

# Public Service Rewards System and Workers' Satisfaction in Rivers State Civil Service, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

*Specifically, the purpose of this research was to determine which aspects of the public service incentives system in Rivers State, Port Harcourt, would contribute to employee happiness. There were a total of 327 responders, and they were all given a questionnaire that they could fill out on their own time. There was an 89% return on the survey's initial query. All of the predictors showed a substantial contribution to employee satisfaction in the Rivers State Civil Service, according to regression and Pearson correlation analyses. Employee satisfaction was found to be highest with regard to salary and lowest with regard to bonuses and other incentives. The results show that a company's rewards system has a positive effect on how happy workers are with their jobs.*

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**Keywords:** *public service rewards system; employees' satisfaction; fringe benefits; promotion; salary*

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## **Introduction**

The level of employee satisfaction is a hot topic in management, psychology, and especially in the fields of organizational behavior and human resource management. Management should prioritize employees' happiness and well-being by considering both financial and in-kind benefits. Workers' happiness and the public sector's reward system are often discussed together. Reward programs for government employees have been shown to increase morale and job satisfaction. Danish and Usman (2010) say that the rewards system is the most variable way to keep workers' morale and enthusiasm high.

According to Bowen and Ostroff (2004), this means that content workers can lead to satisfied clients. Consequently, the government should carefully consider the role of rewards in maintaining employee satisfaction. Many businesses have defined the role that rewards play in employee happiness. Ali and Ahmed (2009) did a survey of UNILEVER companies and found that giving workers rewards makes them more happy and motivated.

Employees are often rewarded with a better work-life balance, monetary bonuses, and health insurance, among other perks. Workers are motivated to do their best and advance public service goals thanks in large part to these compensation packages. The government's efforts to keep its employees happy are mirrored by the success of its incentive programs. Like promotion, in which deserving personnel are given a higher-level position, it's crucial. Workers receive a salary in exchange for their services; salaries can vary widely depending on the employer and the employee's level of responsibility and productivity. Salary incentives would have a significant impact on employee happiness.

Employee motivation and job satisfaction were found to have a substantial effect on advancement in a study conducted by Iqbal, Imran, and Zahid (2011) in the telecommunications sector in Pakistan. Rao (2005) argued that a happy work life is possible for anyone who puts in the effort. So, it's crucial to ensure employees are continually inspired so they'll continue to dedicate themselves to public service. According to the Rivers State Public Service's (RSPS) and Rivers State Government's (2020) official websites, staff satisfaction has risen from 7.7% in 2019 to 8.6% in 2020 as a result of the agency's focus on its CSR initiatives.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As of late, the public service rewards system has been growing in importance as a management system in ministries, parastatals, agencies, and extra-ministerial agencies. This is being done to increase overall worker satisfaction and meet the increasingly high expectations of workers. According to the findings of a study conducted by Snyder, Osland, and Hunter (1996), respondents from the private sector are more satisfied than respondents from the public sector when it comes to indicating that performance-based rewards are a reason to remain in the sector. According to the findings of the study, both the public and private sectors should institute appropriate reward systems in order to ensure the continued employment of their workforces. According to the findings, in order for employers in the public sector to be able to keep their employees, a proper rewards system that is just as alluring as those offered in the private sector needs to be implemented. Inadequate rewards for public sector employees ultimately result in discontent, which in turn drives employee turnover. Because of this issue, problems will arise in the public service, which will, over the long term, lead to decreased efficiency and have an impact on decreased revenue and lost money. On the other hand, a public service reward that isn't there or isn't very appealing could make people unhappy, which could lead to them leaving the organization.

According to Shafiq and Naseem (2011), a poorly designed compensation package provided by an organization to its employees may result in employee dissatisfaction with their jobs and a lack of motivation. Therefore, an unsatisfactory working environment almost always results in a

decrease, which, in turn, causes a disruption in both the level of performance and the morale of the workforce (Quible, 2005). In a similar vein, low levels of quality in the psychological factors that people possess can result in lower levels of overall productivity. In a similar vein, an unsettled state of psychological readiness among workers is likely to result in decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and increased tardiness. In light of this, it is important to note that the Rivers State Government may provide a pleasant physical environment for workers at their place of employment; however, if employees are unhappy, they may not put forth their best effort. In a piece that was published on an official website in relation to a study that was carried out by Telekom Malaysia in a professional comment box, it was mentioned that employees typically leave the company because they are dissatisfied with the payments that they are given and they argue for their inequity with others. This was mentioned in a write-up that was published on an official website.

However, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the process of putting in place a good rewards system in the public service. Aside from that, it's also important to look into how workers feel about different rewards.

## **Literature Review**

On the other hand, Baughman (2003) discovered that employers have a tendency to decrease wages once several benefits, such as medical care, bonuses, and annual leave, have been offered to workers after a few years of employment. This was the case even if the workers had been with the company for an extended period of time. According to the findings of Woodbury's (1983) study, employees view their benefits and earnings as being interchangeable, and they are willing to sacrifice their wages in exchange for increased benefits. According to the findings of Uppal's (2005) research, a positive relationship exists between fringe benefits and employee satisfaction. The findings were validated by Benz (2005), who discovered that just two of the nine fringe benefits investigated were positively connected to satisfaction. This finding was supported by the findings of Benz (2005).

According to observations made by Milman (2002), Goymour (2002), Hinkin and Tracey (2000), and Powell and Wood (1999), some of the reasons cited for the turnover are low compensation, inadequate fringe benefits, poor working conditions, poor worker morale and job attitude, and inadequate recruitment. Inadequate recruitment is also a contributing factor. A high staff turnover rate is often caused by a number of things, such as bad hiring and training, low pay and benefits, bad working conditions, low worker morale and attitude, and poor fringe benefits (Milman, 2002; Hinkin and Tracey, 2000; Powell & Wood, 1999).

### ***Promotion on Workers' Satisfaction***

Because of significant pay raises and timely promotions, a worker may now be better suited to their current employer with organization-specific skills and training than they would be to any other employer (Lazear, 1999). According to what has been said, the government typically provides workers with timely promotions while at the same time monitoring the workers' progress toward achieving their goals. According to March and Simon's research from 1958,

when there is a significant decrease in either the percentage or absolute increment at some point along a promotional ladder, we would anticipate that dissatisfaction, voluntary withdrawal, or both will be the result. Management typically provides workers with timely promotions while at the same time monitoring the workers' progress toward achieving their goals. According to March and Simon's research from 1958, when there is a significant decrease in either the percentage or absolute increment at some point along a promotional ladder, we would anticipate that dissatisfaction, voluntary withdrawal, or both will be the result. March and Simon's research was published in the journal *Personnel Psychology*. There is a possibility that the workers will be considered for the promotion; yet, it is possible that they will not receive the pay raise.

According to Zhao and Zhou (2008), corporations are able to manipulate the promotion process, give indications of sluggish career advancement at the ceiling position, and force employees who are less qualified to leave the company. This kind of award might be used by the government as a way to encourage people to advance their careers, and at the same time, it could serve as a channel of communication to encourage those who are not performing up to par to leave their positions in the public sector.

It is important to know how the Individual Career Management (ICM) process works in a workplace where there don't seem to be many opportunities for vertical promotion and the government is looking for other ways to reward their employees' views on career advancement.

### ***Salary to Workers' Satisfaction***

According to Gould and Penley (1984), an employee who develops career strategies that are appropriate to his or her occupation and organization is likely to increase his or her probability of obtaining evaluations from superiors as well as a larger share of the organization's salary distributions. It is common knowledge that a worker's salary is the single most important factor in determining whether or not they will join, remain in, or leave the public service. As a result, the government places restrictions on the amount of money a worker can earn in order to guarantee that they will continue to be dedicated to their job in the public sector.

In both the commercial and governmental sectors, salaries and opportunities for advancement are the most important considerations when employees are deciding whether or not to remain in their positions (Snyder, Osland, & Hunter, 1996). It was pointed out that salary is one of the very most important factors that can influence the workers' walk-in behavior and that it is used as a measurement tool for both worker satisfaction and worker retention.

### ***Incentives to Workers' Satisfaction***

Incentives are supplementary payments made to employees' salaries after they have satisfactorily completed the requirements of a particular job. The government has utilized incentives as a communication tool. According to Snyder, Osland, and Hunter's (1996) research, there are forty-four distinct reward tools that are described, each of which can be utilized for either individual or group motivation. When designing incentives to attract and retain commissioners, permanent secretaries, managers, administrative officers, and other management staff after they have

completed their advanced training, it is very important to understand the preferences of their reward and the implications of these distinctions. There are numerous types of incentives, some of which do not provide the same tax benefits to the individual worker but can be used to cage workers in the public sector and firms. Also, it is much easier to tie bonuses to what workers actually do, which takes away the effect of short-term, unpredictable stock market changes.

As a direct consequence of the preceding discussion, the two competing profit-sharing and gain-sharing systems disperse incentives in accordance with the non-financial results of the business. These outcomes include enhancements in quality, productivity, and overall employee satisfaction (Miller & Schuster, 1993).

Milne (2007) says that the idea behind incentives is that both long-term and short-term incentives will encourage workers to be loyal, promote teamwork, and help create the desired culture, which encourages and supports sharing of knowledge.

A discussion on extrinsically motivated behavior, which is characterized by the fact that an activity is rewarded by incentives that are not inherently associated with the task, led to the development of reward and recognition systems (Deci, 1971). Iyer and Ravindran (2009) made the observation that, in order for practitioners to determine whether or not incentives would be effective in their company, it may be necessary to do an analysis of the characteristics of the employees. However, when inter-team cooperation is required, incentives can produce friction and animosity, which lower a team's motivation to work successfully, as stated by Hoffman and Rogelberg in 1998.

### **Employees' Satisfaction to Organization**

Barnard (1998) proposed a solution to the problem that entails receiving feedback from workers regarding the system as a means of resolving it. This involves determining the level of contentment that workers have with the system, soliciting the opinions of members of the team with regard to the design of the system, and making certain that there is a way to document performance and provide incentives for both workers and the team (Bayo, 2019; Ubulom, Kayii & Dambo, 2016).

Jenkins and Lawler (1981) discovered that the feeling of influence can explain the positive effect that representation within executive committees produces on workers' satisfaction with regard to the administration of the compensation system. This was found to be the case after the researchers found that workers who felt they had a voice in the executive committees were more satisfied overall. When employees see that management is genuinely interested in how well they perform their jobs, it is much simpler for them to comply with recommendations to improve their performance (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes 2002). Two aspects of workers' attitudes, namely organizational commitment and workers' job satisfaction, have been the subject of a significant amount of research. It is hypothesized that these are factors that contribute to employee turnover, given that disgruntled employees are very likely to quit their respective jobs (Smith, 1996). The Connection between the Benefits Provided by Their Employer and the Happiness of Their Work

According to Artz's (2008) and Donohue and Heywood's (2004) research, bonuses and other fringe benefits do not have a significant impact on employees' levels of job satisfaction when measured using cross-sectional surveys. However, Bender (2005), Heywood and Wei (2006), as well as Bender and Heywood (2006), found that cross-sectional estimates of job satisfaction were positively impacted by fringe benefits. Heywood (2002) discovered that pensions have a negative impact on workers' job satisfaction, while Luchak and Gellatly (2002) conducted a study that investigated the impact of fringe benefit accrual on workers' job satisfaction. Both of these researchers published their findings in 2002.

According to Marchetti (1998), sales personnel, regardless of their market specialization, want money or cash as an incentive to acquire satisfaction. This is true even if the money isn't for them personally. In addition, the findings of a study that was carried out by Marchetti (1998) indicated that commission encourages sales personnel to aggressively pursue new business. By basing sales commissions on the level of satisfaction a customer expresses, a company can encourage its employees to provide appropriate service to customers and motivate those customers to continue doing business with the company (Joetan & Kleiner 2004). Most empirical studies (Aquino, 1997) looked at the links between a worker's self-reported satisfaction with pay and promotion and voluntary turnover, but the evidence isn't always clear (Mobley, 1979).

Evans (1998) also came to the conclusion that factors such as low salaries and low status, growing class sizes, and changes in the education system have all contributed as causes of what has been interpreted as an endemic problem of dissatisfaction within the profession. According to Bender and Heywood (2006), there is not much of a correlation between the level of income and either job or pay satisfaction. A significant number of people changed occupations in search of better opportunities, greater salaries, and other forms of remuneration (Kamal, Yasir, & Hanif, 2009).

Okpara (2002) found that elements such as compensation, the nature of the work itself, supervision, connections with coworkers, and prospects for advancement were seen to contribute to workers' feelings of satisfaction in their jobs. Employee happiness was measured across a wide range of dimensions, including satisfaction with income, prospects for advancement, fringe benefits, job stability, and the significance or difficulty of the work being performed (Nguyen, Taylor, & Bradley, 2003). Therefore, various workers have different responses to different incentives depending on the importance of individual workers' requirements, and the key to a worker's contentment with their employment resides in receiving attractive remuneration (Chiang & Birtch, 2005).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the connection between the public service award system and the level of job satisfaction enjoyed by workers, as well as to identify the factors that serve as predictors of the dependent variable. Workers' levels of contentment are considered the dependent variable, while the public service incentive system is considered the independent variable. According to what is outlined in the conceptual framework, the components that make up the public service rewards system are as follows: promotion, salary, incentives, and fringe

benefits (work-life balance, healthcare, and bonuses) (long- and short-term). In order to study the relationship, the independent variables were put through a direct correlation analysis with the dependent variable to determine the significance of the association. This was done so that the relationship could be investigated.

## Hypotheses

Based on the discussion, this study has formulated several hypotheses as follows:

- H1 There is a positive relationship between work life balance and workers' satisfaction.
- H2 There is a positive relationship between healthcare and workers' satisfaction.
- H3 There is a positive relationship between bonus and workers' satisfaction.
- H4 There is a positive relationship between promotion and workers' satisfaction.
  
- H5 There is a positive relationship between long term incentive and worker' satisfaction.
- H6 There is a positive relationship between short term incentive and to workers' satisfaction.
- H7 There is a positive relationship between salary and workers' satisfaction.
- H8 There is a positive relationship between public service rewards system and workers' satisfaction.

## Methodology

The methodological approach taken in this study is correlational. According to Sekaran (2009), correlation research is carried out with the purpose of determining the nature of the relationship that exists between the variables that are being looked into. As a result, this study was carried out to investigate the connection between rewards for public service and the level of contentment experienced by workers. In light of the aforementioned information, the sampling frame for the purpose of this research was acquired from the office of the Head of Service of the Rivers State Public Service, and the total population of workers was found to be 2256. The method of sampling that was utilized was known as stratified sampling, which involves first stratifying or segregating the population to be sampled, and then selecting individuals at random from within each stratum. Krejcie and Morgan provided the information that was used to determine the size of the sample for this study (1970). According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), if the total number of people in the population is approximately 2200, then the sample size should be approximately 327. As a result, the number of participants in this study has been set at 327 individuals who are currently employed by the Rivers State Government within the Rivers State Public Service. The data were collected by using questionnaires that had previously been developed and validated by a group of specialists from the Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Management

at Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt. The experts were consulted in order to develop and validate the questionnaires. The respondents answered every item on the survey using the Likert scale, which has five points. Within the Rivers State Public Service in Port Harcourt, a total of 327 questionnaires were handed out to employees personally. The distribution of questionnaires and the subsequent collection of responses took about seven days to complete. Nevertheless, there were only 292 questionnaires that were returned, which results in an 89 percent survey return rate.

## **Results**

### ***Univariate analysis***

The majority of the respondents were female which represent 60 percent of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are Malays, which account to 75% and 55% of the respondents are already married and 30% of the respondents are within the age group of 25 years and below. It was found that 57% of them hold a Bachelor's Degree.

### ***Reliability Analysis***

The results of the reliability test for each factor involved in the study are presented in the table 1.0 that can be seen below. The value of reliability for each dimension is greater than 0.6 and is closer to 1 than 0.2. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), the reliability of the test would increase proportionately with the proximity of the result to 1. The reliability values below 0.60 are regarded as being poor, those between 0.70 and 0.80 are considered to be acceptable, and those over 0.80 are excellent. Because of this, one can get the conclusion that the instrument can be trusted.

### ***The Presumptions for the Bivariate Correlation***

In order to ensure that the acquired analysis can be relied upon, it is necessary to make certain assumptions regarding the variables that will be employed in the statistical test. When the assumptions do not match the results, it is possible that the results cannot be believed, which can lead to an overestimation or underestimating of the significance of the finding. This is according to Myers and Well (2002). According to Bowerman, O'Conne, and Koehler (2005), a lack of knowledge and understanding of the situation in which an assumption has been violated will result in serious biases but few consequences.

Because of this, it is absolutely necessary to carry out the preliminary data analysis on each variable in order to investigate the hypotheses of normality and homogeneity of variance, linearity, and in addition to determine the outliers and extreme values that are associated with the data that was gathered. The necessary explanation regarding the assumptions has been presented below for your perusal. Before it was put through its paces for correlation analysis, all of the analysis had been finished.



## Normality

According to Coakes and Steed (2007), data screening and transformation techniques are helpful in ensuring that the data have been correctly entered and that the distribution of variables that are going to be used in the analysis are normal. These techniques can be found in the article "Data Screening and Transformation Techniques." According to Hair et al. (2006), normalcy is represented by a bell-shaped curve that is symmetrical. On this curve, the highest frequency of the scores is found in the middle, and the lower frequencies are found toward the extremes. According to Bryman and Cramer's (1999) findings, a normal distribution will have a median value that is either the same as the mean or very close to it. After that, Kline (2005) made the observation that the appropriate range for skewness should be between -2 and 2, while the appropriate range for kurtosis should be between -3 and 3. The skewness and kurtosis distributions for this investigation are presented in the following table. The data are considered to be normal because both the skewness and the kurtosis fall within the range that is recommended by Kline (2005).

**Table: Analysis of skewness and kurtosis distributions**

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Fringe Benefits	-.310	.375
Promotion	-.051	-.639
Incentives	.270	-.583
Salary	-.288	-.576
Employee Satisfaction	-.091	-.777

## Research Question 1

Which aspect of the public service rewards system do you think contributes the most to the overall happiness of the personnel in the Rivers State Public Service?

H1 There is a positive relationship between work life balance and workers' satisfaction

H2 There is a positive relationship between healthcare and workers' satisfaction.

H3 There is a positive relationship between bonus and workers' satisfaction.

H4 There is a positive relationship between promotion and workers' satisfaction.

H5 There is a positive relationship between long term incentive and workers' satisfaction.

H6 There is a positive relationship between short term incentive and workers' satisfaction.

H7 There is a positive relationship between salary and workers' satisfaction.

**Table 2.0** : Regression Analysis of Public Service Rewards System on Workers' Satisfaction.

Variable	Model 1
Independent Variable	◆
Work life balance	.205**
Healthcare	.286**
Bonus	.242**
Promotion	.304 **
Long term incentive	.109**
Short term incentive	.122**
Salary	.340**
R2	.708
F Value	64.83
Sig. F Value	.000
Durbin Watson	1.968

\*significant at 0.05

\*\*significant at 0.01

The results of the investigation are presented in Table 2.0. The component includes a work-life balance component, a healthcare component, a bonus component, a promotion component, a long-term incentive component, a short-term incentive component, and a pay component. The values that were tested on it are significant to workers' satisfaction in the Rivers State Public Service, and the independent variables had explained 70.8% of the variance in the model. The overall value of  $F=64.83$  and the Durbin Watson equal to 1.968 indicate that work-life balance, healthcare, bonuses, promotions, long-term incentives, short-term incentives, and salary all play a substantial role in employees' levels of satisfaction. The findings indicated that having a healthy work-life balance ( $=.205, p0.01$ ), adequate healthcare ( $=.286, p0.$ )

## Conclusion

This research was carried out with the purpose of identifying the aspect of the public service incentives system in Rivers State Public Service, Port Harcourt, that adds to the overall happiness of the workforce. In addition to that, it was carried out to study the relationship that exists between the two variables.

According to the data that was collected, it was discovered that each of the awards for public service that were investigated contributed to the contentment of the workers. Salary, on the other hand, is the predictor that greatly contributes to employees' overall happiness. The research revealed that the average wage is 4.01, while the standard deviation is .340, and the significance level was found to be less than 0.01. According to the findings, it was determined that the vast majority of employees working for the Rivers State Public Service are pleased with the method of compensation that is offered by the

Rivers State Government. This is due to the fact that workers believe the wage they are paid is sufficient to meet their needs, particularly in light of how they choose to live their lives and the costs associated with doing so. For a long time, people have placed a high value on having sufficient financial resources. As a result, the Rivers State Government has demonstrated a commitment to effective execution by offering competitive salaries to its workforce. In addition to that, promotions are the second largest predictor that contribute to employee satisfaction in the Rivers State Public Service, with a significant value of  $\beta = .304$  and a p-value that is less than 0.01. The workers want to be given the chance to learn and advance along their chosen career path at their own pace.

As a consequence of this, a number of workers, particularly those of a younger age and those in the middle age generation, prefer to seek new opportunities and refuse to remain in the same post for an extended period of time. The potential for advancement is one of the most important factors in determining whether or not employees are happy with their jobs; this, in turn, influences how well they do their jobs. The value for work-life balance is  $\beta = .205$ , and  $p < 0.01$ ; healthcare is  $\beta = .286$ , and  $p < 0.01$ ; and bonus is  $\beta = .242$ , and  $p < 0.01$ . Fringe benefits also have a considerable contribution to workers' satisfaction with the value for work-life balance. However, the ancillary benefits that are provided by the Rivers State Government to its employees are not yet capable of completely satisfying those employees. This occurred as a result of the Rivers State Government's policy of providing unequal fringe benefits, which ultimately resulted in unhappiness. This indicates that the government presumably provides its employees with an unequal implementation of a work-life balance, healthcare, and bonus plan. After the discovery made by Benz (2005), it was found that just two of the nine perks that are provided to workers in the public sector are able to satisfy them. As a result, the variables that contribute to the failure of exercising fringe benefits in the public sector might have an effect on the degree of satisfaction experienced by the workers, which may then lead to increased levels of dissatisfaction. On the other hand, long-term incentives are the factor that has the least impact on workers' levels of contentment. According to the data, the long term incentive has the lowest significant value, with  $\beta$  equaling .109 and  $p$  equaling .006. Despite this, the dimension can still be considered to be in a positive range of relationship when  $p$  is less than 0.01. According to the findings, it was discovered that incentives were the cause of the average level of contentment experienced by workers in the Rivers State Public Service. In addition, the data that was collected showed that certain workers are pleased with both the long-term and the short-term incentives that were provided, whereas other workers voiced their discontent with these rewards.

In conclusion, it was found that the relationship between the public service rewards system and workers' satisfaction is positive, with a significant value of  $r = .708$ , which results in a strong linear relationship according to the Pearson Coefficient value of .839, which was calculated. According to Monday et al (1979) 's research, employees believe that their attachment to the organization will grant them access to meaningful rewards that will fulfill their requirements if they remain loyal to the company. As a result, the vast majority of workers have faith that each of their job accomplishments will be rewarded,

and that their efforts will be maintained so that they can eventually earn better rewards.

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