VOL. 08 NO. 1,
MAY, 2025
E-ISSN 3027-1533
P-ISSN 3026-8648

African Scholar Publications & Research International
www.africanscholarpub.com

Journal of African Innovation & Advanced Studies (JAIAS)

Salaries and Staff Performance of Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.70382/ajaias.v8i2.028

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between salaries and staff performance of federal universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study was carried out to determine the extent salaries contribute to employee motivation and performance in the university system. The study used survey research design, and questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. The data collected in this study were analysed using mean statistic and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). It was found that there is significant correlation between salaries and employee retention; there is significant effect of salaries on employee productivity; and there is significant relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal. This work therefore concluded that the achievement of improved staff performance (productivity of staff, staff retention and commitment to organisational goals) depends on the extent to which the staff receive salaries that are in tandem to the economic reality and the work they do in the universities. It was recommended that employees of the universities should be paid attractive salaries to encourage them for improve productivity. There should be good salaries system to workers to encourage them for commitment to organisational goal which the universities are known for.

Keywords: Salaries, Staff Performance, Employee Motivation, Employee Productivity, Commitment, Staff Retention.

Introduction

Salary increase is a major source of motivation to employees in the university system. This is because salary increase can enhance workers' performance as well as drive them to perform better in the university.

Fapohunda (2019) stated that basic salary is a fixed periodical payment for non-manual employees usually expressed in annual terms, paid per month with generally no additions for productivity. The salaries of the Nigeria university lecturers are poor and therefore serve as the major sources of industrial dispute (Scanzoni, 2019). Ayodele (2023) stated that a comparative study of salary system in the federal universities in Nigeria and few other countries showed that the Nigeria lecturers are not well compensated to effectively perform their functions. In Ghana, the average salary of a professor is likely about $1300 per month; and Nigerian professor in federal universities take home between N300 – N700 thousand naira per month.

The gap is much when compared with countries like South Africa, Egypt and other developing countries, not to talk of developed nations of the world like United Kingdom and United States of America (Ayodele, 2023; National Bureau of Statistics, 2023; Ikechi, 2022). Salary is typically determined by comparing market pay rates for people performing similar work in similar industries in the same region. Salary is also determined by leveling the pay rates and salary ranges established by an individual employer. Salary is also affected by the number of people available to perform the specific job in the employer's employment locale. If staff of universities receive good salaries as at when due, they will likely perform effectively. Performance here is all about the extent to which the university accomplish its objectives. Performance of the university could be measured using extent of employee retention, productivity and commitment to organizational goals.

When the above indices are positive and favorable to the university, it means the university is performing well (Afe, 2021). For example, when the course requirements for each course offered in the universities are well covered, students understanding and performance will be very high; and accomplishment of course content is possible when the compensation system is attractive, employee retention in the university system will be high and industrial dispute will reduce when the salary system is favourable to the teaching and non teaching staff of the universities. In all, extent of quality research output (productivity) will increase if the staff enjoys attractive salaries system (Beach, 2020). The issue of poor salaries for university staff has always led to industrial actions like strike by staff; and when there is industrial action, university function suffers; hence poor performance.

Statement of the Problem

The contribution of improved salaries for employees on performance cannot be over emphasised. However, there is need to determine the extent to which salaries enhances staff performance in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Egwim (2023) wrote on salary increase and productivity in Alvan Ikoku Federal Collage of Education Owerri, Imo State. The work used prompt and delay payments to measure salaries. Oladejo and Yinus (2022) focused on impact of salary on workers performance of selected food and beverages manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The researcher used the minimum wage pay and none minimum wage pay to measure salaries. Adeoye and Omosanya (2018) studied compensation system and employees' performance using non-academic staff of universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. Salaries and allowances were used to measure compensation.

Fubara (2019) examined the relationship between compensation and employee performance of banks operating in Port Harcourt. The study used bonus and fringe benefit to measure compensation. This study like others did not use universities, and was not done within the south east zone. In all, the inconsistencies in the indices used, the exact dependent and independent variables, geographical locations of these previous researches necessitated this work which focused on salaries and staff performance of federal universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine salaries and staff performance of federal universities in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was carried out to:

1. determine the relationship between salaries and employee retention;
2. ascertain the relationship between salaries and employee productivity; and
3. determine the relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal.

Research Questions

Based on our objectives, the following research questions were formulated and used.

1. What is the relationship between salaries and employee retention?
2. What is the relationship between salaries and employee productivity?
3. What are the relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal?

Research Hypotheses

To achieve the objectives of this study and provide answers to the research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of the study.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between salaries and employee retention.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between salaries and employee productivity.

Ho_3: Salaries have no significant relationship between commitment and organisational goal.

Scope of the Study

Subject scope: The study focused on salaries and staff performance.

Geographical scope: Geographically, the study is delimited to federal universities in South-East, Nigeria; one from each of the South-East states. They include University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State; Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alake Ikwo, Ebonyi State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University Akwa, Anambra State; Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State; and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State.

The unit scope: The study covered the entire permanent staff of the universities under study, including teaching and non teaching staff.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Salaries

Salaries have been defined in various ways. Braton and Gold (2023), salary is a fixed periodical payment for non-manual employees usually expressed in annual terms, paid per month with generally no additions for productivity. Wage refers to payment to manual workers, always calculated on hourly or piece rates. Surbhi (2015) also defined salary as a fixed amount paid to the employees at regular intervals for their performance and productivity whereas wages are the hourly- based payment given to the labor for the amount of work finished in a day. In the view of Onuorah, Okeke and Ibekwe (2019), salary is a fixed regular payment, typically paid on a monthly basis but often expressed as an annual sum, made by an employer to an employee, especially a professional or white-collar worker.

Staff Performance

Performance is concerned with the overall growth of an organisation in terms of stock turnover, acquisition of customers, profitability, level of sales, market expansion, and market share (Egwim, 2023). Staff Performance can be defined as the efficiency with which an association is able to meet its objectives. This means an organisation that produces a desired effect or an organisation that is productive without waste (Ogunbajo, 2012). If the organisation has both employees' performance and efficiency, it will achieve its goal of making profit by producing and selling product without waste. For the university system, performance is the extent the university achieves its objectives in teaching, research and community development (Sajuyigbe & Olaoye, 2013).

When the staff of the university perform their function well, cover the course content for courses offered by the students, produced quality and qualified students and do other things which are in line with the university objectives, it means improve performance. When lecturers carried out practical research which will benefit students and the society, and publish their research findings, it means improve performance. According to Kossivi, Xu and Kalgora (2016), a university that gets accreditation for its courses from the National University Commission (NUC), is achieving good performance. The concept of performance is core to organisation because the major objective of public and private sector organisations is to grow and achieve their goals through performance. Ugwu (2023) believed that performance of university depends on employee effectiveness and efficiency. There is some relationship between pay and performance.

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

This theory was developed by Resick in 2007. Human capital signifies the combined brainpower and experience of staff as a source of competitive improvement that cannot be imitated by rivals (Resick, 2007). This theory advocates for attracting, engaging, repayment and developing people in organisations. In the context of business and marketing, some of the employee compensation practices in this research are meant to ensure that the performance of employees is improved. This theory is relevant. Scholars have argued that ultimately, it's only the characteristics that improve employee performance. Employees can be rewarded for their efforts if such efforts are given positive results.

This work is anchored on human capital theory. Staff of the universities if well motivated and encouraged through salary and other incentives, they will perform their functions well. This theory is related to the topic because the employees in the universities are the major human capital which can work to realise the organisational objective or mar it. For that, the extent to which organisation like universities take care of its human resources determines the commitment of the staff in performing their daily functions which will have positive or negative impact on the performance of the organisation. For that, there is need for improved salary, bonuses, and fringe benefits for the staff of the universities so as to enable them to be committed which will encourage productivity and growth of the organisations. Human capital theory emphasises that the neglect of employees will affect the organisation negatively as organisational performance depends on employee performance.

Empirical Review

Egwim (2023) wrote on salary increase and productivity in Alvan Ikoku Federal Collage of Education, Owerri, Imo State. The work used prompt and delay payments as indices of

salaries. The 123 staff of institution were used as the study population/sample. The data collected were analysed using Pearson correlation coefficient – the computer based analysis. The findings revealed that there is significant impact of prompt payments of salaries on productivity.

Ifeanyi (2023) investigated the incentives and performance of workers in tertiary institutions in Anambra and Enugu State, Nigeria. Promotion incentive and wage incentive were used as indices. The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of monetary incentives, non-monetary incentives and career development on performance workers in tertiary institutions in Anambra and Enugu State. Relevant conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature was reviewed taking cognisance of the problem and the hypotheses of the study. The study anchored on expectancy theory of work motivation. Descriptive research survey was adopted in this study. The population of the study were comprises of 7,300 selected academic and non-academic staff of the of the tertiary institutions in Anambra and Enugu State, Nigeria, while the sample size of 362 was obtain using convenience sampling technique of Nwana's (1992). Data was sourced from primary sources. The instrument was validated through face and content validity and research expert, while internal consistency and Cronbach's alpha was used in testing the reliability of the instrument used. Multiple regression analysis was employed in analysing the data generated. It was discovered that monetary incentives have a positive significant influence on workers' productivity in Nigerian organisation; non-monetary incentives have a positive significant influence on workers' productivity in Nigerian organisation; while career development has negative significant effect on workers' productivity in Nigerian organisation. The study concludes that incentives have a positive significant effect on workers' performance in Nigerian organisation. Therefore, the study recommends that effective and good employee financial incentives schemes should be designed to include a mix of both and non-financial incentives. Organisation should strive to improve on non- monetary package giving to their employees in order to get the best out of them. Finally, the study recommends that employers of labour should use career development incentives from time to time to motivate their workers' employee.

Alabi, Olonade, Omotoye and Odebode (2022) examined the relationship between non-monetary rewards and employee performance in money deposit banks in Lagos State, Nigeria. Staff training and commendation were the indices of measuring non-financial reward. This study adopted a cross-sectional design. The study's population comprised five (5) deposit money banks licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria. The study employed convenience sampling technique to select five financial institutions in the state and a simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study. Based on Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size was 352 employees and data collection was through a structured questionnaire. The formulated hypotheses were tested with Pearson Correlation. The findings revealed that all the dimensions of non-financial reward

significantly affect employee performance among the selected financial institutions at a 0.05 level of significance.

Cletus and Akhimien (2022) focused on compensation tools and employee performance in the Ministry of Youth and Sports Edo State. Performance was measured using public acceptance and youth empowerment. The particular objective for this study was to determine the impact of health insurance on service quality. From the study objective, a hypothesis was stated, and 176 respondents at the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Edo State completed the self-administered questionnaire to measure the relationship between the variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyse the data gathered. Based on the results gathered, there was a strong positive correlation between health plans and service quality in the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Edo State. The study concluded based on the findings that employee performance is directly affected by salary. Accordingly, it was suggested that adequate health benefits and service quality should be included in a remuneration package that influences the performance of employees.

Ijezie (2016) researched on the impact of reward and salary on employee productivity. Productivity was measured using tax accomplishment and industrial harmony. The researcher used consolidated breweries Awo-Mmama Imo State for the study. The objective was carried out to determine the benefits of employee salary and reward on employee performance. Survey research design was adopted and questionnaire serves as the instrument of data collection. The data collected was presented in tables and analysed using simple percentage and analysis of variance. The population and sample covered the entire 11 management staff of the organisation. The result revealed that effective reward and salary system enhance employee commitment to duty, reduce employee turnover rate and promote organisational productivity in consolidated breweries Awo-Mmamma Imo State in particular and other Nigeria organisations in general.

Gap in Literature

Many studies have been executed on salaries, performance and other related aspects of this work. However, the exact subject matter has not been covered. There exist so many gaps between existing studies and this present study. Such gap covered the subject scope, the geographical scope, the variables used in the objectives and many others.

Subject gap: Most of the studies covered related aspects of independent and dependent variables (salaries and performance). Therefore, there is no exact work on the subject matter.

Geographical gap: On geographical gap, none of the past studies available to the researcher used federal universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Gap in the indices: The indices of measurement, salaries, (for independent variable); and employee retention, productivity and commitment to organisational goal (for dependent variable) were not exactly covered by previous researches as seen in the empirical review.

On the basis of the above, there exist research gap which this study has filled.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was applied for this study.

The population of this study was 7687. It covered the entire permanent staff in five federal universities (University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State; Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alake Ikwo, Ebonyi State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University Akwa, Anambra State; Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State; and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State) in South-East, Nigeria, that is one federal university from each of the South-East states. The federal universities was used because they have regular and same compensation system for employees. Unlike state universities where there may be variation between what one state university receive as compensation from what the others receive. The staff of the universities was used because they are the recipient of the organisational compensation system in the university; they can give information on the extent the compensation system has affected their performance. The population is therefore presented in the table below.

Table 1: Names of universities under study.

S/N	Name of Universities	Number of Staff
1	University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State	2104
2	Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alake Ikwo, Ebonyi State	1222
3	Nnamdi Azikiwe University Akwa, Anambra State	1743
4	Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State	1676
5	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State **1,499**	1684
	Total	**8,429**

Sources: Personal Unit of the Universities, 2024, and www.zoominfo.com

To ensure the determination of accurate sample size, the statistical formula derived by Taro Yamane (1969) was employed thus:

$$n \quad \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

When n = sample size to be derived
N = total population
e = tolerable level of error of significance (0.05)
1 = constant

$$n = \frac{8429}{1+8429(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{8429}{1+8429(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{8429}{1+21.0725}$$

$$n = \frac{8429}{22.0725}$$

$$n = 381.9$$

Approximately = 382

The researcher used Simple Random Sampling (SRS). This is to ensure that all the members of the population have equal opportunity of being selected into the sample unit. Questionnaire served as the major instrument of primary data. The questionnaire were framed in four (4) likert format of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. The questionnaire, which was named "fringe benefits and staff performance of Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria" was frame from the research questions and each research question was used to develop questionnaire items.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using Mean Statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (at 0.05% level of significance) aided by SPSS version 21.0. Mean statistics was used to analyse the thematic issues of the study from the questionnaires distributed . Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (at 0.05% level of significance) aided by SPSS version 21.0 was used to test the hypotheses.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

It is important to note that out of the 382 copies of the questionnaire distributed by the researcher, only 315 copies were properly filled and used.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between salaries and employee retention.

H_i1	There is significant relationship between salaries and employee retention.	Pearson Correlation = 0.88 Sig = 0.05 N = 315 Mean for 1 = 3.6 Mean for 2 = 3.4 Grand mean = 3.5	**VALID**

Source: Data in table 1 and 2

The table above shows that the Pearson product moment correlation is 0.88 which indicates that there is significant relationship between between salaries and employee retention.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between salaries and employee productivity.

H_i2	There is significant relationship between salaries and employee productivity.	Pearson Correlation = 0.89 Sig = 0.05 N = 315 Mean for 1 = 3.6 Mean for 3 = 3.6 Grand mean = 3.6	**VALID**

Source: Data in table 1 and 3

The above table indicates that the Pearson product moment correlation is also 0.89 which reveals that there is significant relationship between salaries and employee productivity.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal.

H_i3	**There is significant relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal.**	**Pearson Correlation = 0.89** **Sig = 0.05** **N = 315** **Mean for 1 = 3.6** **Mean for 4 = 3.6** **Grand mean = 3.6**	VALID

Source: Data in table 1 and 4

The table above showcases that the Pearson product moment correlation is 0.89 indicating that there is significant relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal.

Fig. 1: Concise table for hypotheses testing.

S/N	Hypotheses	Statistical Tools Applied (Software Results)	Result
H_i1	There is significant relationship between salaries and employee retention.	Pearson Correlation = 0.88 Sig = 0.05 N = 315 Mean for 1 = 3.6 Mean for 2 = 3.4 Grand mean = 3.5	**VALID**
H_i2	There is significant relationship between salaries and employee productivity.	Pearson Correlation = 0.89 Sig = 0.05 N = 315 Mean for 1 = 3.6 Mean for 3 = 3.6 Grand mean = 3.6	**VALID**
H_i3	There is significant relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal.	Pearson Correlation = 0.89 Sig = 0.05 N = 315 Mean for 1 = 3.6 Mean for 4 = 3.6 Grand mean = 3.6	**VALID**

Discussion of Findings

The major findings of this study are discussed thus:

Based on the hypothesis one, the study found there is significant relationship between salaries and employee retention. Oladejo and Yinus (2022) assert that most workers are leaving Nigeria organisations to join organisations abroad because of low work benefits, especially salaries. If the government could implement the current proposed new labour wage of 2024, most workers will have reason to remain in public sector like the universities.

For the hypothesis two, it was found that there is significant relationship between salaries and employee productivity. In view of Egwim (2023) productivity of the workforce in all sectors of the economy can improve is the compensation system is favourable. For Okoye (2022) most workers in public sector have other businesses they are doing because the salaries cannot take care of their needs and such has affected productivity.

Hypothesis three found that there is significant relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal. Based on that, Ifeanyi (2023) was of the view that attractive salary system will enhance dedication and accomplishment of goals by employees. Here, the major factor motivating workers to work is their remuneration; hence the need for increased wage system for employees (Adeoye & Omosanya, 2018).

Summary of Findings

This study has examined salaries and staff performance of federal universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study was carried out to determine the extent improve salaries contribute to employee motivation and performance in the university system. The study used survey research design, and questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. The data collected in this study were analysed using mean statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at 0.05 level of significance through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21.0). It was discovered that:

1. For the Hypothesis one, the study found that there is significant relationship between salaries and employee retention; with a correlation and mean of 0.88 and 3.6.
2. In the hypothesis two, it found that there is significant relationship between salaries and employee productivity; with a correlation and mean of 0.89 and 3.4.
3. Going by the hypothesis three, the study revealed that there is significant relationship between salaries and commitment to organisational goal; with a correlation and mean of 0.89 and 3.6.

Conclusion

Every employee wants to get the best from his work. This reason has made it that most workers normally ask for salary increment in their organisation. The above is the situation for staff of the universities. Before any salary increment in the university system, the staff must have embarked on strike, if not the government may not consider such improved staff benefits. This situation has made many staff of the universities to stake seeking for job abroad, low productivity and inability to effectively be committed to organisational goals (because regular industrial disputes affects staff performance). This work therefore conclude that the achievement of improve staff performance (productivity of staff, staff retention, and commitment to organisational goals) depends on the extent to which the staff receive salaries that are in tandem to the economic reality and the work they do in the universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations could be made:

1. Employees of the universities should be paid attractive salaries to encourage them for improve productivity.
2. Universities should have a unique salary system which will encourage people to stay on their job and reduce the challenges of poor employee retention.
3. There should be good compensation system to workers to encourage them for commitment to organisational goal which the universities are known for.

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