

WORKPLACE INCENTIVE SCHEME AND OFFICE MANAGERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN STATE-OWNED UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between workplace incentives and Office managers' productivity in state-owned universities, Rivers State. These variables were operationalized using monetary incentives, digital incentives and intangible incentives for incentives management as independent variable and service delivery, innovativeness and decision making for Office managers' productivity as the dependent variable. The study was carried out among state-owned universities in Rivers State. To realize the purpose of the study, 10 objectives, 10 research questions and 10 hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A research survey design was adopted for this study. The instrument for data collection used in this study was the questionnaire. The target population of the study comprised two hundred and ninety-six (296) administrative staff of the two state-owned universities in Rivers State. a census study approach was used. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentages) was used as statistical tools for analyzing the data for each variable while Spearman ranked correlation was used for bivariate analysis and partial correlation was used for multivariate analysis with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings of this research revealed that there exists a relationship between information system auditing and administrative effectiveness in state-owned universities, Rivers State. It was recommended that management of the universities are highly encouraged to develop a clear incentive management strategy to allow for improvement of their service delivery and decision-making process.

Keywords: Office Managers, Incentives, Job Satisfaction, Monetary, Intangible

INTRODUCTION

Contemporarily, the focus on office managers has increased due to the fact the different trends such as globalization, automation, organizational culture changes have become rampant. Such changes have also altered characteristics of office managers; hence, organizations ought to adapt their human resource management strategies (Caliskan & Isik, 2016). Office managers occupy a strategic role and position in any organization. They are responsible for converting inputs to productive outputs. Since they are the key to the productive outputs, they ought to be effectively and adequately compensated for their labour. Taking cues first from the Biblical expression that a labourer deserves his wages; and secondly bearing in mind that the reward for labour, a factor of production is "wages", it becomes logical that office managers be adequately and fairly compensated if they are to be motivated to increase productivity in any organization be it the organized private sector or public sector. Believes that "the work of management is to make people productive" so as to achieve superior productivity, and gain a competitive edge in the globalized arena through effective compensation packages. Drucker's belief is anchored on productivity, motivation quality and service in managing people in every organization. This emphasis is often captured in organizational mission statements and goals.

To achieve goals and objectives, organizations irrespective of size, develop strategies to compete in highly competitive markets and to increase productivity. The Human Resources Management has a role to hire and come up with retention strategies for the best office managers, especially the ones holding key roles that can be difficult to replace because of the technical competencies

required. Organizations consider the human capital as being their main asset, capable of leading them to success or if not managed properly can lead to failure of the organization and high staff turnover.

Every organization desires to be successful as much as current environment is very competitive. It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Management to come up with the right incentives and rewards that can motivate office managers to produce more. Office manager motivation is important since there is a direct relationship between motivation and productivity. Traditionally, incentives were used only for the top management, but during the last decade, different forms of programs with the purpose of raising motivation amongst all office managers have spread across the organization. According to Merchant and Van der Steed (2008) business leaders have embraced different theories of motivation in realising that motivation and productivity can be created if proper tools are used.

One of the critical facets of contemporary adaptation is office manager motivation. Motivation is undertaken to ensure the commitment of human resources and other members is enduring. As a human psychological trait, motivation influences the level of engagement in a person's behaviours (Hennessey et al., 2015). In general, motivation involves imparting on individuals in a way that the impact can act as a primer to exceptional productivity. Office manager motivation encourages individuals to adopt purposive behaviours and have the desire to put in an effort and achieve specific goals and objectives. This level of motivation, a variety of dynamic factors are considered as well as an appreciation of different theories of motivation.

Motivation, according to Lai (2009) may not necessarily drive chronic nonperformer to optimal productivity, however, a motivated workforce is a lubricant to the engine of the organization and its benefits include, dedication, office manager retention, loyalty and harmony. These factors according to the author are crucial to the growth of the organization. Principal among the tools that can be used to motivate office manager is incentive. Incentives according to Banjoko (2006) are defined as awards given out when predetermined objectives have been attained within an organization. It can also be regarded as variable payments made to office managers on the basis of the amount of output or results achieved. Azasu (2003) however averred that incentives by definition may not be guaranteed but mostly contingent on productivity. Incentives as motivational factors have been used in the private and public sectors and in the various line of business.

By giving incentives, office manager would tend to continue to presents productivity associated with positive rewards and avoid productivity that lead to negative consequences or punishment. This is related to McClelland Need theory (1961) which explained that human lived with needs for achievement, power, and affiliation (Royle & Hall, 2012). The incentives are expected to encourage office managers to advance their work as best as they can that will lead to productivity improvement. According to Dalkir (2005), incentives are divided into three common classes which are remunerative or monetary incentives, moral incentives, and coercive incentives. Monetary incentives are related with material reward such as money, bonus, and salary. The moral incentives are related with the right things to do that will approve the self-esteem. While, the coercive incentives are related with assumption that fail to act in a desired way will result in physical force in the community such as punishment and firing.

Monetary incentives and moral incentives are important to improve office manager's satisfaction in their job. Consequently, they will lead to productivity improvement. Milton (2013) defines incentives as variable rewards granted according to variations in the achievement of specific results. It is also called a stimulus to greater action. They may be used to incite action or greater effort. Milton (2013) defines incentives as variable rewards granted according to variations in the achievement of specific results. It is also called a stimulus to greater action. They may be used to incite action or greater effort. An incentive is anything which can be given in addition to wages. Incentives are therefore motivations for work. They could be financial or non-financial rewards. Incentives provide a zeal in the office managers for better productivity. It is a natural thing that nobody acts without a purpose behind. Therefore, a hope for a reward is a powerful incentive to

motivate office managers. Besides monetary incentive, there are some other stimuli which includes decision-making, job security, job promotion, and pride for accomplishment.

Markos and Sridevi (2010) demonstrated that employers should consider investing in workforce engagement, because recent researches on this topic have clearly indicated that there was a positive association between work engagement and productivity outcomes, such as office manager retention and productivity. Certain scholars (Fleming & Asplund, 2007) added that office managers who are engaged or involved with their jobs are perceived to be more productive because they are motivated toward accomplishing their work beyond any personal factors. They are also more focused than those of disengaged counterparts. Furthermore, office managers who are motivated are in most cases assumed to work more efficiently and with the aim of putting the success of the organization in their minds as a top priority.

Although several researches have emphasized about the significance of incentives in driving productivity and positive business outcomes, there are only few empirical evidences to support such claims (Saks, 2006). Saxena and Srivastava (2015) reported that incentives plan has become one of the main challenges/activities that need to be well managed to fulfil organization objectives. They also demonstrated that there is a need to test its effect on productivity outcomes at various levels.

Vroom's Expectancy theory (in Lawler & Suttle, 1973, p. 482) found that productivity is linked to motivation. Motivation drives a person to perform a particular action as what expected. Such forms of motivation that can be given to office manager are escalation in job payment, bonuses, promotions, time off, new assignments, and recognition. These are also the causes of satisfaction in job according to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Snell & Bohlander, 2013). Further, the office manager motivation was to have a significant contribution to the productivity (Vosloban, 2012). Hence, the researcher assumed that office manager incentives might has a relationship toward the productivity which is important for future human resource (HR) study.

Researcher tried to develop Al-Nsour (2012) research that studied about the relationship between incentives and productivity for office managers in university. While, in Al-Nsour's study, the samples were office managers in state university. Other researcher tried to find whether the incentives also have the relationship with productivity in private university. Wherein, this private university applied religion as the base to running the whole company. Morality and ethical became the primer foundation for university to establish productivity. Therefore, there is a possibility that these universities enhance more rewards regarding appreciation and recognition than material rewards to apply their foundation.

In fact, the issue of productivity has recently emerged in the literature and carries extreme significance. In spite of all apparent attendant problems of motivation, and productivity, every organisation necessarily seek means of ensuring continuous productivity, which would be geared towards the accomplishment of organisation goals. The organizational system under study cannot be said to be different in any way, in terms of producing the results for which it was set up. The survey became necessary because of the unproductive attitudes of office managers towards work in the public sector. Having understood from the above literature reviewed that incentive packages are one of the major underlining because that can make the office managers to be optimally productive in their job. This study is however necessary because it will help with identifying the incentive packages that the management or the government, as the case may be, needs to put in place to earn office managers' commitment and productivity. As obtained in the literature, incentives packages may be in form of monetary, tangible intangible and intangible (Pattanayak 2005). Therefore, this study examined the extent workplace incentive scheme relates with productivity in Nigerian higher education sector to cover existing gaps in the literature. Hence, this study sorts to study the relationship between the workplace incentive scheme and productivity in a state-owned universities in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between workplace incentive scheme and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State. Consequently, the research sought to undertake the following objectives:

1. examine the relationship between monetary incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State.
2. Investigate the relationship between digital incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State.
3. Examine the relationship between intangible incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between monetary incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between digital incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between intangible incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

- Ho1. There is no significant relationship between monetary incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State.
- Ho2. There is no significant relationship between digital incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State.
- Ho3. There is no significant relationship between intangible incentives and productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State

Literature review

Rewards as all form of financial returns and tangible services and benefits an office manager receives as part of an employment relationship. Defines reward as the benefits that arise from performing a task, rendering a service or discharging a responsibility. According to the Allen et, al. (2011), reward practices play a vital role in improving productivity. San et al. (2012) argues that if an organization fails to reward office managers, it will directly affect productivity. An efficient reward system can be a good motivator but an inefficient reward system can lead to demotivation of office managers in terms of low productivity, internal conflicts, absenteeism, high turnover, lack of commitment and loyalty, lateness etc. An organization needs to develop strategic reward system for office managers in order to retain competent office managers which result to obtain sustainable competitive advantage

From the foregoing, an incentive is anything which can be given in addition to wages. Incentives are therefore motivations for work. They could be financial or non-financial rewards. Incentives provide zeal in the office manager's for better office manager's productivity. It is a natural thing that nobody acts without a purpose behind. Therefore, a hope for a reward is a powerful incentive to motivate office managers. Besides monetary incentive, there are some other stimuli which include decision-making, job security, job promotion, and pride for accomplishment.

Motivation refers to the force that encourages individuals to garner their objectives. The concept can be extrinsic where motivations are harnessed from outside the person or intrinsic where motivation is derived from the person instead of external influence. The positive results associated with motivation have led organizations to continuously sought to motivate their office managers and in tandem, increase their productivity. Lack of office manager motivation can dictate the failure of an organization; thus, it is imperative for organizations to devise new methods of office manager motivation depending on office manager characteristics. If suitable arrangements are used, productivity generally increases, and when different strategies are employed, negative results such

as high office manager turnover and low productivity are witnessed. From this perspective, this research will seek to evaluate Incentives, office manager motivation and their impact on the office manager's productivity.

Productivity is usually defined as the ratio of inputs to outputs. It essentially measure how efficiently production inputs such as labour and capital are being used to produce a given level of output (Krugman, 1994). Okoye and Ezejiofor (2013) opined that productivity is the measure of how well an organization functions and also an indication of efficiency and competition. Improving productivity has been one of the most important objectives for several organizations. This is because higher levels of productivity provide an organization and its office managers with various advantages. For instance, higher productivity leads to favourable economic growth, large profitability and better social progress (Sharma & Sharma, 2014). Additionally, office managers who are more productive can obtain better wages/ salaries, better working conditions, and favourable employment opportunities. Moreover, higher productivity tends to maximize organizational competitive advantage through cost reductions and improvement in high quality of output (Baily et al., 2005; Hill et al., 2014; Wright, 2004). All of these benefits have made productivity worthy of attention. Therefore, looking at its antecedents is very important to ensure organizational survival and long term success.

Theoretical Framework

Vroom's Expectancy theory (1964, in Lawler & Shuttle 1973) argues that motivation as the drivers for person to perform a determined particular action, which are expected as (a) the person's expectancy that particular outcome will occur according to his/her act, and (b) the overall combining elements of that (first-level) outcome. There are three components in Expectancy theory which are,

- a. Expectancy, a belief that an effort will result in desired performance. This effort is based on individual's past experience, self-confidence (self-efficacy), the perceived difficulty of the performance standard or goal, and the perceived control.
- b. Instrumentality, a belief that accomplishment of performance will result in reward giving. This performance accomplishment is based on trust, control, and policies.
- c. Valence, a value that individual sets on rewards given and outcome resulted

Expectancy theory by Vroom in Lawler and Shuttle (1973) found that an individual will work and give result accordingly to motivation drivers that he/she gain. Thus, the amount of input given will reach equality with the output (outcome) amount. That is, the more input amount given, the higher the result of output amount. Further, Herzberg Two Factors Theory as cited in Alshmemri, et al. (2017) stated that motivation factors and hygiene factors can affect the decision-making that lead to job attitudes and productivity. The motivation factors improve the decision-making for long term, included advancement, work itself, possibility of growth, responsibility supervision, recognition, and achievement. These factors are reflected on moral incentives for employees. While, hygiene factors improve the decision-making not in the long term but their existence are important to maintain decision-making, included salary from four other factors. This factor reflected on monetary incentives.

The most widely accepted explanations of motivation have been propounded by Victor Vroom. His theory is commonly known as expectancy theory. The theory argues that the strength of a tendency to act in a specific way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual to make this simple. Expectancy theory says that an employee can be motivated to perform better when there is a belief that the better performance will lead to good performance appraisal and shall result into realization of personal goal in form of some reward future events. The theory focuses on three things efforts and performance relationship, performance and reward relationship, rewards and personal goal relationship.

This theory is based on the hypothesis that individuals adjust their behaviour in the organization on the basis of anticipated satisfaction of valued goals set by them. One way to enhance employee

perform in this theory is by making sure each employee's workplace goals and values are aligned with the organization's mission and vision is important for creating and maintaining a high level of motivation. That can lead to higher productivity, improve employee performance, reduce the chances of low employee morale, encourage teamwork and instil a positive attitude during challenging times (Salaman et al., 2005).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the correlational research design. This design is fit for the study as it sought to examine relationship between two variables. The population for this study comprised of two hundred and ninety-sixty (296) administrative staff of the two state-owned universities in Rivers State. These are regarded in this study as the three levels of administrative staff(s) such as Senior Management, Middle Management and Low management

Table 3.1 Distribution of administrative staff population in the two institutions

Name of Tertiary Institution	Principal officers	Head of Units	Secretaries	Total
Rivers State University Nkpolu, Oroworukwo.	7	35	120	162
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni.	7	30	97	134
TOTAL	14	65	217	296

Source: Establishment office in the Institutions (2021)

For this study, the researcher will conduct census survey and as such there will be no sample size drawn from the population. Census survey is a complete listing of all the items in the population. It is studying the entire population without drawing a sample size.

The study used questionnaires to collect primary data from the respondents. Two sets of questionnaires used were titled Workplace incentive scheme Questionnaire (WISQ) and Office managers' Productivity Questionnaire (OMPQ). The questionnaire was divided into different sections and each section aimed at addressing a particular objective of the study. The instruments were designed along the 5-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

The instruments were validated by two experts of measurement and evaluation in the Ignatius Ajuru University of Educaation. The validators checked for content and face validity and made necessary corrections which were noted and effected before the administration of the instrument to the respondent's necessary corrections. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out by first administering the instruments to twenty-five (25) office managers from the University of Calabar which was not part of the study population. The responses from the pilot study were coded and tested for reliability using the Cronbach alpha reliability test at a threshold level of 0.70 as prescribed by Sekaran (2003). A reliability coefficient of 0.851 was obtained for the instrument. Spearman Rank correlation analysis, set at $p < 0.05$ significance level, was used to determine the relationship between variables.

Out of the 296 copies of questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 291 which represent 98.3% of the sample were duly filled and returned. The analysis further revealed that a total of 5 copies of questionnaire representing 1.7% of sample were not returned.

Results

Table 2 Analysis of Relationship Between Monetary incentives and Office managers’ performance

			Monetary Incentives	Digital Incentive	Intangible Incentives	Productivity
Spearman's rho	Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.722**	.896**	.552**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
		N	291	291	291	291
		Remark	Strong positive relationship	Very Strong positive relationship	Moderate positive relationship	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output from Field Data (2022)

Table 2 showed that Office managers’ productivity when compared against various dimensions of workplace incentives yielded rho values of 0.722 for monetary incentive, 0.896 for digital Incentives and 0.522 for intangible incentives respectively. The result showed that there is a strong relationship between Monetary incentives and Office managers’ productivity (rho = .722, p = 0.000). hence, the null hypothesis (Ho1) was rejected. Also, the result showed that there is very strong positive correlation between digital incentives and Office managers’ productivity (rho = .896, p = 0.000). based on the p-value, the null hypothesis (Ho2) was also rejected. Furthermore, the result showed a moderate positive relationship between intangible incentives and Office managers’ productivity (r = .552, p = 0.000). Based on this result the null hypothesis (Ho3) was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The investigation of the relationship between that Office managers’ productivity when compared against various dimensions of workplace incentives followed three specific hypotheses that were tested. These hypotheses (Ho₁, Ho₂ and Ho₃) were all rejected based on the emerging p-values less than 0.05. The results revealed moderate to very strong positive relationship when Office managers’ productivity was compared against various dimensions of workplace incentives. The result obtained in the study was as follows:

Ho₁: Monetary incentives has a strong positive relationship with Office managers’ productivity in state-owned universities in Rivers State (rho = 0.722; p = 0.000).

Ho₂: Digital incentives has a very strong positive relationship with Office managers’ productivity in state-owned universities in Rivers State (rho = 0.896; p = 0.000).

Ho₃: Monetary incentives has a moderate positive relationship with Office managers’ productivity in state-owned universities in Rivers State (rho = 0.599; p = 0.000).

Summarily, the result revealed significant relationship between workplace incentives and office managers’ productivity. This implies that the use of workplace incentives have tendencies to improve the productivity of office managers in state-owned universities in Rivers State. The result is indicative that a decline in the use of workplace incentives may retrogressively affect the office managers’ productivity. The result points to the need for office managers in the universities in Rivers State to make monetary incentives a veritable tool in their productivity.

CONCLUSION

This study was primarily carried out to determine the extent to which workplace incentive scheme correlate with office managers’ productivity in state-owned universities in Rivers State. The research uncovers consequences and usefulness of workplace incentive scheme in an organization. The findings also revealed that workplace incentive scheme is very important for improving office managers’ productivity in the organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Tertiary institutions should strengthen monetary incentives practices more so as to engineer an improved administrative function.
2. Management of universities should ensure that the institutions digital incentives system is targeted at the job requirement of the beneficiaries.
3. Management of the universities are highly encouraged to develop a clear incentive management strategy to allow for improvement of their service delivery and decision-making process.

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