
Compensation Management and Employee Commitment

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ABSTRACT: *Hiring experienced and qualified workers is critical, but of greater importance is the organization's ability to create a committed workforce. As such, this study examined the relationship between compensation management and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company (IPC) in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was used and the entire two hundred and seven (207) populations of IPC were purposefully adopted for the study. The major instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire administered to the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and Pearson's product moment correlation through SPSS package. The findings revealed that pay-for-performance has positive and significant relationship with employee's commitment in IPC ($r = 0.892$, $p=0.000<0.05$); and skilled-based pay has positive and significant relationship with employee's commitment in IPC ($r = 0.856$, $p=0.000<0.05$). It was concluded that compensation management has positive and significant relationship with employee's commitment in IPC. The study recommends that organization should be fair and consistent in its compensation management so as to create a committed workforce.*

KEYWORDS: Compensation Management, Employee's Commitment, Motivation, Pay-for-Performance, Skill-Based Pay.

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business environment, no organization can perform at peak levels unless each employee is committed to the organization's objectives and work as an effective team member. Without employee commitment, there can be no improvement in any business area. To succeed in the face of increasing competition, organizations need improved productivity at all levels. This requires job commitment on the part of all employees which can only be achieved through better management practices in the area of managing compensation by, creating a perception of fairness and equity through competitive wages and benefits (Daniel, 2019). Compensation package fails to secure employee commitment when it is viewed as not being fair, not being equitable and inconsistent. Armstrong (2017) suggested that positive work-related behaviour and attitudes largely depends on employee perceptions on how their employer values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing in terms of compensation management. Compensation management is a segment of administration that focuses on planning and control of payments that employees receive for the work they performed. The concept of compensation management implies having an appropriate compensation policy where employees are consistently compensated with fairness and equity for the work they have performed or service rendered. It is the process of planning, analyzing and determining of salary, wages, incentives and other benefits each employee receives based on job evaluation and control of pay costs by individual organization (Alex, Uno and Lebo, 2020). The ability of a manager to achieve the organization's objectives through employees and maintain a strategic position in the industry depends on effective compensation management system (Kifordu and Uroko, 2023).

Compensation is the reward given to an employee as a result of efforts put-in to achieve a set objective. It includes both financial and non-financial benefits as well as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that employees are entitled to for their commitment which leads to higher performance. Obiese (2023) described compensation as the total rewards provided to employees in return for the work done of which the overall objectives are to attract, retain and motivate employees to be more committed to the organization. In every employment contract, there is employer-employee relationship which is expected to be mutually reciprocal. Employer expect the employee to put up positive attitudes (commitment) to work such as punctuality to duty post, regular attendance at workplace, adherence to workplace's rules and regulations which leads to job performance; while employee equally expect the employer to offer a fair compensation package that is proportionate to his commitment for the overall success of the organization. In summary, employee commitment is stimulated by compensation packages available in the organization. It is important for human resources management unit to have an effective compensation plans to stimulate employee's commitment (Saharuddin, et al., 2020).

One of the challenges facing modern organizations involves maintaining employee commitment in the current competitive pressures. Employee commitment describes how devoted employees are to their duties and the feelings they have towards various aspect of their jobs. Dunmade, Kadiri, Aun, Bello and Budiandriani (2020) described employee commitment as emotional bond that is characterized by individuals' feeling of attachment, responsibility and loyalty to the organization. It is a force that causes an employee to take to a course of action that is pertinent to the achievement of a specified goal of the organization. Generally, Meyer and Allen (1991) postulated that there are three main dimensions of organizational commitment namely; affective commitment which refers to emotional attachment of employee to the organization; continuance commitment which refers to employee's perceived cost of leaving the organization and; normative commitment which

refers to employee's obligation to reciprocate the kind gesture (e.g training and special course) he has benefitted from the organization overtime. Employees who are committed often display positive attitudes towards its organization and this is important for the achievement of organizational set goals and objectives. Therefore, employee's commitment is essential to organization's success as it influence employee's performance and decision to stay or leave the organization to pursue another job elsewhere. This can only be possible through effective compensation management (Daniel, 2019).

Statement to the problem

Fairness is an ethical principle that speaks how we treat one another in our social and economic interactions (Uwa, 2022). Recently, the rate at which experienced and skilled employees voluntarily resigned from one business organization for the other is worrisome. In most cases, this has been attributed to unfair compensation management of the organization. Most employees who are committed to their respective organizations are constantly disappointed with the kind of compensation packages they are getting when compared to their contributions. Many Scholars postulated that Organizations with fair compensation management tends to achieve high rate of employee commitment and employee low turnover rate (Obiese, 2023). This implies that a fair compensation management strategy of the organization can motivate employees to exhibit positive attitudes towards the success of the organizations. In the global world of today, for any organization to have competitive edge amidst her competitors, there must be in place a formidable compensation strategy to attract, retain, and motivate workers.

In the Nigerian business environment, poaching is the order of the day where organization loses highly rated and qualified employees to its competitors. Despite the growing interest of organizations in providing compensation schemes that could motivate employees to be committed and work harder, most employees seems to be disappointed with these compensation packages, thus making the issue of employees' turnover a matter of concern (Andrew, 2016). This is the case of Ibom Power Company (IPC) located in Ikot Abasi, Akwa Ibom State where business activities were suspended for over seven months as a result of mass resignation of employees in search of greener pasture elsewhere, citing unfair and inequity in compensation management as the major reason (IPC Human Resource Unit, 2023). This is a clear indication that compensation measures taken by management and stakeholders are not enough to address the problem of unfair compensation in relation to employees' commitment as stated by Osibanjo, Adeniji, Falola and Heirsmac (2014). A study into the administration of Ibom Power Company revealed that they have neglected fairness and equity in compensation management as opined by Khudhair, Rahman and Adnam (2020). This has actually created feeling of unfair treatment on the minds of employees. As a result, employees perceive imbalance in their input-output ratio in comparison to other employees elsewhere.

It is on this premise that the study set to examine the relationship between compensation management and employees' commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between compensation management and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The specific objectives include:

- i. To examine the relationship between pay-for-performance and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company (IPC) in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
- ii. To assess the relationship between skill-based pay and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company (IPC) in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Research questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised:

- i. What is the relationship between pay-for-performance and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company (IPC) in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between skill-based pay and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company (IPC) in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses of the study

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between pay-for-performance and employee's Commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between skill-based pay and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of compensation management

Compensation management is one of the most fundamental human resource practices in management and a major subject of importance in the general field of management. This is no surprise considering the fact that most, if not all, employees accept job opportunity mostly because of the kind of financial and non-financial benefits attached to it. The concept of compensation management aims at rewarding employees with equity and fairness consistently, according to their values and contributions to the organization (Armstrong, 2017). It implies the formulation, implementation and management of policies and strategies that is aimed at attracting, retaining and motivating qualified employees to be more committed to the achievement of organizational goal and objectives (Petera, 2011). Compensation management can be use for a variety of purposes to further the success and existence of the company. By offering an attractive compensation package, organization can motivate employee's commitment and also attract the best talent available in the job market. The payment of compensation in exchange for the contributions provided by employees is important in defining the employment relationship (Gerhart, 2023). Because of liberalization, globalization and privatization, the workforce has become highly mobile. The practice of lifelong employment and commitment between the employer and the employee which was practiced in some economies of the world (William Ouchi's Theory Z) is fast disappearing. Now, employees don't hesitate leaving an organization and joining the other if they are offered better compensation package. Therefore, each organization should design compensation system where qualified and experienced employees not only get attracted but also stays with the organization. Experienced employees may not be motivated to be committed unless they are fairly compensated for their contributions towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Therefore, compensation system must be designed to

motivate the existing employees to contribute their maximum towards the organizational objectives (Armstrong, 2017).

In an organization, the greatest challenges that confront management are the types and mix of compensation management strategies to be adopted in order to motivate individual employee to be more committed to work. On one hand, an employee may prefer extrinsic reward in terms of attractive pay, bonus and incentive to enhance their commitment; while other employees may be interested in both extrinsic (attractive pay) and intrinsic rewards (recognition and praise) for certain work accomplishments (Alam, 2012). It is therefore convincing that subjecting an employee to different measures of compensation management can motivate and improve his commitment level to the organization. Therefore, this study is focused on pay-for-performance and skill-based pays as measures of compensation management.

Pay-for-performance

Employee commitment leads to job performance (Armstrong, 2016). This implies that there is no performance without commitment. Here, commitment is reflected in employee's attitudes to work such as punctuality, absenteeism and workplace attendance. Workers' attitudes are important to management because it affect organizational behaviour of workers thereby affecting their performance (Uwa, 2021). Right attitudes to work leads to success, wrong attitudes lead to mediocrity or failure for both the business and the people who work for it. As cited in Uwa (2021) Brown, George-Curran and Smith (2018) opines that attitude has a positive and significant influence on job performance. This means that if the employees have a positive work attitude (commitment), the level of job performance will increase. Meanwhile, employee performance involves factors such as quantity, quality and effectiveness of work as well as the behaviors employees show in the workplace (Donohoe, 2019). Pay-for-performance strategy of compensation management provides proportionate pay to employee's commitment (punctuality, absenteeism and workplace attendance) and effort in achieving organization's objectives. The resultant effect of this commitment is the achievement of pre-specified performance targets and is a fairer approach to compensation management that benefits both the employees and the organizations. It is a system where employee's extra efforts and contributions to the achievement of company's goals and objectives are recognized and compensated (Hewitt, 2019). Pay for performance is a type of compensation system that is based on an employee's contributions to the company (Armstrong, 2017). Pay-for-performance is an efficient technique to inspire and reward employees for being more productive. The benefits include enhanced employee motivation (Gerhart, 2023).

Basically, employees and employers largely agree that pay should be based on merit/performance (Kifordu and Uroko, 2023). It is a compensation strategy where individual's pay increases on his/her extra contributions on performance ratings (Fulmer and Li, 2022). Pay-for-performance is appropriate when organization believes that those employees who are making the most valuable contributions should receive higher pay in return and this substantially reduce employees' turnover (Gerhart, 2023). Pay is universally valued, and more pay is generally attractive and preferred by employees. In most organization, the ultimate dependent variable when making strategic pay choice is commitment (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2014). Since commitment leads to performance, some of the bases for measuring performance include the accomplishment of a given duty measured against preset standard of; quantity and quality delivery, low cost of execution, low wastages of material, completeness, accuracy, speed and delivery period (Gerhart, 2023).

Skill-based pay

A salary structure that bases an employee's pay on his expertise, experience, educational qualification, or specialized professional skill is known as skill-based pay (Armstrong, 2017). Skill-based pay is popular in specialized fields like technology, healthcare, arts and crafts. The goal of this type of compensation management dimension is to reward expertise and experience thereby motivating employees to be more committed to the job. Richard and Kang (2018) stated that organizations with standardized job functions often utilize a skill-based pay approach, in which employees' compensation are based on their expertise, dexterity, experiences and the prevailing market rate for the position. Employees who have acquired certain skills are properly compensated. Raising one's degree of expertise may lead to better job prospects and higher pay. Skill-based pay boosts organizational efficiency (Kang and Lee, 2021). Depending on the organization, the employee may be paid more for obtaining formal technological skills [which is skill derived from participation in classroom based activities (Brownson, 2013)] and certification in his professional field. Companies can use skill-based pay to examine market and compensation data and establish pay based on the assessed value of a person within an organization. Skill-based compensation management is a pay system in which pay increments are connected to the number of depths of skills an employee obtains and utilizes. It is a method of promoting broader and deeper skills among the workforce. These raises are in addition to, not in place of, general salary. Skill-based pay is a person-based approach rather than a job-based system. Armach (2012) posited that skill-based pay plan is a person-based system that compensates employees who have mastered a certain skill set with higher wages. It recognizes a person for what he can do rather than what the job is worth. However, pay growth is directly related to skills acquired. It aims to compensate employees for the value they provide to their organizations (Kang and Lee, 2021). It can encourage employees to improve their commitment level (Gerhart and Feng, 2021). In skill-based pay, an employee must possess the ability and skills that extend beyond the existing job prescription.

The concept of employee commitment

According to Azmi and Ansori (2020), employee commitment is a feeling of identification, involvement, and loyalty expressed by employees towards the organization. It is the emotional attachment and the resulting loyalty of an employee to organization. Based on this understanding, it can be deduced that commitment to the organization involves three attitudes: a sense of identification with the organization's goals, a feeling of being involved in organizational tasks, and a feeling of loyalty to the organization. Unmade, Kadiri, Aun, Bello and Yahaya (2019) describe employee commitment as a psychological bond characterized by individual's feeling of attachment, responsibility, and loyalty to a known organization. It is a force that causes an employee to take to a course of action that is pertinent to a specific goal of the organization. Employees' commitments describe how devoted employees are to their duties and the feelings they have towards the various aspects of their work (Armstrong, 2017).

Generally, Meyer and Allen (1991) opined that there are three main dimensions of commitment namely: affective commitment, continuance commitment and, normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional bond to the organization, perhaps due to the organizational culture, goals and objectives (Torrington, Hall, and Taylor, 2018). Continuance commitment occurs when an employee is influenced by the salary and other benefits he receives in his present employment and the degree of his involvement and recognition in the company's community compare to the consequences involved if he leaves (Hanson, Sandvik and Selnes, 2023). Normative commitment occurs

when employee feels that he has to stay to reciprocate the investment an organization has invested in him through training, special course and others. It denotes the worker's feeling of obligation to be loyal to the organization for developing and promoting his social status in the society (Culpepper, Gamble and Blubaugh, 2014). Ali and Raza (2015) opined that employees only stay in an organization to give their best when they believe that the compensation is commensurate to their input. This study is focused on employee punctuality to duty post, employee low absenteeism and workplace attendance, employee low turnover and, Loyalty to company's rules and regulations as measures of employee's commitment.

Relationship between compensation management and employee's commitment

Higher pay levels substantially reduce employees' turnover (Gerhart, 2023). Employees of the organization mostly accept to work because of the compensation packages accrued to their duties. The proposition in expectancy and equity theories suggests that positive work-related behaviors and attitudes (commitment) largely depends on the employee perceptions that their employers recognize their contribution and cares about their wellbeing (Baridam, 2021). As a result of this, employees evaluate and react to their compensation within a social context where perceptions of fairness/equity are central. For most employees, compensation received via the employment relationship is their major and only source of income to cater for so many kinds of needs (Leana and Meuris, 2015). So, employee's commitment requires offering compensation at a level and in a form that attracts, motivates, and retains a workforce that has the desired attitudes towards work. Compensation costs must be carefully managed, which is often the single largest operating cost (Noe et al., 2023). It is interesting to note that, of the studies that have reported positive correlations between compensation and employee commitment in organizations, most have used measures of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. However, in this study, Low turnover, Low absenteeism and, Loyalty to company's rules and regulation are used as measures of employee commitment.

Pay-for-performance and employee's commitment

Pay-for-performance leads to commitment thereby increases unit productivity (Armstrong, 2016). Abdulsalam et al. (2021) has found that pay-for-performance systems can attract and retain the desired talent. A qualified and competent employee, on average, prefers organizations that are fairer and equitable in its compensation system. As organization competitive advantage is typically based on strong human resources, it is crucial for organizations to improve employee commitment to enrich the overall organizational performance. Hence, organizations seriously focus on enhancing positive work-related attitudes and work-related behaviors to unleash the job performance of employees (Meijerink et al., 2018). In this context, several researchers have argued that, it is possible to enhance the positive work-related attitudes and behaviors among employees through pay-for performance compensation management approach. Armstrong (2016) indicates that, pay-for-performance provides a win-win outcome for both employer and employee.

Skill-based pay and employee's commitment

Skill-based pay provides compensation based on demonstrated expertise. It encourages employees to improve their abilities so as to earn more money and commitment (Kang and Lee, 2021). Employees that are officially recognized as having acquired a specific skill or qualification may be eligible for a pay increase under a skill-based pay scheme which eventually improves his commitment. In this pay system, monetary bonuses are awarded only when employees have shown that they deserve it by demonstrating proficiency (Richard and Kang, 2018). Experts refer to skill-based pay as a "person-based system" since it emphasizes

personal qualities [innovative capabilities of the person gained through the nurturing of their creative skills professionally (Brownson, 2014)] above those required for specific role. In skill-based pay, proficiency is an important factor in deciding employee's wage rate. Skill-based pay focused on the pay rate of the current market pay (Armstrong, 2017). Investigations on employees' perspective on skill-based pay compensation plans indicate that employees have generally favorable impressions about it (Zeuch, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey design was applied in the study. Structured questionnaire was used in generating needed primary data for the study. The study purposefully adopted the entire two hundred and seven (207) populations of Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi of Akwa Ibom State because it was finite in size. This study used both content and constructs validity. Each statement of the questionnaire was reviewed to assess its content as to the extent of which it relates to the variables under study. Construct validity was tested to ensure that the instrument accurately captured all of the conceptual framework's components. After the administration of 207 copies of the questionnaire, 203 were returned in a usable form. The analysis in this study was done using the copies of the questionnaire that was returned. Pearson Product Moment Correlations (PPMC) analysis was applied in analyzing the generated primary data for the study. The rationale for this choice of data analytical tool is to show the causal relationship between the studied variables.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of data, it becomes imperative to subject data to statistical test to ascertain the extent of deviation or agreements with the hypotheses formulated in the introductory part of this study. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength of the relationship between the variables. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses will be rejected if the probability value (p-value) is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

TABLE 1: TEST OF HYPOTHESES

		Pay-for- Performance	Skill-Based Pay	Employee Commitment
Pay-for- Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.674**	.894**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	203	203	203
Skill-Based Pay	Pearson Correlation	.674**	1	.856**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	203	203	203
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.894**	.856**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	203	203	203

Source: Field Survey Data, (2024).

Test of hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between pay-for-performance and employee's Commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

From the analysis, the correlation coefficient (R) for the first hypothesis (H_{01}) was $R_{x_1} = 0.894$, suggesting a strong positive correlation between pay-for-performance and employees' Commitment. The result was statistically significant ($R_{x_1} = 0.894$; $n = 203$; $p = 0.000$). Based on this, it is safe to assume that pay-for-performance will influence employees' commitment. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between pay-for-performance and employees' Commitment.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between skill-based pay and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

From the analysis, the correlation coefficient (R) for the second hypothesis (H_{02}) was $R_{x_2} = 0.856$, suggesting a strong positive correlation between skill-based pay and employee's commitment. The result was statistically significant ($R_{x_2} = 0.856$; $n = 203$; $p = 0.000$). Based on this, it is safe to assume that skill-based pay will influence employee's commitment. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between skill-based pay and employee's commitment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Pay-for-performance and employee's commitment

The result of hypothesis one shows that the correlation between pay-for-performance and employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company, Ikot Abasi ($R_{x_1} = 0.894$; $n = 203$; $p = 0.000$) is positive and significant. This finding prompted the rejection of the null hypothesis, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Pay-for-performance leads to commitment thereby increases unit productivity (Armstrong, 2016). Based on this, it is assumed that pay-for-performance compensation strategy will influence employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company, Ikot Abasi. The findings contradict Ayeni (2015) who examined the impact of financial reward on continuance commitment of employees in College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti and concluded that financial reward does not result in sustained motivation for retention. Meanwhile, this current finding is in line with Ogwu, Okereke, and Ifeanyi (2023) who studied how compensation management impact on employee performance in mortgage banks that operates in Abuja, Nigeria. The result showed that employees will be inclined to commit to working for the banks when compensation is performance-based. Also, Odunlami and Matthew (2014) results showed that there is a significant relationship between pay management and employee performance. Again, the result also supported the findings of Effiong, and Ugbe (2023) who carried out empirical study on compensation management and employee performance in selected organizations in Calabar, Cross River State and revealed that employee compensation influences employee performance. A qualified and competent employee, on average, prefers organizations that are fair in its compensation management. However, the relationship between pay-for-performance and employees' commitment becomes negative when the strategy is poorly implemented.

Skill-based pay and employee's commitment

The result of hypothesis two on Skill-based pay shows that the variable has positive and significant relationship with employee's commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi ($R_{x_2} = 0.856$; $n = 203$; $p = 0.000$). This finding necessitated the rejection of the null hypothesis, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This finding is in support of Aliku, Morka, and Igemohia (2020) who investigated the effect of compensation management on employee

performance in selected manufacturing industries in Lagos State, Nigeria with “skill-based pay” as a dimension and concluded that skills, qualification and experience have significant relationship with employees’ performance. Kang and Lee (2021), Richard and Kang (2018), Zeuch (2016) are in support of this. Compensating an employee according to his profession’s standard rate enhances his loyalty and commitment. Employees that are officially recognized as having acquired an additional skill or qualifications may be eligible for a pay increase under a skill-based pay scheme which eventually improves their commitment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that Pay-for-performance has positive and significant relationship with employee’s commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi; and Skill-based pay has positive and significant relationship with employee’s commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi. Based on these findings, it was concluded that compensation management has positive and significant relationship with employee’s commitment in Ibom Power Company in Ikot Abasi of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the major findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. That every organization should make pay-for-performance based compensation a compulsory policy since it is more beneficial to both the organization and the employees; and
- ii. Since skill-based pay provides compensation based on demonstrated expertise, management should design training programmes to update employees’ skills.

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