STAFF RECOGNITION AND LECTURERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The objective of this study was to investigate staff recognition and lecturers' academic performance in selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The study adapted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 3215. The sample of the study was 523 obtained through Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination. The questionnaire was validated by Senior Lecturers in Business Management and Management Evaluation Departments in Ebonyi State University Abakaliki who used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with a value of 0.000. The reliability of the instrument of 0.781 was obtained by using test–retest and Cronbach coefficient alpha. Data generated were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 5% level of significance. The result of the hypothesis revealed that there is a positive relationship between staff recognitions and academic staff performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria with the value of $r = 0.6744$; p-value $= 0.00$ at 5% level of significance. The study recommended that management of the tertiary institutions should enhance academic staff performance through staff recognition since all efforts are focused towards accomplishing the objective of the institutions. Also, institution authorities should frequently re-evaluate and review the non-financial reward practices and implement them in the education sector.
Keywords: Staff recognition, lecturers' academic performance, tertiary institutions, Nigeria
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INTRODUCTION
It is globally recognized that one of the important issues affecting human resources in any organization is how to induce and influence employee performance. Reward is what an employee is offered, due to the fact that he has behaved well, worked hard or provided a service to the community. Recognizing the intricate of compensation plans that induce different aspects of employee's attitude and behavior toward commitment, it entails that implementing various reward strategies on staff can induce higher commitment to performance. It is believed that organizations try to implement an equitable balance between staff contribution to the organization and the organizations part on the workers. It is mostly the sole responsibility of the management to strike a balance between reward plans and employee's performance in the organization. Solimun (2021)

found that non-financial reward has a more motivational value than monetary rewards and directly influence lecturer's commitment, job satisfaction, retention, empowerment, job security and job flexibility in the institution. The study emphasized that non-financial rewards in any form and dimension has both emotional and psychological effect on employee's performance.

Reward system consists of all the available measures that employers used to employ, motivate, satisfy and retain employees for continuous commitment to higher performance in the organization (Armstrong, 2013). It is assumed to be psychological and materials payoff for doing work which variably lead to job satisfaction and social recognition. Thompson (2022) allude that compensation in any form and dimension is an appreciation either in cash or in kind presented to workers for additional effort put to achieve a certain goal in the organization. To Armstrong (20130) reward in totality is perceived as a take home for efforts and contributions employees demonstrated in a particular period towards ensuring organizations sustainability which may include both financial and non-financial compensation to influence their commitment and retention in the organization despite environmental influences. Based on this opinion, employees have often agitated for total rewards as they caution both their immediate materials and psychological needs in the society. Reward consists of various polices, processes and strategies needed to maintain employees value and their input in accomplishing both, team, departmental and general organizational objectives within a specific period of time (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). It is a management system that focuses on the development, and administration of employee's welfare to influence their survival and commitment in the organization. Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby (2020) in Lebo & Edema (2019) are of the opinion that employees' attitudes are certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act towards some aspects of his environment.

Staff recognition has been found to be a reward for outstanding performance. The inability of university authorities to acknowledge, appreciate and give credit to lecturers who excel in a particular area of human endeavor has affected the extent of creativity, innovation, research and publication and consultancy services among lecturers in the universities in Nigeria. It is on the basis of this problem that the researcher decided to empirically investigate the correlation between staff recognition in relation to the number of students supervised, creativity, research and publications, teaching load and extent of consultancy services among lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Sun (2023) found out that employee's recognition influences commitment but negatively affect employee's retention in the organization as employees who are highly recognition in a particular work setting may decide to change to another work environment.

Despite the global demands in education sector, academic staff still face a serious problem of non-financial reward strategies which indirectly affect their performance. Considering the need for education as bedrock of any nation's development, government and university authorities have not put motivational strategies on ground to influence staff job performance through providing opportunities of personal drive for career progression and advancement which variably has affected the extent to which academic staff supervised students towards graduation. Since the introduction of tertiary education trust fund (TETFUND), as administration and implementation

in the institutions in Nigeria has recorded poor success as there are imbalances among academic staff across the geographical zones in the state. The university authority's failure to disburse the resources to provide lecturers opportunities for career advancement to gain new knowledge and experience which directly affect the extent of teaching, supervision and research among academic lecturers in universities has been a problem. Dabo (2019) asserts that inadequate job knowledge or teaching knowledge occurs as a result of no opportunity for staff recognition which is indirectly reflected in student's graduation and research among lecturers in Nigerian universities. This problem: staff recognition and lecturers' academic performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria was identified for study. At present, there is no research evidence on this problem. The absence of any research on this situation, therefore, provided the focus of this paper; namely: to ascertain the staff recognition and lecturers' academic performance in selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Non-financial rewards are non-cash incentives and attraction. It is both psychological and social recognition employees enjoy for working in the organization such as acknowledgement letter, certificate, attractive office, job security, genuine appreciation, etc which influence the extent of commitment toward higher performance among employees in the organization (Matsumura & Kobayashi, 2018). Academic staffs have psychological value for non-financial rewards strategies than pay as career advancement is a function of higher performance in terms of supervision of students with ease (Morrel, 2021). Employees (academic staff) have to grow and develop academically in order to handle diverse students' problems.

Day, Summons, Stobart & Kington (2017) argue that staff career advancement is factor of employee performance as employee is given the opportunity to acquire higher certificates through skills; knowledge, learning and experience to enable him handle any aspect of the job assigned. To him academic staff who acquired higher qualifications can handle different jobs in the sense that allocation to task and responsibility depends on qualification, skill, knowledge and experience in a given job (Yeo & Li, 2021). Staff recognition is the gratitude organizations give to their key employees for achieving a designated task which gives such employees job satisfaction and self-esteem. Staff recognition is non-monetary reward strategy that triggers employees' moral for satisfaction as they feel a sense of belonging to the organization (Ryam, 2023). It is an acknowledgement institutions display to their lecturers for outstanding academic performance. Staff recognition is based on the extent which the employees are able to achieve the level of retention in the organization. Lecturers are duly recognized based on performance.

Job performances are behaviors or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organization it is a behavior demonstrated or something done by the employees to influence organization effectiveness and is assessed through lecturer operational outcomes which include number of students supervised, research/publication, teaching load, creativity etc. Sirawas & Abugre (2023) argue that employee performance is never a single unified concept but an ideology with many perceptions encompassing more than one type of behavior or action. Meanwhile, tertiary institutions produce intangible goods and the quality of service is daily perceived by the current

performance of the service the academic staff render (Chen, Lawler & Uen; 2020). It is adduced at this juncture that academic performance is the outcome generated as a result of the efforts of the lecturers in different areas of study.

However, tertiary institution performance is never connected to institutions standard as institutions seek to formulate method to guide and evaluate the graduates' excellence which can be accessed through feedback from society. The system of tertiary institution is duly protected by the management style and nature of education in the country as it enjoys certain academic privileges and authority which makes the ideology of payment by result assumed a new perception (Kulno & Tonu, 2017). Despite the nature of the Nigerian depressed economy, there is need to motivate academic staff to demonstrate higher performance.

Academic performance of lecturers in universities as it relates to the level of non-financial compensation is difficult to ascertain due to nature of the service lecturers offer in the open system. Owolabi & Makinde (2022) assert that due to the nature, consistency, tight schedule, stress induced and complexities of academic job, the performance indicators among academic staff revolve around these key variables parameters which include number of students admitted newly, teaching load, number of students supervised to graduation in terms of bachelor, master and doctoral degrees; research output, publication in both local and international journals, total grants received annually, level of creativity and innovation of lecturers, community service in terms of social assistance, scientific meetings, consultant services, seminars and symposia for the local communities, technical service, rendered (Babalola & Taiwo, 2016).

In this study the dependent variable is employee (lecturer) performance which can at times be perceived by the extent to which a student has maintained a considerable and acceptable GPA in the department. The performance of lecturers in the universities has a multidimensional perspectives ranging from students' characteristics, competence of lecturer and university work environment. In terms of the characteristics of students, Leo & Choy (2023) opine that the extent students handle their studies, cope up to achieve various assignments assigned to them by their lecturers determine the level of performance. This variable is a function of the level of intelligence of students these factors play a key role to influence the extent of students' characteristics to confidently handle and cope with their studies and achieve their academic obligation in a given period. In the university perception, the ability of the students to learn recall all that were studied and write them down when called upon and even communicate it in their own idea and understanding influences the level of performance academically.

Jackline & John (2014) assert that the competence of lecturers focused on how they are able to transfer knowledge and the excellent performance of students in the class and which the students will demonstrate out of school environments. The university environment is determined by the level of modern infrastructural facilities available to influence teaching and learning in school such as media, well equipped classroom, teaching apparatus and well maintained accommodation for students will influence performance in the university system (Pamphil, Omindo, Amina, & Dishon, 2014).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused mainly on the following key performance indicators as they relate to non-financial rewards among academic staff in the Nigeria tertiary

institutions. These variables of interest are the number of students supervised, services rendered. The number of students supervised is perceived as the ratio of students under a given lecturer to monitor, guide and control to graduation or completion of academic activities in the department. The ability to acquire or obtain additional academic certificates to enhance skills and methodologies in teaching through career advancement leads to quality supervisory performance among lecturers in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. University as a knowledge intensive organization requires academic staff to constantly update their knowledge and skills in their supervisory role in order to produce graduates that will stand the taste of time and compete globally (Dabo, 2019). Creativity is viewed as the hallmark of any nation's economic growth and development. For academic institutions to survive in this 21st century of economic recession, staff creativity has a key role to play for the sustainability of the economy. Creativity is the degree to which academic staffs apply the initiative skill to come upon or introduce new ideas in a specific area of human endeavor.

Creativity enables lecturers to fit in well in their job and assume higher responsibility. The ability to endow with creative ideas and skill influences staff retention in the institution (Yang & Lee, 2019). Creativity is the ability to conceive ideas and articulate knowledge that when put into practical application create goods and services which the society needs (Umoh, 2020). Lecturers should continue to apply both chaotic theory and the corridor's principle. A chaotic theory as it relates to academic field presumes that lecturers are change agents that create chaos by changing and disrupting the status quo in a well constructive way to introduce new ideas, processes or knowledge while corridor principle is the ideas that by doing or performing one thing or even following one idea, new opportunities may arise from continued efforts. These concepts will change foreigner's ideas on developing countries as creative imitators that depend on already established rules (Udu, Udu & Eze, 2018). Updating of knowledge, ideas and skills are necessary among lecturers to enable them come up with new techniques in teaching and supervising students for final graduation.

Employee's recognition is the ability of organization to appreciate and praise the efforts and achievement of employees in the organization. Koch (2015) found that recognition correlates with the level of research and publications among lecturers in the institution. Research and publication is a critical creativity and exercise that takes a long time for completion and recommendations proffer when implemented will help to improve the economy and academic staff who ventured in this type of adventure need to be rewarded both financial and non-financial to motivate such lecturers to embark on another venture. Costa (2023) found that quality of research conducted among academic lecturers' influences recognition in the tertiary institutions. Employees whose contributions are significant in the areas of research and development need to be appreciated. Although academic lecturers work collectively and individually to achieve quality researches and academic goals but the degree at which lecturers are individually and collectively honoured for excellent performance is low and need to be investigated to enhance academic performances. A research conducted by Uzoma (2023) found that nothing motivates lecturers than to receive an open award honouring excellent achievement in front of the entire staff during a formal awards ceremony or convocation ceremony. Financial rewards may solve immediate needs as academic staffs are interested on building their Curriculum Vitae (CVS) for future positions in the country. Jenson (2017) refers to staff recognition as the praise or acknowledgement establishments demonstrate to their staff for excellent achievement. This non-financial reward strategy is believed

to be more than cash reward as it last long in the memories of the employees and the entire organization members.

Alan, Saeed, Sahabuddi & Akter (2014) carried out a study on the impact of employee recognition on performance. The objective of the study was to investigate the extent to which management recognition affects the employee performance in tertiary institution in Dakar. The study adopted descriptive survey design; data were gathered from respondents through questionnaire distributed to randomly selected respondents for the study. The data gathered were analyzed using simple percentage distribution and chi-square (x^2) statistical model. The finding revealed that employee recognition as a non-financial reward strategy influences employee attitude and behavior, toward strategy, influences employees' attitude and behavior, toward commitment to higher organizational performance. Recognition has a positive impact on employee performance both in the short run and long run effect on the organizational sustainability. The study concluded that employees take recognition as a psychological feeling of value and appreciation and this leads to increase in employees' morale and efficiency of the organization. The need to feel appreciated is psychological inbuilt in all employees. Employees appreciated (recognized) through praise helps to develop a positive self-concept and meet their esteem needs, self-actualization needs, growth and achievement needs in the organization.

Staff recognition increases employee's morale, status as he feels valued and worthy of trust to work in the institution. Employees achieve their ego when recognized for accomplishing quality research and they feel a sense of belonging psychologically and morally satisfied. In applying Carrot principle, Gostick & Elton (2019) advised that effective university management are those who often recognize their staff for tasks accomplished as it tends to change their behavior attitude and orientation and make them loyal and focus towards higher job performance. Higher performance can always be attained when institutions management learns to appreciate and recognize staff contributions in achieving departmental objectives. Staff recognition helps to get feedback as it is used to amend past mistakes and set standards for future performance to enhance institutional sustainability. Nzuve (2019) portrays that staff recognition can be informed of organizing regular meetings to discuss progress made and advice on how to meet desired target. This employee's participation in decision making influences higher performance.

METHODOLOGY
This study adopted a survey-descriptive methodology because the events happened naturally. What was required was to ascertain the career advancement and lecturers' academic performance in selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of three thousand, two hundred and fifteen lecturers. The instrument was designed to elicit responses on lecturers' recognition in the following factors: lecturers' ranks, lesson content, lesson delivery, students' motivation and evaluation of learning. Each of the factors had a weight of three (5) points.

The respondents were simply required to rate the teaching effectiveness of their lecturers. For this research, the variables for this study were operationalized in this way: $Y = f(x)$; Where y = dependent variable (employee or academic staff performance ASP), x = independent variables (Non-Financial Rewards NFR) that is, career advancement - NFR = CA,

Hence, ASP = f (NFR)

Where:

$X_1, X_2 \ldots X_n$ are the independent sub variables

X_1= Career Advancement (CA)

Presentation of data (results)

Table 1: Response rate on appreciation of staff for good performance at work.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	127	25.0
Disagree	139	27.4
Undecided	66	13.0
Agree	110	21.6
Strongly agree	66	13.0
Total	507	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Table 1 indicates that 127 respondents (25.0%) strongly disagree and 139 respondents (27.4%) disagree that they are often appreciated for good for performance in their work. While 110 respondents (21.6%) strongly agree and 66 respondents (13.0%) agree that they are often appreciated for good for performance in their work. Meanwhile, 66 respondents (13.0%) were undecided.

Table 2: Response rate on colleagues' recognition of one's performance.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	65	12.8
Disagree	91	18.0
Undecided	41	8.0
Agree	143	28.2
Strongly agree	167	33.0
Total	507	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Table 2 indicates that 65 respondents (12.8%) strongly disagree and 91 respondents (18.0%) disagree that theircolleagues often recognize their performance. While 143 respondents (28.2%) strongly agree and 167 respondents (33.0%) agree that theircolleagues often recognize their performance. Meanwhile, 41 respondents (8.0%) were undecided.

Table 3: Response rate on whether institution always display staff outstanding performance in every gathering.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	93	18.3
Disagree	112	22.0
Undecided	35	7.0
Agree	142	28.0
Strongly agree	125	24.7
Total	507	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Table 3 indicates that 93 respondents (18.3%) strongly disagree and 112 respondents (22.0%) disagree that the institution always display their outstanding performance in every gathering. While 142 respondents (28.0%) strongly agree and 125 respondents (24.7%) agree that the institution always display their outstanding performance in every gathering. Meanwhile, 35 respondents (7.0%) were undecided.

Hypothesis testing

Step 1: Statement of the research question:

To what extent does staff recognition relate to quality research among lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Step 2: Statement of the hypothesis:

H_{o1}: There is no positive significant relationship between staff recognition and quality research among lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

H_{a1}: There is a positive significant relationship between staff recognition and quality research among lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Computation of correlation coefficient: Coefficient of determination

$$r^2 = (0.674)^2 = 0.4548$$

$$t_c = r\sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-r^2}}$$

$$t_c = 0.674\sqrt{\frac{507-2}{1-0.4548}}$$

$$t_c = 0.614\sqrt{\frac{505}{0.5452}}$$

$$t_c = 13.84$$

For hypothesis 1 $r = 0.6744, r^2 = 0.4548, t_c = 17.48$

Decision rule

At 5% level of significance, reject Ho if computed t-value exceeds the critical value or is less than the critical t value.
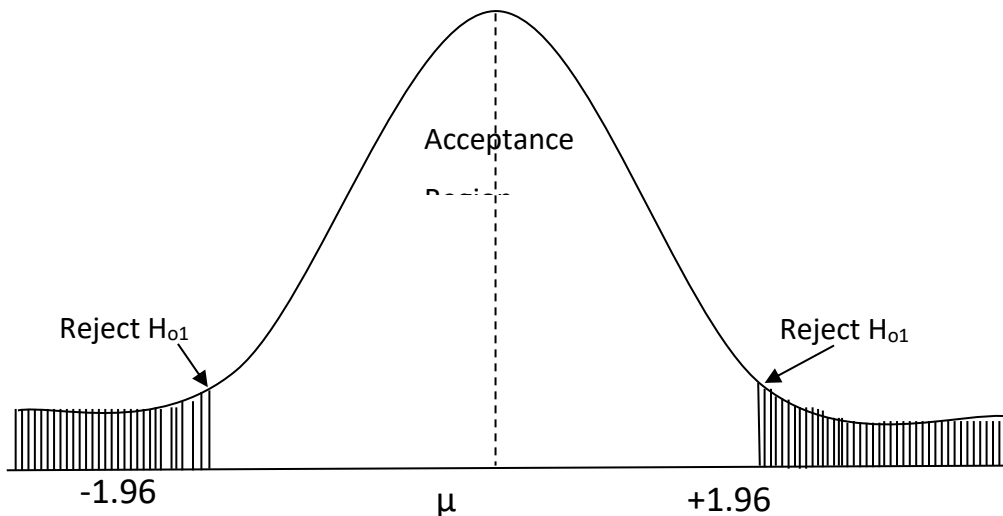

Figure 3: Normal distribution curve showing rejection and acceptance decision regions for hypothesis 3.

Step 4. Decision: At 0.05 level of significance, the calculated t-value of 17.48 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96, so the study rejects the null hypothesis which states that there is no positive significant relationship between staff recognition and quality research among(academic performance) lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State and accepts the alternative that there is a positive significant relationship between staff recognition and quality research(academic performance) among lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria The p-value for the test is 0.001 which is less than the level of significance 0.05; thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

Step 5: Interpretation:

Staff recognition brings increased productivity in academic performance of lecturer in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Discussion

To ascertain the extent to which staff recognition relates to academic staff performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In line with the procedures in conducting the test in accomplishing other aims of this research, hypotheses were formulated as stated above and subjected to analysis through the application of Karl Pearson's product moment correlations model, while conducting initial investigation on the collated data before testing. The analysis indicates that Cranach's alpha which was used to determine the extent of reliability for staff recognition and academic staff performance was above the acceptable limit of 0.5 (0.884) and 0.1 implying that the instrument used to quantifying staff recognition and the academic staff

performance was absolutely reliable for the study considering the issue under investigation. Consequently, the construct of validity of the variables under investigation was determined using the principal component analysis (PCA) with a value above 0.5 as in other variables.

After determining the reliability and validity of the variables unclear examination, the test of correlation was conducted to determine the degree of relationship that exist amongst the selected factors through Karl Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. The analysis indicated a value that was both positive and significant ($r = 0.6744$; $p = 0.001$). This finding shows that we reject null hypothesis that there is no positive significant relationship between staff recognition and academic staff performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State but accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a positive significant relationship between staff recognition and academic staff performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria (see hypothesis three in chapter four). This correlation values can be viewed as to be significant and direct effect, that is, as staff recognition as part of non-financial rewards increases or decreases the level of academic staff performance in form of quality research conducted also increases or decrease among lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The finding of this study is fully supported and in consonance with all the empirical studies under review. The empirical review confirmed with this present finding that staff recognition has a positive significant correlation with quality research and publications among lecturers' rewards, higher academic performance, in the tertiary institutions. Akinfolarin and Ehinola (2014) as one of the key contributors on the concept of non-financial reward strategy agreed that the number of quality researches and publications are key sources of staff recognition in the institution and lecturers' performance globally depend on the number of research and publications conducted locally and internationally. Alan *et al* (2015) supported that staff recognition has a positive significant relationship with employee performance both in the short run and long run effect on the organizational sustainability. Academic staffs take recognition as a psychological feeling of value and appreciation and increase in morale and efficiency in performing their duties. Academic staff takes recognition in addition to little cash reward to remain in the institution as it would give them the psychological inbuilt to achieve their self-esteem and self-actualization needs through quality researches and publications.

In the context of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria where all the academic staffs (lecturers) are fully creative and overloaded and are not allowed to rest or enjoy their leisure time, recognition of the individual and groups contributions is often necessary to enhance academic performance. It is the perception of the researcher that as their finding is positive and significant, lecturers would see this study as a source of recognition (value and appreciation) to their efforts and contributions to nations building. This result also agrees with the finding of Lewis (2023) that staff recognition (non-financial reward) has a strong impact on academic performance of lecturers in the universities as it uplifts their spirit of creativity towards conducting quality research and publications for local and global acceptance. These findings may equally add to the general ideology in the Nigerian tertiary education environment that academic staff contributions are not recognized and valued which invariably affect the level of commitment and other negative workplace attitude toward their job. Meanwhile, it would be appreciated if the concept of staff recognition is studied in the context of a private setting but conducting it in this public tertiary institutions in Nigeria has absolutely filled a research gap as no research has been carried out in this area.

Summary
The result of hypothesis three showed that there is a positive significant relationship between staff recognition and academic staff performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria with a value of r = 0.6744, p- value = 0.001 at 2 degree of freedom at 5% level of significance. Also, the positive significant relationship amongst variables observed in hypothesis 3 indicated that staff recognition brings increased academic performance amongst lecturers in the tertiary institutions due to the fact a staff that receives recommendations from management before other staff members can increase his performance.

CONCLUSION
Non-financial rewards in different dimensions have been the major source of employees' satisfaction in any work setting especially the tertiary institutions where the lecturers face challenges emanating from work stress of various levels. The opinion of majority of the academic staff (respondents) of the three selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria showed that staff recognition as a measurement parameter of non-financial rewards directly have a positive significant relationship with academic performance amongst lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria is an evidence of the urgent demand to discourse and revise these poor policy of non-financial rewards for the lecturers growth and sustainability of the tertiary institutions in particular and the Nigerian economy in general as they are the engine on which the economy revolves. As a non-financial reward strategy, employees' recognition and retention in tertiary institutions is indispensable. This can only be successful where employees thrive to uplift the image of the institution through quality teaching, rich, publication, creativity, innovation and consultancy services. Non-financial rewards that appear in different dimensions contribute positively in influencing staff performance especially when implemented fully by institutions' management. This goes a long way to changing employees' attitudes and behaviors in carrying out their innovative and creative research, publications and consultancy services in the institutions.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the researchers believe that the following recommendations are suitable;
1. The institutions should have culture, policy and criteria for recognizing outstanding performance in order to ensure that the strategy for reward is justifiable and acceptable by all academic staff. This would help academic staff with information on actions and behaviors that are acceptable in the tertiary institutions.
2. Institutions authorities should frequently reevaluate and review the non- financial rewards practices and their implementation to ascertain whether they are in consonance with predetermined impact of global changes in the education sector.

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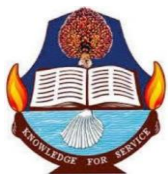
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