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

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Abstract

This work examined the relationship between fringe benefits and staff performance of Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study was carried out to determine the extent fridge benefits contribute to employee motivation and organisational goal 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 there is significant correlation between fringe benefits and employee retention with a correlation and mean of 0.88 and 3.5; there is significant effect of fringe benefits on employee productivity with a correlation and mean of 0.88 and 3.5; and fringe benefit has significant effect on commitment to organisational goal with a correlation and mean of 0.89 and 3.6. The work concludes that the achievement of employee retention and productivity in the university depends on the fringe benefits provided. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it was recommended that organisations should develop medical benefits plan for workers so as to motivate workers and improve productivity. Also, universities should have functional medical centers in the school and give free medical service to staff and their families to encourage employee retention and commitments to organizational goal. In all, there should be accommodation or housing allowances for staff of the university, as that is one of the major strategy for achieving productivity and staff retention.

Keywords: Fringe Benefits, Staff Performance, Employee Motivation, Organisational Goal, Employee Productivity, Employee Retention, Commitment

Introduction

Fringe benefit is a major source of motivation to employees in the university system. This is because it makes them to have access to good health care system, transportation system, accommodation system and insurance scheme. Eteete, Uwannah and Mark (2019) contend that fringe benefits is part of the reasons for employees to decline in performance in the university, because such has encouraged low productivity and industrial conflict like strike. In the Nigeria university system, there is almost no emphasis on medical allowances, insurance scheme, health allowances and transportation allowances for employees (Agwu, 2013; Owor, 2016). This means that employee performance in the university system may reduce because of ineffective fringe benefits system. Akpanabia (2015) opined that the overall goal of fringe benefits is to attract qualified staff, retain and motivate them, and to help an organisation achieve its objectives.

In the view of Gunu (2010), to attract good and committed employees, organisations must have good fringe benefits plans. Also, organisations representative should be paid in such a way that what they want to do for personal interest and gain is in the organisation's interest too. To achieve the above, organisations must offer attractive wage system and offer encouraging fringe benefits (Agu, 2013). In this case, Gunu (2010) argued that fringe benefit plans typically rely heavily on incentives for the workers. Good fringe benefit is expected to enhance the goal of the organisation based on improved performance of workers.

Statement of the Problem

The contributions of employee fringe benefits on performance cannot be over emphasised. For that, there is need to determine the extent to which fringe benefits enhances staff performance in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Enyioko and Ikoro (2024) examined the effect of fringe benefits plan on growth of telecommunication industry in Nigeria with a case study of MTN Nigeria, Abia State. Onuorah, Okeke and Ibekwe (2023) examined the effect of fringe benefits in Nigerian private sector organisations. Oburu and Atambo (2016) carried out a research on the effect of non-financial compensation on staff performance of micro-finance institutions: a case study of Wakenya Pamoja Sacco, Kissi County, Kenya. Kancheva and Marinov (2022) studied fringe benefits and productivity in Germany.

Enyioko and Ikoro (2024); Onuorah, Okeke and Ibekwe (2023); and Kancheva and Marinov (2022) used housing allowances, employee transport benefits, social welfare, and children benefits to measure fringe benefits. In the work of Oburu and Atambo (2016), performance was measured using staff commitments and task accomplishments. 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 fringe benefits and staff performance of Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to determine the relationship between fringe benefits and staff performance. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the relationship between fringe benefits and employee retention;
2. ascertain the relationship between fringe benefits and employee productivity;
3. determine the relationship between fringe benefits 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 fringe benefits and employee retention?
2. What is the relationship between fringe benefits and employee productivity?
3. What are the relationship between fringe benefits 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 fringe benefits and employee retention.

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

Ho_3: Fringe benefit has no significant relationship between and organisational goal.

Scope of the Study

Subject scope: The subject scope of this study focused on fringe benefits 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 unit scope covered the permanent staff of the universities under study, including teaching and non teaching staff.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Fringe Benefits

Chan, Gee and Steiner (2010) describe fringe benefit as various types of non-wage compensation provided to employees in addition to their normal salaries. Examples of fringe benefit include employer – provided housing, group insurance, retirement benefits, sick leave, paid vacation, profit sharing, domestic help (servants) and other special benefits. **In this case, fringe benefit is** any nonwage payment or benefit (e.g. pension plans, profit-sharing programs, vacation pay, and company-paid life, health, and unemployment insurance programs) granted to employees by employers (Ike, 2019). It may be required by law, granted unilaterally by employers, or obtained through collective bargaining. Employers' payments for fringe benefits are included in employee-compensation costs and therefore are not usually liable to corporate income tax. If the cost of fringe benefits were paid directly as wages, workers would pay personal income tax on this amount and therefore have less to spend on such benefits as they might elect to furnish for themselves. Thus, with the same amount of money, employers can obtain more benefits for employees and can also take advantage of lower group rates for insurance. For Yapa (2014), the purpose of fringe benefits is to increase the economic security of employees and in doing so improve worker retention across the organisation. As such, it is one important component of rewards. Fringe benefits are the additional benefits offered to an employee, above the stated salary for the performance of a specific service. Some fringe benefits such as social security and health insurance are required by law, while others are voluntarily provided by the employer.

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 (Kancheva & Marinov, 2022). 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 framework

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

Enyioko and Ikoro (2024) examined the effect of fringe benefits plan on growth of telecommunication industry in Nigeria: a study of MTN Nigeria, Abia State. The study used housing allowances to measure employee transport benefits. The methodology that was used for the study was survey design, primary and secondary sources of data were adopted, with a sample size of 133 which was selected among managers and other senior staff of MTN. ANOVA was used for data analysis. The study revealed that if employees are well compensated by way of fringe benefits, they will increase their performance.

Onuorah, Okeke and Ibekwe (2023) examined the effect of fringe benefits in public school in Nigeria. The study used social welfare and children benefits to measure fringe benefits. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The instrument was trial-tested on a representative sample of 20 employee randomly selected of Anambra State. Findings show that equity based fringe benefits has no negative significant effect on employee performance in Nigeria organisation.

Kancheva and Marinov (2022) studied fringe benefits and productivity in Germany. The study used employee transport benefits to measure social welfare. This paper is aimed at present-day Bulgarian public organisations. Questionnaire was used to collect data and the data was analysed using graph. Data was analysed using simple percentage and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. It was discovered that fringe benefits some time do not lead to workers productivity.

Abdul-Khadir, Umar, Ari, Audu, Hussaini and Ramalan (2020) evaluated compensation scheme and academic staff performance in Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa State. The work used special allowances and special benefits to measure compensation. Primary data was used through questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was used to present the data while multiple regression analysis was carried out to examine the extent to which the independent variable affects the dependent variable and the finding reveals that both special allowances and part-time emoluments have significant positive effect on academic staff performance in Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa. The researcher recommends that the management of the institution should continue to enhance employees' compensation schemes (both special allowances and part-time emoluments).

Afriyie, Twumasi, Sarpong and Darko (2020) investigated the effect of compensation on employee's performance Accra Technical University, Ghana. Salary and fringe benefit were used as measures of compensation. Descriptive survey design was used for the investigation. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample 40 respondents out of a total population of 57 Administrators of which 35 responded to the twenty item questionnaire. Frequency tables were used to present the responses. The work found that salary increase and fringe benefit enhances workers performance.

Ugwu (2019) carried out a research on the impact of employee incentive on job satisfaction using selected banks in Owerri Imo State. The work used promotion, good leadership, salary, bonus and job security as incentive measures. The data collected were presented in tables and analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result revealed that salaries, bonuses, and job security enhance job satisfaction.

Ikebugo (2018) determined the factors influencing employee performance in production firms in Port Harcourt City. The work identified low welfare package and poor management system as the major factor. The objective is to identify the impact of product pricing and distribution on marketing performance. The work was a survey study. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient and multiple regressions were adopted for the test

of hypotheses. The study discovered low welfare package and leadership affects performance.

Oburu and Atambo (2016) carried out a research on the effect of non-financial compensation on employee performance of micro-finance institutions: a case study of Wakenya Pamoja Sacco, Kissi County, Kenya. Performance was measured using staff commitments and task accomplishments. Data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Basically, the researcher used analysis of variance and percentages for data analysis. The study established that indeed the Micro finance industry especially Wakenya Pamoja Sacco-Kisii, does employ Non-financial compensation and incentives to motivate employees, drive up their performance as well as to retain staff.

Gap in Literature

Many studies have been executed in related aspect of fringe benefits and performance. However, the exact subject matter has not been covered. There exist so many gaps between existing studies and this present study. Such gap covers 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 (fringe benefits 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. Previous works consulted did not exactly used 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. Most of them did not cover university system and some of the past studies were not done within the South-East geographical zone of Nigeria; and other were not even done within Nigeria.

Gap in the indices: this work used Fringe benefits (as independent variable); and staff performance was measured with employee retention, productivity and commitments to organizational goals.

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	1684
	Total	**8,429**

Sources: Personal Unit of the Universities, 2025, 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 380 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 fringe benefits and employee retention.

H_i1	**There is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee retention**	**Pearson Correlation = 0.89** **Sig = 0.05** **N = 315** **Mean for 1 = 3.5** **Mean for 2 = 3.5** **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 fringe benefits and employee retention.

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

H_i2	**There is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee productivity**	**Pearson Correlation = 0.89** **Sig = 0.05** **N = 315** **Mean for 1 = 3.5** **Mean for 3 = 3.4** **Grand mean = 3.5**	VALID

Source: Data in table 1 and 3

The above table indicates that the Pearson product moment correlation is also 0.88 which reveals that there is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee productivity.

Ho_3: Fringe benefit has no significant relationship between commitment and organisational goal.

H_i3	**Fringe benefit has significant relationship between commitment and organisational goal**	**Pearson Correlation = 0.87** **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 fringe benefit has significant relationship between commitment and organisational goal.

Summary table for hypotheses testing

S/N	Hypotheses	Statistical Tools Applied (Software Results)	Result
H_i1	There is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee retention	Pearson Correlation = 0.89 Sig = 0.05 N = 315 Mean for 1 = 3.5 Mean for 2 = 3.5 Grand mean = 3.5	**VALID**
H_i2	There is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee productivity	Pearson Correlation = 0.89 Sig = 0.05 N = 315 Mean for 1 = 3.5 Mean for 3 = 3.4 Grand mean = 3.5	**VALID**
H_i3	Fringe benefit has significant relationship between commitment and organisational goal	Pearson Correlation = 0.87 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:

For the hypothesis one, it was found that there is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee retention. Accommodation and medical care for the staff of the university are parts of the strategy for encouraging staff retention and staff effectiveness (Onuoran, Okeke & Ibekwe, 2023).

Based on the hypothesis one, this study discovered that there is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee productivity. For Zaman (2018), most workers are very effective on their job because the organisation take care of their medical challenges. It is encouraging for organisations to provide health care system for their staff to achieve improve productivity (Abdul-Khadir, Umar, Ari, Audu, Hussaini & Ramalan, 2020). For Gituma (2017), providing health care system for workers will lead to more productive action and overall organisational growth.

Hypothesis three found that fringe benefit has significant relationship between commitment and organisational goal. Based on that, Ikenna (2020) was of the view that housing scheme can enhance employee commitment if implemented. Most workers who enjoy housing benefits are dedicated to the goal of their organisation. Workers who enjoy medical benefits for themselves and their families are likely to remain in the organisation without seeking for job in other places (Enyioko & Ikoro, 2024).

Summary of Findings

This study has examined fringe benefits and staff performance in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study was carried out to determine the extent fridge benefits contribute to employee motivation and organisational good in the university system. It was discovered that:

1. There is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee retention with a correlation and mean of 0.88 and 3.5.
2. There is significant relationship between fringe benefits and employee productivity with a correlation and mean of 0.88 and 3.5.
3. Fringe benefit has significant relationship between commitment and organisational goal with a correlation and mean of 0.89 and 3.6

Conclusion

The purpose of fringe benefits is to increase the economic security of employees and in doing so improve worker retention across the organisation. As such, it is one important component of compensation system. Basically, fringe benefits are the additional benefits offered to an employee, above the stated salary for the performance of a specific service. This work found that employee medical benefits, and housing benefits has positive and significance impact on productivity and retention of the staff. The work concludes that the

achievement of employee retention and productivity in the university depends on the fringe benefits provided.

Recommendations

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

1. Universities should have practical fringe benefits to encourage employee retention and commitments.
2. Organisations should develop (housing, medical, insurance, and transport benefits) plan for workers so as to motivate workers and improve productivity.
3. University system should design practical fringe benefits system so as to achieve employee accomplishments of their functions which will lead to organizational goal achievement.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study has contributed to knowledge by focusing on fringe benefits and staff performance in Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Most of the past work covered related topics, not exactly focusing on the universities in South-East, Nigeria. This study has contributed to knowledge by utilizing productivity, goal accomplishments and employee retention as the indices of the work of staff.

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