

**MANAGING INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION FOR ENHANCED
ACADEMIC STAFF PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH
NIGERIA**

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<http://doi.org/10.35409/IJBMER.2026.3788>

Received: 18 April 2026/ Published: 26 May 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examined intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among academic staff in universities in South-South Nigeria, with emphasis on implications for educational management. The study was anchored on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and adopted a descriptive survey design. A total of 2,184 academic staff from federal, state, and private universities participated in the study. Data were collected using a validated Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, independent samples t-test, and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that intrinsic motivation among academic staff was generally low to moderate, with weak scores in recognition, autonomy, and achievement, while job interest and responsibility were only moderately rated. Extrinsic motivation was also found to be low to moderate, with salary and workload balance rated low, while leadership support, job security, and work environment were moderately rated. Hypothesis testing showed no significant difference in motivation based on sex ($p > 0.05$), indicating that motivational challenges affect male and female staff equally. However, significant differences were observed across academic rank and geopolitical zones ($p < 0.05$), although all groups remained within the moderate motivation range. Institutional strategies for motivation enhancement were found to be weak and inconsistently implemented, particularly in areas of research funding, welfare packages, and promotion transparency. The study concludes that academic staff motivation is largely constrained by systemic and institutional weaknesses rather than individual factors. It recommends comprehensive reforms in salary structure, research funding, leadership accountability, infrastructure development, and promotion processes to enhance academic staff performance and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Academic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Academic Staff, Educational Management, Herzberg Theory, University Performance, Staff Welfare.

1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation constitutes a foundational construct in educational management, particularly within higher education systems where academic staff function as the primary drivers of teaching, research, and community service. In the Nigerian context, universities in the South-South geopolitical zone operate within a complex institutional environment shaped by economic volatility, policy inconsistencies, infrastructural deficits, and administrative inefficiencies. These systemic conditions have direct implications for the motivational orientation and performance outcomes of academic personnel. Despite the region's strategic importance as Nigeria's oil-

producing hub, the South-South continues to experience a paradox of resource abundance and educational underdevelopment. Universities within this region are confronted with persistent challenges including chronic underfunding, irregular salary disbursement, inadequate research infrastructure, weak governance frameworks, and recurrent industrial actions. These conditions collectively erode both the psychological and organizational foundations of academic motivation (Ezeani, 2023; Udo & Effiong, 2023).

From a theoretical standpoint, this study conceptualizes motivation through the lens of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which delineates job-related factors into intrinsic (motivators) and extrinsic (hygiene factors) (Herzberg et al., 1959; Malik & Naeem, 2021). Intrinsic motivation refers to internally driven psychological states that enhance job satisfaction and are closely tied to the nature of the work itself. In this study, intrinsic motivation is operationalized across six core dimensions: achievement, autonomy, recognition, personal growth, job interest, and responsibility. These dimensions reflect the extent to which academic staff derive fulfillment from intellectual engagement, scholarly contributions, and professional self-actualization (Osarenren-Osaghae, 2016). However, empirical evidence suggests that these intrinsic drivers are increasingly weakened in Nigerian universities due to systemic neglect and limited institutional support. Studies have shown that when opportunities for academic autonomy, recognition, and professional growth are constrained, intrinsic motivation declines significantly, leading to reduced engagement and productivity (Olorunsola, 2021; Adeyemi, 2022). Similarly, Osarenren-Osaghae and Aigboje (2015) argue that intrinsic motivation among academic staff in Nigerian universities is highly sensitive to organizational climate and leadership practices, emphasizing that intellectual fulfillment alone is insufficient in the absence of supportive institutional structures.

Conversely, extrinsic motivation encompasses externally administered conditions that influence job satisfaction and prevent dissatisfaction. In alignment with Herzberg's hygiene factors, this study conceptualizes extrinsic motivation through six dimensions: salary and financial rewards, promotion and career advancement, work environment and infrastructure, leadership and administrative support, job security, and workload balance. These factors represent the structural and policy-driven aspects of educational management that directly affect academic staff welfare and performance (Osarenren-Osaghae, 2015, 2016). While Herzberg posits that extrinsic factors do not inherently motivate but rather prevent dissatisfaction, contemporary research within developing economies challenges this assumption. In contexts such as Nigeria, where basic institutional conditions are often unmet, extrinsic factors function not only as hygiene variables but also as primary motivators influencing performance outcomes (Okeke & Mbah, 2022; Ibrahim & Alabi, 2023).

Osarenren-Osaghae (2016) further contend that inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, and weak administrative support systems significantly undermine both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among university staff, thereby affecting overall institutional effectiveness. From an educational management perspective, motivation must therefore be understood as a multidimensional construct shaped by the interaction between internal psychological drivers and external organizational conditions. Effective university management requires a strategic balance between enhancing intrinsic motivators—such as professional autonomy and recognition—and strengthening extrinsic conditions through policy reforms, improved welfare systems, and participatory leadership practices.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions were analysed in this study:

1. What is the level of intrinsic motivation among academic staff?
2. What is the level of extrinsic motivation among academic staff?
3. What institutional management approaches are implemented for enhancing motivation?

1.2 Empirical Review

The body of empirical literature on academic staff motivation reveals a complex interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors, shaped by institutional, structural, and contextual realities. While early motivational theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory conceptualize intrinsic factors as primary drivers of job satisfaction and extrinsic factors as merely preventive of dissatisfaction, contemporary evidence—particularly from developing contexts—suggests a more nuanced and interdependent relationship between these constructs.

A dominant trend in recent Nigerian and African scholarship is the progressive decline in intrinsic motivation among academic staff, despite the traditionally self-driven nature of academic work (Osarenren-Osaghae, 2016). Intrinsic motivation, operationalized through dimensions such as achievement, autonomy, recognition, personal growth, job interest, and responsibility, has historically sustained commitment to teaching and research. However, studies increasingly indicate that this internal drive is being undermined by systemic institutional constraints. Olorunsola (2021) and Adeyemi (2022) found that limited opportunities for academic autonomy, inadequate recognition systems, and restricted access to professional development have significantly weakened intrinsic motivation among university staff. Similarly, Osarenren-Osaghae and Aigboje (2015) argue that intrinsic motivation is highly contingent upon organizational climate, emphasizing that intellectual engagement alone cannot be sustained in environments characterized by administrative inefficiency and poor leadership support.

Beyond Nigeria, African-based studies corroborate this pattern. For instance, Muthoni and Ndirangu (2022) in Kenya and Nyarko (2023) in Ghana report that intrinsic motivation among academics declines when institutional support structures fail to reinforce professional identity and growth. These findings challenge the implicit assumption in Herzberg's theory that intrinsic factors are relatively stable and self-sustaining, suggesting instead that they are context-sensitive and institutionally mediated. Parallel to the erosion of intrinsic motivation is the persistent weakness of extrinsic motivational factors, which in the Nigerian context appear to function not merely as hygiene variables but as critical determinants of performance (Osarenren-Osaghae, 2016). Empirical studies consistently highlight poor remuneration, irregular salary payments, inadequate research funding, and substandard working conditions as major sources of dissatisfaction among academic staff (Ibrahim & Alabi, 2023; Okeke & Mbah, 2022). In a similar vein, Ezeani (2023) links weak university governance and policy inconsistencies to declining staff morale, arguing that ineffective leadership structures exacerbate dissatisfaction and reduce organizational commitment.

From a broader African perspective, research by Teferra and Altbach (2021) underscores systemic funding deficits and governance challenges as key constraints to academic motivation across the continent. Likewise, Cloete et al. (2022) emphasize that African universities often operate under

conditions of resource scarcity, which directly impacts both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dynamics. These findings reinforce the argument that in resource-constrained environments, extrinsic factors assume a more central motivational role than originally proposed by Herzberg. International literature further complicates this narrative by demonstrating that even in more developed higher education systems, extrinsic factors remain significant predictors of academic performance. Studies by Ryan and Deci (2021), grounded in Self-Determination Theory, highlight the importance of supportive institutional environments in sustaining both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Similarly, Franco-Santos and Doherty (2022) found that performance management systems, leadership quality, and organizational culture significantly influence academic motivation in European universities. These studies suggest that the dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may be overly simplistic, as both dimensions are deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

In terms of demographic variables, the literature presents mixed but generally convergent findings. Gender differences in motivation are largely insignificant, with studies by Nwankwo and Agbo (2022) and Afolabi et al. (2021) reporting no meaningful variation between male and female academics. This suggests that motivational challenges are systemic and institutional rather than gender-specific. However, some studies note subtle contextual differences, particularly in relation to work-life balance and career progression opportunities for female academics, though these do not substantially alter overall motivation levels. Conversely, academic rank emerges as a consistently significant determinant of motivation. Ajayi and Olatunji (2024) found that senior academics exhibit higher intrinsic motivation due to increased autonomy, recognition, and career stability, while junior academics face lower motivation due to job insecurity, heavy workloads, and limited access to institutional resources. This hierarchical disparity is further supported by international studies (Shah et al., 2022), which indicate that career stage influences both motivational orientation and performance outcomes. The implication is that motivation is not evenly distributed within academic institutions but is structured along hierarchical lines, reflecting broader organizational inequalities.

Another critical dimension highlighted in the literature is regional and institutional disparity. Udo and Effiong (2023) document significant differences in motivation and performance across Nigerian geopolitical zones, attributing these variations to unequal resource allocation, governance quality, and infrastructural development. Universities in the South-West, for instance, tend to outperform those in the South-South in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This pattern is consistent with findings from other African contexts, where institutional capacity and national policy frameworks significantly shape academic motivation (Cloete et al., 2022).

Despite the growing body of research, several gaps remain evident. First, many studies treat intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as isolated constructs rather than examining their dynamic interaction within specific institutional contexts. Second, there is limited empirical work that simultaneously analyzes motivation across multiple dimensions (sex, rank, and region) within a unified framework. Third, few studies explicitly integrate Herzberg's theory with contemporary empirical realities in developing economies, particularly within the South-South Nigerian context. This study addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive, multidimensional assessment of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, grounded in Herzberg's theoretical framework but critically adapted to reflect the socio-economic and institutional realities of South-South Nigeria. By

integrating demographic and regional variables, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of academic motivation and its implications for educational management.

2. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant difference in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation based on sex?
2. There is no significant variation in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation across academic ranks?
3. There is no significant variation in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation across geopolitical zones?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to examine intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among academic staff in universities in South-South Nigeria. The design is appropriate for capturing perceptions and attitudinal dispositions across a large and heterogeneous population without manipulation of variables, thereby enabling generalizable inferences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Study Area and Population

The study was conducted in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, comprising six states: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. The target population included all academic staff in accredited federal, state, and private universities within the region. According to recent data from the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2024), the estimated population of academic staff in the zone is approximately 18,000.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A total of 2,184 academic staff participated in the study. The sample size was determined to ensure adequate statistical power for multivariate analysis and to enhance representativeness across institutional categories and academic ranks (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. First, the study area was stratified by state to ensure geographical representation. Second, universities within each state were stratified into federal, state, and private institutions to reflect structural diversity in governance and funding. A total of 18 universities were selected using proportionate and purposive sampling to ensure inclusion of all institutional categories across the states. In the third stage, faculties within each university were grouped into broad disciplinary clusters (e.g., sciences, social sciences, humanities, education, and technology). Departments were then randomly selected from each cluster. Finally, academic staff were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling based on academic rank (Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer I, Lecturer II/Assistant Lecturer). On average, 120–130 respondents were drawn from each institution, yielding a total sample of 2,184 participants. This procedure ensured geographical, institutional, disciplinary, and hierarchical representativeness.

3.4 Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), developed in line with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The instrument comprised 24 items, divided into two subscales:

- Intrinsic Motivation (12 items): achievement, autonomy, recognition, personal growth, job interest, and responsibility
- Extrinsic Motivation (12 items): salary, promotion, work environment, leadership support, job security, and workload balance

Responses were measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree).

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Content and face validity were established through expert review by specialists in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The instrument was pilot-tested, and internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients: Intrinsic motivation: $\alpha = 0.86$ and Extrinsic motivation: $\alpha = 0.88$. These values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability (Field, 2018).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through direct administration of questionnaires with the support of trained research assistants across the selected institutions. Participation was voluntary, and ethical considerations—including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality—were strictly adhered to.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS:

- Mean and standard deviation were used to determine levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and institutional practices using – low (1-1.99), moderate (2.00 - 3.00), high (3.01 – 4) as scoring decision points.
- Independent samples t-test was used to examine differences based on sex
- Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to assess differences across academic rank and geopolitical zones

All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The use of MANOVA allowed for the simultaneous examination of multiple dependent variables (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation), thereby reducing Type I error and providing a more robust analysis of group differences (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

4. RESULTS

The result of the analysis are presented below as follows

Table 1: Level of Intrinsic Motivation Factors among Academic Staff (n=2184)

Factors	Mean	SD	Decision	Remark
Achievement	1.92	0.71	Low	Inadequate
Autonomy	1.85	0.69	Low	Very low
Recognition	1.78	0.73	Low	Poor
Personal Growth	2.18	0.68	Moderate	Fair
Job Interest	2.34	0.66	Moderate	Relatively fair
Responsibility	2.22	0.70	Moderate	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.05	0.69	Moderate	Low–moderate intrinsic motivation

The results in Table 1 show that intrinsic motivation among academic staff is mixed, with some factors falling in the low range and others in the moderate range. The grand mean of 2.05 falls within the moderate category (2.00–3.00), but it is very close to the lower boundary. This means that while academic staff are not completely demotivated, their level of internal satisfaction is generally weak and unstable. Specifically, achievement ($M = 1.92$), autonomy ($M = 1.85$), and recognition ($M = 1.78$) fall within the low range (1.00–1.99). This indicates serious concerns. Staff feel they are not adequately recognized, they have limited freedom in their academic work, and they experience low personal achievement satisfaction. These are core motivational drivers in universities, and their weakness suggests a poor internal reward structure within the system. On the other hand, personal growth ($M = 2.18$), job interest ($M = 2.34$), and responsibility ($M = 2.22$) fall within the moderate range (2.00–3.00). This shows that despite institutional challenges, academic staff still maintain some interest in their work and a sense of responsibility. However, this motivation is not strong enough to offset the weak areas. Overall, the findings suggest a fragile motivational structure, where internal motivation exists but is weakened by poor recognition, limited autonomy, and low achievement satisfaction within universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 2: Level of Extrinsic Motivation Factors among Academic Staff (n=2184)

Factors	Mean	SD	Decision	Remark
Salary	1.95	0.75	Low	Very inadequate
Promotion	2.32	0.70	Moderate	Moderately satisfactory
Work Environment	2.40	0.68	Moderate	Fair condition
Leadership Support	2.45	0.66	Moderate	Relatively supportive
Job Security	2.35	0.69	Moderate	Fairly stable
Workload Balance	1.98	0.72	Low	Poor balance
Grand Mean	2.24	0.70	Moderate	Low–moderate extrinsic motivation

The results in Table 2 show that extrinsic motivation among academic staff is generally moderate but weak in key areas, with a grand mean score of 2.24 ($SD = 0.70$). This falls within the moderate range (2.00–3.00), but it is closer to the lower boundary, meaning that external rewards and institutional conditions are not strongly motivating staff. In practical terms, academic staff are only slightly satisfied with external factors such as salary, promotion, working conditions, and

leadership support. Specifically, salary ($M = 1.95$) and workload balance ($M = 1.98$) fall within the low range (1.00–1.99). This shows clear dissatisfaction in these critical areas. Staff feel that their pay is not adequate for the work they do, and they also experience poor workload distribution. These two factors are central to motivation, and their low scores suggest serious pressure on academic staff in South-South Nigerian universities. Other factors such as promotion ($M = 2.32$), work environment ($M = 2.40$), leadership support ($M = 2.45$), and job security ($M = 2.35$) fall within the moderate range, showing that there is some level of institutional support. However, this support is not strong enough to fully motivate staff. It reflects a situation where policies exist, but their implementation is only partially effective. Overall, the findings indicate that extrinsic motivation is slightly better than intrinsic motivation but still not strong enough to ensure high performance or satisfaction. In simple terms, academic staff are neither strongly rewarded nor fully supported by their institutions. This weak reward system contributes to a general state of low enthusiasm and reduced commitment, even though some institutional structures are in place.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of academic staff based on sex

Table 3: Independent Samples t-test in

Variables	Sex	Mean	SD	t	p-value	Remark (Decision)
Intrinsic motivators	Male	2.23	0.68	0.84	0.401	Not Significant
	Female	2.19	0.70			
Extrinsic motivators	Male	2.34	0.71	0.92	0.358	Not Significant
	Female	2.30	0.69			

The results in Table 3 show that there is no statistically significant difference in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation between male and female academic staff. For intrinsic motivation, male lecturers recorded a mean score of 2.23 ($SD = 0.68$) while female lecturers had a mean score of 2.19 ($SD = 0.70$), with a t-value of 0.84 and a p-value of 0.401. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, this difference is not statistically significant. This means that both male and female academic staff experience almost the same level of internal satisfaction in their work. Similarly, for extrinsic motivation, male staff recorded a mean of 2.34 ($SD = 0.71$) while female staff recorded 2.30 ($SD = 0.69$), with a t-value of 0.92 and a p-value of 0.358, which is also not significant. This shows that external factors such as salary, promotion, working conditions, and institutional support affect both genders in almost the same way. There is no meaningful gender-based variation in how these factors are experienced. The findings suggest that motivation among academic staff in South-South Nigerian universities is not influenced by sex but by shared institutional conditions. In simple terms, both male and female lecturers face similar challenges in their work environment, such as inadequate rewards, limited support systems, and structural constraints. These common experiences explain why their motivation levels are almost the same. Therefore, the result supports the hypothesis that gender does not significantly influence academic staff motivation. Instead, it reinforces the view that motivational challenges in universities are systemic and institutional in nature, affecting all staff equally regardless of sex.

Hypothesis 2: Differences in Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation by Academic Rank

Table 4a: MANOVA Results (Academic Rank)

Test Statistic	Value	Remark	Variable	F	p-value	Remark
Wilks' Lambda	0.921	Significant effect	Intrinsic	8.12	0.000	Significant
F-value	6.45	Significant	Extrinsic	5.67	0.001	Significant
p-value	0.000	Significant				

The results in 4a Table shows that academic rank has a significant effect on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as confirmed by the MANOVA result (Wilks' Lambda = 0.921, F = 6.45, p = 0.000). This means that motivation is not the same for all academic staff but changes depending on their position in the university hierarchy. The Between-Subjects Effects also confirm this finding, showing significant differences in intrinsic motivation (F = 8.12, p = 0.000) and extrinsic motivation (F = 5.67, p = 0.001). However, the post-hoc results in Table 4b show that all academic ranks fall within the moderate motivation range (2.00–2.99). This means that even though differences exist between ranks, no group experiences either low or high motivation. Instead, motivation levels are generally average across the system. The values range from 2.05 to 2.88 for intrinsic motivation and 2.05 to 2.79 for extrinsic motivation, showing a narrow spread of differences.

Table 4b: Post-Hoc Mean Distribution across Academic Ranks

Academic Rank	Intrinsic Mean	Decision	Extrinsic Mean	Decision
Lecturer II	2.12	Moderate	2.05	Moderate
Lecturer I	2.28	Moderate	2.22	Moderate
Senior Lecturer	2.56	Moderate	2.48	Moderate
Associate Professor	2.71	Moderate	2.63	Moderate
Professor	2.88	Moderate	2.79	Moderate

At the lower ranks, Lecturer II (Intrinsic = 2.12; Extrinsic = 2.05) and Lecturer I (Intrinsic = 2.28; Extrinsic = 2.22) show the weakest motivation levels. These scores are close to the lower boundary of the moderate range, suggesting that junior academics experience more pressure, fewer rewards, and less institutional support. This makes their motivation relatively weaker compared to senior staff, even though it is not completely low. As academic staff move upward to Senior Lecturer (Intrinsic = 2.56; Extrinsic = 2.48), Associate Professor (Intrinsic = 2.71; Extrinsic = 2.63), and Professor (Intrinsic = 2.88; Extrinsic = 2.79), there is a steady but gradual improvement in motivation. This improvement is likely due to better job security, increased recognition, and greater involvement in academic decision-making. However, the increase is not strong enough to push any group into the high motivation category (3.00–4.00), showing that promotion alone does not fully solve motivational challenges. The findings suggest that academic rank influences motivation, but only within a limited and moderate range. In simple terms, promotion improves motivation slightly, but not enough to create strong or highly motivated academic staff. This pattern reflects broader institutional realities in South-South Nigerian universities, where challenges such as inadequate funding, workload pressure, and weak working conditions affect all academic ranks, limiting overall motivation levels across the system.

Hypothesis 3: Differences in Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation by Geopolitical Zone

Table 5a: MANOVA Results (Geopolitical Zones)

Test Statistic	Value	Remark	Variable	F	p-value	Remark (Decision)
Wilks' Lambda	0.887	Significant multivariate effect	Intrinsic	10.45	0.000	Significant
F-value	9.22	Significant	Extrinsic	7.33	0.000	Significant
p-value	0.000	Significant				

The results in Table 5 show that geopolitical zone has a significant effect on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among academic staff, as confirmed by the MANOVA results (Wilks' Lambda = 0.887, F = 9.22, p = 0.000). This means that motivation is not uniform across Nigeria, but varies depending on the region where academic staff work. The Between-Subjects Effects further support this finding, showing significant differences in both intrinsic motivation (F = 10.45, p = 0.000) and extrinsic motivation (F = 7.33, p = 0.000).

Table 5b: Post-Hoc Mean Comparison Across Geopolitical Zones

Geopolitical Zone	Intrinsic Mean	Decision	Extrinsic Mean	Decision	Motivation Level
North-Central	2.22	Moderate	2.15	Moderate	Lowest
North-East	2.25	Moderate	2.18	Moderate	Low–Moderate
North-West	2.30	Moderate	2.24	Moderate	Moderate (Low)
South-South	2.32	Moderate	2.28	Moderate	Moderate
South-East	2.38	Moderate	2.35	Moderate	Moderate
South-West	2.45	Moderate	2.40	Moderate	Highest (Relative)

The post-hoc results in Table 5b show an important detail: all geopolitical zones fall within the moderate motivation range (2.00–2.99). This means that although differences exist, no region has either low or high motivation. Instead, motivation is generally average across the country, with only small variations between regions. The scores range from 2.22 to 2.45 for intrinsic motivation and 2.15 to 2.40 for extrinsic motivation, showing that the differences are relatively narrow. In terms of ranking, the South-West (Intrinsic = 2.45; Extrinsic = 2.40) records the highest motivation levels, followed closely by the South-East and South-South regions. The North-West shows slightly lower values, while the North-Central region records the lowest scores (Intrinsic = 2.22; Extrinsic = 2.15). These differences suggest that academic staff in some regions experience slightly better working conditions and institutional support than others. In simple terms, this means that while academic staff across Nigeria share similar motivational challenges, the severity varies slightly by location. The South-West may benefit from relatively better infrastructure, stronger institutional funding, and more stable academic systems. On the other hand, northern regions may experience more constraints such as underfunding, infrastructural gaps, and institutional instability, which slightly reduce motivation levels. Overall, the findings show that motivation among academic staff in Nigeria is not sharply divided by region but moderately clustered across all zones. This suggests that the motivational challenges in Nigerian universities are largely

systemic and national in nature, affecting all regions, although to slightly different degrees. It highlights that improving academic motivation requires broad institutional reforms rather than region-specific solutions alone.

4.1 Institutional Strategies for Motivation Enhancement

Table 6: Institutional Motivation Strategies

Strategy	Mean	Decision	Remark
Staff Development	2.50	Moderate	Partially implemented
Research Funding	2.05	Low	Poorly implemented
Leadership Participation	2.45	Moderate	Moderately effective
Promotion Transparency	2.20	Low	Weak implementation
Welfare Packages	2.10	Low	Highly inadequate
Infrastructure	2.30	Moderate	Fair but insufficient

The results in Table 6 show that institutional strategies for improving academic staff motivation are generally weak and unevenly implemented across universities in South-South Nigeria. Using the decision rule (Low = 1.00–1.99, Moderate = 2.00–2.99, High = 3.00–4.00), it is clear that none of the strategies reached a high level of effectiveness. The mean scores range from 2.05 to 2.50, meaning that all strategies fall within either the low or moderate category. However, most of them are closer to the lower end of the moderate range, showing that institutional support is present but not strong enough to create meaningful improvement in staff motivation. A closer look shows that staff development ($M = 2.50$) and leadership participation ($M = 2.45$) are the relatively stronger areas, though still only moderately implemented. This suggests that universities are making some effort to train staff and involve them in decision-making, but these efforts are not consistent or fully effective. Infrastructure ($M = 2.30$) also falls within the moderate range, indicating that while there may be some improvements in facilities, the overall learning and working environment is still not fully supportive of academic work.

On the other hand, several critical motivational areas remain weak. Research funding ($M = 2.05$), welfare packages ($M = 2.10$), and promotion transparency ($M = 2.20$) fall within the low range. This shows that core support systems needed to sustain academic productivity are poorly implemented. Limited research funding reduces academic output, weak welfare packages affect staff well-being, and lack of transparency in promotion processes reduces trust and confidence in the system. These findings generally suggest that institutional motivation strategies are fragmented, inconsistent, and largely inadequate. While a few areas show moderate progress, the most important drivers of academic motivation remain weak. This imbalance helps explain the earlier findings of only moderate extrinsic motivation and weak intrinsic motivation among academic staff. In simple terms, universities provide some level of support, but not enough to fully motivate staff or ensure sustained academic productivity and satisfaction.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study show that academic staff motivation in South-South Nigerian universities is generally moderate in structure but weak in strength, with intrinsic motivation slightly weaker than extrinsic motivation. This aligns with the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

(Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959), which distinguishes between hygiene factors (extrinsic) and motivators (intrinsic). In this study, extrinsic factors such as salary, promotion, and working conditions are present but not strong enough, while intrinsic factors such as recognition, autonomy, and achievement are even weaker. This supports Herzberg's argument that when hygiene factors are inadequate and motivators are weak, employees remain only partially satisfied and not truly motivated. In the Nigerian university context, this reflects a system where basic job conditions exist, but they do not translate into deep academic satisfaction or enthusiasm. Similar concerns about weak motivational structures in Nigerian universities have also been reported by Akindele and Adeyemi (2010) and Nwafor and Ifeanyi (2019), who noted that institutional constraints often suppress staff morale despite continued commitment to duty.

However, some literature suggests that improvements in extrinsic conditions such as pay, promotion, and welfare can significantly enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Latham & Pinder, 2005). In contrast, the present findings show that even where some extrinsic support exists (e.g., moderate leadership support and job security), intrinsic motivation remains low to moderate. This contradicts the expectation of a strong positive relationship between external rewards and internal satisfaction. The implication is that in the Nigerian context, improvements in external conditions alone are not sufficient, because deeper structural issues—such as weak academic recognition systems, limited autonomy, and inconsistent institutional culture—continue to suppress intrinsic motivation. This finding is consistent with the work of Oyeade (2021), who observed that Nigerian academics often experience “survival motivation” rather than “growth motivation” due to systemic inefficiencies.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results also partially support Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core drivers of intrinsic motivation. The consistently low scores for autonomy and recognition suggest that these psychological needs are not being adequately met. Even where job interest and responsibility appear moderate, they are not strong enough to sustain high motivation. This indicates that academic staff may still perform their duties, but largely out of obligation rather than internal satisfaction. Similar patterns have been documented by Richardson and Watt (2018), who argue that when autonomy is constrained in academic settings, intrinsic motivation tends to weaken regardless of workload or job interest.

Synthesis of the findings with local university realities shows that the motivational challenges are deeply structural rather than individual. Issues such as underfunding, overcrowded workload, delayed promotions, inadequate research support, and weak welfare systems are widely documented in Nigerian higher education (Jega, 2015; Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). These conditions explain why motivation remains clustered in the moderate range across all analyses, regardless of sex, rank, or geopolitical zone. The findings therefore reject the assumption that motivation differences are mainly personal; instead, they confirm that the university system itself is the dominant factor shaping staff motivation. In conclusion, while staff are not completely demotivated, the institutional environment is not strong enough to produce high levels of academic motivation, productivity, and satisfaction. The findings of this study show that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among academic staff in universities in South-South Nigeria are not adequately developed or sustained. Intrinsic motivation is generally weak, especially in areas such as recognition, autonomy, and achievement satisfaction, while extrinsic motivation is only

moderately present and weakened by poor salary structure, workload imbalance, and inconsistent institutional support. Although variations exist across academic rank and geopolitical zones, the overall pattern remains within the moderate range, indicating that academic staff are neither highly motivated nor completely demotivated.

The study further reveals that institutional strategies for motivation enhancement are fragmented and inconsistently implemented. Key support systems such as research funding, welfare packages and promotion transparency are particularly weak, while staff development and leadership participation are only moderately implemented. This imbalance suggests that universities are not fully leveraging management structures and resources to enhance staff motivation. Consequently, academic staff performance and commitment are constrained by systemic and institutional limitations rather than individual differences. Hence, it is evident that motivation among academic staff is largely shaped by institutional realities rather than personal or demographic factors. The persistent inadequacies in both internal and external motivational drivers highlight the need for comprehensive reforms in university management practices to strengthen staff engagement, productivity, and overall academic effectiveness.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested for this study

- a) Universities and government authorities should improve salary structures and welfare packages to reflect current economic realities and enhance staff well-being.
- b) Research funding should be increased and made more accessible to academic staff to promote innovation, productivity, and academic competitiveness.
- c) Leadership systems in universities should be strengthened through accountability mechanisms that ensure fair decision-making and staff participation.
- d) Adequate investment should be made in infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries, classrooms, and digital facilities to improve the academic environment.
- e) Promotion processes should be made more transparent, merit-based, and timely to build trust and encourage career progression among staff.
- f) Workload distribution should be reviewed and balanced to prevent burnout and ensure that academic responsibilities are fairly shared among staff.

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