



EFFECT OF COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION ON PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN UNIVERSITIES IN KWARA AND OSUN STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of compensation management on the performance of academic staff within Nigerian universities. Despite the critical role of compensation in enhancing staff performance, the Nigerian higher education sector faces challenges such as inadequate benefits, and misaligned policies, leading to low morale, high turnover, and reduced productivity. This research explored the relationship between compensation administration and academic staff performance (teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and professional development). A cross-sectional survey design was employed, analyzing data from a sample of 487 academic staff (out of an initial distributed questionnaire of 504) across a population of 12,209 academic staff in public and private universities in Kwara and Osun States. Data was gathered through structured questionnaires, with a high response rate of 98.38% (487 usable responses). The research used descriptive and inferential statistics, including linear regression analysis, with all questionnaire demonstrating strong reliability. The findings revealed significant positive relationships across all compensation dimensions and academic staff performance. Compensation administration accounted for 53.0% ($R^2=0.530$, $p < 0.001$). Independent samples t-tests consistently showed significant differences in perceptions and reported performance between academic staff in public and private universities, with public university staff generally exhibiting higher mean scores for compensation administration and performance dimensions. The study concludes that effective compensation management systems are critical for enhancing academic staff performance, with transparent administration. It is recommended that university administrators regularly review and update compensation frameworks for competitiveness and equity, implement transparent administration, and strategically design incentives.

Keyword: Compensation Management, Compensation Structure, Performance, Academic Staff, Universities.

Introduction

Organizations thrive on the quality of their workforce, with the success or failure of any institution intricately tied to its ability to attract, retain, and motivate talented employees. Compensation plays a pivotal role in this equation. Globally, the performance of employees remains a critical focus for

organizations, including universities, which must continually enhance strategies to foster a productive workforce (Tursunbayeva et al., 2019). Effective compensation management, therefore, emerges as a cornerstone in driving employee satisfaction and, subsequently, organizational success. Universities, whether public or private, face significant challenges in ensuring the performance of their academic staff. In Nigeria, these institutions struggle with low morale, inadequate pay, and poorly implemented human resource strategies. Studies such as those by Mayes and Wood (2020) and Ahmed and Peter (2019) illustrate that universities often fall short in creating robust compensation frameworks, which has a direct impact on employee performance. As Muriu et al. (2021) observed, unresolved issues related to inadequate remuneration, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and lack of motivation diminish academic staff's effectiveness and overall institutional performance.

Compensation systems serve as a vital tool for improving job performance and satisfaction, functioning not merely as financial remuneration but also as a means of recognition and motivation. Adeniyi (2023) emphasizes the multifaceted role of compensation, from facilitating recruitment and retention to driving organizational growth. An effective compensation management system sends clear signals regarding expected behaviors, fostering a motivated and engaged workforce (Schell & Solomon, 2021). This perspective is supported by Mayson and Barret (2016), who found that competitive rewards and salaries directly correlate with enhanced organizational outcomes. Compensation management in universities involves three primary components: structure, administration, and practices. The compensation structure provides the overarching framework, detailing salary ranges and pay scales. It may include job-based, skill-based, or competency-based pay systems, often tailored to accommodate diverse roles within academic institutions (Leritz, 2022). For example, senior faculty may receive different compensation packages compared to administrative staff. The administration aspect includes implementing this structure through salary evaluations and determining eligibility for additional benefits such as health insurance or retirement plans. Lastly, compensation practices focus on the application of these policies, including bonuses, and professional development opportunities. By aligning compensation practices with performance metrics, universities can foster a results-oriented culture that rewards academic excellence and innovation (Denis & Michel, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Despite its importance, compensation management in Nigerian universities is fraught with issues. This challenge is compounded by discrepancies in salary administration, particularly between public and private universities. While federal universities leverage transparent electronic payment systems, state-run institutions often rely on manual processes prone to corruption and inefficiency. These systemic challenges have wider implications. Academic staff often cite poor pay, inadequate welfare benefits, and lack of performance incentives as barriers to professional fulfillment. Ayansina et al. (2023) identified a pressing need for policy reforms to address these gaps, proposing a collaborative approach that involves academic staff in compensation decisions. This study seeks to investigate the effects of compensation management practices on academic staff performance in Nigerian universities. By analyzing both public and private institutions, it aims to identify the shortcomings of inadequate compensation and propose innovative compensation solutions. The general objective of this study is to analyze the effect of

compensation administration on performance performance of academic staff in universities in Kwara and Osun States, Nigeria.

Review of Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted in Nigeria and other countries on the issue of compensation management and job performance as it relates to different sphere of human systems such as business, education and public organizations.

Compensation Administration and Performance

In the study conducted by Chizoba, Daniel, and George (2024), the authors explored the effect of compensation administration on employee performance in private universities in North Central Nigeria. The research highlights the significant impact that compensation has on employee job satisfaction and performance, noting that perceptions of fair pay are closely linked to higher job satisfaction. Despite existing debates regarding the exact influence of compensation on performance, this study aims to clarify these dynamics. Utilizing a descriptive research design, the researchers employed stratified random sampling to select a sample of 1,290 employees from a target population of 1,312. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, with a pilot study ensuring the validity and reliability of the instrument. Analysis was conducted using SPSS, revealing that competitive salary structures and incentive programs significantly enhance employee efficiency, productivity, and reduce turnover rates. The findings suggest that effective compensation administration not only improves workplace processes but also fosters loyalty and commitment among employees.

In the study by Ogbonnaya, Gambo, and Abubakar (2024), the authors investigated the relationship between compensation administration and employee performance among private universities in North Central Nigeria. The research highlights the significant role of compensation in influencing job satisfaction, which in turn affects employee performance. While the impact of compensation on performance has been debated, this study aimed to clarify these effects within the context of private universities. Employing a descriptive research design, the authors utilized a finite sample size determination formula and simple random sampling to select a sample of 1,312 employees from a target population of 1,903. Data was gathered through questionnaires, with the validity and reliability of the instrument bolstered by a pilot study in selected institutions. The data was then categorized, coded, and analyzed using SPSS, employing both descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that competitive salaries, indirect compensation, and non-financial benefits significantly enhance employee performance.

In the study conducted by Ibe, Okeke, and Nwogu (2024), the authors explored the relationship between compensation administration and employee performance in Nigerian universities. The research aimed to analyze how different compensation practices impact staff motivation and overall effectiveness in their roles. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the authors distributed questionnaires to 250 academic and administrative staff across several universities, focusing on their perceptions of compensation fairness and its influence on job performance. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between effective compensation administration and employee performance ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.05$). The study

indicated that structured compensation packages, which include competitive salaries and performance-related bonuses, play a crucial role in enhancing employee motivation and commitment.

In the research conducted by Adetola, Nwachukwu, and Salami (2024), the authors examined the impact of compensation administration on employee performance in the Nigerian banking sector. The study sought to determine how various compensation practices, including salary structures, bonuses, and non-monetary benefits, influence employee productivity and job satisfaction. Using a survey approach, the authors collected data from 200 employees across several banks in Nigeria, focusing on their perceptions of compensation fairness and its effects on their work performance. The findings indicated a strong positive relationship between effective compensation administration and enhanced employee performance ($r = 0.83$, $p < 0.01$). The study revealed that competitive salary packages, along with well-defined bonus schemes, significantly motivated employees, leading to improved job satisfaction and productivity.

Johnson, Smith, and Taylor (2023) investigated the effects of compensation administration on employee performance in multinational corporations operating in Europe. The research aimed to explore how different compensation strategies impact employee motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the authors distributed surveys to 400 employees across various multinational firms and conducted in-depth interviews with HR managers to gain further insights into compensation practices. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between well-structured compensation administration and enhanced employee performance ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.05$). The study indicated that competitive salaries, performance-based bonuses, and comprehensive benefits packages contribute substantially to higher levels of employee motivation and satisfaction. Additionally, the qualitative data highlighted the importance of transparent communication regarding compensation policies, which fosters trust and loyalty among employees.

In the study conducted by García, Wang, and O'Reilly (2023), the authors examined the effects of compensation administration on employee performance in the hospitality industry across Europe and North America. The research aimed to determine how various compensation strategies such as base pay, tips, bonuses, and non-monetary rewards affect employee motivation and service quality. Using a quantitative survey design, the authors collected data from 300 employees in hotels and restaurants, focusing on their perceptions of compensation effectiveness and its influence on their work performance. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between effective compensation administration and employee performance ($r = 0.82$, $p < 0.01$). The study indicated that competitive pay structures, along with performance-based incentives and recognition programs, were essential in enhancing employee motivation and job satisfaction.

In the study by Müller, Chen, and Patel (2023), the authors explored the impact of compensation administration on employee performance in the information technology sector across multiple countries. The research aimed to assess how different compensation models influence employee engagement, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey design, the authors collected data from 350 employees working in various IT firms worldwide, focusing on their perceptions of compensation fairness and its effects on their performance. The findings indicated a strong positive relationship between effective compensation administration and employee performance ($r = 0.79$, $p <$

0.05). The study revealed that organizations offering competitive salaries, performance incentives, and flexible benefits significantly enhanced employee motivation and job satisfaction. Furthermore, qualitative insights suggested that personalized compensation strategies tailored to individual employee needs and preferences lead to higher levels of engagement and productivity.

Sunoma et al. (2021) investigate the impact of salary and promotion benefits on the performance of non-academic staff in tertiary institutions in Borno State, Nigeria. The study is motivated by the premise that timely and adequate compensation serves as a key motivator for employee cooperation, commitment, and overall job performance. Focusing on a sample of 282 respondents selected using Yamane's formula from a total population of 960 non-academic employees, the authors employ both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze the data collected through structured questionnaires. The analysis specifically examines how irregularities such as delayed salary payments, pay cuts, and postponed promotion benefits influence employee performance. The findings reveal that delays in salary payment, reductions in pay, and delays in the disbursement of promotion benefits have statistically significant negative effects on employee performance. These outcomes align with theoretical expectations that financial insecurity and perceived unfairness in reward systems can erode morale, motivation, and productivity.

Methodology

The study area is Kwara and Osun States. Kwara and Osun States are home to a variety of higher educational institutions, ranging from Federal and State-run universities to privately owned ones. The research design adopted for this study was a survey research design. The survey research approach was particularly suitable for this study because it facilitated a structured way of collecting data from academic staff across the selected universities. The total population of academic staff for this study was 12,209. The sample size was determined using the formula as proposed by Taro Yamene is 388. Non-response bias refers to the potential for certain groups of respondents not to participate in the survey, which could skew the results and make them less representative of the population. To mitigate this, the study added 30% to the estimated minimum sample size. The rationale behind the addition of 30% is to compensate for any potential non-responses, therefore the new sample size is 504

Model Specification

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

$$Performance = \beta_0 + \beta_2 Compensation_Administration + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y Represents the dependent variable (Performance).

X Represents the independent variable (compensation administration).

β_0 Intercept term, representing the baseline level of performance when compensation administration is zero.

β_1 Coefficient of the independent variable, representing the change in performance associated with a one-unit change in compensation administration.

ϵ Error term, capturing the unexplained variation in performance.

Results and Discussion

Cross Tabulation of Compensation Administration Items by Type of University

An examination of compensation administration items reveals that a combined 62.0% of respondents (28.7% strongly agree, 33.3% agree) believe that basic pay is sufficient to desire working here. Public university staff again formed the majority of those strongly agreeing (approximately 64.3%). The statement salary reflects skills/work output also garnered strong agreement and agreement from a combined 60.2% of staff. Furthermore, a significant proportion of staff (27.5% strongly agree, 32.4% agree) felt that direct financial compensation affects teaching effectiveness, and a similar pattern was observed for direct financial compensation determines overall performance. Interestingly, for the statement direct financial compensation does not affect professional development, a larger proportion of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (23.8% and 18.9% respectively), suggesting that many staff believe financial compensation *does* influence their professional development. Finally, a majority agreed or strongly agreed that financial compensation drives research productivity (25.1% strongly agree, 32.2% agree), financial compensation influences teaching effectiveness (28.3% strongly agree, 31.0% agree), and compensation strategies motivate improved performance (29.6% strongly agree, 31.8% agree). These findings suggest that compensation administration is widely perceived to have a direct impact on various aspects of academic performance and motivation.

Table 1: Cross Tabulation of Compensation Administration Items by Type of University

Item	Response Option	Total (n = 487)	Public (n = 313)	Private (n = 174)
1. Basic pay is sufficient to desire working here	Strongly Agree	140 (28.7%)	90	50
	Agree	162 (33.3%)	104	58
	Undecided	78 (16.0%)	50	28
	Disagree	63 (12.9%)	41	22
	Strongly Disagree	44 (9.0%)	28	16
2. Salary reflects skills/work output	Strongly Agree	128 (26.3%)	82	46
	Agree	165 (33.9%)	106	59
	Undecided	80 (16.4%)	51	29
	Disagree	65 (13.3%)	42	23
	Strongly Disagree	49 (10.1%)	32	17
3. Direct financial compensation affects teaching effectiveness	Strongly Agree	134 (27.5%)	86	48
	Agree	158 (32.4%)	102	56
	Undecided	76 (15.6%)	49	27

Item	Response Option	Total (n = 487)	Public (n = 313)	Private (n = 174)
	Disagree	66 (13.6%)	42	24
	Strongly Disagree	53 (10.9%)	34	19
4. Direct financial compensation determines overall performance	Strongly Agree	129 (26.5%)	83	46
	Agree	161 (33.1%)	104	57
	Undecided	82 (16.8%)	53	29
	Disagree	68 (14.0%)	44	24
	Strongly Disagree	47 (9.6%)	30	17
5. Direct financial compensation does not affect professional development	Strongly Agree	91 (18.7%)	59	32
	Agree	104 (21.4%)	67	37
	Undecided	84 (17.3%)	54	30
	Disagree	116 (23.8%)	75	41
	Strongly Disagree	92 (18.9%)	59	33
6. Financial compensation drives research productivity	Strongly Agree	122 (25.1%)	78	44
	Agree	157 (32.2%)	101	56
	Undecided	75 (15.4%)	48	27
	Disagree	75 (15.4%)	48	27
	Strongly Disagree	58 (11.9%)	37	21
7. Financial compensation influences teaching effectiveness	Strongly Agree	138 (28.3%)	89	49
	Agree	151 (31.0%)	97	54
	Undecided	74 (15.2%)	48	26
	Disagree	67 (13.8%)	43	24
	Strongly Disagree	57 (11.7%)	37	20
8. Compensation strategies motivate improved performance	Strongly Agree	144 (29.6%)	93	51
	Agree	155 (31.8%)	100	55
	Undecided	73 (15.0%)	47	26
	Disagree	66 (13.6%)	42	24
	Strongly Disagree	49 (10.1%)	32	17

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho1: Compensation administration has no significant influence on performance academic staff in universities in Kwara and Osun States, Nigeria.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.728 ^a	.530	.529	2.21456

a. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation Administration

The model summary indicates that the overall model has a strong explanatory power, as evidenced by an R value of .728 and an R Square (coefficient of determination) of .530. This suggests that approximately 53% of the variance in the performance of academic staff can be explained by variations in compensation administration. The adjusted R Square value of .529, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model relative to the sample size, remains consistent with the R Square, confirming the robustness of the model. Furthermore, the standard error of the estimate (2.21456) provides an indication of the average deviation of observed values from the predicted values, suggesting that predictions based on this model are relatively precise. These results collectively underscore the substantial influence of compensation administration on academic staff performance, highlighting its importance as a determinant of workplace outcomes.

Table 3: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2675.362	1	2675.362	545.876	.000 ^b
	Residual	2372.490	485	4.892		
	Total	5047.852	486			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Academic Staff

b. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation Administration

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) table further validates the statistical significance of the regression model. The F-statistic of 545.876, with a corresponding p-value (Sig.) of .000, confirms that the model explains a significant proportion of the variance in academic staff performance beyond what would be expected by chance. The partitioning of the total sum of squares into regression (2675.362) and residual (2372.490) components reveals that a substantial portion of the variability in the dependent variable is attributable to the independent variable, compensation administration. With degrees of freedom (df) of 1 for the regression and 485 for the residual, the model demonstrates high explanatory power while maintaining parsimony. These findings provide strong evidence that compensation administration plays a critical role in shaping the performance of academic staff, warranting further exploration of its mechanisms and implications.

Table 4: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.281	.468		34.654	.000
	Compensation Administration	.812	.035	.728	23.364	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Academic Staff

The coefficients table offers detailed insights into the nature and magnitude of the relationship between compensation administration and academic staff performance. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for compensation administration is .812, indicating that a one-unit increase in compensation administration is associated with an estimated .812-unit increase in academic staff performance, holding all other factors constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of .728 further emphasizes the strength of this relationship, aligning closely with the R value reported in the model summary. The t-statistic of 23.364 and its associated p-value of .000 confirm the statistical significance of the relationship, rejecting the null hypothesis that the coefficient is equal to zero. Additionally, the constant term (intercept) of 16.281 represents the baseline level of academic staff performance when compensation administration is zero.

Independent Sample Test

Table 5: Group Statistics

Variable	University Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Compensation Administration	Public University	313	3.60	0.82	0.046
	Private University	174	3.30	0.84	0.064
Performance	Public University	313	3.74	0.80	0.045
	Private University	174	3.49	0.83	0.063

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025.

The Group Statistics for Compensation Administration show that Public University staff had a higher mean ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.82$) compared to Private University staff ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.84$). Performance means remained consistent with the previous analysis: Public University staff ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.80$) and Private University staff ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.83$). These findings suggest that individuals employed by public universities tend to have a more favorable outlook on compensation administration and also report a higher degree of performance.

Table 6: Independent Samples Test

Variable	Levene's F	Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Decision
Compensation Administration	0.307	0.580	3.187	485	0.002	0.30	Significant

Variable	Levene's F	Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Decision
Performance	0.323	0.570	3.189	485	0.002	0.25	Significant

To test the hypothesis an Independent Samples Test was performed. Levene's Test showed that the variances were equal for Compensation Administration ($F = 0.307$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.580$) and Performance ($F = 0.323$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.570$). The t-test for Compensation Administration revealed a significant difference ($t = 3.187$, $df = 485$, $\text{Sig. (2 tailed)} = 0.002$). Since the p-value (0.002) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates a statistically significant difference in compensation administration between academic staff in public and private universities. The mean difference is 0.30. The Performance variable also showed a significant difference, as noted previously.

Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis, which proposed that compensation administration has no significant effect on academic staff performance, was also decisively rejected. The analysis demonstrated that compensation administration explains 53.0% of the variance in performance ($R^2 = 0.530$, $p < 0.001$), establishing it as a profoundly influential factor. This finding emphasizes that it is not merely the design of the compensation system that matters, but also its implementation. The efficiency, timeliness, transparency, and fairness of administrative processes—from payroll disbursement to the management of benefits—are integral to staff motivation and, consequently, performance. This aligns perfectly with the findings of Ogbonnaya, Gambo, and Abubakar (2024), who found in their study of private universities in North Central Nigeria that efficient compensation administration enhances employee performance. It also resonates with the work of Ibe, Okeke, and Nwogu (2024), who highlighted the importance of effective compensation practices in Nigerian universities. The negative consequences of poor administration, such as delayed salary payments, as documented by Sunoma et al. (2021) for non-academic staff, further reinforce the importance of this dimension by showing the detrimental effects when administration fails. Theoretically, effective compensation administration is the bedrock of Instrumentality in Vroom's model. If academic staff perform their duties diligently but face chronic delays in salary payments or bureaucratic hurdles in accessing their entitled benefits, the perceived link between performance and reward is severely broken. This erodes trust and creates financial and psychological distress, diverting focus and energy away from core academic responsibilities. Conversely, when compensation is administered flawlessly, it reinforces the belief that the institution honors its commitments, thereby strengthening the motivational force of the entire reward system.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrated that compensation administration has a significant influence on academic staff performance in universities in Kwara and Osun States. The regression model indicated that a substantial portion of the variance in academic staff performance can be explained by variations in compensation administration. An improvement in compensation administration was consistently associated with an increase in academic staff performance. Staff in public universities generally reported a more favorable

perception of compensation administration processes and also showed higher performance levels. This suggests that transparent, timely, and equitable implementation of compensation policies is crucial for fostering trust, motivation, and loyalty among academic staff. These findings are strongly supported by prior empirical studies. Kelechi et al. (2016) reported a significant positive relationship between effective compensation administration and productivity. Ogbonnaya, Gambo, and Abubakar (2024) corroborated this in their study on private universities in North Central Nigeria, emphasizing that competitive and efficiently managed pay systems directly contribute to improved job satisfaction and performance.

Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive significant findings, this study puts forth the following actionable recommendations.

The finding demonstrated the pervasive influence of compensation administration on performance, highlighting that the *implementation* of compensation is as critical as its design. To address this, universities are strongly advised to invest in modern Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) to automate and streamline their payroll and benefits administration. This will ensure the timely, accurate, and transparent disbursement of salaries and entitlements, directly tackling issues of administrative delay and inconsistency that erode trust and motivation.

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