**secretary’s financial incentives on organizational productivity**

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**Abstract**

The study made anassessment ofsecretary’s financial incentives on organizational productivity. In order to carry out this study, specified research objectives were drawn from which research questions and hypotheses were formulated and used for the study. The research design for this study is a survey design. The population of this study comprised all secretaries of law firms in Uyo metropolis. 344 secretaries were selected using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts. Data from completed questionnaires was subjected to descriptive analysis. The findings showed that there is positive impact of secretary’s financial incentive used on the organizational productivity. Benefits of secretary’s financial incentive on the organizational productivity were seen to be remarkable. The study concluded that That there is need for the organization to increase their financial incentives to all strata of staff to have a higher increase on productivity and profitability. That consideration should be given for a slight increase in salary and other financial incentive to encourage the secretaries to perform at their highest level. Those other motivational factors should be made available to the secretaries for improved performance and productivity in the present dispensation.

**INTRODUCTION**

The progress and continuous existence of any organization are determined by the manner the secretaries are given their emoluments and rewards. As stated by Dixit and Bhati (2012), poor incentive packages have been the major factor affecting secretaries’ commitment and productivity. The attitude of workers to their jobs and the level of their dedication are determined by the reward system and the motivating inducements.

According to Ogundele (2010), motivation is as an action which an individual takes in order to correct an imbalance work.  Nevertheless, for any organization to achieve its goals and objectives in any competitive business environment, employers of labour must have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of what galvanizes its workforce to perform effectively and efficiently and reward them in the same way. Moreover, secretaries must be motivated via sufficient incentives plans and reward system and that will always stimulate them to take the initiative, do things on their own without necessarily having to ask bosses for direction or go-ahead because they are proactive and have the interest of the organization at heart and have a good attitude to work, hence foster organizational productivity. Nonetheless, in a fast-changing organization, inducement strategies are used by employers of labour to make sure that the competent and hard-working secretaries are kept happy, invigorated, energized, and retained for the continuous improvement of the organization.

Incentives impel and drive employee attitude in the place of work and also foster understanding between the employer and the employee which will as a result, give rise to the fantastic performance of the secretaries in particular and the organization as a whole. Chidi, Joy, Badejo, Ogunyomi, Onabote (2012), added that motivation is the process of stimulating people to action in order to accomplish desired goals. It is a predisposition to act in a specific goal directed way. Charles (2000) viewed motivation as psychological forces that determine the direction of a person’s behavior, a person’s level of effort, and a person’s level of persistence in the face of obstacles.

Job satisfaction has to do with a personal evaluation of the extent to which people like their job. That is, whether or not the condition in the work itself and the environment, as well as policies and management strategies are beneficial. In a situation where they are favourable, then, secretaries are satisfied, if the conditions remain the same. This leads them to form positive attitudes that are useful to customers and management. Schermerhorn (2000), opines that job satisfaction is an emotional response towards various aspects of an employee’s work. He emphasizes that likely causes of job satisfaction include – status, supervision, co-workers’ relationship, job content, remuneration, and organizational structure.

Hersey and Blanchard (1988), state that motivation is influenced by forward-looking perception concerning the relationship between performance and reward, while satisfaction refers to people’s feelings about the rewards they have received. A number of research findings have suggested a positive relationship between motivation and job satisfaction to the extent that Kreitner and Kinicki (2001), suggest that managers can potentially enhance employee motivation through secretaries’ job satisfaction.

A number of other research findings have had support for the uplifting effects of money in employee motivation, especially in developing nations with poor employee remuneration, but with high family, societal, political, and so forth financial demands and expectations.

**Statement of the Problem**

In the past, employers of labour have been complaining that secretaries perform their work efficiently when they are newly employed, but with time, their efficiency and productivity dwindle. The secretaries have attributed decrease in efficiency and productivity to the fact that employers do not provide adequate financial incentives and motivation to enable them to put in their best. According to Ubeku (1975) productivity suffers a lag if incentives are poorly or inappropriately used. The use of various incentives to motivate staff must be adequate and appropriate. The human in the economic sense, has generally been regarded as an economic man, this means that means that man or worker, as the case may be, only responds to financial incentives as a form of motivation. This assumption is popular among the classical economic schools of thought. They equate satisfaction only to economic values, such as a monetary inducement as the only benefit that workers respond to. In other words, the only condition that may get a worker motivated or satisfied can only be measured in financial or monetary terms.

The problem is lack of job satisfaction among staff. Locke and Lathan (1976) gave a comprehensive definition of a job satisfaction as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience. Job satisfaction is a result of an employee’s perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important. According to Mitchell and Lasan (1987), it is generally recognized in the organizational behavior field that job satisfaction is the most important and frequently studied attitude. While Luthan (1998) posited that there are three important dimensions to job satisfaction: Job satisfaction is an emotional response to a job situation. As such, it cannot be seen, it can only be inferred.

Organizational productivity is only determined by how well outcome meet or exceed expectations. For instance, if organization secretaries feel that they are working much harder than others in the department, but are receiving fewer rewards they will probably have negative attitudes towards the work, the boss and or coworkers. On the other hand, if they feel they are being treated very well and are being paid equitably, they are likely to have positive attitudes towards the job.

To tackle this problem, the researcher has decided to use financial incentive. This will boost staff morale and galvanize them towards greater productivity and more dedication to their jobs. This problem, if left unsolved, will lead to disenchantment of the staff with their jobs, low morale among staff, poor quality of work done and by extension, lack of satisfaction of customers. Therefore, the importance of solving this problem cannot be over-emphasized.

**Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of financial incentives on organizational productivity. Other objectives include:

1. Examine the impact of financial incentive used on the organizational productivity.
2. To examine the impact of benefits of financial incentive on the organizational productivity.

**Research Purpose**

1. What is the impact of financial incentive used on the organizational productivity?
2. What is the impact of benefits of financial incentive on the organizational productivity?

**Research Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant impact of financial incentive used on the organizational productivity.
2. There is no significant impact of benefits of financial incentive on the organizational productivity.

**Overview of Financial Incentives in Business Organization**

Incentives have been defined and used in different areas. In the context of the health care industry, incentives are defined as “An available means apply with intention to influence the willingness of physicians and nurses to exert and maintain an effort toward attaining organizational goals” (Mathauer & Imhoff, 2006). Based on the World Health Report 2000, the definition of incentive in the health care industry is generally about “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” (Adam & Hicks, 2000). This defining primary places on individual, in the context of service provider, within a specific organization and acknowledges the importance of the wider institutional context as well as the particular work implemented by the individual or group will determine the incentives used and its outcome. In this sense, incentives are considered as factors within health care work environments that enable, encourage and motivate staff to stick with their careers, in their profession and within their national boundary.

In the context of education, incentives are used to encourage students to increase their work effort and study performance. According to a UNDP Capacity Development Resource (2006, p.12), “incentives are external measures that are designed and established to influence motivation and behavior of individuals, groups or organizations”. Whereas, in the tourism sector, incentive has been defined differently. According to a study from the Society of Incentive and Travel Executive (SITE), Incentive is a “management tool that uses an exceptional travel experience to motivate and/or recognize participants or increase level of performance in support of organizational tools”. It is a kind of compensation that has been designed to recognize employee’s performance and their accomplishment.

Meanwhile, from organizational standpoints, incentive is defined as a technique, which is usually used by employers to carry out their end of the employment contract, a form of compensation to the secretaries for their effort (Hartman, Kurtz & Moser, 1994). Incentives are tangible or intangible rewards used to motivate a person or group of people to behave in a certain way (Collins, Tinkew & Burkhauser, 2008).

A similar definition is given by Zurn, Dolea and Stilwell (2005, p.5), incentive is “an explicit or implicit financial or non-financial reward for performing a particular act”. Meanwhile Banjoko (2006) generally regards incentive as variable payments, which are made to secretaries or a group of secretaries on the basis of the amount of output or based on the achieved result. Optionally, it can be the payment made with the aim of pushing employee daily work performance in an attempt to reach a common goal. Incentive could also be defined as compensation other than basic salaries or wages that usually fluctuates based on employee exceptional performance and their attainment of some standard set by the organization (Martocchio, 2006).

From the above discussion, incentive can be defined in different ways with different contexts and situations. However, the core concept of those definitions is around tangible or intangible compensation, explicit or implicit ways to influence individuals or groups of people to exert more time and effort in order to achieve personal as well as organizational goals.

**Financial Incentives and Organizational Productivity**

Financial incentives are developed separately according to different types of people and organizations. In the context of public and private organizations as well as in the literature of human resource management there is a long tradition of expressing the existence of financial incentives as remuneration (Lawler, 1971; Lathan, 2007).

Financial incentives are developed to satisfy basic human needs, encouraging and pushing people to do their best work performance, the recruitment of their capabilities and enhance their competencies level. Financial incentives are also designed as a means of payment to increase productivity and improve employee work performance. Therefore, the more secretaries produce the more they can get.

Whereas, a decrease in quality or quantity of work might deprive secretaries from earning part or all of their incentive (Jadallah, 2007). Financial incentives are designed to give the employee some control over their income as the employee’s income will be based on their performance, to create a greater sense of responsibility of the job on the part of the employee, and to stimulate the employee to work harder than what he/she usually does (Yavuz, 2004; Lawzi, 2005)

One feature of financial incentives is that it is variable in nature. For instance, financial incentives are often called variable pay, as there are not guaranteed (Gross, 1995). It also refers to pay that is contingent based on actual performance of secretaries, as different to an entitlement. Another study of financial incentives shows that some secretaries are motivated by rewards and that money is a strong motivator for them (De Cenzo, 1996). According to a study on compensation and incentives conducted by Baker, Jensen and Murphy (1988) one person might not be as responsive as others to the same reward. For instance, one person might appreciate a compliment or recognition from their organization while another would prefer financial benefit like a salary increase. This finding has also been supported by a survey that was conducted in a Malaysian organization that found that most of the secretaries prefer to have a cash reward (Rafikul I. & Ahmad Zaki Hj. 2004).

In addition, financial incentives do not always deal with direct benefits like pay or wage, bonuses, pensions, allowances, etc. Sometimes it could be developed as indirect financial benefits such as subsidized food, accommodation, transportation, educational fees, childcare and so on (Buchan, Thompson & O’May, 2000).

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that financial incentives can be designed and developed into different forms with regard to different people, organizations and situations. And their main purpose is to encourage and motivate people for greater achievement.

**The Effects of Incentives on Organizational Productivity**

Incentives are generally developed to generate employee motivation, satisfaction, and greater performance. The link between the three variables has been widely discussed and debated among the researchers, scholars and practitioners (Lawler, 1971; Latham, 2007). They argue that the effectiveness of incentives for reaching higher behavioral outcomes of secretaries is based on the degree to which those incentives are perceived to fulfill or satisfy their needs. For example, if the employee overwhelmingly desires job autonomy and perceives the amount of money or benefits are likely to satisfy this need, then the payment is likely to motivate them to perform the job. Since secretaries’ satisfaction could be both the cause and outcome of overall performance, organizations should demonstrate the link between reward and performance in order to motivate secretaries (Latham, 2007). Latham also suggests that if there is no link between employee performance and satisfaction or there is a negative one, then the organization clearly has an ineffective system of incentives. In addition, with an effective incentive, secretaries could gain several social and psychological benefits as a result of improving their purchasing power to satisfy his/her needs of goods and services (Al-Jahni, 1998). Therefore, it can be concluded that incentives have great potential for improving employee work performance and increasing production efficiency through encouraging individuals or groups to act in a desired and productive way.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Dual Factor Theory**

According to Herzberg, Mauser and Snyderman (1959) job satisfaction consisted of two distinctive dimensions: job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. These two dimensions are not at opposite ends of the same continuum, but instead represent two distinct continua. Kumari and Pandey (2001) examined the impact of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction on physicians’ intention to change jobs the from public to private sector in Finland. The physicians worked primarily in a public hospital or public healthcare centre but also ran a private practice. The result showed that private practice had a positive, statistically significant effect on the intention to switch jobs.

The findings also suggest job satisfaction decreased a physician’s intention to switch sectors (from public sector to private sector); meanwhile, job dissatisfaction significantly increased the physicians’ intention to leave the public sector.

Herzberg, Mauser and Snyderman (1959) also conclude that those job characteristics, which are essential and can lead to job satisfaction but not to job dissatisfaction, are considered satisfiers. According to the theory, the satisfiers are related to the nature of the work itself and the rewards that flow directly from the performance of that work. The most potent of these are those characteristics that foster the individual’s needs for self-actualization and self-realization in their job. These characteristics also relate to intrinsic factors such as job autonomy, job recognition, high achievement, and opportunity for development as well as advancement. A sense of performing interesting and important work, job responsibility and advancement are the most important factors for a lasting attitude change. Achievement and recognition are also frequently associated with long-range factors of responsibility and the nature of the work itself. Recognition that produces good feelings about a job does not necessarily have to come from managers or supervisors; it might come from co-workers, subordinates or stakeholders (Herzberg, Mauser & Snyderman, 1959).

Another study on the effect of job characteristic on job satisfaction has been addressed by Hackman and Oldham (1976). The study has shown that job characteristics were widely used as a framework to study how particular characteristics of job impact on job outcomes and job satisfaction. The authors also state that there are five main job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. These five main characteristics have a great influencing power toward job outcomes including job satisfaction and absenteeism.

# RESEARCH METHOD

**Area of the Study**

The research area for this study was some select banks in Uyo Metropolis. Uyo is one of the Local Government Areas and the capital city of Akwa Ibom State. Uyo Local Government lies between latitude 6.05 North and longitude 80 East. This is within the equatorial rain forest belt, which is a tropical zone that house vegetation of green foliage of trees shrubs and oil palm trees.

**Research Design**

An Expost-facto design, which was used for this study, is a non-survey design which the researcher cannot manipulate the effect on the dependent variable but just obtain the effect already existing in the natural course of events. This design was being found fit for the study, as it attempted to find out the existing influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

**Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprised all secretaries of law firms in Uyo metropolis.

**Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A simple sampling technique was used to draw the 344 respondents. The simple randomly sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents from the select law firms. The balloting system was used in selecting the sample.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument used by the researcher for this study was a research questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to obtain data on the independent and dependent variables presented in both sections A and B of the questionnaire. Section A measured the demographic data of the respondents such as name, gender, age, educational qualification and marital status as well as other independent variable.

**Validation of the Instrument**

The instrument designed by the researcher passed through face and content validation by being vetted by the researcher’s supervisor and one expert from test and measurement. The instrument was, vetted by my supervisors and a lecturer in test and measurement, in the Faculty of education,

**Reliability of the Instrument**

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, experts in test and measurement and statistics were given the instrument for rating in respect of the consistency with the research objectives. Items in which at least two experts agreed upon were regarded as suitable, the reliability coefficients was 0.85 and was considered substantially high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

**Administration of the instrument**

A letter of introduction was written and presented to the Head of Operations in the select banks. The questionnaire were issued and retrieved 3 days latter from each respondent. The exercise took about two weeks.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques and Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha level. The result was considered significant if the calculated values were either equal to or greater than the critical value but non significant if the calculated values were less than the critical values.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES**

**Data Analyses and Results**

**Hypothesis One**

There is no significant impact of secretary’s financial incentive used on the organizational productivity. In-order to test the hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the mean score of the two groups. (See table1).

**TABLE 1**

**Independent t-test analysis of difference of impact of secretary’s financial incentive used on the organizational productivity.**

**=================================================================**

**Variable N X SD t**

**----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

High 257 12.01 1.30

21.45\*

Low 87 15.15 0.71

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**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 342; N= 344; critical t-value = 1.96**

The above table 1 presents the obtained t-value as (21.45). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 342 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (21.45) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant difference of the impact of secretary’s financial incentive used on the organizational productivity.

**Hypothesis two**

There is no significant impact of benefits of secretary’s financial incentive on the organizational productivity. In-order to test the hypothesis independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the mean score of the two groups. (Table 2)

**TABLE 2**

**Independent t-test analysis of difference of impact of benefits of financial incentive on the organizational productivity.**

**===============================================================**

**Variable N X SD t**

**-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

High 292 12.41 1.65

10.96\*

Low 52 14.98 0.83

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**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 342; N= 344; critical t-value = 1.96**

The above table 4.3 presents the obtained t-value as (10.96). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 342 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (10.96) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant difference of the impact of benefits of secretary’s financial incentive on the organizational productivity.

**Discussion of the Findings**

The result of the data analysis in Table 1 is significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (21.45) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 342 degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant difference significant difference of impact of secretary’s financial incentive used on the organizational productivity. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Jensen and Murphy (1988) who said that one person might not be as responsive as others to the same reward. For instance, one person might appreciate a compliment or recognition from their organization while another would prefer financial benefit like a salary increase. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in Table 2 is significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (10.96) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 342 degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant difference of impact of benefits of secretary’s financial incentive on the organizational productivity. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Robinson (1999) who posits that financial incentives can be manipulated to affect employee’s decisions. The challenge to funders or payers is to assemble the mix or blend of financial incentive rules and monitoring efforts that result in the employee productivity. The greater the costs of these activities, the less likely that financial incentive are used. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher wishes to draw the following conclusion:-

1. There is positive impact of secretary’s financial incentive used on the organizational productivity.
2. Benefits of secretary’s financial incentive on the organizational productivity were seen to be remarkable.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations were made:

That there is need for the organization to increase their financial incentives to all strata of staff to have a higher increase on productivity and profitability.

That consideration should be given for a slight increase in salary and other financial incentive to encourage the secretaries to perform at their highest level.

Those other motivational factors should be made available to the secretaries for improved performance and productivity in the present dispensation.

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