

Navigating Reward System: Impact on Employee Involvement of Service Delivery Firms in South South Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the extent of relationship between reward system and employee involvement of service delivery firms in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design and census sampling technique methodology. The study comprised a total target population of 130 employees from eight statistically selected relevant service delivery firms in the study area. Based on this 120 staff was statically selected as the sample size. The likert 5 point scale structured questionnaire was used in the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data after ascertaining the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. After data cleaning 98 copies of the questionnaire were found fit for use in the analysis, five hypotheses were posited and tested. The research data were descriptively and inferentially analyzed using Spearman's Rank Order correlation coefficient statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance with the aid of statistical package for social sciences software. Based on the analyses, the results revealed the existence of statistical positive and significant relationships between the predictor and criterion variables, the organizational structure as a moderating factor had partial correlation on their respective relationship. In conclusion on the proven fact that employee involvement via both direct financial and indirect financial rewards and other means of motivating staff should be enhanced in the service delivery firms in South-South Nigeria. Based on this, the study recommended amongst others that management should ensure that direct financial rewards and other non-financial benefits should be encouraged so that employee performance can be improved and employee will be motivated to stay and put in their maximum efforts as it will lead to high level of employee productivity.*

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Introduction

Contemporary organization face various challenges to remain competitive in the operating industries and gain sustainable competitive advantage. Nowadays, most companies manage employees of different nationalities, cultures and social backgrounds which make the phenomenon of employee retention even more challenging retaining a talented and high quality employee has been considered as one of the long term sustainable competitive advantages but in the modern business environment, it has become a challenge for companies (Armstrong 2013). Paying employees for productivity has been the cornerstone of industrial and business development for centuries. Financial reward has always been important in managing employees performance, but over the last 25 years other elements of compensation have developed to

provide employers with more scope to reward, and thus motivate employees. Armstrong and Taylor (2014). Reward management influences performance by recognizing and rewarding good performance and by providing incentives to improve it.

A reward system is aimed to shape the behaviours of employees towards job and a company in general (Griffin & Moorhead, 2013). Rewards are given to those employees who meet or more often exceed expectations to the management, thus being a tool of motivation. Reward is generally understood as the total amount of financial and non financial compensation or total remuneration provided to an employee in return for labour or service rendered at work. The influence of reward on employee's performance is in most occasion significantly misconstrued.

Armstrong (2010) points out that in order for an organization to accomplish an exceptionally committed business condition and its overall business objective, a reward strategy must be created to guarantee that the commitment individuals make to accomplishing organizational group objectives are valued recognized and rewarded. Organizations gives rewards for a wide range of reasons such as enhancing recruitment and retaining by offering a compensation package that is competitive on the market, cases of positive rewards would be autonomy, power, salary increases, and bonuses and some negative rewards would be obstruction in work from superiors, zero salary increase and no promotion.

In today's volatile business landscape, organizations are relentlessly seeking strategies to ensure their sustainability and gain a competitive edge amidst uncertainties and challenges. The business environment is marked by increasing complexities, driven by rapid technological advancements, heightened competition both locally and internationally, capital mobility, and evolving societal expectations. These factors necessitate organizations to navigate through turbulent waters and establish a robust competitive position. Hence, managers are under immense pressure to effectively address these challenges to ensure organizational survival and attainment of objectives.

The involvement of competent employees with technical, professional, or conceptual skills is crucial for organizations to drive their vision, goals, and objectives. Competent and knowledgeable employees are widely recognized as indispensable assets for organizational success (Nwaeke and Obiekwe, 2017). Consequently, organizations are adopting strategies to empower their employees, allowing them to contribute to processes and decision-making, thereby enhancing performance and gaining a competitive advantage in the market. Employee involvement has emerged as a vital strategy for improving organizational performance and achieving positive outcomes.

In today's dynamic business landscape, where uncertainties prevail, organizations require agile and reliable strategies to cope with challenges and achieve their goals. Corporate leaders and managers increasingly acknowledge the importance of employee involvement in decision-making and problem-solving processes to harness the full potential of their workforce (Sofijanov and Zabijakin-Chatleska, 2013). Skilled and highly qualified employees are the driving force behind organizational success (Oforegbunam and Okorafor, 2010). They enable organizations to adapt to changing environments and drive innovation and productivity (Joseph and Dai, 2009). Organizations that overlook the involvement of employees in decision-making risk stagnation and

eventual decline (Cohen et al., 1997). Employee involvement fosters commitment, improves performance, and enhances organizational effectiveness (Obiekwe, 2018; Robbins and Coulter, 2007). However, merely hiring skilled workers is insufficient; organizations must actively involve them to leverage their abilities and gain a competitive edge (Obiekwe and Zeb-Obipi, 2018).

Reward systems play a pivotal role in motivating employees and enhancing organizational performance. Rewards can be intrinsic, inherent in the job itself, or extrinsic, external to the job, such as pay and benefits (Mahaney & Lederer, 2016). These rewards are essential for motivating employees and driving performance aligned with organizational goals (Allen & Killman, 2011). Rewards serve as a critical link between individual employee performance and organizational success (Ranjan, 2016). They encompass various tangible and intangible elements, including pay raises, bonuses, recognition, and developmental feedback (Omolawal et al., 2017). In summary, employee involvement and effective reward systems are indispensable for organizational success in today's competitive landscape. This study aims to investigate the impact of reward systems and employee involvement in service delivery firms in South-South Nigeria, shedding light on their significance in enhancing organizational performance and competitiveness.

Objectives of the Study

The major aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between reward system and employee involvement of service delivery firms in South-south Nigeria. Specifically, the study shall seek to:

- 1) Examine the nature of relationship between direct financial reward and employee involvement of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.
- 2) Evaluate the magnitude of relationship between indirect financial reward and employee involvement of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.
- 3) Ascertain how organizational structure moderate the relationship between reward system and employee involvement of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.

Research Questions:

Based on the problem statement and specific objectives of the study, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the nature of relationship between direct financial reward and employee involvement of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria?
2. What is the magnitude of relationship between indirect financial reward and employee involvement of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria?
3. How does organizational structure significantly moderate the relationship between reward system and employee involvement of service delivery firms in South-south Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in a null form.

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between direct financial reward and employee participation of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship between direct reward and team work of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.
- Ho₃:** There is no significant relationship between indirect financial reward and employee participation of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.
- Ho₄:** There is no significant relationship between indirect financial reward and teamwork of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.
- Ho₅:** Organizational structure does not significantly moderate the relationship between reward system and employee involvement of service delivery firms in south-south Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Reward Systems

Maloney and McCarthy (2013), defined reward system which encapsulates a blend of financial and non-financial components aimed at compensating employees for their dedication and effort within the workplace. Armstrong (2012) underscores its overarching goals, which include attracting skilled personnel, fostering retention, and motivating employees towards heightened achievements. Optimal reward systems entail a balanced amalgamation of financial incentives and non-monetary motivators to bolster employee performance and satisfaction (Kalaiselvan, 2019). The dynamic and ever changing environment with fierce competition is making firm learn ways of quick responses to changing consumer demands all this requires highly motivated and satisfied employees, who can give their 100% for the organization competitiveness in many of today's industries is based on the effectiveness of human assets on the ability of employees to create, to apply their skills and accumulated knowledge, to work effectively together, and to treat customers well. Rewards in organizational settings serve as powerful motivators, delineated into two primary categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation emanates from within the individual, fostering feelings of pride, contentment, and personal growth (Kaplan & Atkinson, 2018). Conversely, extrinsic rewards are bestowed by external sources such as organizations or individuals, encompassing both monetary and non-monetary forms (Jaghult, 2015). Monetary incentives, constituting a significant component of extrinsic rewards, often manifest as variable compensation, bonuses, or promotions, contingent upon predefined performance metrics (Ax & Kullven, 2015). The multifaceted objectives of reward systems encompass motivating employees towards enhanced performance and bolstering employee retention (Mesepey, 2016). Such systems underpin the organizational employment structure, fostering a conducive environment for talent retention and reduced turnover (Armstrong & Murlins, 2012). Rewards, encompassing financial and non-financial elements, constitute a pivotal facet of the organizational exchange process, wherein employees contribute various resources in exchange for tangible and intangible rewards (Omolawal et al., 2017).

Dimensions of Reward Systems

Reward system encompasses the area of performance related pay, total reward systems and team rewards it will reveal the many different types of incentive available to modern day employees as well as the most favourable way to apply those incentives to get the best performance from the staff. The reward system is a central, integrated feature of the approach to the human resource management. The basis of the reward system consists of employees charges, fees, remuneration, compensations or earnings. Armstrong and Stephen (2014) delineate reward systems as intricate frameworks comprising direct financial rewards, indirect financial benefits, and non-financial incentives, collectively constituting a holistic approach towards reward management. Direct financial rewards, pivotal in motivating employees, encompass tangible forms of compensation such as pay, bonuses, and profit-sharing schemes (Chelladurai, 2019). Despite debates surrounding the direct motivational impact of pay, its significance in bolstering employee morale, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria, remains undeniable. Indirect financial benefits, as expounded by Doy1e (2010), encompass supplementary perks extended by employers, not mandated by regulations but offered at the discretion of the organization. These benefits, ranging from healthcare provisions to paid leave, contribute to employee well-being and organizational morale. Furthermore, adherence to labor laws and provision of disability coverage underscore organizational commitment to employee welfare (Gale, 2002; Donata, 2021).

Extrinsic Rewards

According to Raza (2012), extrinsic rewards in other words monetary rewards are the best source of employee motivation which would cater the expectations of individual employees in order to keep them motivated, therefore, this way of motivation tends to be short-term and should be repeated constantly to retain motivation and performance of the employees. By extrinsic rewards organization can boost the productivity and moral of work force, therefore maximizing and improving employees performance as well as the whole organizational performance (Danish and Usman 2010). Infact, monetary rewards can play an effective role to maximize productivity of employees and has a critical role in maintaining high level of motivation among employees. Extrinsic rewards are such as salary, promotion and bonus e.t.c

Intrinsic Reward

Every organization needs financial, physical and human resources to achieve its targeted goals. It is possible only when motivated employees use their full potential to do the work. The reward management system includes intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards like salary, bonuses, recognition, praise, flexible working hours and social rights. Allen and Kilmann (2001) pointed out that reward practices play a vital role in improving employee performance and to achieve organizational goals. In contrast, if an organization fails to reward employee, it will directly affect the performance of the employee Ajila and Abiola (2004) explained that intrinsic reward have a positive and significant influence on the performance of the employee in an organization. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation that comes from inside an individual. This type of motivation usually comes with the satisfaction employee gets after the work being done for people to motivate them. This motivation occurs from the external sources such as money, grades, criticism, or punishment. A good balance of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards enables the organization

maximize employee commitment, motivation and job satisfaction which in turn maximizes the performance of employees particularly in terms of productivity (Khan et al., 2013).

Non-financial Rewards

Non-financial rewards are those that focus on the needs people have to varying degrees for recognition, achievement, responsibility, autonomy, influence and personal growth. Non-financial rewards can be extrinsic such as praise or recognition, or intrinsic associated with job challenge and interest, and feelings that work is worthwhile (Armstrong 2010).

Armstrong, (2010) proposed a reward management system which emphasizes the need to consider all aspects of the work experience of value to employees, not just a few such as pay and benefits. He argues for the total reward approach in which he aims to blend the financial and non financial elements of reward into a cohesive whole. Non-financial rewards cater to intrinsic human needs for recognition, personal growth, and conducive working environments. These rewards, encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic facets, pivot on acknowledging achievements, fostering job satisfaction, and nurturing professional development (Armstrong & Murlins, 2012). Intrinsic rewards, inherent within job roles, encompass elements such as challenging tasks and training opportunities, fostering a sense of fulfillment and personal growth (Armstrong & Stephen, 2014). Conversely, extrinsic rewards manifest as external recognition or praise, further bolstering employee motivation and engagement. In summary, an effective reward system integrates both financial and non-financial components, tailored to organizational objectives and employee needs, thereby fostering a conducive environment for talent retention, motivation, and organizational success.

Measures of Employee Involvement

There is an increasing demand for committed employees who need little or no supervision to carry out their jobs efficiently for the good of the organization. Involvement entails building human capacity, ownership and responsibility. Employee involvement means employee participation in decision-making and implementation in the organization. It is measured by how well employees have sense of ownership and responsibility towards the organization. It reflects on the level of employee commitment. Employee involvement takes on various forms and definitions across scholarly discourse. Kumari and Kumari (2014) conceptualize it as the empowerment of employees to engage in managerial decision-making and organizational improvement initiatives tailored to their respective roles within the company. Similarly, Price (2004) characterizes employee involvement as a procedural framework intertwining participation, communication, and decision-making processes, ultimately fostering industrial democracy and bolstering employee motivation. Price further underscores that integrating employees into an organization's operations not only motivates them but also enables them to significantly contribute to the organization's objectives.

The essence of employee involvement lies in affording employees the opportunity to partake in decisions that impact them directly, thereby augmenting their autonomy and control over their work. This inclusivity extends to delegating authority and responsibility, aimed at cultivating heightened commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction among employees within an

organization. Mitchell (1993) emphasizes that employee involvement entails a shared authority in decision-making between management and workers concerning the work environment.

Singh (2009) contends that involving employees is imperative for fostering a culture of creativity and garnering commitment to adopt novel and improved work practices. When employees are engaged in formulating and executing decisions that directly affect them, they perceive these decisions as their own, thus exhibiting dedication to their success. Notably, the success of employee involvement hinges on the establishment of organizational cultures, systems, and processes that actively solicit and leverage employee input and feedback (Kok, Lebusa, & Joubert, 2014). Moreover, the degree of employee involvement in organizational processes is contingent upon the national cultural context within which the organization operates.

Employee Participation

The concept of employee participation is common to many different discipline areas in the social sciences. Employee participation in management refers to the participation of non-management employees in the decision making processes of the organization. The participation of the employees in the functioning of the organization gives employees mental and psychological satisfaction. Employee participation can also be direct or indirect. Direct participation occurs when employee personally influence the decision process. Levels of employee involvement reflect both the degree of power over the decision. Employee participation has become a convenient all term to cover a variety of form and organizational techniques. It encompasses such diverse forms as participative management, workplace democracy, representative participation, empowerment, quality circles and employee ownership. Employee participation denotes a management initiative or process wherein employees are afforded opportunities to engage in decisions pertaining to their work or discuss issues aimed at influencing managerial decisions. According to Wagnew (1994), it entails the equitable sharing of influence among individuals who are hierarchically unequal. The primary objective of employee participation is to enhance productivity for both employees and the organization, foster a deeper understanding of employees' roles in the production process, and cater to workers' aspirations for self-expression. This, in turn, leads to improved relations, enhanced effectiveness and efficiency, and industrial harmony.

Teamwork

The challenges of survival propelled individuals to organize into interdependent, cooperative groups. Team processes are the means through which team resources are directed to achieve desired team outcomes. Team work is the essential part of devising new roles of effectiveness in order to achieving desired objectives. The governmental institutions depends on entire teams to accomplish their work rather than individual employees. Teamwork involves a collective effort wherein a group of individuals collaborates interdependently to solve problems or achieve specific tasks. The efficacy of teamwork relies on the synergy of individual members' contributions and collective endeavors (Earley, 1993). Teams afford employees the autonomy to assume additional responsibilities, exercise discretion over work methods and schedules, develop multifaceted skills, and participate in team member selection. Judeh (2011) asserts that organizations often rely on teamwork to continuously enhance their products, services, and

overall organizational functions. Effective team building hinges on leveraging the skills, abilities, and competencies of individual team members. By fostering trust and camaraderie, adept team leaders elevate team effectiveness, subsequently enhancing organizational competitiveness (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Notably, collective responsibility transcends individual participation in decision-making and hierarchical positions, emphasizing every member's obligation within the group dynamic.

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure is only one of many aspects of organizational designs that reflects the way in which work in an organization is divided. It is a powerful determinant of organizational behaviour. Infact, many people believes decisions about organizational structure to be the central determinant of organizational behaviour. Organizational structure is the framework of the relations on jobs, systems operating process, people and groups making efforts to achieve the goals. Organizational structure is a set of methods dividing the task to determined duties and coordinates them. Organizational structure should facilitate decision making, proper reaction to environment and conflict resolution between units (Monavarian, Asgari & Ashena, 2007). The organizational structure constitutes the formal framework of task assignments and reporting hierarchies aimed at incentivizing employees to attain organizational objectives. It serves as a mechanism for top management to administer and guide strategic decision-making across different echelons within the organization (Smith, 2019).

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study involved a cross-sectional research design to delve into the intricacies of reward systems and employee involvement within service delivery firms in Nigeria. The target demographic encompassed 8 service delivery firms operating within the South-South region of Nigeria. Given the manageable size of this population, a census sampling technique was utilized, ensuring the inclusion of all 8 service delivery firms as the study's sample. Consequently, 130 questionnaires were disseminated among the employees of these firms. However, the analysis was based on the 98 completed questionnaires that were returned, providing the foundation for this study's investigation

Table 1 Population Distribution

| S/N | Names of Service Delivery Firms | Population |
|------------|--|-------------------|
| 1 | MTN Nig | 20 |
| 2. | 9mobile | 15 |
| 3. | Airtel Nig | 17 |
| 4. | Globalcom | 17 |
| 5 | Smile Nigeria | 16 |
| 6 | Nitel | 15 |
| 7 | Mainone | 15 |
| 8 | Spectranet | 15 |
| | Total | 130 |

Source: Nigeria Communication Commission

Direct Financial Reward and Employee Involvement Measures

| | | | | Direct Financial Reward | Employee Participation | Team Work | Organizational Structure |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Direct Financial Reward | Correlation Coefficient | | 1.000 | .571** | .271** | .329** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | . | .000 | .007 | .001 |
| | | N | | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| | Employee Participation | Correlation Coefficient | | .571** | 1.000 | .635** | .754** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| | Team Work | Correlation Coefficient | | .271** | .635** | 1.000 | .661** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .007 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| | Organizational Structure | Correlation Coefficient | | .329* | .754** | .661** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .001 | .000 | .000 | . |
| | | N | | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 |

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

Indirect Financial Reward and Employee Involvement Measures

| | | | Indirect Financial Reward | Employee Participation | Team Work | Organizational Structure |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Indirect Financial Reward | Correlation | 1.000 | .534** | .750** | .897** |
| | | Coefficient | . | | | |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .013 | .003 |
| | | N | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| | Employee Participation | Correlation | .534** | 1.000 | .635** | .754** |
| | | Coefficient | | | | |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| | Team Work | Correlation | .750** | .635** | 1.000 | .661** |
| | | Coefficient | | | | |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .013 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| | Organizational Structure | Correlation | .897* | .754** | .661** | 1.000 |
| | | Coefficient | | | | |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .003 | .000 | .000 | . |
| | N | 98 | 98 | 98 | 98 | |

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

Correlation for the Moderating Effect of Organizational Structure

| Control Variables | | | Reward System | Employee Involvement | Organizational Involvement |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Reward System | Correlation | 1.000 | .790** | .799** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 |
| | | Df | 0 | 96 | 96 |
| | Employee Involvement | Correlation | .790** | 1.000 | .454** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | Df | 96 | 0 | 96 |
| | Organizational Structure | Correlation | .799 | .454 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . |
| | | Df | 96 | 96 | 0 |
| Organizational Structure | Reward System | Correlation | .1000 | .777 | |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .006 | |
| | | Df | 0 | 95 | |
| | Employee Involvement | Correlation | .777 | 1.000 | |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | |
| | | Df | 96 | 0 | |

Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

Conclusion

Effective employee involvement hinges upon fostering an open and robust communication system within an organization, one in which both management and employees actively participate. This approach is pivotal in cultivating a positive work environment characterized by high levels of trust, exceptional customer service, collaborative teamwork, and innovative problem-solving. Such an environment not only fosters employee satisfaction but also serves as a catalyst for enabling organizations to attain competitive advantage. Employee involvement is thus indispensable for effective management, as it contributes significantly to organizational success. Drawing upon the insights gleaned from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Fair and Transparent Remuneration System:** Implementing a coordinated remuneration system that recognizes and rewards employees based on their contributions is crucial. This system should celebrate high achievers while also providing support and encouragement to those who may need to improve their performance, thereby fostering a culture of fairness and accountability within the organization.
2. **Enhanced Employee Recognition Programs:** The telecommunications industry should prioritize the implementation of robust employee recognition programs to acknowledge and reward outstanding performance. Such programs serve as potent motivators, fostering heightened employee engagement and commitment within service delivery firms.
3. **Provision of Crèche Facilities:** In alignment with non-financial reward strategies, organizations should consider offering crèche facilities to support employees in balancing their professional responsibilities with childcare needs. This initiative can enhance employee focus and productivity within the organization.
4. **Diversification of Motivational Strategies:** Management must recognize that direct financial rewards are not the sole drivers of employee motivation. Therefore, alongside monetary incentives, organizations should explore offering non-financial benefits and indirect financial rewards to cultivate a holistic approach to employee satisfaction and retention.

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