



Effects of Employees' Recognition and Medical Insurance as Veritable Components of Compensation on Employee Performance in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of employees' recognition and medical insurance as veritable components of compensation on employee performance in Nigeria Universities with specific reference to Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU) and University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). The study adopted survey research design, primary and secondary sources of data; stratified random sampling. The population of this study comprised of the academic and non-academic staff of the two (2) universities, a sample size of 382 determined using Taro Yamen formula. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Results of the study revealed that the importance of employee recognition can never be overemphasized, especially when properly managed leads to a significant effect on employee performance. The findings also showed a positive significant influence of medical insurance on employee productivity. The study concluded that compensation is one factor that affects employee performance positively and negatively. The study therefore recommended that the Nigerian government should redesign organization strategies and there should be mutual balance between motivation through monetary rewards and other incentives with performance.

Keywords: Compensation, employees' recognition, medical insurance, performance and universities

Introduction

Compensation plays a great role in the employees' performance and productivity. Thus enough

compensation must be provided by employers for employees because good relationship between employees and management will initiate employees to work together on the job. Usual compensation can be performed in the

form of wage, salary and fringe benefit. Wage is usually hourly rate paid to employees as production and maintenance of their well-being. Salaries are paid weekly or monthly to clerical, administrative and professional employees. Fringe benefit can be given to an employee in addition to their wages and salaries such as vacation time, health life insurance and pension programme. There are many ways of measuring performance.

Compensation is one of the key drivers of performance because employees' are naturally inclined to perform better when they perceive that they will be compensated for their efforts. While people exert effort for different reasons, today's competitive economic environment coupled with the consumer society has made compensation arguably the most important motivational factor. Most people are motivated by money at least for their basic needs and wants. Gerald and Dorothee , (2004) found that compensation are significantly related to professionalism and employees performance. They supported the argument that employee performance for professionals is derived in part from what professional perceives from job. Employee performance is influenced by compensation. Equitable rewards are another work-related factor that affects employee performance.

Compensation in any form is the most obvious extrinsic reward; it provides the carrot that most employees want. It is usually narrowed to cash and as a result; employers only have a tunneled vision when it comes to the

issues of compensating their employees. Other aspects of compensation such as Health/Medical Insurance, paid time off, retirement benefits, etc which makes up the total compensation package for the employee are not given much attention. Employees themselves fail to recognize the fact that their compensation is a package and not only related to cash.

The term employee performance has become a very significant one, now that managers seek for practices which are likely to make people more satisfied and therefore, more productive. Though several papers within the latest literature, it is easy to understand that employee performance is quite difficult to measure while it is considered as major determinant of organizational performance (Riketta, 2002). Performance might be measured based on the number of hours it takes to produce a good, while in a service sector, performance might be measured based on the revenue generated by employee divided by his/her salary.

Research shows how compensation are strong determinant of job satisfaction. As equity theory suggests "perceived equity seems to lead to greater performance and organizational commitment" (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001). Also, most employees in recent times have lamented about the poor compensation plan in the institutions and how it affects their level of commitment, productivity, morale or zeal to work. The management of MOUAU and UNN believes that as long as salaries are paid to the employees then there is no need for any other compensation. While compensation is

arguably one of the key drivers of performance and one of the most studied areas, doubts have been cast by Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson and Capwell (1957) and Armstrong (2008) on the effectiveness of compensation. They argued that, while lack of it causes dissatisfaction, its provision does not result in lasting motivation.

The effects of compensation on motivation vary from organization to organization. It is in the light of this that the researcher decided to embark on this study to find out the effects of compensation on employees performance in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria using Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU) and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) as a case study.

Literature Review

Concept of Compensation

Compensation is a fundamental component of human resource management. It covers economic reward in the form of wages and salaries as well as benefits, indirect compensation or supplementary pay (Ojo, 1998). Employees' compensation is divided into two categories; the direct and indirect compensation. Indirect compensation relate to a psychological mindset that is experienced by workers at work. Whereas the direct compensation covers employees' pay and benefits, which workers enjoy as a result of their contribution to the organization (Armstrong, 2002).

The most vital tool for creating value to organization is extrinsic/indirect

compensation (Lai, 2012). Individuals who feels that they are being compensated inequitably are unlikely to be highly motivated to perform effectively and are much more prone to stay away from work (absenteeism) or to leave the organization altogether (turn over) (Maduabum, 2006). This could spell doom for the organization. Obisi (2003) opined that compensation is a price given to employees as an inducement towards their performance. Robert (2005) stated that, it is a process of developing and implementing strategies, policies and system which help the organization to achieve its objectives by obtaining and keeping the people it needs and increasing their motivation and commitment. It helps the organization to retain good employees, enhance competitiveness, growth, survival and profitability of the organization concerned. This is because human beings in the organization are responsible for control and management of materials and other resources for attainment of organizational objectives. If human beings in the organization are poorly treated, they will not put in their best performance and this will consequently affect the overall performance of the organization.

Johnson, Houmanfa and Smith (2010), expounded the aims of compensation which include: attract, retain and motivate employees to support the attainment of the organization's strategic and short term objectives by helping to ensure that it has the skilled, competent, committed and well-motivated work force it needs, to meet the expectations of employees that they will be treated equitably, fairly

and consistently in relation to the work they do and their contributions. From interaction with lecturers and administrative staff under the study areas, it was noted that over the years, the universities has lost a large number of talented employees to other universities due to poor compensation package compared to other universities. They also cited last payment of salaries and lack of benefits as some of their reasons.

Features of Good Employee Compensation

A good compensation must have the following features:

- (i) **Competitiveness:** Employee compensation must be attractive and competitive for the high caliber of people that are generally in short supply. These employees will work their worth, the actual or potential values of their contributions and expected to be rewarded accordingly (Hayble, 2001).
- (ii) **Compensation must Satisfy Employee Needs:** Compensation is an important ingredient in an organization and it is not motivational unless it satisfy their basic needs such as food, shelter, safety and security. Not all employees need the same thing and one employee may need different thing at different times (Ajzen, 2001). Money for example, is a powerful motivator

for those who seek security through material wealth.

- (iii) **Equity:** The distribution of compensation within the organization must be perceived to be done fairly and equitably. Rewards are equitable if employees perceive it as fair and just (Akuoko and Donkor, 2012).

- (iv) **Flexibility:** A good compensation should be capable of dealing with members of the organization as individuals. The compensation must take cognizance of difference in peoples' needs, desires, expectations, goals and aspirations (Onyere, 2001).

Objectives of Compensation are to:

Biswanath (2012) listed the following as some of the objectives of compensation:

- ❖ establish a fair and equitable remuneration,
- ❖ retain the present Employees,
- ❖ improve productivity,
- ❖ control cost,
- ❖ improve public image of the company,
- ❖ motivate employees,
- ❖ increase self-confidence,
- ❖ improve union management relationship,

Factors Considered in Designing Compensation Packages

Determine the best total rewards philosophy for the organization. Reviewing the current compensation and

benefits system to see how it compares to labour market competition and formulating effective communication strategies focused on the value of the compensation, Performance management and benefits programme.

Kumar (2015) stated these the following factors;

- ❖ **Base Pay:** To determine the base pay the following is to be taken into consideration.
 - ✓ Conducting job analysis and documenting job content
 - ✓ Developing systematic base pay structures
 - ✓ Using market benching or job evaluation method
 - ✓ Development of employer specific base pay strategic
 - ✓ Analysis of employee base pay to new base pay structures and
 - ✓ Job description development
- ❖ **Incentive programme:** To develop the incentive programme the following is taken into consideration.
 - ✓ Developing motivating variable pay programmes for production, office, management and sales employees that tie organizational strategies and goals to individual or team performance and
 - ✓ Creating pay-for-performance system including performance appraisal tools and merit increase guidelines
- ❖ **Benefit programme:** To develop benefit programme the following is to be considered

- ✓ Assessing employees' satisfaction with your current benefit package through a Benefit Assessment Survey.
- ✓ Analysis of current benefit offerings and recommendation of effective benefit chances.

❖ **Guiding Principles of Compensation Design:**

- ✓ Making salary decisions that are based upon appropriate equity and budget considerations
- ✓ Encouraging and rewarding excellent performance with merit increase whenever possible
- ✓ Providing salary increase within available funding and
- ✓ Motivating employees by demonstrating the link between performance and pay

- ❖ **Compensation System Design Issues:** Compensation must be viewed strategically as a lot of organizational funds are spent on compensation related activities. Organizations must make a number of important decisions about the nature of a compensation system.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the main factor in ensuring that the organization is running smoothly and successfully. Good employee performance will improve the organization productivity. To maintain a good employee performance, a suitable performance management is needed. Hermann (2007) expounded that performance management is defined as a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of

individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization.

Employee Recognition and Performance

Employee recognition is a form of non-financial/non-cash/indirect compensation, and it could be in form of social recognition, praise and genuine appreciation for job well done (Okwusili, 2015). Lotta (2012) posits that financial rewards are indeed a way of motivating the employees for greater performance but added that in comparing the effectiveness of financial and non-financial reward in inducing higher employee performance, the non-financial reward is more appreciated by the employees. Nelson (2014) noted that praise and recognition are the most cherished intrinsic reward that enhances employee performance, especially in civil service where pay reward seldom comes.

Jenson (2007) in his own view sees intrinsic reward as a tool that motivates employees to perform far more than expectations in an organization because the value of such reward does not erode easily unlike pay reward whose effect disappears as soon as the money finishes. Rowley (2011) expounded that it is imperative for organizations to recognize achievements, assign important tasks to the employees and provide them with the authority to execute such responsibility. In his opinion, such empowerment upgrades employee status and make them feel valued and worthy of trust. He posits that recognizing employees' accomplishment is another way of

making them satisfy their esteem needs. He remarked that apart from recognition, through all forms of appreciation, involving employees in decision making in the organization is one form of motivation that is more potent than any other. To him, such recognition does not only make the employee feel valued but also gives him a sense of belonging that arouses his inner feeling of satisfaction that does not only make him perform at his best but also make him to be deeply loyal to the organization.

Consequences of Employees Low Performance in the Nigeria Tertiary Institution

Recently, Nigeria universities were on strike due to non-payment of salaries of workers and adequate compensation. This made the students to stay at home for weeks, thereby, killing our education system. As a result of these, create a very low performance of the employees. Negative morale may lead to complacency and inattention to duties which is a dangerous problem facing public employees (Vellani, 2001). This result not only increases the amounts of stress facing public sector employees, but creates a multitude of personnel issues for supervision and administration. Negative morale reduces individual and group performance level. Low morale tends to escalate throughout the officers and other ranks until ultimately it poisons the entire institution (Garland, 2002). He further asserted that negative morale can lead to high level of employees' turnover. Ward (2005), points out that compensation is not the predominant reason why people leave

their jobs for supposedly greener pastures. Fajana (2002) on his part argued that whenever an employee or groups of employees are dissatisfied with their pay one could expect a long series of misunderstanding event or incidents to take place such as poor job performance, strike, grievances, turnover, job dissatisfaction and mental disorder.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs. Abraham Maslow developed this theory in the 1940's. This theory assumes that people are motivated to satisfy five levels of needs: physiological, security, belongingness, esteem and self-actualization. This ranking is guided by four major assumption, firstly, only unmet needs motivate, secondly, people needs are arranged in order of importance from basic to complex, thirdly, people will not be motivated to satisfy higher level needs unless the lower level needs have been at least minimally satisfied and lastly human needs can be arranged on a hierarchy with the basic needs appearing at the bottom while self-actualization coming at the apex. An individual is motivated first and foremost to satisfy physiological needs.

When these needs are satisfied, he is motivated and moves up, the hierarchy to satisfy security needs. This process of moving up continues until the individual reaches the self-actualization level. Physiological needs represent basic issues of survival such as food, sex, water and air. In organizations, most

physiological needs are satisfied by adequate salaries and by the work environment itself, which provide employees with rest rooms, adequate lighting, comfortable temperatures and ventilation.

Security or safety needs refers to the requirements for a secure physical and emotional environment e.g. desire for adequate housing and clothing. Need to be free from worry about money, job security and desire for safe working conditions. Security needs are satisfied for people in the work place by job continuity, adequate insurance, retirement benefit package and a good grievance resolving system. Social needs include need for love and affection and for acceptance of one's peers. Managers can help ensure the satisfaction of these needs by allowing social interaction and by making employees feel like a team or a group of people working together.

Esteem needs comprise of needs for a positive self-image, self-respect and need for recognition and respect from others. Organizations can help address esteem needs by providing variety of external symbols of accomplishment such as job titles and spacious offices. At the top of the hierarchy are those needs that Maslow defines as self-actualization needs. These needs involve realizing one's potential for continued growth and individual development. Since these needs are individualized and personalized, they are perhaps the most deficits for managers to address. An employee should try to meet these needs on his own. However, an organization can help the employee by creating a climate for fulfillment of these needs.

For instance, organization can help in fulfillment of needs by encouraging employees to participate in decision making. This process of consulting in decision making helps employees in experiencing personal growth and development associated with self-actualization.

Research Methodology

The study adopted survey research design, a population of 11,040 respondents comprising of University of Nigeria, Nsukka staff strength of 8,520 (UNN, 2018) and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike staff strength of 2,520 (MOUUAU, 2018); primary and secondary sources of data collection, stratified random sampling a sample size of 382 determined using Taro yamen's formular. The method employed in analyzing data in this study includes descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire

A total of 727 employees at junior and senior levels were involved and given questionnaires at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU) and University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). The 727 questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 100% as shown in Table 1. Each questionnaire from each employee was inspected and corrected before being coded into the computer SPSS database. This made data from respondents to be inspected to detect the most obstructive omissions and inaccuracies in the data. Before coding the data, questionnaire from one employee was dropped because it was improperly filled and had incomplete answers which reflected either lack of interest or inadequate time. Thus, questionnaires from 726 employees suited the data analysis with a response rate of 99.45%.

Result Findings

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaires and Response Rate

Details	Number
Returned Questionnaire	727
Unreturned Questionnaire	0
Omitted Questionnaire	1
Total	726

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Data Analysis and Results

Effect Employee Recognition on Employees' Performance in Nigeria Universities

Table 2: Effect of recognition on employee performance

ITEM STATEMENT	INSTITUTION	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Employee Recognition ensures that the objective of the organization is achieved.	MOUUAU	381	3.29	1.154	.059
	UNN	345	3.31	1.125	.061
Employee excellent performance is as a result of employee recognition	MOUUAU	381	2.62	1.099	.056
	UNN	345	2.69	1.115	.060
Employee poor performance is as a	MOUUAU	381	3.71	1.072	.055

result of employee non recognition and as such affects organization negatively	UNN	345	3.83	1.058	.057
The more recognition employee receive, the better the performance	MOUAU	381	2.64	1.119	.057
	UNN	345	2.69	1.115	.060
Non recognition of the employee results to waste of resources and does not improve organizational performance	MOUAU	381	3.65	1.092	.056
	UNN	345	3.83	1.058	.057
Employee recognition affects employee's organizational productivity	MOUAU	381	4.47	.686	.035
	UNN	345	4.48	.652	.035
MEAN BENCHMARK			3.00		

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Employee recognition is one of the forms of compensation that have been hypothesized to motivate employee to greater performance. Table 2 shows the effect of employee recognition on employee performance in Nigeria Universities, the results shows that MOUAU and UNN staffs believe that employee recognition ensures that the objectives of the organization is achieved with mean of 3.29 and 3.31 respectively. But they disagreed that employee excellent performance is as a result of employee recognition with mean scores of 2.62 and 2.69 respectively. Even after the low mean in recognition and employee excellent performance recorded in item 2, they agreed that non-recognition can result in poor performance of employees in Nigerian Universities with mean scores of 3.71 and 3.83 respectively. Item 4 which links better performance to more recognition was rejected by the respondents from the two institutions with mean of 2.64 and 2.69 for MOUAU and UNN staffs respectively. This response may likely imply that employee recognition though important to performance but cannot altogether determine an employees' level of performance. Non recognition of employee leading to waste of resources

and reduction in organizational performance was the next item with a mean of 3.65 and 3.83 for MOUAU and UNN respondents respectively. The respondents altogether agreed that employee recognition can affect organizational productivity which is in line with apriori expectations with mean of 4.47 and 4.48 respectively.

Effect of Medical Insurance on Employee Performance in Nigerian Universities

Provision of medical insurance to staffs is one of the ways that staffs can be motivated to greater productivity, because health they say is wealth. The result presented in table 4.9 shows that the respondent testify to the relevance of medical insurance in worker motivation. They agree that the more medical insurance an employee receives, the greater the performance of that employee with a mean of 3.59 and 3.74 for MOUAU and UNN respectively, they agree that regular medical insurance affects low performing staffs to greater productivity with mean response of 3.67 and 3.59 for MOUAU and UNN respondents respectively. They also agreed to the statement that medical insurance affects workers' productivity

in Nigerian universities with a mean response of 3.82 and 3.74 respectively, the statement that poor performance is as a result of employee non-medical insurance received lower mean response with mean values below the benchmark of 3.0. The item Institutions medical insurance existence have a significant effect on employee performance and

productivity received a mean response of 3.47 and 3.61 for MOUAU and UNN respondents respectively. The result therefore indicates that employees of MOUAU and UNN agree that medical insurance is very necessary for the motivation of employees to greater productivity in an organization.

Table 3: Effect of Medical Insurance on Employee Performance in Nigerian Universities

ITEM STATEMENT	INSTITUTION	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The more medical insurance an employee receives, the better the performance	MOUAU	381	3.59	1.134	.059
	UNN	345	3.74	1.175	.061
Regular medical insurance affects low performing staff towards greater productivity	MOUAU	381	3.67	1.499	.056
	UNN	345	3.59	1.215	.060
Medical insurance allowance affects employee performance in Nigerian universities	MOUAU	381	3.82	1.142	.055
	UNN	345	3.74	1.658	.057
My great performance in the organization is not as a result of any medical insurance	MOUAU	381	3.25	1.119	.057
	UNN	345	3.31	1.025	.060
Institutions medical insurance existence have a significant effect on employee performance and productivity	MOUAU	381	3.47	1.051	.056
	UNN	345	3.61	1.028	.057
Employee poor performance is as a result of employee non-medical insurance and as such affects organization negatively	MOUAU	381	2.89	1.171	.035
	UNN	345	2.67	1.152	.035
MEAN BENCHMARK			3.00		

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

Ho₁: Employee recognition does not have any effect on employees' performance in Nigeria Universities.

This hypothesis was stipulated by the researcher to be tested with the help of OLS regression model.

Table 4a: Regression Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.350 ^a	.502	.106	.502

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee recognition

Table 4a specified the model summary for regression results, the result shows an R^2 value of 0.502, which implies that about 50.2% variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent or explanatory variables. In other words, 50.2% change in dependent variable is dependent on the explanatory variables.

Table 4b: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.451	6	.075	57.299	.000 ^b
1 Residual	181.027	719	.252		
Total	181.478	725			

a. Dependent Variable: employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee recognition

The Analysis of variance for the regression shown above indicates an F-statistic value of 57.299 which is significant at 1% level of significance, therefore, the independent variables put together can have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

From Table 4c above, items 1, 2 and 6 were significant at 5% level of significance with t values of 2.991, 2.354 and 2.091 respectively, while item 4 was significant at 1% level with t-stat of

3.428. The result shows that majority of the items had significant effect on the dependent variable.

Decision

Since the F-stat recorded a significant value, R^2 account for more than 50% of the variation in the dependent variable, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate. Thus employee recognition has a significant effect on employee performance in Nigeria Universities.

Table 4.14c: Coefficients of Regression

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.606	.159	10.121	.000
	Employee Recognition ensures that the objective of the organization is achieved.	.003	.017	.007	2.991

Employee excellent performance is as a result of employee recognition	.030	.085	1.067	2.354	.003
Employee poor performance is as a result of employee non recognition and as such affects organization negatively	-.014	.066	-.029	-1.207	.086
The more recognition employee receive, the better the performance	.036	.084	2.080	3.428	.000
Non recognition of the employee results to waste of resources and does not improve organizational performance	.022	.065	.048	.339	.735
Employee recognition affects employee's organizational productivity	.031	.028	.041	2.091	.005

a. Dependent Variable: employee performance

Hypothesis 2

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of MOUAU and UNN staffs on the effect of employee medical insurance on employee performance

Table 5: T-test result for hypothesis 4

ITEM STATEMENTS	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
The more medical insurance an employee receives, the better the performance	.250	724	.803
Regular medical insurance affects low performing staff towards greater productivity	.792	724	.428
Medical insurance allowance affects employee performance in Nigerian universities	1.520	724	.129
My great performance in the organization is not as a result of any medical insurance	.595	724	.552
Institutions medical insurance existence have a significant effect on employee performance and productivity	1.260	724	.094
Employee poor performance is as a result of employee non-medical insurance and as such affects organization negatively	.117	724	.907

Source: Field Survey, (2023). **t-critical= 1.960**

Decision

When t-calculated is greater than the critical value at 5% level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate and vice versa. From the result presented in table 4.15, all the items recorded t-calculated values less than the t-critical value ($t_{calc} < t_{critical}$) therefore, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate.

Conclusion and

Recommendations

The study concluded that the importance of employee recognition in employee motivation and performance can never be over emphasized. The result of this study validated past studies on recognition and performance, the findings shows that that MOUAU and UNN staffs believe that employee recognition ensures that the objectives of the organization is achieved, non-recognition can result in poor performance of employees in tertiary institutions with mean scores of. Also, the findings of this study show that there is a strong positive relationship between medical insurance and employee productivity. Provision of medical insurance to staffs is one of the ways that staffs can be motivated to greater productivity, because health they say is wealth, the more medical insurance an employee receives, the greater the performance of that employee, regular medical insurance affects low performing staffs to greater productivity. The study further recommended the following:

- i) Policy makers in Nigeria should design and make adjustments to existing policy frameworks and incentives schemes to ensure that workers are well motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically.
- ii) The Nigerian government should redesign organization strategies for each public office and make jobs more interesting and challenging and ensuring the availability of the primary motivational factors identified by this thesis as well as ensure they address intrinsic motivation of their employees.
- iii) There should be mutual balance between motivation through monetary rewards and other incentives with performance, organizations should stop motivating workers using financial incentives if they see that performance or their productivities are very low
- iv) The results of this study could be used as starting point for organizations and other interested parties to identify and understand what factors motivate employees in their institutions and thereby ensure an environment that encourages, promotes, and fosters such factors.

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