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Influence of Occupational Hazards on Job Performance of Academic Staff of Universities in Benue State.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated influence of occupational hazards on job performance of academic staff of Universities in Benue State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 3,242 academic staff out of which a sample of 617 academic staff was selected using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a ten item-questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Influence of Occupational Hazard on Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire" (IOHASJPQ). Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of frequency, percentage, Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while Chi-Square (χ^2) test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study shows that inadequate infrastructural facility has significant influence on job performance of academic staff of universities in Benue State and overloaded instructional programme has significant influence on job performance of academic staff of universities in Benue State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that Government through the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) should provide adequate infrastructural facilities in the universities, also employments of academic staff should be done on a regular basis to avoid overloaded instructional programme.

Introduction

In recent times, hazards have become a major issue that has seriously affected academic staff in tertiary institutions all over the world. However, scholars are of the view that hazard in academic institutions may have positive and negative consequences if not properly controlled (Adeoye, B., & Olatunji, T. 2022). Several recent studies support and expand on the views of Edem (2016) and Nwadiani (2016) regarding hazards in academia. For example, at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, Prah et al. (2025) found high rates of musculoskeletal pain, stress, and workload-related risks. Global post-COVID surveys indicate pervasive burnout and psychological distress among higher education staff (BMC Public Health, 2024). Across contexts, work-related stress including research, teaching and administrative demands—is strongly linked to reduced life satisfaction and emotional burnout (Frontiers in Psychology, 2023). Meanwhile, in China, performance levels and psychological counselling were found to influence burnout outcomes (Lei et al., 2025). South African academics report that heavy workloads, lack of resources and poor work life balance undermine their well-being (Springer, 2024), while the adoption of occupational health and safety systems has been shown to mitigate such hazards (Springer, 2025). In Nigeria, hazards among academic staff of tertiary institutions are one of the factors that has disrupted the smooth operation

of academic activities in tertiary institutions (Ogugua, 2017). Accordingly, several academic staff in Nigerian tertiary institutions have been observed to report insomnia, fear, hypertension, headaches, depression, adjustment disorders (emotional hazard) as result of academic hazards. This situation has caused wrong decision making, poor academic performance, lack of commitment and poor construction (Ikeotuonye, 2018). In Benue State, the tertiary institutions such as Rev.Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi and Joseph Sawuan Terka University, Makurdi show that academic staff suffer from a lot of academic hazards which occur as a result of trying to obtain a high percentage in their job performance. Besides, in most cases while trying to develop research papers, prepare lecture notes for students and at the same time staying in an academic environment with no electricity and no access to internet, majority of academic staff who cannot survive under these conditions are faced with hazard which is the major concern of this work. Occupational hazards may constitute poor or inadequate infrastructural facilities.

Infrastructural facilities constitute the essential physical structures and services necessary to create, sustain or enhance the teaching and learning environment within schools and universities. These include, but are not limited to, educational facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, assembly and examination halls, computer rooms, administrative blocks, workshops, school clinics and guidance and counselling units. They also encompass recreational and sporting amenities such as parks and sports pitches and residential provisions like hostels, refectories and staff quarters, especially in boarding institutions (Adaralegbe, 2003; Cogley, 2012).

The availability and proper upkeep of such infrastructures may significantly enhance academic performance and contribute to the holistic development of students. However, many universities face challenges regarding maintenance and sustainability of these facilities. A study at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, found that approximately 80% of campus buildings including staff residences, hostels, offices and classrooms required immediate maintenance. Specific issues included deteriorated roofs (74.6%), floors (57.3%), walls (60%), doors, windows and plumbing but the root causes were traced to lack of maintenance policies and inadequate funding (Ugwu, Okafor, & Nwoji, 2017). Similarly, research on tertiary institutions in Southwest Nigeria identified that planned preventive maintenance and maintenance policies were often missing, further aggravated by insufficient funding, poor staffing and slow response to repair needs (Akinsola, Hussaini, Oyenuga, & Fatokun, 2012).

Instructional programmes in higher education refer to the structured interaction between lecturers, students, learning materials, and academic objectives designed to achieve teaching and learning goals. In contemporary universities, these programmes extend beyond classroom teaching to include research, academic advising, student supervision, administrative responsibilities, and community service (Springer, 2024). This broadening of academic roles reflects the evolving expectations of universities worldwide but has also increased the complexity and intensity of lecturers' work. Insufficient infrastructural facilities in universities may intensify work overload by forcing academic staff to manage larger classes and additional responsibilities with limited resources.

The expansion of instructional programmes could lead to work overload, which may now be recognised as a significant occupational hazard in academia. When lecturers are required to balance heavy teaching schedules, research commitments and administrative duties, the strain often results in fatigue, stress and declining productivity (BMC Public Health, 2024). The overlapping and sometimes conflicting nature of these tasks may create conditions of role overload, in which academic staff are expected to perform too many responsibilities simultaneously. This situation not only threatens their job performance but also compromises their physical and psychological well-being.

Recent studies have confirmed that work overload is a pressing concern in universities across different contexts. Prah, Aggrey, Kudom, and Addo-Yeboah (2025) found that academic staff in Ghana reported significant physical and psychological risks, including musculoskeletal pain and stress, due to excessive workload and lack of adequate rest. Similarly, Lei, Alam, and Bashir (2025) revealed that job performance pressures substantially contribute to burnout, though psychological counselling may help mitigate the impact. Global evidence also shows that academic staff face heavy workloads, poor work life balance and persistent stressors, which collectively reduce overall well-being and organizational commitment (BMC Public Health, 2024; Springer, 2024).

In Benue State universities, the escalating complexity of academic roles has become a major occupational hazard, undermining job performance. Lecturers are challenged by heavy instructional loads, evolving curricula and student overpopulation conditions that intensify work stress and reduce instructional quality. Existing evidence emphasizes that stress-related conditions ranging from heavy workloads and emotional burnout to poor psychosocial safety and inadequate work environments may adversely impact job performance across university contexts (Adebayo, 2022; BMC Psychology, 2024; Amer et al., 2022; Idowu & Aderonke, 2025).

However, there is a notable lack of localised empirical research focusing specifically on Benue State. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how these hazards affect academic staff performance, ultimately providing data-driven insights to inform policy, improve working conditions and strengthen higher education outcomes in the State.

Statement of the problem

Occupational hazards in universities refer to work-related conditions that exert intense pressure on academic staff, often undermining their job performance and well-being. Such hazards include inadequate infrastructural facilities, excessive instructional workloads, disruptive student behaviours, poor funding, insecurity and unstable government policies. Recent studies reveal that these challenges contribute to work stress, burnout and declining productivity among lecturers, thereby limiting the overall effectiveness of higher education institutions (Adebayo, 2022; BMC Psychology, 2024). The persistence of these hazards despite previous interventions highlights the urgent need for systematic identification and control strategies to mitigate their adverse effects.

In Benue State, the situation is particularly concerning given the persistent issues of overcrowded classrooms, irregular funding, and frequent industrial actions, all of which amplify occupational risks for university lecturers. Evidence indicates that such hazards significantly reduce job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and teaching effectiveness, ultimately compromising educational outcomes (Idowu & Aderonke, 2025; Amer et al., 2022). Since occupational hazards cannot be completely eliminated, there is a pressing need to assess which factors exert the greatest negative impact on academic staff performance in order to design context-specific interventions that will improve staff welfare and institutional productivity. Motivated by these concerns, the study investigates the influence of occupational hazards on job performance of Academic staff of Universities in Benue State

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of occupational hazards on job performance of Academic staff of Universities in Benue State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the extent to which inadequate infrastructural facilities influence the job performance of academic staff of the universities in Benue state.
2. examine the extent to which overloaded instructional programme influence the job performance of academic staff in universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do inadequate infrastructural facilities influence the job performance of academic staff of Universities in Benue State?
2. To what extent does overload instructional programme influence the job performance of academic staff in universities?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Inadequate infrastructural facilities have no significant influence on job performance of academic staff of universities in Benue State.
2. Overloaded instructional programmes has no significant influence on job performance of academic staff in universities.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive-survey design. The population of the study comprised 3,242 academic staff on the Consolidated University Academic Salary Structure (CONUASS) and was made up of 1550 academic staff from Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University and 1352 academic staff from Rev.Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, while we have 245 from University of Mkar, others are 50 from Makurdi and 45 from Otukpo study centres of National Open University of Nigeria in Benue States (ASUU, 2024). The sample size of the study comprised 616 academic staff representing 19% of the population. The instrument used for collecting data was a 10-item questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Influence of Occupational Hazard on Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire" (IOHASJPQ) in Benue State of Nigeria. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A solicited information on demographic information of respondents, section B of the questionnaire is divided into two clusters A and B with 10 items. Cluster A contained item 1-5 which measured inadequate infrastructural facilities on job performance of academic staff of universities. Cluster B contained item 6-10 on overloaded instructional programme on academic staff job performance of universities. The instrument was structured on the four-point rating scale with a response mode of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE)=3, Low Extent (LE)=2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) =1. The instrument was personally administered to the respondents with the help of one research assistant from each selected school, (class representatives). The researcher briefed the research assistant on the contents and the method of administration and collection of the instruments. The data collated was coded and analyzed. The descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. The Mean scores that were up to the cut-off point of 2.50 and above were agreed as having positive response while Mean scores that were less than 2.50 were disregarded and taken as negative response. Chi square test of goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question One: what is the influence of inadequate infrastructural facilities on job performance of Academic staff of Universities in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean scores and Standard Deviation of respondents of Influence of Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities on Job Satisfaction of Academic Staff of Universities in Benue State.

Item no	Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Std. D
1	Inadequate laboratories make academic staff too uncomfortable to work in universities	95	15	8	3	3.61	0.62
2	Lack of enough staff offices for lecturers affects their job performance	85	26	9	4	3.13	0.66

3	In conducive office accommodation affects Job performance of academic staff in universities	90	20	5	2	3.71	0.70
4	Dilapidated staff quarters affect job performance of academic staff in universities	80	30	4	1	2.98	0.55
5	Lack of lecture halls affects job performance of academic staff in universities	76	35	10	2	3.10	0.70
Cluster		426	126	36	12	3.31	0.66

Source: *Field work, 2025*

Table 1 shows that the decision guide 3.50 and above VHE, 2.50-3.49 HE, 1.50-2.49 LE and 0-1.49 VLE. The respondents, rating of item description 1-5 mean and standard deviation were 3.61(0.69), 3.13(0.66), 3.71(0.70), 2.98(0.55), 3.10(0.70). Based on the above cut-off point, respondents had rated items high, thus: item 1-5. The cluster mean of 3.31 with the standard deviation of 0.66 implies high extent which shows that inadequate infrastructural facilities have negative influence on job satisfaction of academic staff of the Universities.

Research Question Two: In what ways do overloaded instructional programme influence the job performance of Academic staff?

Table 2: Mean scores and Standard Deviation of respondents of the extent to which Overloaded Instructional Programme Influence the Job Performance of Academic Staff

Item no	Item Description	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Std. D
6	So many courses allocated to academic staff affects job performance in universities	100	20	6	7	3.67	0.72
7	Assigning many courses to academic staff affects job performance in universities	94	14	3	4	2.91	0.51
8	Supervision of lesson notes affects academic staff job performance in universities	90	16	4	3	3.45	0.96

9	Overloaded time table affects job performance of academic staff in universities	94	22	2	2	3.53	0.82
10	Selection of appropriate curricular textbook work scheduling and use of teaching methods affects job performance of academic staff in universities	90	18	3	8	3.00	1.00
Cluster		468	90	18	24	3.31	0.80

Source: *Field work, 2025*

Table 2 shows that the decision guide 3.50 and above VHE, 2.50-3.49 HE, 1.50-2.49 LE and 0-1.49 VLE. The respondents rating of item description 6-10 Mean and Standard Deviation were 3.67(0.72), 2.91(0.51), 3.45(0.96), 3.53(0.82), 3.00(1.00). This result implies that academic staff courses allocated affects their job performance in universities, assigning many courses to academic staff affects job performance in universities, supervision of lesson notes affects academic staff job performance in universities, overloaded time table affect job performance of academic staff in universities, selection of appropriate curricular textbook work scheduling and use of teaching methods affects job performance of academic staff in universities. The cluster Mean of 3.31 is also above the cut off mark of 2.50. This implies that overloaded instructional programmes have negative influence on job performance of academic staff in universities in Benue State.

Hypothesis One: Inadequate infrastructural facilities have no significant influence on job performance of academic staff of universities in Benue State.

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis of Influence of Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities on Job Performance of Academic Staff of Universities in Benue State

Responses	OF	EF	DF	X ² cal	Level of Sig	P-value	Decision
VHE	426	150.0	3	725.28 ^a	0.05	0.00	Sig.
HE	126	150.0					
LE	36	150.0					
VLE	12	150.0					

Table 3 shows chi-square value of 725.28^a, $P < 0.05$ with 3df. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that inadequate infrastructural facilities have no significant influence on job performance of academic staff of universities in Benue State was rejected. This result shows that an inadequate infrastructural facility has significant negative influence on job performance of academic staff of universities in Benue State.

Hypothesis Two: Overloaded instructional programmes have no significant influence on job performance of academic staff.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis of Influence of Overload Instructional Programme on Job Performance of Academic Staff of Universities

Responses	OF	EF	DF	X ² cal	Level of Sig	P-value	Decision
VHE	468	150.0	3	920.16 ^a	0.05	0.00	Sig.
HE	90	150.0					
LE	18	150.0					
VLE	24	150.0					

Table 4 shows chi-square value of 920.16^a, $P < 0.05$ with 3df. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that Overloaded instructional programmes have no significant negative influence on job performance of academic staff was rejected. This shows that overloaded instructional programme has significant influence on job performance of academic staff.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the results of the analysis of Means scores and chi-square test, the findings were discussed for ease of correspondence. All the two null hypotheses postulated and tested were all not accepted.

The first finding reveals that inadequate infrastructural facilities significantly affect the job performance of academic staff in universities within Benue State. Poor access to essential facilities such as functional lecture halls, libraries, internet connectivity, and laboratories constrains teaching, research, and overall academic productivity. This finding aligns with Oginni and Adeniyi (2023), who reported that infrastructural deficits in Nigerian universities undermine the ability of academic staff to deliver quality education and diminish job satisfaction. Similarly, Idowu and Aderonke (2025) found that the work environment, particularly infrastructural inadequacies, has a strong negative effect on the performance of lecturers in North-Central Nigeria. The result of this study, supported by a cluster mean of 3.31, further indicates that inadequate facilities exert a high extent of negative influence on the job satisfaction and performance of academic staff in universities in Benue State.

The second finding indicates that overloaded instructional programmes have a significant negative influence on the job performance of academic staff in universities. Excessive workload, arising from large class sizes, congested curricula, and time pressure, undermines teaching effectiveness and contributes to occupational stress. This is consistent with Bashir (2025), who reported that work overload among Nigerian university lecturers negatively affects their productivity, job satisfaction and research output. Similarly, Prah et al (2025) established that persistent role overload and administrative demands diminish lecturers' commitment and reduce organizational efficiency in higher education institutions. The Mean and Standard Deviation ratings of items 6–10 in this study further confirm that overloaded instructional programmes constitute a serious hazard with adverse consequences on academic staff performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that inadequate infrastructural facilities and overloaded instructional programme has significant negative influence on job performance of academic staff of Universities in Benue State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should provide more adequate infrastructural facilities in the universities in Benue State.
2. Employment should be done on regular bases to avoid overloaded instructional programme on academic staff of universities in Benue State.

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