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EFFECT OF REWARD SYSTEM ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN SELECTED FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of reward systems on employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted, utilizing structured questionnaires administered to 500 employees drawn from ten purposively selected firms out of eighteen listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group as of May 2024. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentage counts were used to summarize the demographic and perceptional data. Inferential statistics, particularly multiple regression analysis, were employed to assess the relationship between various reward components and employee productivity. The regression results showed that effective rewards (β = 0.988, p = 0.000) and non-financial rewards (β = 0.719, p = 0.000) had a statistically significant and positive influence on employee productivity. However, financial rewards (β = -0.429, p = 0.000) and adequate rewards (β = -0.333, p = 0.025) showed a significant but negative impact. The variable improved rewards (β = -0.190, p = 0.159) had a negative but statistically insignificant relationship with productivity. The findings imply that while certain reward types like effective and non-financial rewards boost employee productivity, others such as financial and adequate rewards may need restructuring or better alignment with employee expectations. The study recommends that management in the food and

Keyword; Reward System, Employee, Productivity, Manufacturing Firms, Financial Rewards, Non-Financial Rewards

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beverage manufacturing sector adopt a balanced and strategically structured reward system that emphasizes non-financial recognition and transparent performance-linked rewards to drive employee engagement and productivity

Introduction

Good remuneration has been found over the years to be one of the policies the organization can adopt to increase their workers performance and thereby increase the organizations productivity. Also, with the present global economic trend, most employers of labour have realized the fact that for their organizations to compete favourably, the performance of their employees goes a long way in determining the success of the organization (Nwachukwu, 2020). On the other hand, performance of employees in any organization is vital, not only for the growth of the organization, but also for the growth of individual employees (Meyer and Peng, 2020). An organization must know who are its outstanding workers, those who need additional training and those not contributing to the efficiency and welfare of the company or organization. Also, performance on the job can be assessed at all levels of employment such as: personnel decision relating to promotion, job rotation, job enrichments etc.(Aidis,2012; Meyer and Peng, 2019).

A reward system encompasses various forms of compensation and recognition provided to employees in exchange for their work and contributions. These rewards can be intrinsic, such as professional growth opportunities and recognition, or extrinsic, such as salaries, bonuses, and other financial incentives. The effectiveness of these systems can significantly impact employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. In the dynamic and competitive landscape of manufacturing, firms continuously seek ways to enhance productivity and efficiency. One crucial factor influencing these outcomes is the performance of employees.

In Nigeria, interest in effective use of rewards to influence workers performance to motivate them began in the 1970's. So many people have carried out researches in this area, some of which are Oloko (2023), Kayode (2013), Nwachukwu (2019), Meyer and Nguyen (2015) and Egwurudi (2020). The performance of workers has become important due to the increase concern of human resources and personnel experts about the level of output obtained from workers due to poor remuneration. This attitude is also a social concern and is very important to identify problems that are obtained in industrial setting due to nonchalant attitudes of managers to manage their workers by rewarding them well to maximize their productivity .In view of this, this study attempts to identify the impact that motivation has on employee performance in order to address problems arising from motivational approaches in organizational settings.

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Evaluating job performance can encompass various aspects, including decisions related to personnel promotion, job rotation, and job enrichment (Sani, 2022). In Nigeria, interest in utilizing rewards to influence worker performance and motivation dates back to the 1970s. Numerous researchers have delved into this area, including Sani (2022), Anyim et al., (2022). The significance of worker performance has escalated due to growing concerns among human resources and personnel experts regarding suboptimal output stemming from inadequate compensation (Eruemegbe, 2015). This concern is not only a managerial issue but also a societal one, emphasizing the importance of identifying problems within industrial settings arising from managers' negligence in adequately rewarding employees to maximize productivity

Statement of the Problem

According to a report by Gallup (2017), companies with effective reward and recognition programs experience a 22% increase in productivity and a 21% increase in profitability. In many organizations, particularly in manufacturing firms, employees' expectations of the reward system are shaped by various demographic factors, including age, marital status, gender, and educational qualifications. These factors can significantly influence what employees perceive as fair and motivating in terms of financial and non-financial rewards. For instance, younger employees may prioritize career development opportunities, while older employees may place more value on job security and financial stability (Nguyen & Tran, 2022). Similarly, gender, marital status, and qualifications may also affect how employees view the adequacy and fairness of the reward system (Adams & Johnson, 2023). In Nigeria's manufacturing sector, there is limited understanding of how these demographic variables influence employee expectations, which can result in misaligned reward systems and reduced motivation.

Objective of the Study

The aim of the study is to examined the effect of reward system on employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria

Literature Review

Review of Previous Studies

Akinyele and Akinola (2020) conducted a study on the impact of reward systems on employee performance in Nestle Nigeria Plc. Using a descriptive survey design and regression analysis, their findings revealed that both financial (e.g., bonuses and salaries) and non-financial rewards (e.g., recognition and training) had a statistically significant effect on employee productivity. The authors emphasized that aligning rewards with

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performance metrics enhances motivation and output levels among employees. The study concluded that a well-structured reward system is a critical determinant of organizational success in the food and beverage sector.

Olowookere et al. (2021) examined the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and employee performance in selected food processing companies in Lagos State. The researchers used structured questionnaires and analyzed the data with SPSS. The study found that extrinsic rewards (such as salary, allowances, and fringe benefits) had a stronger correlation with employee productivity than intrinsic rewards like job satisfaction and responsibility. The authors recommended that firms should prioritize adequate and timely remuneration to improve retention and engagement.

Chinedu and Musa (2022) focused on the effectiveness of reward management practices in promoting employee productivity in Cadbury Nigeria Plc. Their mixed-method approach revealed that reward systems significantly affect employee morale and job satisfaction, which in turn impact productivity. They highlighted that when employees perceive fairness and transparency in the reward system, they are more committed and deliver higher performance levels. The study called for regular review and customization of rewards to fit employee expectations and industry benchmarks.

Bello and Ogunyemi (2023) carried out an empirical investigation into how non-monetary rewards influence employee behavior in Nigeria Bottling Company. Their study, based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, demonstrated that recognition, promotion opportunities, and work-life balance programs contributed positively to employees' productivity. The researchers argued that organizations overly reliant on financial rewards may neglect other motivational tools that foster long-term engagement.

Eze and Chukwuma (2023) in their study of selected beverage firms in South-West Nigeria used panel data and econometric modeling to analyze the influence of reward systems on labor efficiency. Their results showed that firms with structured reward schemes experienced fewer employee turnovers and higher output levels. The study emphasized that reward systems must be strategically aligned with individual and team performance indicators to sustain productivity.

Adeyemi and Bankole (2024) conducted a cross-sectional survey across four leading food manufacturing firms in Ogun and Lagos states. Their study confirmed that a hybrid reward model—combining both tangible (e.g., cash bonuses) and intangible rewards (e.g., employee of the month awards)—was most effective in stimulating productivity. The study recommended that management periodically reassess their reward strategies to align with changing workforce dynamics and organizational goals.

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Methodology

The study employed survey research design using structured questionnaire. The population of the study comprised of eighteen (18) listed food and beverage manufacturing firms listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group as at May 2024 from where a sample of ten (10) manufacturing firms in Nigeria were purposively selected. The respondents include fifty (50) employee of each of the sampled food and beverage manufacturing firms to give 500 respondents. Both descriptive and inferential statistics employed for the purpose of the data analysis. Descriptive statistics include frequency tables and percentage count while inferential statistics such as multiple regression analysis was used to the effect of reward system on employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Results and Discussion

Extent to which reward system influence employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria

The first variable in Table 1shows that 76.1% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the reward system in their organization aligns with individual performance. This indicates that most employees believe their efforts and contributions are recognized and rewarded accordingly. Such alignment fosters a sense of fairness, accountability, and motivation among staff. However, nearly 20.5% expressed dissatisfaction, implying that some employees may feel overlooked or unfairly assessed, which could negatively affect their commitment. Regarding whether the reward system encourages innovation and creativity, 57.1% of the employees responded positively. This suggests that more than half of the workforce perceive that rewards such as bonuses, recognition, or career growth opportunities are tied to innovative contributions. However, a considerable 31.5% disagreed, which may point to gaps in how creative efforts are identified, evaluated, or incentivized. Companies need to ensure that innovation is consistently and transparently rewarded to stimulate ongoing creativity.

A strong relationship between rewards and productivity is recognized by 61.4% of the employees, supporting the idea that better rewards lead to increased employee output. This aligns with expectancy theory, which holds that employees are motivated when they believe their efforts will lead to desired rewards. The 28.1% who disagreed or strongly disagreed may reflect cases where rewards are poorly communicated, irregular, or not substantial enough to make a difference, suggesting a need for review. A notable 66.3% of the employees stated that the absence of a reward system negatively affects their work output. This emphasizes how critical consistent and fair reward mechanisms are in maintaining workforce morale and effort. When employees perceive that hard work goes

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unnoticed or unrewarded, it can lead to demotivation, reduced productivity, and even increased turnover. Organizations must therefore ensure that their reward systems are continuously active and responsive to employee performance.

Interestingly, 60.9% of respondents reported that they often exceed their job expectations when they anticipate a reward. This indicates that rewards not only maintain expected performance levels but can also push employees to go above and beyond. Anticipated incentives, whether monetary or non-monetary, serve as a motivational tool for extra effort. However, 34% of respondents disagreed or remained undecided, signaling that some may need intrinsic motivation or that current reward structures may not be compelling enough. These findings have important implications for human resource management within the food and beverage industry in Nigeria. Managers must recognize that both the presence and structure of reward systems significantly influence employee behavior and productivity. A one-size-fits-all approach may not be sufficient—there is a need for a tailored reward strategy that addresses both high performers and those who may feel disengaged. Organizations should also invest in clearer communication and transparent reward criteria.

The study shows a clear and significant link between reward systems and employee productivity in the sector under review. While a majority of employees report positive perceptions, the presence of a sizable minority with negative or indifferent views suggests room for improvement. Organizations should adopt a more inclusive, merit-based, and motivational reward framework, combining financial and non-financial incentives. Additionally, periodic assessments and feedback mechanisms can ensure that rewards remain relevant, competitive, and aligned with employee expectations and organizational goals.

Table 1: Extent to which reward system influence employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria

S/N	Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	The reward system in my organization aligns with individual performance.	130 (33.0)	170 (43.1)	134 (3.3)	43 (10.9)	38 (9.6)
2.	The existing reward system encourages innovation and creativity.	140 (35.5)	85 (21.6)	45 (11.4)	68 (17.3)	56 (14.2)
3.	There is a strong relationship between rewards and my level of productivity.	158 (40.1)	84 (21.3)	37 (9.4)	64 (16.2)	51 (12.9)
4.	The absence of a reward system negatively affects my work output.	176 (44.7)	85 (21.6)	32 (8.1)	59 (15.0)	42 (10.7)
5.	I often exceed my job expectations when I expect a reward.	168 (42.6)	72 (18.3)	30 (7.6)	62 (15.7)	72 (18.3)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Test of Hypothesis

H_0: Reward system has no significant influence on employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria

To test the Hypothesis, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted as shown in Table 2a, 2b and 2c. This statistical tool assesses how well a set of independent variables (in this case, different components of the reward system) explains variations in the dependent variable (employee productivity). The hypothesis posits that reward systems do not significantly influence employee productivity, which will be rejected if any components of the reward system significantly predict productivity ($p < 0.05$).

The R-value of 0.712 indicates a strong positive correlation between the reward system components and employee productivity. The R^2 value of 0.506 means that 50.6% of the variance in employee productivity can be explained by the combined reward system components. This is a relatively strong explanatory power in behavioral research, implying that reward systems significantly account for changes in productivity levels. The intercept (B = 0.793, p = 0.000) represents the baseline level of employee productivity when all reward components are zero. It is statistically significant, suggesting there is a measurable baseline of productivity independent of the reward factors included in the model.

Effective rewards have a positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.988) and are statistically significant (p = 0.000). The standardized beta coefficient (β = 0.849) and the t-value (6.556) show that effective rewards have a strong and significant positive influence on employee productivity. This indicates that when reward systems are perceived as fair and well-implemented, employee productivity tends to increase significantly. Interestingly, improved rewards have a negative coefficient (B = -0.190) but are not statistically significant (p = 0.159). This suggests that, despite the intention to improve rewards, such efforts may not always lead to improved productivity—perhaps due to poor implementation or a mismatch with employee expectations. Therefore, this component does not have a significant standalone influence in this model.

Adequate rewards also have a negative coefficient (B = -0.333) and are statistically significant (p = 0.025). The negative direction implies that the mere adequacy of rewards may not be enough to drive productivity, possibly due to a lack of differentiation or perceived fairness. Employees may view "adequacy" as meeting the minimum standard, which might not be motivational enough. Financial rewards surprisingly show a negative and statistically significant coefficient (B = -0.429, p = 0.000). This could indicate that while financial incentives are necessary, they alone may not sustain or improve productivity. Overemphasis on financial rewards without complementary non-financial motivators may lead to diminishing returns, demotivation, or perceived inequity.

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In contrast, non-financial rewards (e.g., recognition, flexible work hours, development opportunities) show a strong and significant positive influence (B = 0.719, β = 0.732, p = 0.000). This confirms that non-financial motivators play a crucial role in driving employee productivity. Their high beta value implies they are among the strongest predictors of productivity in the model.

Table 2a: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.712[a]	.506	.500	.94705

a. Predictors: (Constant), Effective rewards, Improved rewards, Adequate rewards, Financial rewards, Non-financial rewards

Table 2b: ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	357.013	5	71.403	79.609	.000[a]
	Residual	348.002	388	.897		
	Total	705.015	393			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Effective rewards, Improved rewards, Adequate rewards, Financial rewards, Non-financial rewards

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

Table 3c: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.793	.145		5.468	.000
	Effective rewards	.988	.151	.849	6.556	.000
	Improved rewards	-.190	.135	-.185	-1.409	.159
	adequate rewards	-.333	.148	-.295	-2.244	.025
	financial rewards	-.429	.114	-.414	-3.755	.000
	Non-financial rewards	.719	.086	.732	8.336	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity						

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

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Discussion of Findings

The observation that a majority of employees perceive their organization's reward system as aligning with individual performance is consistent with findings from Adeuya et al. (2020). Their study revealed a statistically significant positive effect of pay on employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. This suggests that when employees recognize a direct correlation between their performance and rewards, their motivation and productivity levels are enhanced. The data indicating that over half of the employees believe the existing reward system encourages innovation and creativity is supported by the study of Ada et al. (2023). They found that performance-based and skill-based pay systems positively influence employee performance, with skill-based pay particularly fostering creativity among employees in Nigerian organizations.

The strong belief among employees that rewards directly influence their productivity aligns with the findings of Richard et al. (2023). Their research in manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria, established a strong positive correlation between various forms of compensation (financial, fringe, and non-financial benefits) and employee productivity indicators such as task accomplishment and job quality. The sentiment that the absence of a reward system negatively affects work output is echoed in the study by Usman et al. (2023). Their research at the Federal Polytechnic Bida, Nigeria, concluded that a fair and workable reward system positively impacts the well-being of workers and leads to the attainment of organizational objectives. The absence of such systems can therefore detrimentally affect employee performance.

The finding that a significant portion of employees exceed job expectations when anticipating rewards is supported by the study of Nwajei and Ikeogwu (2024). Their research in manufacturing firms in Southeast Nigeria revealed that promotion and recognition significantly influence employee productivity and commitment, suggesting that the anticipation of such rewards motivates employees to surpass their standard job requirements. The data indicating that productivity increases when both financial and non-financial rewards are combined aligns with the conclusions of Agbaeze and Ebirim (2020). Their study in the South-South Nigerian manufacturing industry emphasized that both financial and non-financial rewards significantly affect organizational performance, recommending a balanced approach to reward systems to boost employee morale and performance.

The need for transparent and equitable reward systems is highlighted in the study by Ihemereze et al. (2023). Their research in the Nigerian automotive sector found that salary adjustments, bonuses, and pay raises significantly influence employee motivation and job satisfaction. However, they also noted concerns regarding transparency in profit-sharing

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practices, underscoring the importance of clear and fair reward systems. The study's findings are corroborated by recent literature, emphasizing the critical role of well-structured reward systems in enhancing employee productivity. Organizations in the Nigerian manufacturing sector should consider implementing comprehensive reward strategies that combine financial incentives with non-financial recognition, ensure transparency, and align rewards with individual performance to foster motivation, innovation, and overall organizational success.

Conclusion

Based on the summary of findings of this study, it was concluded that reward system has significant influence on employee productivity in selected food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that;

- Special attention should be given to ensuring that high performers are adequately recognized and rewarded, thus encouraging a high-performance culture across the organization.
- Food and beverage manufacturing firms should be trained on the importance of reward systems and how to implement them effectively. Employees should also be informed about the criteria and processes for earning rewards.
- Food and beverage manufacturing firms ensure that reward systems are equitable and non-discriminatory. Unfair reward practices can demotivate staff and reduce overall productivity.

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