

Staff Promotion and Reward Incentives as Predictor of Employee Productivity of the Rivers State Civil Service

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Abstract

This study investigated staff promotion and reward incentives as predictors of employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. Two objectives, research questions, and hypotheses were formulated and guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design, with a population of 40,667 Civil Servants in the Rivers State Civil Service from 26 ministries. The sample of 381 Senior Management employees from 10 out of the 26 ministries of the Rivers State Civil Service, was derived from Taro Yemen's sampling formula. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size, and a questionnaire titled Motivational Strategy and Employee Productivity Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation and then subjected to a pilot study to ascertain its reliability, which yielded an index of 0.841 through the Cronbach Alpha test. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings from this study showed, that staff promotion has a positive, very strong and significant relationship with employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service, and reward incentives positively, strongly and significantly relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. The study concluded that the Rivers State Civil Service can enhance employee productivity by focusing on staff promotion and reward incentives as key factors in motivating employees to perform at their best. The study recommended, among others, that the Rivers State Civil Service should regularly assess employee performance and provide clear pathways for promotion based on merit.

Keywords: Staff Promotion, Rewards Incentives, Predictors, Employee, Productivity.

Introduction

Promotion and reward incentives in any organization are essential for boosting employee morale and productivity. These incentives can come in various forms, such as bonuses, recognition programs, or career advancement opportunities. They serve as a way to recognize and appreciate employees' hard work and dedication, ultimately leading to increased job satisfaction and retention rates within the company. When the type of incentive offered does not align with the organisation's goals and values, it may not have the desired impact on employee motivation. Also, when employees are not promoted or recognized for their efforts despite meeting expectations, it can lead to feelings of frustration and disengagement (Ogini, 2020). In a nutshell, it is crucial for organizations to carefully consider the type of incentives and promotion strategies they offer to ensure they are effectively motivating and retaining their employees. Chiekezie et al. (2017) confirmed that with a well-thought-out incentive and promotion system in place, employees are more likely to feel valued and motivated to perform at their best. This can ultimately lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity within the organisation.

According to Dike (2019), promotion is the process of moving an employee up in the organization. It is a crucial element in motivating civil servants to perform better and strive for excellence. The promotion of an employee who demonstrates exceptional skills and dedication to their work not only boosts their morale but also encourages others to work harder. This implies that the promotion process should be fair and transparent, based on merit rather than favouritism or nepotism. For instance, in the Rivers State Civil Service, when an employee is being considered for promotion, their performance is thoroughly evaluated based on objective criteria such as productivity, leadership abilities, and innovative thinking. This ensures that deserving individuals are rewarded and creates a sense of healthy competition among employees.

Reward incentives for employees who perform well can be powerful motivators. These can take the form of bonuses, promotions, or even just verbal praise from supervisors. An employee who is recognized and appreciated for their hard work is more likely to feel valued and appreciated, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation. According to Certo (2016), a reward incentive is defined as "the acknowledgement and celebration of an individual or team's accomplishments, contributions, and efforts towards achieving organizational goals." This practice not only benefits the employee but also the organization as a whole. In the Rivers State Civil Service, when employees are recognized and appreciated for their hard work, it can create a positive work culture where employees feel motivated to perform at their best. This can result in improved productivity and overall organizational success.

A study carried out by Ajibade and Salako (2021) on incentive schemes and employees' productivity in private organisations in Nigeria reported that organizations that implemented effective incentive schemes experienced higher levels of employee productivity compared to those that did not. This suggests that recognizing and rewarding employees for their hard work can significantly impact overall organizational success and performance. Buttressing the foregoing, Uzochukwu et al. (2023) emphasise the importance of aligning incentive schemes with organizational goals and values to ensure that they are truly motivating employees. They argue

that a well-designed incentive program can not only boost productivity but also foster a positive work culture and improve employee retention rates.

Over the years, the Rivers State Civil Service Commission has done little or nothing to recognize the efforts of their employees in terms of promotion and reward incentives, even when they are performing exceptionally well. And when they do, the financial benefits accrued are often minimal and fail to reflect the actual contributions of the employees. However, recently, the new administration of the Rivers State, under the new leadership of Rivers State Government led by Governor Siminalayi Joseph Fubara has shown a commitment to addressing this issue by implementing new policies and programs aimed at rewarding and promoting employees based on merit and performance. This positive change is expected to boost morale and productivity within the Civil Service Commission, as well as lead to a more efficient and effective workforce, but the extent to which these new initiatives will be successful in reversing the culture of demotivation and disengagement remains to be seen. It is on this premise that this study investigated staff promotion and reward incentives as predictors of employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service.

Statement of the Problem

The rate at which employee turnover is increasing in the public civil service, especially from the education, health, and social services sectors, among others is a growing concern for government agencies. This high turnover rate is leading to decreased productivity, increased costs for recruitment and training, and ultimately impacting the quality of services provided to the public. There had been constant mobility of highly skilled employees from one government agency to another to pursue better opportunities, as well as to other foreign countries, resulting in a loss of institutional knowledge and expertise within the public sector. This issue is further exacerbated by the lack of competitive compensation and benefits packages offered by government agencies compared to the private sector, making it difficult to attract and retain top talent. The Rivers State Civil Service is not immune to these challenges, as it struggles to retain experienced staff and maintain consistent service delivery.

Consequently, lack of staff promotion and reward incentives are argued by this study to be linked to the brain drain phenomenon experienced in the public sector. Concerning the aforementioned, Obiaga and Itakpe (2021) regretted that despite the huge allocation received by the State over the years, as well as its humungous internally generated revenue, the lack of competitive compensation and advancement opportunities in the Civil Service has led to a significant loss of skilled professionals to the private sector. This trend not only hinders the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery but also perpetuates a cycle of talent drain that further exacerbates the challenges faced by the public sector. Thus, if adequate measures are not taken to address this issue, the productivity of employees in the Civil Service will continue to decline, ultimately impacting the quality of services provided to the citizens. It is based on this backdrop, that this study was considered necessary to investigate staff promotion and rewards incentives as predictors of employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study investigated staff promotion and reward incentives as predictors of employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine how staff promotion relates to employee productivity of the Rivers State Civil Service.
2. ascertain how reward incentives relate to employee productivity of the Rivers State Civil Service.

Research Questions

1. How does staff promotion relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service?
2. To what extent does reward incentive relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service?

Hypotheses

1. Staff promotion does not significantly relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service.
2. Reward incentives do not significantly relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service.

Literature Review

Staff Promotion as predictors of employee productivity

Promotion is a term used to refer to the advancement of an employee to a higher position within an organization. This is a common motivational strategy used in public service to encourage employees to work harder and improve their performance. According to Grobler et al. (2016), the promotion of an employee is the reassignment of an employee to a higher position or job within the same organization.

Hasibuan (2018) argues that promotion is a move that enlarges the authority and responsibility of employees in higher positions in an organization so that obligations, rights, status, and production are greater. The importance of promotion cannot be overstated, as it serves as a key motivator for employees to perform at their best. When employees are allowed to advance in their careers, they are more likely to feel valued and appreciated by their organization. A positive evaluation that motivates the employee may serve as the employee's reward for superior performance (Louis, 2019). This means that employees who receive promotions are likely to feel valued and appreciated, which can lead to increased loyalty and commitment to the organization.

If promotion is to serve as an effective motivational tool in an organization, it is advisable to implement a legitimate promotion policy based on reasonable, proven principles that grant promotion opportunities primarily to employees who are creative, talented, and producing exceptional work results and who are deserving of promotion (Linh 2017). To achieve a deserving promotion, the organization must establish guidelines and principles for promotion opportunities, such as the criteria should be communicated to all staff members and outlined in employee regulations; the criteria should be consistent over long periods; and new management of the

organization should not unilaterally decide to change well-defined criteria for promoting to a specific position, as this could lead to perceptions of favouritism or discrimination.

Reward incentives as predictors of employee productivity

Reward incentives for outstanding performance are essential components of a successful motivational strategy for public civil service employees. This approach can help increase job satisfaction, boost morale, and improve overall productivity. In addition to reward incentives, other motivational strategies that are commonly used in the public sector include providing opportunities for professional development and career advancement, offering flexible work arrangements, and fostering a positive work environment through effective communication and collaboration.

According to Eisenberger and Rhoades (2018), reward incentives are key drivers of employee motivation and engagement. These can take many forms, such as verbal praise, bonuses, promotions, and opportunities for professional development. In addition to reward incentives, public civil service organizations can also foster a positive work environment by promoting open communication, providing adequate resources and support, and encouraging collaboration among team members. By doing so, employees are more likely to feel valued and empowered to contribute their best work. Furthermore, public civil service organizations can benefit from adopting a growth mindset that emphasizes continuous learning and improvement.

In the public civil service sector, the provision of recognition is especially important given the nature of the work and the limited financial incentives available. Research has shown that employees who receive regular recognition are more engaged, committed, and satisfied with their jobs (Shoss et al., 2017). This can lead to increased productivity and better outcomes for the organization as a whole. However, recognition must be meaningful and tailored to individual employees to have a significant impact (Grawitch et al., 2016). This requires managers to have a deep understanding of their employees' needs and preferences, as well as a willingness to invest time and resources into recognition programmes.

Employee productivity

The phrase employee productivity is used to describe the level of output that an employee produces in a given period. This is a critical organizational performance indicator, as it directly impacts the company's bottom line. Jennifer and George (2016) argued that employee performance contributes directly to an organization's efficacy, efficiency, and even the achievement of administrative objectives. In addition, it was stated that a company's inability to certify that its employees are motivated hurts its organizational effectiveness and efficiency, thereby influencing employee productivity about expected goals and objectives.

Bernardin (2017) explained that providing employees with the necessary resources and support can help them perform at their best. Organizations can also implement training programs to improve employee skills and knowledge, which can lead to increased productivity. Regular performance evaluations and feedback sessions can also help identify areas where employees may

need additional support or guidance. Overall, monitoring and improving employee productivity are crucial for organizational success.

Empirical Review

Modu and Maina (2022) examined the effect of Job Promotion on Employee Retention in Deposit Money Banks in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. The population of the study was 198 respondents with a sample size of 132 respondents obtained using Yamane's formula. Data was collected using structured questionnaires administered to the respondents. The data collected was analysed using multiple regression analysis with the aid of a statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). The major findings of the study revealed that there is a significant effect of promotion on employee retention in deposit money banks in Maiduguri Metropolis. The study concludes that monetary rewards offered to employees in the banking sector lead to timely promotion and play a critical role in the determination of their level of retention, whereas inadequate monetary reward is perceived as a major setback to employee retention and this would bring about low performance and high employees' turnover.

Uzochukwu et al. (2023) investigated the effect of a reward system on employee productivity in Nigeria's hospitality industry. The specific objectives of the study are to: assess the effect of sizeable wage and salary reward systems on employee quality of service delivery in the Nigerian hospitality industry and ascertain the effect of the retirement benefits reward system on employee commitment in the Nigerian hospitality industry. The research design was descriptive survey research. The Study Area was Enugu State. A sample size of 378 respondents was drawn from the 503 population of the study using the Taro Yamane sample technique. The research question was answered with simple percentage, mean and deviation while the methods of data presentation are table and simple percentage. The hypotheses were tested with regression analysis comprising student-t statistics. The following are the major findings of the study: the study revealed that a sizeable wage and salary reward system has a significant effect on employee quality of service delivery in the hospitality industry (t-statistics (8.312) > P-value (0.000)); the study reveals that retirement benefits reward system has a significant effect on employee commitment in the hospitality industry (t-statistics (9.491) > P-value (0.000)). The study concludes that there was a positive and significant effect of the reward system on employee productivity in the hospitality industry especially in Nike Lake Resort Hotel Enugu Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The design was adopted since the study is concerned with examining the relationships between staff training, positive work environment, and organizational performance. Nwankwo (2013) added that correlational research designs are useful for identifying potential predictors of organizational productivity and understanding the connections between different variables.

The population of this study consisted of 40,667 Civil Servants in the Rivers State Civil Service from 26 ministries (Source: Rivers State, Ministry of Finance, 2022). The sample of the study consisted of 381 Senior Management employees from 10 out of the 26 ministries of the Rivers

State Civil Service. The sample was derived from the population of the study based on the derivation of the Taro Yemen's sampling formula.

The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the participants for this study. This technique allowed the researcher to intentionally choose individuals who possess specific characteristics or experiences that are relevant to the research objectives. In this study, the researcher selected participants who hold key positions within the Rivers State Civil Service and have extensive knowledge and experience in the subject matter.

A questionnaire designed by the researcher, titled "Motivational Strategy and Employee Productivity Questionnaire (MSEPQ)," was used to gather data from the respondents based on the items of the questionnaire. The instrument was a 21-item questionnaire scale on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point with a 2.5 criterion mean.

To ensure that the instrument measured what it ought to measure, face, and content validity were carried out by two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation for scrutiny and evaluation to ensure its face and content validity and to ascertain the degree corresponding with the research objectives and research questions. The instrument was tested for reliability through a pilot study, with a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.841$ ascertained through the Cronbach Alpha test.

The collected data was analyzed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Ver. 22) using descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: How does staff promotion relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service?

Hypothesis 1: Staff promotion does not significantly relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service.

Table 1: PPMC analysis on the relationship between staff promotion and employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service

		Staff Promotion	Employee Productivity
Staff Promotion	Pearson Correlation	1	0.881**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	n	381	381
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation	0.881**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	n	381	381

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In answering research question 1, Table 1 revealed how staff promotion relates to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. The result showed that staff promotion has a very strong relationship with employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service ($r = 0.881$) since the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.881$) is within $r \leq \pm 0.80$ to ± 1.00 .

Furthermore, in testing hypothesis 1, Table 1 shows that staff promotion significantly relates to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service ($r = 0.881$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$). The findings imply that staff promotion has a positive, very strong and significant relationship with employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. Thus, null hypothesis 1 was rejected at a 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 2: To what extent does reward incentive relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service?

Hypothesis 2: Reward incentive does not significantly relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service.

Table 2: PPMC Analysis on how reward incentive relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service

		Correlations	
		Rewards Incentive	Employee Productivity
Rewards Incentive	Pearson Correlation	1	0.779**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	n	381	381
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation	0.779**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	n	381	381

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In answering research question 2, Table 2 revealed the extent to which reward incentive relates to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. The result showed that reward incentives to a high extent relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service ($r = 0.779$) since the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.779$) is within $r \leq \pm 0.60$ to ± 0.79 .

Furthermore, in testing hypothesis 2, Table 2 shows that reward incentives significantly relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service ($r = 0.779$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$). The findings imply that reward incentives are positively, strongly and significantly related to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. Thus, null hypothesis 2 was rejected at a 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated staff promotion and reward incentives as predictors of employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. However, the result in Table 1 showed that staff

promotion has a very strong relationship with employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. Furthermore, the test of the hypothesis revealed that staff promotion significantly relates to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. The findings from this study are corroborated by the study by Modu and Maina (2022), which revealed there is a significant effect of promotion on employee retention in deposit money banks in Maiduguri Metropolis.

The result in Table 2 showed that reward incentives to a high extent relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. Furthermore, the test of the hypothesis revealed that reward incentives significantly relate to employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. The finding from this study is corroborated by the study by Uzochukwu, et al. (2023) which revealed that a sizeable wage and salary reward system has a significant effect on employee quality of service delivery in the hospitality industry; the study reveals that retirement benefits reward system has a significant effect on employee commitment in hospitality industry.

Conclusion

The study investigated staff promotion and reward incentives as predictors of employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. The findings of the study revealed that staff promotion has a very strong relationship with employee productivity, and is significantly related. Also, reward incentives have a strong relationship with employee productivity, and it is significantly related. These results suggest that providing opportunities for staff promotion and implementing reward incentives can positively impact employee productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service. Therefore, the study concluded that the Rivers State Civil Service can enhance employee productivity by focusing on staff promotion and reward incentives as key factors in motivating employees to perform at their best.

Recommendations

Considering the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Rivers State Civil Service should regularly assess employee performance and provide clear pathways for promotion based on merit.
2. The Rivers State Civil Service should implement a comprehensive rewards system that recognizes and rewards outstanding performance to further motivate employees to excel in their roles.

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