

Pay Reward System Management and Staff Performance in Nigeria: A Study of the Delta State Civil Service

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ABSTRACT

This study examines pay reward system management and staff performance in Nigeria: using the Delta state civil service as a focus. The data utilized in this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. While the primary data were derived from focus group discussions, the secondary data were obtained from relevant textbooks, journals and government documents. The findings of the study indicate that the incongruence of the pay reward system of the Delta state civil service and the central guiding principles of fairness, costs of living and moderation, the in-grained culture of poor performance and the dysfunctional employee mode of entry have negatively impacted on the performance of staff. The study made some useful recommendations including the exigency of a fair, moderate, dynamic pay reward system that should be reflective of the prevailing societal costs of living, the dismantling of the culture of poor performance and a merit-based employee entry practice.

Key words: Pay Reward System, Management, Staff Performance, Nigeria

1.1 Introduction

Reward systems are arguably at the heart of employee performance. This assertion is premised on the understanding that reward systems have the potency of engendering higher levels of performance in organizations through the stimulation and direction of employees along the path of goal accomplishment (Ejumudo, 2011). As a matter of fact, employees are the most critical of all organizational resources and their capacity to function and meet the expected standards is a function of both their inward potentials and the outward environment in which they operate. This nature-nurture perspective of explaining the indicators of employee performance underscores the indispensability of reward systems as integral part of organizational environments. In this light, it is instructive to assert that well rewarded employees are much likely to feel valued and cherished by their organizations.

Despite the arguably important nexus between reward systems and employee performance in both public and private sector organizations, it is worrisome to note that the much-desired employee performance that is a critical input for sustainably increasing organizational productivity is largely absent and consequently a constraining factor to the actualization of organizational goals and objectives. For instance, while Akerele (1991) blamed the low productivity level of Nigerian workers on several factors, particularly the failure of employers to provide adequate compensation for hard work, Markova and Ford (2011) emphasized that the real success of organizations originate from employees willingness to use their creativity, abilities and know-how in the direction of their organizations' growth and development path in response to the favourably stimulating and encouraging reward practices. This study examines the relationship between the pay reward system management and staff performance in the Delta State Civil Service.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the face of the importance of an integrated sustainable pay reward system management and practice in the performance of employees in both public and private sector organizations, it is disheartening to note that pay reward systems and practices in the Nigerian public sector are largely disconnected from the demands of fairness, prevailing realities and moderation. The environment created by this reward system and practice has the potency of constituting a cog in the much-desired process of initiating and sustaining the attraction, motivation and retention of a team of competent, efficient, goal-driven, proactive and value-adding human resource in organizations and institutions. This study examines the relationship between the pay reward system management and practice and staff performance in the Delta state civil service.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the relationship between pay reward system management and staff performance in the Delta state civil service.
- ii. Assess the relationship between pay reward practice and staff performance in the Delta state civil service.
- iii. Make useful recommendations that will engender an integrated sustainable pay reward system management and practice in the Delta state civil service that will be cognisant of the dynamics of

the prevailing economic realities and costs of living.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. Is there any relationship between the pay reward system management and staff performance in the Delta state civil service?
- ii. Is there any relationship between the pay reward practice and staff performance in the Delta state civil service?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is evident in its modest efforts to establish a relationship between the somewhat static pay reward system management and practice (that is largely disconnected from the central guiding principles of fairness, costs of living and moderation) and staff performance in the Delta state civil service. The study is equally significant because of its addition to the existing body of knowledge on constantly emerging issues of reward management.

2.1 Reward System: A Conceptual Understanding

Reward systems emphasize the importance of considering all aspects of compensation as an integrated and coherent whole. All the elements of reward-base pay, pay contingent on performance, competence or constitution, employee benefits and non-financial rewards-are deliberately linked together so that they are mutually supportive. Reward systems also refer to all the employer's available tools that may be used to attract, retain, motivate and satisfy employees (Armstrong, 2012). This encapsulates the totality of investment that an organization makes in its people and everything its employees value in the employment relationship. In a simplistic parlance, the notion of reward systems mean that there is more to rewarding people than throwing money at them (World at Work, 2010). It essentially connotes that the monetary values in the reward package still matter, but they are not the only factors as Murlis and Watson (2011) rightly articulated. Reward systems are based on building a much deeper understanding of the employee agenda across all elements in employment relationships. According to Pfeffer (2008), reward systems have to do with empowering work environments in which individuals are able to use their abilities to do meaningful jobs for which they are shown appreciation so as to enhance motivation and performance. Creating such an environment may be more difficult and take more time than merely turning the reward lever.

2.1.1 Features of a Reward System

Reward systems have five aspects which have to be taken care of. These are: values of rewards, amount of rewards, timing of rewards, likelihood of rewards, and their fairness. A reward system has both monetary and non-monetary elements. The importance of the mixed nature of reward systems is evident in its potency to provide the diversity needed to match the needs of individual employees. The timing, accuracy and frequency of incentives in reward systems are the very basis of successful incentive plans. The plan requires that it should be properly communicated to the employees to encourage individual performances, provide feedback and encourage redirection.

Reward systems include promotions and compensations. Promotion that has to do with change and calls for greater responsibilities usually involves higher pay and better terms and conditions of service, and therefore, a higher status or rank. It is an upward advancement of an employee in an organization to another job, which commands better pay, better status, and higher opportunities, challenges, responsibilities and authority, better working environment and a higher rank. Promotions usually put the worker in a position where he will be of a greater value to the company and at the same time derive increased personal satisfaction and/or income. It is a kind of recognition an individual's performance and a reward that is expected to build up morale, loyalty and a sense of belonging on the part of the employees.

Compensation, on the other hand, covers monetary and non – monetary types. Both types should be integrated in a fashion that will satisfy employee's basic needs and conform to the three parameters of external equity, internal equity and individual equity. The external equity must ensure fairness vis-à-vis compensation standards in the industry. Crucially while these three factors are related to broad force such as the cost of living, the rate of inflation, pay scale in the industry and pay scales within the organization, the company can like the rewards directly to its strategic goals by pegging it to the employee's contribution towards achieving them. Thus companies will be able to ensure that their pay systems are integrated firmly into their business.

2.1.2 Determinants of Reward System

Most organizations believe that the reward system is designed to pay off for merit. The problem is that the definitions of merit are often data table. Some define merit as 'deserving', while to others, merit is 'achieving excellence'. Deserving rewards may take into consideration such factors as intelligence, effort or seniority. A major contributor to the problem is the difficult of defining excellence is performance, we concede how problem is the difficulty of defining excellence. If excellence is performance, we concede how unsatisfactory our efforts

have been at trying to measure performance. Creation of quantifiable and meaningful performance measures of almost all white-collar jobs, and many blue-collar jobs, has eluded us. While few will disagree with the viewpoint that the merit concept for distributing rewards is desirable, what constitute merit is highly debatable. The popular criteria by which rewards can be distributed are:

Performance: Performance is the output. To reward people in the organization, therefore, requires some agreed-upon criteria for defining performance. A difficult issue with performance is differentiating between quantity and quality. For example, an individual may generate a high output his performance standards might be quite low. Hence, where controls are not instituted to protect against such abuses, we often find quantity replacing quality.

Effort: The rewarding of effort represents the classical example of rewarding means rather than the ends. In organizations, where performance is generally of a low caliber, rewarding of effort may be the only criterion to differentiate rewards on the assumption that those who try, should be encouraged. In many cases, effort can count more than actual performance. The employee, who can show his effort, without really putting one, will stand to be rewarded more than his sincere counterparts.

Seniority: Seniority dominates most government organizations in the world, and while they do not play an important role in business organizations, there are evidences that length of time on the job is a major factor in determining the allocation of rewards. The greatest virtue of seniority is that, relative to other criteria, it is easy to decide an employee's seniority. So seniority represents an easily quantifiable criterion which can be substituted for performance.

Skills Held: Another practice that is not common in organizations is to allocate rewards on the basis skills of employees, regardless of whether the skills are used. Those individuals who possess the highest skills or talents will be rewarded commensurately. Where such practices are used, it is not unusual to see individuals become 'credential crazy'. The requirement that an individual needs a university degree in order to attain a certain level within the organization is utilizing skills as a determinant of rewards. When individual needs a university degree in order to attain a certain level within the organization is utilizing skills as a determinant of rewards. When individuals enter an organization, their skill level is usually a major determinant of the compensation that they will receive. In a competitive market, skills become a major element in the reward package.

Job Difficulty: The complexity of the job can be a criterion by which rewards can be distributed. For example, those jobs that are highly repetitive and can be learnt more quickly may be viewed as less deserving in reward than those that are more complex and sophisticated. Jobs that are difficult to perform, or are undesirable due to stress or due to unpleasant working conditions, may have to carry with them rewards are higher in order to attract workers to these activities.

Discretionary Time: The greater is the discretion called for on a job, the greater is the impact of mistakes and a need for good judgment. In a job that has been completely programmed, that is, where each step has been procedurized and there is no room for decision making by the incumbent, there is a litter discretionary time. Such jobs require less judgment and lower rewards can be offered. As discretionary time increases, greater judgmental abilities are needed and rewards must commensurately be expanded.

The above classifications suggest that there are number of determinants by which rewards can be allocated. Most organizations consider merit as the major criterion that will determine rewards. However, what constitutes merit is a value judgment. Performance too is a variable that is frequently cited as the basis on which rewards are allocated. Again we are faced with problem of measurement as well as the belief that other criterion such as effort, or seniority are as important or more important than performance in evaluating an individual's contribution to the organization and determining the rewards for that contribution. In impossible to attain, performance can be manipulated to emphasize visible behaviours. Some parts of the job are more highly visible than others, yet the invisible factors may be as relevant or more relevant to the performance of that job. For example, it is a lot easier to evaluate an individual on whether he arrives at and leaves from work on time than to assess the creativity he demonstrates in the decisions he makes on the job.

2.1.3 Evaluating the Reward System

The reward system should be audited regularly to assess its effectiveness, the extent to which it is adding value and its relevance to the present and future needs of the organization. This audit should include an assessment of opinions about the reward system by its key users and those who are affected by it. This leads to a diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses and an assessment of what needs to be done and why. The operation of the reward system should be monitored continually by the personnel department through such audits and by the use of comparative ratio and attribution analysis. In particular, it is necessary to analyse data on upgrading, the effectiveness with which performance management processes are functioning and the amount paid out on pay-for-performance scheme and the impact they are making on results.

Internal relatives should also be monitored by carrying out periodic studies of the differentials that exists vertically within departments or between categories of employees. The studies should examine the differentials built into the pay structure and also analyse the differences between the average rates of pay at different levels. If this it is revealed that because of changes in job values and/or are no longer 'felt fair', then further investigations

to establish the reasons for this situation can be conducted and, if necessary, corrective action taken. External relatives should also be monitored by tracking movements in market rates by studying published data and conducting pay survey. Moreover, no reward innovations should take place unless a cost-benefit analyse has forecast that they will add value. The audit and monitoring processes should establish the extent to which the predicted benefits have been obtained and check on the costs against the forecast.

2.1.4 Communicating Reward System to Employees

Employee reward systems communicate messages to employees about the beliefs of the organization on what is felt to be important when valuing people in their roles. They deliver two messages: this is how we value your contribution; this is what we are paying for. It is therefore important to communicate to employees collectively about the reward policies and practices of the organization and individually about how those policies affect them – now and in the future. Transparency is essential, especially as employees generally should understand: the reward policies of the organization in setting pay level, providing benefits and progressing pay the pay structure – grade and pay range and how the structure is managed; the benefits structure – the range of benefits provided, with details of the pension scheme and other major benefits; methods of grading and regarding jobs. The employees should also know the evaluation scheme and how it operates; pay progression – how pay progresses within the pay structure and how pay decisions affecting employees collectively and individually are made; pay-for-performance schemes – how individual, team and organization-wide schemes work and how employees can benefit from them; pay for skill or competence – how any skill-based or competence-based schemes work. Additionally, the employees should be acquainted with the aims of the organization in using such schemes, and how employees can benefit from them; performance management – how performance management processes operate and the parts played by managers and employees as well as reward developments and initiatives.

2.2 Reward System Management: A Conceptual Clarification

Reward system management is concerned with the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies that aim to reward people fairly, equitably and consistently in accordance with their value to the organization (Armstrong, 2012). It deals with the design, implementation and maintenance of reward practices that are geared to the improvement of organizational, team and individual performance. Reward system management is an integral part of a human resource management (HRM) approach to managing people. It supports the achievement of the organizational strategy in the sense that it addresses longer term issues relating to how people should be valued for what they do and what they achieve and it is integrated with other HRM strategies, especially those concerning human resource development.

Reward system management is concerned with developing a positive employment relationship and psychological contract and adopting a ‘total reward’ approach which recognizes that there are a number of ways in which people can be rewarded (Cascio, 2012). It embraces both financial and non-financial rewards and recognizes the integration of the two core elements in order to maximize the effectiveness of reward policies and practices. Reward system management is premised on a well-articulated philosophy- a set of beliefs and guiding principles that are consistent with the values of organizations and accepts HRM as investment in human capital from which a reasonable return is required. It focuses on the development of the skills and competencies of employees in order to increase the resource based capability of organizations and it is an integrated process which can operate with flexibility (Andrew, 2005).

2.3 Strategic Aims of Reward System Management

The overall strategic aim of reward system management is to develop and implement the reward policies, processes and practices required to support the achievement of organizational goals by helping to ensure that it has the skilled, competent, well-motivated and committed people it needs (Mintzberg, 2011). The philosophy underpinning the strategy is that people should be rewarded for the value they create. The objective is therefore to create reward processes that are based on beliefs about what the organization values and is prepared to pay for. The reward strategy will be driven by the need to reward the right things to convey the right message about what is important in terms of expected behaviours and outcomes (Federick, 1986). Reward system management strategy defines what the organization intends to do in the longer term to develop and implement reward policies, practices and processes that will enhance the achievement of its goals. It establishes priorities for developing reward plans that are aligned to human resource and organizational strategies. Brown (2011) asserts that reward strategy is ultimately a way of creating value and recognizing that effective reward system management encapsulates the process of clearly defining goals that are linked to organizational objectives, designing pay and reward system management programmes that are tailored to the needs of organizations and their people in a consistently integrated fashion.

The basic purpose of reward system management is thus to support the macro organizational strategy, align reward policies and processes to corporate needs and provide a sense of purpose and direction and a framework for reward planning (Quinn, 2010). The criteria for an effective reward system management are that

it should link reward plans to corporate goals; reflect and help to enact organizational values; be clear on the goals but flexible in achieving them; be justified in terms of how it will help to meet business needs; take account of the resources available and contain achievable plans for implementation which will establish priorities that are incremental.

2.4 Pay Reward System

The debate as to whether money motivates is still on-going. There is however the contention that money can take on varying degrees of importance because it has the potential of serving sundry needs (Bright, 2012). More importantly, pay reward system is a product of an organization's philosophy and policy that provide guidelines for the implementation of reward strategies and the design of incentives and packages. This understanding explains why the policy direction and the level of rewards of an organization is an indicator of its pay reward system whether the company is a high payer, is content to pay average. Pay reward system that is an out-growth of policy refers to the 'pay stance' of an organization.

Pay reward system is a function of the inter-play between the extent to which the organization demands high levels of performance from its employees, the degree to which there is competition for good quality people, the traditional posture of the company, the organization culture and the level of commitment to the dynamics of a competitive high pay (Atiomo,1984). Pay reward systems are therefore externally competitive and internally equitable, but may have to sacrifice its ideals of equity to the realism of the market place. They also involve an integrated approach that relates pay to individual, team or organizational performance and encompass processes that encourage flexibility in response to fast-changing conditions (Anikpo, 1994). The three major determinants of pay reward systems are pay equity, pay level and pay administration practices.

2.5 Staff Performance: A Conceptual Understanding

Staff Performance is a multi-dimensional construct, the measurement of which varies depending on a variety of factors (Bates and Holton (2009:13). It can be simply understood to mean the record of outcomes achieved among staff. Kane (2010:23) argued that performance is something that employees leave behind and that exists apart from the purpose. Bernadin et al (2010) also opined that performance is the outcome of work because they provide the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of organizations, customer satisfaction, and economic contribution. This refers to outputs/outcomes (accomplishments) and it is about doing the work as well as being about the results achieved. Staff performance should therefore be regarded as behaviour – the way in which organizations, teams and individuals get their work done.

Campbell (2009) posited that staff performance is behaviour and should be distinguished from the outcomes, because they can be contaminated by system factors. A more comprehensive view of staff performance is achieved if it is defined as embracing both behaviour and outcomes of employee. This is well articulated by Brumbach (2010:10) who asserted that performance means both behaviours and results. Behaviours emanate from the performer and transform performance from abstraction to action. Not just the instruments for results, behaviours are also outcomes in their own right – the product of mental and physical effort applied to tasks – and can be judged apart from results.

The above understanding of staff performance leads to the conclusion that when managing the performance of teams and individuals both inputs (behaviours) and outputs (results) should be taken into consideration. This is the so-called 'mixed model' (Hartle, 2010).

2.6 Pay Reward System Management and Staff Performance

Managing staff performance through effective pay reward system management is a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained growth and development in organizations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors (Armstrong and Baron, 2012). This pay reward system-staff performance linkage is strategic in the sense that it is concerned with the broader issues facing organizations if they are to function effectively in their environments and with the general direction in which they intend to go in order to achieve longer-term goals. It is integrated because it links different aspects of human resource management, especially organizational development and reward in order to achieve a coherent approach to the management and development of people (Hulin and Water, 1971). Ensuring sustained higher levels of employee performance through competitive pay reward system is a way of achieving organizational goals. This process is owned and driven by line management.

Essentially, employees in exchange for their work generally expect some appreciation. Arguably, money is the most important motivation for employees, though non-financial incentives work efficiently (Wood, 2012). The goals of pay reward systems management are to design a competitive pay structure that will attract, motivate and retain competent employees. In so far as reward is what employees receive in exchange for their contribution to organizations, pay reward system management helps the organization obtain, maintain and retain a productive workforce.

The pay reward systems bring about high productivity of workers and in turn help the organization to accomplish its goal. Locke and Latham (1988) argue that an individual's motivation is enhanced when feedback on performance is available, that is the extent to which the individual is committed to pursuing the goal even when things get rough. Goal commitment is likely to be enhanced when goals are made public and when they are set by the individual rather than imposed externally. According to Humble (1967), a major aspect of management by objectives is the intension that the process should attempt to harmonize individual and organizational goals. In order for the organization to achieve its goals there is need to integrate the personal goals with the goals of the organization and this can be done by an effective reward system that brings about employees' high productivity.

Without adequate pay reward system, current employees are likely to leave and it will also be difficult to engage new people. The outcome of pay dissatisfaction may detract from the objective of enhancing organizational productivity and suggest a decline in the quality of work life. In severe cases, pay issues may lower employee performance, increase grievances or cause workers to quit (Andrea, 2012). Poorly remunerated jobs can also lead to absenteeism and other forms of employee withdrawal. Even over-payment can harm the organization and its people, causing anxiety, guilt and discomfort as Thompson (2013) explicitly stated.

Although high pay reward costs reduces an organization's competitiveness and its ability to provide jobs, human resource departments can contribute to the organization's strategic objectives through a balance between employee satisfaction and competitiveness in the organization's compensation programme. By achieving desired results, pay reward policies reinforce those behaviours that comfort the organization's strategies. The flexibility and responsiveness of pay reward system management can efficaciously stimulate the process of enhancing employee performance in organizations (Akerle, 1991). This explains why pay levels must respond to the supply and demand of workers in the labour market and the competitiveness in industries and among organizations.

2.7 Public Service Reward System in Nigeria

Pay in the public services of Nigeria could be viewed from three phases. The first phase being the pay practices before the Public Service Review Commission. The second is the Unified Grading and Salary Structure adopted after the work of a public service review commission, while the third represents the current state of affairs of partial unification of the pay system. In order to find a linkage between the past and the present it is relevant to trace briefly the history of organized pay rates in the public service.

From the colonial period to date, there have been series of reviews in terms of grading and wage structures as well as other conditions of services in the public service of Nigeria. These reviews were effected either by unilateral revision of rates of pay by employers, by series of tripartite provincial wages committees or through ad-hoc fact-finding committees and commissions of enquiry set up by government. Some of these are listed below:

2.7.1 Hunt's Commission (1934)

The colonial administration set up the Hunt's commission in 1934 to structure the wages of unskilled workers in the public service. Before then, little was known about the earliest pay exercises and practices in Nigeria.

2.7.2 The Bridges Committee (1941) and the Provincial Wages Committees (1942)

These tripartite committees were appointed through official directives, to examine the adequacy of wage rates of workers on the basis of changes in the cost of living and make recommendations about temporary increases. The cost of living allowances (COLA, as these were popularly known) were awarded by the committees and could be regarded as constituting important features of the wages structure of that period.

2.7.3 The Miller Committee (1946)

This committee examined the cost of living allowances of the un-established and daily-paid government employees, consolidated the COLA with basic wages, and introduced zonalization of wages throughout Nigeria. It made provision for regular annual increments and classified un-established labour into Grades I, II and III and skilled Artisans into Grades I, II and III. As a result of the 1945 general strike Tudoe Davies, and Harragin fact-finding "Commissions of Enquiry" were set up. The report of the former brought about an increase of 50 per cent in the cost of living allowance (COLA) for public service employees, while the later revised the salary and wages structure created by the various ad-hoc adjustments made by the earlier provincial committees. Furthermore, the Commission examined the salary structure and remuneration of established civil servants and evolved the two service structure of senior and junior civil services.

2.7.4 Temporary Additions to Wages/Salaries (1950-1952)

After the World War II, there emerged the post-war pattern of high cost of living. As the Harragin salary revision could no longer withstand the pressure of high cost of living of workers, temporary additions to rates of pay were made throughout Nigeria in 1950. A salary revision was carried out internally in 1952, by two administrative officers, Messrs Milne and Levy.

2.7.5 L.H. Gorsuch Commission-(1954-1955)

The commission, in its report, recommended the division of the service into four broad classes corresponding to the general educational standards of the time. These are the sub-clerical manipulative clerical and technical, executive and higher technical and administrative and professional classes. This replaced the two-tier service structure of 'junior service', manned by Africans, earlier introduced by the Harragin Report of 1946. The four-class system by Gorsuch consisted of professional/administrative classes divided into cadres, with each (cadre) having between four and eight grades or promotion levels. The result was a multiplicity of cadres and salary scales with the federal civil service alone having more than 600 cadres and about 100 salary scales. It is instructive to note that the Gorsuch Report did not make any pretensions towards changing neither the orientation (work ethic) of the civil servant nor the technology of its operation.

2.7.6 Morgan Commission (1963/1964)

After the attainment of political independence by Nigeria in 1960, there emerged pressure from the newly-formed Joint Action Committee of Nigerian Trade Unions. The federal and the four regional governments came together and appointed the Morgan Commission in 1963. The commission recommended a general revision of salaries and wages; and for purposes of wage fixing, it recommended the division of the country into national economic zones in terms of geographical areas. It also recommended a progressive levelling up of minimum wages paid throughout the country until, in due course, a national minimum wage emerges. By a tripartite agreement, otherwise known as Okotie-Eboh agreement on the commission's recommendation, six wage areas-two in the south and four in the North (later reduced to two by the government of the Northern Region) were created. Also, the labour grades were reduced to two and the unskilled and semi-skilled were grouped into one category, while skilled labour was raised to 6/3d in the Southern zones.

2.7.7 Edwood Panel (1966)

This was purely a grading panel, although it mentioned the disparity of wages between the top and the bottom levels in the public service.

2.7.8 Adebo Wages and Salaries Review Commission (1970-1971)

This Commission was headed by Chief S.O. Adebo. It looked into wages and salaries as affected by the cost of living and the development of the national economy. With wide terms of reference covering review of wages and salaries in the public service, rationalization and harmonization of pay and conditions of employment between the public and private sectors, consideration of the need to establish a system of constant review and harmonization of remunerations in the public services, the commission was said to have gone beyond its terms of reference and recommended a new 20-grade salary structure. The commission also defined the role and responsibilities of permanent secretaries and handled issues of management of statutory corporations, productivity, prices and incomes policy, and the requirements for better industrial relations. It also recommended the establishment of a public service review commission. Furthermore, it reduced the wage zones to three, raised the minimum wage rates per zone and gave some percentage increases to the established and monthly rated staff (OHSF, 1988).

The above first phase was characterized by a multifarious grading and pay structure based on the traditional British Civil Service concept of classes, viz: administrative, professional, clerical, technical, skilled and unskilled, etc. There were then more than 600 cadres having arbitrary relationship with the work contents of the various posts. The several salary scales could not be scientifically related to one another and the differentials in pay amongst the various levels in the promotional ladder were invariably too insignificant to make promotion meaningful to the recipients. During this period, the review machineries (e.g., the provincial wages committee, 1937 and the Whitley Council, 1948) did not function efficiently and failed, either for reasons or their composition or political complication. It is relevant to note that the grading referred to here "laid emphasis on academic attainments which seldom have any direct bearing on the output requirements of the positions. The logic in the old system was that if a capable person was employed as judged by the academic performance, it allowed that his/her services would provide an equitable return on the employer's investment in terms of his/her salary" (OHSF, 1988).

2.7.9 Udoji Public Service Review Commission (1974)

Specifically, the commission examined, among others things, the organization, structure and management of the public services; investigate and evaluate methods of recruitment and conditions and undertake the re-grading of all posts in the services, establish scales of salaries corresponding to such grades. The commission was thus confronted with a fundamental question of how to design a reward system that would meet the needs of the dynamic and expanding Nigerian economy. In implementing the white paper on the Udoji recommendations, the extremely powerful top bureaucracy under the Gowon regime, spurred by huge revenue surpluses from oil, decided to facilitate the implementation of the handsome remuneration package (Yahaya and Akinyele, 1992). The more fundamental aspects of the report were to be implemented as soon as conditions were conducive', which turned out to be never. Thus, throughout the nearly three decades of its post-independence life, the Nigerian Civil Service had to be contend with major institutional and structural problems which, in no small

measure, combined not only to drastically weaken its capacity to perform but also its creditability in the face of both government and the general public (FMI, 1974).

As a result of wide criticisms, mostly due to misunderstanding of the operation of the system, there have been serious distortions to the Unified Grading and Salary Structure. This represents the third phase in the pay system in the public service. In 1981, the universities were taken out of the Unified Grading and Salary Structure and given a new separate and higher pay called the University Salary Structure (USS). This was sequel to the report of the presidential commission on salary and conditions of service of the universities, otherwise called the Cookey Commission.

Another presidential commission on parastatal under the chairmanship of Mr. G. Onosode also recommended the removal of some parastatals from the UGSS. The central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) had opted out of the UGSS and settled for a different structure and higher pay. Lately, the Unified Grading and Salary Structure, hitherto a structure without any overlapping, has been elongated from seven steps on some ranges to more than ten steps with very wide overlapping that stretches beyond two or three adjacent ranges. It is regarded that the idea was to remove stagnation and motivate officers who, for reasons other than non-performance failed to gain promotion. It would appear that the foregoing distortions had undermined the fundamental principles which are the strength of the UGSS.

2.7.10 1988 Civil Service Reforms

The 1988 Reform was instituted against this background. The rationale for the Reforms becomes obvious from the myriad of problems which had bedevilled the Civil Service and which had severely constrained its efficacy.

2.8 Issues and Problems of the Public Service Reward System in Nigeria

The public service reward system in Nigeria has been plagued with sundry problems including wage determination by wage tribunals, unrealistic pay indicators, gap between the public and the private sectors and economic mismanagement and erosion of pay by inflationary trend.

2.8.1 Wage Determination by Wage Tribunals

Wage determination by wage tribunals may be a reflection of the manipulation by the elite in the Nigeria society, apart from the fact that it could be unilateral in approach. Moreover, wage tribunal system may not be consultative enough and could consequently fail to capture the different determinants that should be considered in arriving at a pay system that is both rewarding and objective. Wage tribunal system appears to be fiat-like in approach and the final product may not be a comprehensive and holistic representation of the realities on ground.

2.8.2 Unrealistic Pay Indicators

The indices used in determining pay could be unrealistic and faulty. Any pay system that does not take into cognizance the demand and supply implications of the economic system of any society lacks the potencies of actualizing a pay reward system that will be a critical input in the productive output or outcome of that society.

2.8.3 Gap between the Public and the Private Sectors

The difference in the pay system of the public sector when juxtaposed with that in the private sector may be unrealistic and disturbing considering the fact that they are operators in the same socio-economic environment. The operating authority in the public sector in ensuring a reasonable measure of comparability between public and private sectors seem to be also handicapped by inadequate control of the private sector by relevant authorities. It is gathered that there are pays which cannot be related to the economy of the country and the presence of many such pays render the public sector pay incomparable in any sense.

2.8.4 Erosion of Pay by Inflationary Trend

In the civil services of Nigeria, salary and wages have been mainly handled centrally at the federal level (Yahaya and Akinyele, 1992). The major problems are its inappropriateness as a tool for coping with inflation. In this context, the pay reward system is conservative to the extent that it does not reflect the changing inflationary trend. The financial capacities of civil servants are consequently largely eroded because of the dwindling purchasing power of their pay.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

For purpose of this study, the equity theory of Adam and the expectancy theory of Vroom were adopted. According to Adam (1964), people make comparisons between themselves and other in terms of what they invest in their work (input) and what outcomes they receive from it. Their senses of equity or fairness or applied to their subjective view of conditions and not necessarily to the objective situation. The theory states that when people perceive an equal situation, they experience "equality tension" which they attempt to reduce by appropriate behavior. This behavior may be to act positively to improve their performance and seek to improve rewards, or may be to act negatively, for instance, working more slowly (on the grounds of being under rated or under paid). Managers should be advised to reflect on the idea of equity theory especially in recognizing that subject perceptions are extremely powerful factors in motivation. According to Jaque (1961), questions of equitable payment in relations to discretion or autonomy available to an individual in the job are key factors in

achieving a sense of fairness at work.

The expectancy theory, on the other hand, provides a guide for understanding the condition under which an economic incentive system (such as performance, contingent rewards) might be successful (Vroom, 1964). A key point of this theory is that an individual's behaviour is formed not on objective reality, but on his or her subjective perception of the reality. The core of the theory relates to how a person perceives the relationship between three things, effort, performance and rewards. Vroom also explains three factors which stimulate an individual to put effort into things or work which is based on the individual perception of the situation. These includes: expectancy, that is to extent of the individual's perception or believes that a particular act will produce a particular outcome, instrumentality that is the extent to which the individual perceive that effective performance will lead to desired rewards and valence, that is the strength of the belief that attractive reward potentially available. Vroom also distinguished "valence" from value, by defining the formal in terms of the anticipated satisfaction the individual hopes to obtain from the outcome or reward, and by defining "Value" in terms of the actual satisfaction obtained by the individual.

As stated by Vroom the three factors expectancy, instrumentality and Valence combine together to create a driving force which eventually motivates an individual to put in effort, achieving a level of performance and obtain rewards. Vroom opined that force was a multiple of expectancy and valence. The expectancy theory takes a compressive view of the motivation process, underscores the importance of individual perceptions of reality in the motivational process and shows that individuals will only act when they have a reasonable expectancy that their behavior will lead to the desired outcomes.

The utilitarian value of Adam's equity and Vroom's expectancy theories is evident in their relevance in explaining the relationship between pay reward system management and staff performance in the Delta State Civil Service.

This theory is based on the work context that persons make comparisons between themselves and other in terms of what they invest in their work which is the input and what outcomes they receive from the input. So in relating it to the Nigerian public workers, we will discover that workers, strongly advocates for equity when it comes to the level of services- they render to the public sector organization and what benefits they stand to get especially in the situations where top government officials receive high salaries or steal government funds at the expenses of the lower grade level income earners. It is no doubt that this would certainly affect the workers moral as well as their level of performance.

Conclusively, workers in the public sectors would not be productive if there is no equity in the design of reward system. The theory state that when people perceive an equal situation, they experience "equality tension" which they attempt to reduce by appropriate behavior which can be to act positively to improve their performance and to seek improve rewards, or may be to act negatively, like working slowly on the grounds of being under rated or paid. And as such, there should be fairness in terms of rewarding workers (Schuler, 2011) in order for public or private organizations to achieve its goals or objectives through performance being motivated by its reward system.

3.1 Research Methods

This study adopted a qualitative case study method. This research method, according to Yin (2003), has three aspects viz: investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, the existence of boundaries between the phenomenon and the real life context and the use of multiple sources of evidence. The qualitative case study method also lends itself to exploratory, descriptive and explanatory methods. Yin emphasized that exploratory research attempts to find out about a situation, while the descriptive and explanatory research types respectively seek to know "what happened" and how and "why it happened." This study which examined pay reward system and staff performance in the Delta state civil service utilized both primary and secondary sources of data.

3.2 Primary Data

The primary data utilized in this study were derived from focus group discussion sessions conducted by the researcher. Whether to test ideas for new projects, to uncover attitudes to volunteering or understand the needs of the community, focus groups are a straightforward way for research into topical issues that can benefit from the vast ideas and experiences of experts and significant others from different or related fields of study. Focus groups have proved to be a highly insightful research technique for engaging a group of people with a question, product or idea. Bringing together a group to discuss a particular topic provides a more natural setting than one-to-one interviews, as it allows participants to share their ideas and experiences and through discussion new strands of thought can emerge (Stone, 2013). This qualitative research method can generate rich data in a less resource intensive manner than interviewing. Using focus group discussion technique to engage with questions of local, national or global significance can form part of the design process of a wider survey, or it can uncover the opinions of key stakeholders.

The design, size and facilitation of a focus group can be flexible, although a key to its success is having clear aims and objectives and keeping it enjoyable and useful for the participants so as to ensure the information gathered is the most useful. Focus groups in this study were structured in a manner that the researcher interacted with the participants so as to allow conversations to flow and develop, rather than to encourage expected answers. To enable these conversations to occur, it is important to clearly plan the focus group sessions, create a topic guide and think carefully about the facilitation of the session or sessions (Charleston, 2012).

In order to ensure the fruitful use of the focus group discussion (FGD) technique, a topic guide was planned in advance and the areas for discussion were outlined with key ideas and questions to be discussed. The topic guide was constructed with some degree of flexibility because the topics may be covered in a different order. To guarantee robust and insightful discussion sessions, the mix of individuals that participated was carefully determined by the researcher who facilitated during the discussion sessions. The importance of this approach is evident in the fact that more interesting ideas can emerge from a diverse range of individuals, as their experiences and attitudes may be broader as Bolt (2011) rightly articulated.

Three sessions were conducted with three different groups made up of six (6) participants each. There is no optimal number of participants advocated in the literature, but in order to fully involve every participant and avoid uncontrollable discussion sessions, Frich-Lyon, (1981) recommended 8-12 participants, Viassof (1990) recommended 6-12 participants, Oke and Oluwadare (2002) recommended 5-8 participants and Andrew (2010) recommended 6-8 participants. In this study, the researcher used six (6) persons.

The three groups were made up of civil servants and political public servants. While the first group comprised of directors in the office of the head of service, the second and the third groups were made up of permanent secretaries and commissioners on the board of the Delta state civil service commission. The three FGD sessions were conducted in three different days during the month of January, 2014. Before the FGD commenced, the researcher discussed fully the issues with the participants to ensure they clearly understood them. The discussion was guided by the selected topic pay reward system management and staff performance in the Delta state civil service and it was introduced by the researcher as the facilitator. Different questions relevant to the above topic were asked and the discussions took place in a friendly and productive manner with an observer in each of the three focus group discussion sessions. According to Woods (2012), it may also be helpful to include observers in addition to the facilitator, either for writing notes or 'sparks' who take a role in discussion offering opposing arguments to encourage new ideas into the group if necessary. Also, the focus group discussions were recorded in order to ensure that the data captured can be analyzed later. This can be achieved through detailed note taking, although a preferred option is to record the session, so that a transcript of what was said can be written up later. Digital recorders are usually available for hire from your university. It should be noted transcription takes considerable time to carry out. A debrief of the session with the facilitators and any observers is also useful as they may have further insights (Opara, 1984).

3.3 Secondary Data

The secondary data in this study were derived through the content analysis instrument. This instrument was utilized in collecting relevant data from texts, journals, newspapers and magazines in an analytical manner that is fruitful for the study. Content or textual analysis enables a researcher to carry out an in-depth analysis of existing data and to provide explanation for them in a manner that is useful and fruitful as Richard (2012) rightly emphasized.

3.4 Data Analysis

Analyzing focus group discussions involve firstly revisiting your aims and objectives and looking through the detailed notes or a full transcript if you have had the time to produce one. The analysis is aimed at identifying key themes and points of consensus or disagreement as well as noting useful quotations which reflect the purposes of your research (Woods, 2012). In this study, all the notes taken at the focus group discussion sessions were read and transcribed. The transcribed versions of the focus group sessions were compared with the notes taken during FGD sessions to fill the identified gaps. The consensus in the opinions and the commonality in the ideas expressed and presented during the focus group discussion sessions constituted the basis for answering the research questions raised in this study. This process was supported with the qualitative data generated in the study through in-depth content analysis of cognate text books and journals (Richard, 2012) premised on the thematic discourse reward system management and staff performance in the Delta state civil service.

4.1 Data Presentation

In Nigeria, the civil service is the bedrock of the executive arm of government and, by implication, the nerve centre for the implementation of governmental policies. The Nigerian civil service is therefore responsible for the management of governmental machinery and the execution of the functions and duties that public administration demands. The strategic importance of the Nigerian civil service is evidently not subject to

controversy primarily because of the pivotal position that it occupies in the Nigerian society. In fact, the notable importance of the Nigerian civil service may have accounted partly for the numerous commissions that have been set up to deal with the reward system affecting the governmental sector. The Udoji public service review commission (1974), for instance, addressed itself to reform measures that would enable both the federal and state governments to assume not only constructive roles in planning and administering development programmes. A key area addressed in the reform is the poor reward system. The commission was thus confronted with a fundamental question of how to design a reward system that would meet the needs of the dynamic and expanding Nigerian economy.

Available data obtained during the focus group discussion sessions with directors in the office of the head of service of Delta State, some permanent secretaries in the service and commissioners on the board of the civil service commission of the state reveal that the indispensability of the state civil service is not in doubt despite the growing concern about its poor and abysmal performance. This agrees with the contention of Peters and Pierre (2007: 2) that although the failure of the public sector has its own negative consequences for government and society, yet; it is the major point of contact between citizens and the state. The Nigerian civil service has, in fact, come under severe attack for its performance dilemma despite the gargantuan of reforms in the sector (Ejumudo, 2011).

The focus group discussion sessions also indicated that, in the face of the somewhat disappointingly low performance of the Delta State civil service and the poor service delivery record, the reward system is quite poor and its response to the changing economic realities is weak and slow. The discussants generally agreed that the poor reward system management in the Delta State civil service is a reflection of the generic trend that is obtainable and discernable in the Nigerian civil service. They were also of the opinion that while there is a weak relationship between the pay reward system and staff performance in the Delta State civil service, the relationship is not significant. This assertion was based largely on their argument that the real problematic issue is the worrisome and disturbing prevailing environment and culture of abysmally poor performance in the civil service, that the poor pay reward system is part of. They added that the reviews so far implemented in the Delta State civil service produced only a token effect considering the fact that the general attitude of civil servants in Delta State did not change in the face of such pay reward system reviews.

The following tables representing the pay reviews in the Delta State Civil Service between 1993 and 2011 indicates that the pay reward system is not only quite poor and its response to the changing economic realities weak and slow, it is also in tandem with the informed views expressed by the various participants in the three focus group discussion sessions:

**CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC SERVICE SALARY STRUCTURE (CONPSS)
 EFFECTIVE 1993**

PAY	GRADE LEVEL
01	4356
02	4440
03	4560
04	5088
05	5760
06	7020
07	8748
08	12624
09	14568
10	17232
12	19416
13	21358
14	24276
15	25700
16	29112
17	31662

SOURCE: NATIONAL SALARIES, INCOME AND WAGES COMMISSION, ABUJA.

**HARMONISED PUBLIC SERVICE SALARY STRUCTURE (HAPSS)
 EFFECTIVE 1st May, 1996**

GRADE LEVEL	PAY	INCREMENT RATE
01	7500	3144
02	7725	3285
03	7919	3359
04	8228	3140
05	9103	3343
06	11612	4732
07	14522	5774
08	18240	5616
09	21026	6458
10	24284	7052
12	28584	9168
13	31585	10227
14	34601	10325
15	48977	23277
16	62355	33243
17	66927	35265

SOURCE: NATIONAL SALARIES, INCOME AND WAGES COMMISSION, ABUJA.

**CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC SERVICE SALARY STRUCTURE (CONPSS)
 EFFECTIVE 1999**

PAY	GRADE LEVEL	INCREMENT RATE
01	8437.50	937
02	8497.94	4433
03	8552.09	772
04	8877.17	958
05	9831.24	728
06	11752.38	140
07	15683.76	1161
08	19517.23	1277
09	22498.25	1472
10	25984.09	1700
12	30012.99	1428
13	33164.67	1579
14	36331.05	1730
15	51334.20	2357
16	65602.98	3247
17	70253.44	3326

SOURCE: NATIONAL SALARIES, INCOME AND WAGES COMMISSION, ABUJA.

**CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC SERVICE SALARY STRUCTURE (CONPSS)
 EFFECTIVE 1ST JANUARY, 2004**

PAY	GRADE LEVEL	INCREMENT RATE
01	12808.13	4371
02	12930.85	4433
03	13058.52	4506
04	13572.58	4695
05	15139.98	5308
06	18066.13	6454
07	26988.66	11305
08	34092.23	14575
09	39601.80	17103
10	46044.39	20060
12	53161.10	23149
13	56096.08	22932
14	64835.23	28534
15	88579.28	37245
16	98112.57	32510
17	109404.62	39151

SOURCE: NATIONAL SALARIES, INCOME AND WAGES COMMISSION, ABUJA.

**HARMONISED PUBLICSERVICE SALARY STRUCTURE (HAPSS)
 EFFECTIVE JANUARY-MAY 2007**

PAY	GRADE LEVEL	INCREMENT RATE
01	15600	2796
02	16032	3102
03	16440	2976
04	18288	4716
05	20664	5525
06	25044	6978
07	30576	3588
08	42768	8676
09	49392	9791
10	60000	13956
12	67704	14543
13	76032	19936
14	78336	13501
15	90312	1733
16	111703	13591
17	120298	10894

SOURCE: NATIONAL SALARIES, INCOME AND WAGES COMMISSION, ABUJA.

**CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC SERVICE SALARY STRUCTURE (CONPSS)
 EFFECTIVE FROM JULY 2010**

GRADE LEVEL	PAY	INCREMENT RATE
01	17,073.14	1827
02	17,350.44	1827
03	17,586.94	1827
04	18,422.81	1827
05	20,875.19	900
06	25,451.75	900
07	40,642.53	900
08	52,507.12	900
09	61,671.16	900
10	72,386.61	900
12	83,495.65	900
13	93,183.57	900
14	102,914.50	900
15	135,603.03	900
16	169,127.29	900
17	296,566.83	900

SOURCE: NATIONAL SALARIES, INCOME AND WAGES COMMISSION, ABUJA.

**CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC SERVICE SALARY STRUCTURE (CONPSS)
 EFFECTIVE 23RD MARCH, 2011**

GRADE LEVEL	PAY	INCREMENT RATE
01	18,900.00	1826.86
02	19,177.23	1826.79
03	19,413.76	1826.82
04	20,249.64	1826.83
05	21,775.19	900.00
06	26,351.75	900.00
07	41,542.54	900.01
08	53,407.13	900.01
09	62,571.17	900.01
10	73,286.61	900.00
12	84,395.65	900.00
13	94,083.57	900.00
14	103,814.50	900.00
15	136,503.04	900.01
16	170,027.28	900.00
17	297,466.83	900.00

SOURCE: NATIONAL SALARIES, INCOME AND WAGES COMMISSION, ABUJA.

The focus group discussion participants equally emphasized that the poor performance culture in the Delta State civil service manifest in sundry ways including poor response to deadlines on official assignments, inability to skilfully handle official responsibilities, absenteeism, lateness to work and truancy. The momentary token effect of pay reviews in the Delta State civil service has not over-time significantly reduced the level of the poor performance indicators mentioned above. Although, the discussants noted that the poor reward system management culture in the Delta State civil service has contributed to the existing climate of poor performance that has largely permeated the civil service, they opined that the relationship between the pay reward system management and staff performance in the service is weak.

4.2 Data Analysis

The central aim and objective of the focus group discussions was to identify the key areas of consensus or disagreement among the discussants. The out- come of the three focus group discussions on different aspects of

the central theme “Pay Reward System Management and Staff Performance in the Delta State Civil Service” shows that the pay management practices are largely a deviation from acceptable principles that demands linking pay with the changing economic realities such as inflation. All the discussants agreed that there is a poor level of commitment by the Delta State Government to the dynamic trend in the pay reward system. There was also a commonality of opinion among the discussants on the culture of poor performance that has largely stifled the potential effects of the pay reviews executed so far in the Delta State Civil Service.

In a similar vein, there was convergence of opinion by the discussants on the poor level of staff performance mainly due to the persisting culture of lackadaisical attitude to work and the enduring environment of poor performance in the Delta State civil service. In sum, the consensus in the opinions and the commonality in the ideas expressed and presented during the focus group discussion sessions constituted the basis for answering the research questions raised in this study. This process corroborated and modestly re-enforced the qualitative data generated in the study through in-depth content analysis of cognate text books and journals premised on the thematic discourse “Pay Reward System Management and Staff Performance in the Delta State Civil Service”.

Consequent upon the data presented and analyzed above, the two research questions in this study-is there any relationship between the pay reward system management and staff performance in the Delta state civil service and is there any relationship between the pay reward practice and staff performance in the Delta state civil service are partly and insignificantly sustained and accepted.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study came up with some valuable findings. Such findings became possible through the use of selective utilization of focus group discussion and in-depth library and documentary sources of information. First and foremost, the study revealed the existence of poor pay reward system and poor pay reward system management in the Delta State civil service. The study also revealed that the poor pay reward system and poor pay system management are not significantly responsible for the low level of staff performance in the Delta Sate civil service. The study further show that the major reason for the low level of staff performance in the Delta Sate civil service is the persisting and enduring environment and culture of poor attitude to work and poor performance. This culture of poor performance has largely manifested in sundry ways including: poor response to deadlines on official assignments, inability to skilfully handle official responsibilities, absenteeism, lateness to work and truancy.

5.2 Conclusive Remarks and Recommendations

Reward systems are arguably central to employee performance. This assertion is premised on the understanding that reward systems have the potency of engendering higher levels of performance in organizations through the stimulation and direction of employees along the path of goal accomplishment. And, in so far as employees are the only resource that can deliberately frustrate the accomplishment of organizational goals, the total environment of work should be adequately rewarding. In fact, employees are the most critical of all organizational resources and their capacity to function and meet the expected standards is a function of both their inward potentials and the outward environment in which they operate. In this light, it is instructive to assert that well rewarded employees are much likely to feel valued and cherished by their organizations.

To actualize the facilitating role of pay reward system management in the increasingly sustainable levels of employee performance in the Delta State civil service, there is a need for the recognition and acceptance of adequate pay reward system that relates existing pay to the dynamic trend of economic realities. Moreover, the enduring climate and culture of lackadaisical attitude to work and poor performance should be dismantled and altered through a process of re-orientation that will be engineered by the Delta State Government and top management of the civil service. Once a regime of genuine commitment from both government and top management is in place and discernable, other employees are largely likely to give more than a token support to the new environment of work.

Essentially too, the genuine adoption and holistic application of a multi-dimensional approach that will embody a fair, moderate, dynamic pay reward system that should be reflective of the prevailing societal costs of living, the dismantling of the culture of poor performance and a merit-based employee entry practice.

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