

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS CORRELATE OF LECTURERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study looked into human resource management practices as correlate of lecturers' job performance in public universities in Delta State, Nigeria. A correlational survey design was adopted for the study. In the study, two research questions were answered, with two hypotheses tested at 0.5 level of significance. Sample size of 540 lecturers was used for the study through convenience non-randomized sampling technique. A structured questionnaire, titled 'Human Resource Management Practices and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (HRMPTJPQ)' was used to collect relevant data online, after the instrument had been validated by 3 experts. Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was adopted to test reliability of the instrument; with coefficient of 0.88 obtained, the instrument was deemed satisfactory. The instrument was administered online through different WhatsApp platforms of academic staff in public universities in Delta State, Nigeria, while the data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool. The study found that the relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance is positive and strong. It was also established among others that the study supervisory and monitoring practices have a positive and strong relationship with lecturers' job performance. The study concluded that the outcomes highlight the vital roles of effective reward systems and strong supervisory mechanisms in enhancing lecturers' job performance. The study recommended that emphasis should be placed on supportive supervision, timely feedback, mentorship, and fair performance evaluation processes to maintain and enhance the strong positive relationship between supervision, monitoring, and job performance.

Keywords: Human Resource Management Practices, Correlate, Lecturers' Job Performance.

Introduction

Human capital remains a critical determinant of institutional success, particularly in higher education. Universities rely on the expertise, commitment, and performance of their academic staff to achieve their core mandates of teaching, research, and community service. Effective human resource management (HRM) practices are essential in ensuring that lecturers are well-motivated, productive, and committed to their duties. HRM plays a pivotal role in shaping the working conditions, training, career progression, and overall well-being of academic staff. Supporting this, Armstrong (2021) asserted that in universities, human resources include academic and non-academic staff whose roles drive teaching, research, and administration. HRM in universities might involve recruitment, training, compensation, performance appraisal, and employee relations, all aimed at enhancing job satisfaction and institutional efficiency. It encompasses the policies, practices, and systems that influence employees' behaviour, attitudes, and performance. This is regarding HRM, however it important to understand human resource as a concept.

Human resource can be described as the entire human abilities and competencies devoted to initiating, establishing and making every aspect of an establishment operational and goal driven. In essence, human resource consists of every man and woman associated with the operations and functionality of an establishment for the purpose of sustenance and achievement of vision, mission, goals, targets and objectives of the organization. To Dessler (2020), human resource refers to the workforce within an organization that contributes to achieving its objectives. This mean that human resource has to be managed through practices, if its objectives and goals stand any chance of being achieved.

HRM practices are strategies designed to manage human capital effectively and ensure lecturers' job productivity, if it is the tertiary education system. In relation to this, Paauwe (2018); Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2020) comprehensively highlighted the following as key HRM practices applicable to universities: ensuring merit-based hiring of qualified lecturers, providing continuous professional development, evaluating lecturers' work through student feedback, peer reviews, and research output, competitive salaries, promotions, and incentives to retain top talent, health benefits, housing, and pension schemes, ensuring conducive offices, classrooms, and research facilities, structured mentorship programs and promotion pathways, involvement in decision-making bodies such as faculty boards, paid sabbaticals, maternity/paternity leave, and annual leave, effective dispute resolution frameworks to manage grievances, flexible work arrangements to enhance productivity, grants, collaboration opportunities, and library access, ensuring stable career growth and protection from arbitrary dismissals, ensuring safe working conditions, mental health support, and emergency preparedness, and encouraging gender balance and inclusivity in university employment. With these strategic practices targeted at getting the best out of academic staff of the universities, their job performance is expected to improve.

Lecturers play a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and professional growth of students. Their job performance is assessed through: teaching effectiveness, research contributions, administrative duties, and community service. But, how well they perform is hugely dependent on the effective application of HRM practices. Throwing more light on the role of HRM practices in lecturers' job performance, some scholars Aguinis (2019); Guest (2017); Torrington et al. (2020), explained that it enhances motivation and job satisfaction through fair compensation and career growth; provides necessary training and professional development to improve teaching and research; reduces stress and burnout through effective welfare programs and work-life balance policies, and encourages innovation through grants, research support, and academic collaboration. Corroborating the foregoing, Paauwe (2018) observed that studies have shown that: recruitment and selection ensure the right talent is hired, impacting institutional effectiveness; training and development enhance research output and teaching quality; fair compensation improves job satisfaction, reducing turnover rates, and performance appraisal fosters accountability and excellence in teaching and research.

Despite the recognized importance of HRM, several challenges exist in Nigerian public universities. Okafor and Aruoture (2022); Okoro and Ibara (2020) observed that some of the challenges confronting effective deployment of HRM practices include but are not limited to: frequent changes in government policies affect HRM consistency; insufficient budget allocations limit human resource investments; recruitment and promotions are sometimes influenced by favoritism rather than merit; inadequate classrooms, laboratories, and offices affect lecturers' efficiency; salary delays demotivate lecturers, leading to industrial actions; subjective evaluations hinder objective performance assessment, and insufficient access to research funding and modern academic resources. Meanwhile, while several studies have examined HRM practices in Nigerian universities, limited research focuses specifically on public universities in Delta State. Given the unique socio-economic and political challenges in the state, there is a need to investigate, the relationship between HRM practices and lecturers' job performance in public universities in Delta State, with special attention to reward practices, and supervisory and monitoring practices. This study will bridge these gaps by providing empirical data on the variables of interest, which will guide policymakers, university administrators, and HR professionals in formulating strategies to enhance the productivity of lecturers.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of education in public universities is largely dependent on the effectiveness and productivity of academic staff. Lecturers play a fundamental role in knowledge dissemination, research, and community service, all of which contribute to national development. However, in many Nigerian public universities, including those in Delta State, there has been growing concern over lecturers' job performance due to various institutional challenges. Issues such as poor research output, declining teaching quality, frequent industrial

actions, and administrative inefficiencies have raised questions about the effectiveness of human resource management (HRM) practices in these institutions.

HRM practices are critical in shaping employees' motivation, commitment, and overall job satisfaction. Studies have shown that well-implemented HRM strategies, such as fair recruitment, professional development, adequate compensation, and effective performance appraisal, contribute significantly to job performance. However, in Delta State's public universities, lecturers often face HRM-related challenges such as irregular salary payments, lack of research grants, poor career progression frameworks, ineffective appraisal systems, and inadequate welfare programs. These deficiencies may negatively impact lecturers' job satisfaction and, consequently, their performance in teaching, research, and administrative duties.

Despite the recognition of HRM's role in shaping job performance, there is limited empirical research focusing on how HRM practices correlate with lecturers' job performance in Delta State's public universities. Previous studies on HRM and academic staff performance in Nigeria have largely focused on federal universities or broader regional contexts, leaving a gap in understanding the unique challenges and dynamics within Delta State's university system. Additionally, while existing literature acknowledges the importance of HRM in employee performance, there is insufficient data on the specific HRM factors that most significantly influence lecturers' effectiveness in this region.

Furthermore, the disconnect between HRM policies and actual implementation in Nigerian universities remains a pressing issue. Policies on recruitment, training, and promotion are often not executed transparently, leading to inefficiencies, low morale, and high turnover rates among academic staff. Similarly, performance appraisal systems are frequently perceived as subjective or politically influenced, reducing their effectiveness in motivating lecturers to excel. The lack of adequate HRM structures and policies tailored to the needs of university lecturers has continued to hinder the attainment of optimal job performance.

Given these gaps, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between HRM practices (reward practices and supervisory and monitoring practices) and lecturers' job effectiveness or performance in public universities in Delta State, Nigeria. The study will offer valuable insights for university administrators, policymakers, and HR professionals to enhance lecturers' job performance and universities performance.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses which further guided the study were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria.

Methodology

A correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The targeted population was the entire academic staff of government-owned universities in Delta State. Sample size of 540 lecturers was used for the study through convenience non-randomized sampling technique. Orji (2025) clarified that convenience sampling is considered as one of the sampling strategies in qualitative research that involves allowing potential respondents to respond to data collection instrument(s) based on their willingness, availability, accessibility and commitment to ensuring data is genuinely collected. Hence, convenient sampling was considered ideal for the study. A structured questionnaire, titled 'HRM Practices and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (HRMPTJPQ)' was used to collect relevant data online, after the instrument had been validated by 3 experts. Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was adopted to test reliability of the instrument; with coefficient of 0.88 obtained, the instrument was deemed satisfactory. The instrument was administered online through different WhatsApp platforms of academic staff in public universities in Delta State, Nigeria, while the data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for the data analysis.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. For decision on research questions, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, r was interpreted using the guideline provided by Downie and Heath cited in Nworgu (2015), which recommended 0.80 and above as high correlation; above 0.30 but below 0.80 as moderate correlation, and below 0.30 as low correlation. For decision on the null hypotheses, in line with the recommendations of Lumen (2021), if probability value (P-value) was less than or equal to the level of significance or alpha levels of 0.05, the null hypothesis was to be rejected, and if the probability value (P-value) was greater than the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis would not be rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Pearson r on reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities

	N	Reward Practices	Lecturers' Job Performance	Remarks
Reward Practices	540	1.00	0.81*	Strong
Lecturers' Job Performance	540	0.81*	1.00	

Table 1 revealed that the correlation coefficient (r) between reward practices and lecturers' job performance is 0.81. This revealed that there is a strong relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria. The relationship is also found to be positive.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Pearson r on supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance

	N	Supervisory and Monitoring Practices	Lecturers' Job Performance	Remarks
Supervisory and Monitoring Practices	540	1.00	0.88*	Strong
Lecturers' Job Performance	485	0.88*	1.00	

On table 2, the result shows that the correlation coefficient (r) between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in South-South, Nigeria is 0.88, meaning that in terms of magnitude, the relationship is strong. Also, in terms of direction, the relationship is positive.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson Correlation, r between reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities.

	N	Reward Practices	Lecturers' Job Performance	P-Value	Decision
Reward Practices	540	1.00	0.81*		

				0.05	Significant
Lecturers' Job Performance	540	0.81*	1.00		

Result of the data analysis presented on table 3 revealed that correlation coefficient (r) = 0.81, which is greater than the 0.05 for P-Value. This shows there is significant relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson Correlation, r between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance in universities.

	N	Supervisory and Monitoring Practices	Lecturers' Job Performance	P-Value	Decision
Supervisory and Monitoring Practices	540	1.00	0.88*		
Lecturers' Job Performance	540	0.88*	1.00	0.05	Significant

Result of the data analysis presented on table 4 revealed that correlation coefficient (r) = 0.88, which is greater than the 0.05 for P-Value. This shows there is significant relationship between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance in universities in Delta State, Nigeria. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study reported that the relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance is positive and strong. This suggests that effective reward systems, including financial and non-financial incentives play a critical role in enhancing lecturers' motivation, commitment, and overall performance. The finding is in tandem with Milkovich and Newman (2018), who reported that rewards such as recognition, promotion opportunities, bonuses, and professional development initiatives encourage lecturers to strive for higher levels of achievement and contribute more meaningfully to institutional goals. On the other hand, the study confirmed that there is a positive and significant relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance. This, according to Armstrong (2012) reinforces the importance

of implementing effective and fair reward systems as a strategy to drive higher job performance among academic staff.

The study also established that supervisory and monitoring practices have a positive and strong relationship with lecturers' job performance. Undoubtedly, effective supervision characterized by supportive leadership, constructive feedback, and consistent monitoring fosters an environment where lecturers are guided, motivated, and held accountable for their tasks. Similar to the finding was Robbins and Judge (2017), who pointed out that strong supervisory and monitoring mechanisms help ensure that lecturers maintain high standards of teaching, research, and community service, thereby boosting overall institutional performance. It was further found that supervisory and monitoring practices have a positive and significant relationship with lecturers' job performance. In consonance with this, Dessler (2017) stressed that strong leadership and continuous performance appraisal systems within institutions to maintain and enhance lecturer effectiveness. Therefore, the findings correspond with existing literature, which emphasizes the crucial roles of organizational reward systems, supervision, and monitoring in achieving higher employee productivity and institutional success (Dessler, 2017). In essence, universities that invest in structured reward programs and effective supervisory mechanisms are better positioned to support and enhance their academic staff performance.

Conclusion

The study investigated the relationships between reward practices, supervisory and monitoring practices, and lecturers' job performance in public universities. The findings revealed that the relationship between reward practices and lecturers' job performance is positive and strong, and likewise, the relationship between supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance is positive and strong. Furthermore, the null hypotheses which were rejected in favor of alternative hypotheses confirmed that these relationships are statistically significant. These outcomes highlight the vital roles of effective reward systems and strong supervisory mechanisms in enhancing lecturers' job commitment, motivation, and overall productivity. Therefore, strengthening these organizational practices is essential for sustaining academic excellence and institutional growth.

Recommendations

In line with findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. For reward practices and lecturers' job performance, public universities should establish comprehensive reward systems that go beyond basic salary structures. These systems should include performance-based bonuses, research funding opportunities, awards for excellence, and career advancement pathways to sustain and strengthen the strong positive impact of rewards on lecturers' job performance. Also, management of the universities should formalize and document clear reward policies that are

transparent and consistently applied. Regular reviews and updates to the reward systems should be conducted based on lecturers' feedback to ensure the system remains fair, motivating, and aligned with the goals of improving lecturers' performance.

2. For supervisory and monitoring practices and lecturers' job performance, universities should institutionalize effective supervisory frameworks by providing regular training for academic leaders and supervisors. Emphasis should be placed on supportive supervision, timely feedback, mentorship, and fair performance evaluation processes to maintain and enhance the strong positive relationship between supervision, monitoring, and job performance. Meanwhile, the universities should develop structured monitoring programs, such as periodic peer reviews, teaching evaluations, and research progress assessments, to provide continuous support and accountability for lecturers. Such structured monitoring will help maintain the significant positive impact of supervision and monitoring on lecturers' job performance.

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