

Incentive Structure and Work Attitude among Junior Staff in Cross River State Civil Service

Chibueze C. Ikeji (Ph.D)^{1*}, Paul Utulu² and Edem Ebong³, Dominic C. Ekpenyong⁴

1. Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

*E-mail: chubby.ikeji@yahoo.com Tel: +2348035518807

2. Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

E-mail: paulben@yahoo.com

3. Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

4. Department of Economic, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

E-mail: charlesekpenyong@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study investigates whether incentive structure plays a significant role in the work attitude of junior civil servants in Nigeria. Five different incentive items were tested by data collected. These include monetary, job security, promotion, good work environment, and social/official recognition. These five sub-variables were ranked in their order of importance. Frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient and T-test statistical techniques were used to analyze data obtained. It was found that junior civil servants considered monetary incentives highest on their ranking, and that incentive structure as a whole significantly affected work attitude among junior staff in the Civil Service.

Introduction

The main function of the Nigerian Civil Service is to implement government policies. However, its ability to do this has depended crucially on the quality of the Civil Service. The traditional role of the civil service in Nigeria has been severely diluted by the politicization of the civil service in recent years, undermining its credibility and integrity (Salisu, 2011). Presidents and State Governors have tended to listen more to their close political supporters and advisers than to professional civil servants. As a result, sharp friction exists between the advisers (usually political appointees) and the civil servants (career administrators), with the advisers always getting the upper hand. The consequence of this has been the weakening of the civil service, with workers lacking motivation, since professional prospects are bound to diminish in a politicized civil service.

In summarizing the factors affecting the efficiency of the Nigerian civil service, Ajayi (1998) noted in particular that over-staffing and the closely related poor remuneration of employees in public service are key factors. Secondly, there are the issues of poor assessment of manpower needs and the use of wrong criteria to appraise staff performance. These two have led to poor recruitment procedures, inadequate training and ineffective supervision. There tends to be a lack of qualified technical support staff as opposed to the abundance of general staff. The failure to carry out periodic assessment of manpower needs of the various departments leads not only to uneconomic systems of compensation but also to inadequate job description and poor physical working conditions. There has also been considerable political interference in the process of personnel administration, leading to improper delegation of power, ineffective supervision and corruption. The resulting apathy has in turn led to unauthorized and unreasonable absenteeism, lateness and idleness and, notably, poor workmanship.

Incentive structure plays a crucial role when it comes to capacity development by motivating individuals and targeting organizational performance (Ulleberg, 2009). The limited impact of many incentives schemes is linked to competing disincentives leading to capacity erosion, such as sustained low wage levels, lack of transparency in recruitment or promotion based on political affiliation. The lack of knowledge about efficient use of non-financial incentives and human resources management tools could be a reason for failure. When it comes to public sector reform, political will, existing capacity level, as well as the scope of sequencing of reform are crucial elements.

As a major instrument for implementing government policies, the civil service in Nigeria (as well as in Cross River State) is expected to be professionally competent, loyal and efficient. Nonetheless, the civil services are now denounced, as elsewhere in Africa, for being corrupt, poorly trained and poorly attuned to the needs of development. Ironically, the civil service is expected to play the key role in managing and implementing reform programmes in the country. The state of the civil service has led to a number of complex agency problems, yet to be resolved. However, it is broadly acknowledged, and Nigerian experience attests to this, that when the incentive structures in the civil service remain poor, its efficiency as well as ability to effect policy, such as that directed toward reducing poverty, will remain very low. This condition is more notably so in the junior cadre of the civil service of Nigeria.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Rank various incentive structures in their order of importance to junior Civil Servants
2. Ascertain whether incentive structure affects attitude to work of junior Civil Servants in Nigeria. Evidence is drawn from Cross River State of Nigeria.

1.2. Statement of hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between incentive structure and work attitude.

H_a: There is significant relationship between incentive structure and work attitude.

2.0. Literature Review

Work motivation in the public sector is premised on the idea that individuals who choose to work in the public sector have an ethic that is oriented toward public service and a sense of duty (Staats, 1988). Perry and Wise (1990), used the phrase “public service motivation” to describe work motivation in the public sector. According to them, Public Service Motivation can be defined as an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions. Brewer and Selden (1998) define Public Service Motivation as the motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful public service. It has also been defined as the “beliefs, the values and the attitudes that go beyond self interest or organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity, and that induce through public interaction, motivation for targeted action”(Vandenabeele, et. al., 2004).

Public service motivation could also be defined as an individual’s psychological propensity to be induced to respond to the changing needs of people in society, via government institutions with expected economic rewards immaterial (Tongo, 2005). In order to shed some more light on the concept of public service motivation, March and Olsen (1989), see public service as a shared definition of the common good. According to them those who seek to manage the affairs of government have a primary interest in helping to realize this common good. Such persons are likely to be motivated by fulfilling obligations, maintaining trust and obeying rules. It then means that managing the affairs of a government must be completely different from managing the affairs of a business organization.

For instance, Perry and Wise (1990) have argued that people with high public service motivation (P.S.M) are more likely than others to choose government jobs, to perform better on the job and to respond more to non utilitarian incentives once in government. Since the public service sector is charged with the responsibility of promoting the general social welfare, as well as the protection of the society and every individual in it; the composition of the public workforce has been expected to reflect the nature of work in the public sector, by attracting employees who desire greater opportunities to fulfill their altruistic motives. Hence public administration scholars have tended to view employee motives as inputs brought to the work situation that represent the raw materials in the public sector motivational processes(Perry and Porter,1982; Bozeman,1987).

The World Health Report (2000) defined incentives as “all the rewards and punishments that providers face as a consequence of the organizations in which they work, the institutions under which they operate and the specific interventions they provide” (Adams and Hicks, 2000). Another definition identifies an incentive as a “particular form of payment intended to produce a change in behavior”. The notion of incentives is often used interchangeably with the notion of motivation, although the former is the cause and the latter the effect. Motivation is linked conceptually to capacity and is commonly defined as “the ability of people, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives” (UNDP, 2006:5).

The ultimate role of incentives in developing countries is to promote, via its impact, enhanced public sector performance, the objective and wider process of capacity development in the public sector. The correlation between effective public institutions and capacity development is well known. The importance of incentives is linked to their impact on the very same chain of causality: incentives with motivational effects influence public sector performance, which in turn is decisive for poverty reduction and economic growth (UNDP 2006).

The link between incentives and public sector performance implies a focus on the human dimension of public sector organizations, namely the civil service. Public sector organizations are made up of people. Incentives

recognize that individual change is a necessary condition for organizational change. Effective institutions are due to the effective use of individual skills, which occurs when individuals align their proper goals with that of the organization they work for. Incentives thus represent the various ways of aligning individual and organizational interests. In other words, an incentive is a tool used to trigger a motivational reaction—that is, a change in human behavior. The overall objective of this change is to promote enhanced performance. Mathauer and Imhoff (2006) define motivation as the willingness to exert and maintain an effort towards organizational goals. Incentives often include measures that create competition and accountability, such as merit-based pay and promotion, evaluations and a transparent work environment. Generally, incentives should correspond to the objective of fostering a high-performance public service that attracts, retains and motivates competent staff (World Bank, 2008).

2.1. Theoretical framework

Abraham Maslow's theory of human of motivation was propounded in 1943 (Maslow, 1943). Abraham Maslow's theory of human of motivation is used for the purpose of this study. This theory ranks human needs in hierarchy as follows: Physiological, safety, love, esteem and actualization. Human needs arrange themselves in hierarchies of pre-potency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need. Man is a perpetually wanting animal. Also no need or drive can be treated as if it were isolated or discrete; every drive is related to the state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of other drives. The desire to meet this needs will serve as motivation to do what is required to have those needs met. Fulfilling the needs of one level sets one on the higher hierarchy of needs, and the cycle of desire to meet those particular needs runs again. In the context of this study, if junior civil servants find their salary and other benefits as meeting their needs, they are most likely to have a good work attitude.

3.0. Methodology

3.1. Study Area

This study focuses on Cross River State of Nigeria. Cross River State is in South-South political region of Nigeria. Cross River State is a coastal state in South Eastern Nigeria, named after the Cross River, which passes through the state. Located in the Niger Delta, Cross River State occupies 20,156 square kilometers. It shares boundaries with Benue State to the north, Ebonyi and Abia States to the west, to the east by Cameroon Republic and to the south by Akwa-Ibom and the Atlantic Ocean.

3.2. Data Source

Primary data is used for the purpose of this research. Primary data is obtained by the use of questionnaire as the instrument. 255 Questionnaire were distributed to and retrieved from five ministries of the government (i.e. 51 to each ministry), namely: Agriculture, Information, Works, Establishment and Justice. Likert scale ranking (1-4) was used for the purpose of this research.

3.3. Sample size

Sample size of 255 was used in this research. This size was adopted to make the sample representative. 51 junior staff were interviewed in each of the five Ministries, namely: Agriculture, Information, Environment, Works and Justice. All 255 questionnaire distributed were recovered with required data.

3.4. Sampling Technique

Random sampling is used for the purpose of this study. This means questionnaire were distributed to (and retrieved from) respondents as they were randomly picked with the use of the staff list.

3.5. Analytical Technique

Frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, Correlation and T-test are used for the purpose of this study. Correlation shows the degree of movement-together between the two variables tested (i.e. Work attitude and Incentive structure), t-test is to show whether or not there is significant relationship between the two variables.

4.0. Result

Table 1: Ranking of Various Incentive Structures in their order of Importance by Respondents (frequency distribution)

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis on Incentive Structure and Work Attitude (Paired Sample Statistics)

Table 3: Paired Samples Correlations

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing: Paired T-Test

Actual T = 2.7202

Critical t = d/s_d

where d = Mean Difference

s_d = Standard Deviation of Difference

t = 0.106/0.622

= 0.170

Actual T = 2.7202 (from the Table 2 above)

Decision Rule: If $T \geq t$, then reject H_0 ; otherwise, do not reject H_0 .

Conclusion: Since $2.7202 > 0.170$, reject H_0 and accept H_a which means there is significant influence between Incentive Structure and Work attitude.

4.1. Discussion

Table 1 shows ranking of various incentive structures in their order of importance by respondents as observed from data collected. It is shown that majority (191 out of 255 respondents or 75%) of junior civil servants consider monetary incentives (salary and allowances) as most important to them. Promotion is next on the ranking with 28 out of 255 respondents or 11%. Job security ranks third with 23 out of 255 making 9%. Good work environment ranks fourth with 7 out of 255 making 3%. Social/official recognition ranks fifth with 6 out of 255 making 2%

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the data obtained from the two variables incentive structure and work attitude. Incentive structure had a mean of 2.53, standard deviation of 0.587 and Standard error of mean of 0.037, work attitude reported a mean of 2.64, standard deviation of 0.648, and standard error of mean of 0.041.

Table 3 shows correlation coefficient of Incentive with work attitude, which is shown to be equal to 0.897. This indicates a very high movement in the same direction between the two variables, showing that preferred incentive structure will produce a more positive work attitude among junior civil servants in the study area (Cross River State).

Table 4 shows hypothesis testing (paired t-test).

Decision Rule: If $t \geq 2.7202$, then reject H_0 ; otherwise, do not reject H_0 .

Since Actual T is greater than Critical t, i.e. $2.7202 > 0.170$ ($\alpha = 0.05$), reject H_0 , and conclude that there is a significant influence between incentive structure and Work attitude. This is proof that Work Attitude is significantly influenced by Incentive Structure, meaning the better the incentive structure of junior civil servants, the more positive their work attitude will be.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Salisu (2001). He found out that one of the reasons why Nigeria's Civil Service has remained weak, inefficient and incapable of reforming itself is the institutionalizing of inappropriate incentive structures, among other reasons. The findings of the study are also in line with the positions by UNDP paper in 2006 which stated that the ultimate role of incentives in developing countries is to promote, via its impact on enhanced public sector performance, the objective and wider process of capacity development in the public sector (UNDP, 2006).

Echu (1999) in his study concluded that administrators of the vast resources in the Nigerian public sector can no longer rely solely on traditional methods of manipulation of working populace with pact of unfulfilled agreement/promise to encourage employees to perform efficiently and courageously. The managers of the nation's vast resources must seek to appreciate the forces that energize individual employee or group behavior and the responsibility to develop a work environment that harnesses the enormous energy that is within every individual employee or the group. These are in line with the findings of this research.

5.0. Conclusion and Recommendation

It is evident from this study that Work Attitude is significantly influenced by Incentive Structure. The implication is that the more preferred the incentive structure of junior civil servants, the more positive their work attitude will be. From this study, it is shown that majority of junior civil servants consider monetary incentive (salary and allowances) their greatest motivational attraction for positive work attitude which affects remarkably their contribution to organizational outcomes. Therefore, the Cross River State Government should build a more positive work attitude in their junior staff by giving them a preferred incentive structure with emphasis on monetary benefits. Such incentive structure will enhance public sector performance thereby promoting the objective and wider process of capacity development in the public sector. This is in line with Abraham Maslow's Theory of Human Needs which posits that humans will do all necessary if it will help them meet their felt needs.

References

- Adams O. and Hicks V. (2000). Pay and non-pay Incentives, Performance and Motivation. Prepared for WHO's Global Health Workforce Strategy Group, December 2000. Retrieved 16 July 2009 from www.who.int/hrh/en/HRDJ_4_3_02.pdf
- Ajayi, S.T. (1998). *Productivity Measurement and Improvement in the Civil Service*. Paper delivered at the 32nd Conference of the Civil Service Commissions in the Federation, Kano, Nigeria, 28-29 September.

Bozeman, B. (1987). *All Organizations are Public*, Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Brewer, G. and Selden, C. (1998). "Whistle Blowers in the Federal Civil Service: New Evidence of the Public Service Ethic", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol 8 (3): 413-439.

March, J. and Olsen, J.(1989). *Reconsidering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*, New York: Free press.

Maslow A (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. Published in *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.

Mathauer I and Imhoff I. (2006). "Health worker Motivation in Africa: The Role of non-financial Incentives and human Resource Management Tools". In: *Human Resources for Health*, 4 (24). Retrieved 16 July 2009 from: www.human-resources-health.com/content/pdf/1478-4491-4-24.pdf

Perry, J. and Porter; L. (1982) "Factors Affecting the context for motivation in Public Organization". *Academy of Management, Journal* 7, 1: 89-98.

Perry, J. and Wise, R. (1990). "The Motivational Bases of Public Service", *Public Administration Review*, Vol 50(3): 367-373.

Salisu M. (2011). Incentive Structure, Civil Service Efficiency and the Hidden Economy in Nigeria. Discussion Paper No. 2001/86. UNU/WIDER.

Staats, E.(1988). "Public Service and the Public Interest", *Public Administration Review*, 48: 601-605.

Tongo, C. I. (2005). "Public Service Motivation in Edo State of Nigeria" in *Wither Nigeria (14th General Assembly Proceedings)*, Social Science Academy of Nigeria, 188-198 pp.

Ulleberg I. (2009). Incentive Structure as a Capacity Development Strategy in Public Service Delivery. International Institute of Educational Planning, ISBN: 978-92-803-1344-4.

UNDP (2006). Incentive Systems: Incentives, Motivation, and Development Performance—A UNDP Capacity Development Resource (Conference Paper No.8, working draft, November). New York: Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development, UNDP.

UNDP (2006). Incentive Systems: Incentives, Motivation, and Development Performance. A UNDP Capacity Development Resource (Conference Paper No.8, working draft, November). New York: Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP.

Vandenabeele, W; Hondeghem, A; Massachalck, J; Depre,R. (2004). "Values and Motivation in Public Administration: Public Service Motivation in an International Comparative Perspective", *EGPA 2004 Annual Conference* (1-4 September 2004) Ljubljana, Slovenia.

World Bank (2008). *Public Sector Reform: What Works and Why? An IEG Evaluation of World Bank Support* (Advance Copy). Washington DC: World Bank.

Appendix

Table 1: Ranking of Various Incentive Structures in their order of Importance by Respondents (frequency distribution)

Incentive Structure Based on:	Number that ranked it highest	Percentage (%)	Rank in order
Monetary	191	75	1
Promotion	28	11	2
Job security	23	9	3
Good work environment	7	3	4
Social/official recognition	6	2	5

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis on Incentive Structure and Work Attitude (Paired Sample Statistics)

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Incentive	2.53	255	.587	.037
Work attitude	2.64	255	.648	.041

Table 3: Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Incentive and Work Attitude	255	.897	.000

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing: Paired T-Test

Variable	N	Mean	Mean Difference	95.00% Confidence Interval		Standard Deviation of Difference	T	Df	p-value
WORK_ATTD	255.000	2.639	0.106	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	0.622	2.7202	254	0.007
INCENTIVE	255.000	2.533		0.029	0.183				

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR PAPERS

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. There's no deadline for submission. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/>

The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a **fast** manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request from readers and authors.

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

