

INFLUENCE OF PROMPT PAYMENT OF SALARIES ON ACADEMIC STAFF JOB SATISFACTION AND RETENTION IN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH - WEST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of prompt payment of salaries on academic staff job satisfaction and retention in state universities in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The study has two research objectives in line with the research questions and research hypotheses. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was five thousand and sixty-six (5066) targeted respondents. This comprise of all academic staff of the state universities in the North-west zone. The sample for the study was 357 respondents selected through research advisor (2006) using proportionate stratified sampling technique. Data was collected using adapted questionnaire titled "Influence of Prompt Payment of Salary Questionnaire and Academic Staff Job Satisfaction and Retention Questionnaire (IPPSQ & ASJSRQ)". The instruments were validated by 4 experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation while its reliability was established at 0.86, using the Cronbach's Alpha method. Data collected were analysed using simple linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that, there is a significant influence of prompt payment of salaries on job satisfaction among academic staff in state universities in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. There is a significant influence of prompt payment of salaries on the retention of academic staff in state universities in the North-West Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The study concluded that effective implementation of regular payment of salaries by university management is critical to enhancing academic staff job satisfaction and promoting long-term retention. It was therefore recommended that state governments and universities management should prioritise prompt salary payment improve academic staff morale, satisfaction and retention.

Introduction

In any educational institution, academic staff are considered to be the pillars of teaching and learning, because they shoulder the responsibility of educating and training students until they become important elements to self-development and the country at large. Employees who are satisfied with their job are creative, innovative and initiate the break through that can increase their job satisfaction and retention. Garcia (2018) says that they realized that the organizations cannot achieve competitive levels of quality, either at a product level or a customer service level, if their employees do not feel satisfied or do not identify with the organization. The understanding of the factors affecting job satisfaction is relevant for improving the wellbeing of workers. It is very important to note that in education system, it is indispensable to keep and maintain the academic staff motivated and satisfied at their job.

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel positively about their work roles, responsibilities, and work environment. Contemporary human resource scholars emphasize that job satisfaction is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including pay,

recognition, career advancement, and professional growth (Robbins & Judge, 2022; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). In higher education institutions, job satisfaction among lecturers affects teaching effectiveness, research productivity, organizational commitment, and student outcomes. Where lecturers perceive inequity in compensation, stagnation in career progression, or lack of appreciation, dissatisfaction may emerge, leading to disengagement and withdrawal behaviours (Saks, 2022).

Job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Intrinsically, academic staff may derive satisfaction from intellectual engagement and autonomy in teaching and research. However, extrinsic rewards such as salary, promotion, training opportunities, and awards are equally important and often determine the willingness of staff to remain in their positions or seek employment elsewhere (Maurice, 2023). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) provide theoretical insight into how motivation can drive job satisfaction and retention. When staff needs are not met particularly physiological and safety needs such as financial stability and job security, it becomes difficult to sustain commitment and productivity.

Retention refers to an organization's ability to keep competent employees for a sustained period. In the university system, retention is critical because experienced academic staff contribute to curriculum development, postgraduate supervision, research continuity, and institutional reputation. Recent studies indicate that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of employee retention and turnover intention (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2023). In the Nigerian higher education context, economic pressures, irregular remuneration, and limited developmental opportunities have been linked to the increasing movement of academics to better-funded institutions or international Labour markets. This trend poses a serious challenge to state universities in the North-West zone.

Retention of academic staff in Nigerian universities is crucial for institutional stability and quality assurance. Frequent resignation, absenteeism, or migration of lecturers to better-paying institutions within or outside Nigeria contributes to disruptions in academic calendars, poor student performance, and overall inefficiency (Aliyu & Garba, 2022). Motivational techniques, therefore, need to be strategically implemented by university management to retain competent academic staff and reduce turnover intentions.

It is widely believed that money helps to stimulate job efforts. This is particularly true of most of the developing countries where physiological needs of most workers are yet to be satisfied. Money is instrumental in achieving workers' desired needs and in obtaining high order needs such as recognition in the society and in buying essential and luxury goods and services that lead to comfortable life (Stronger, 2017). One major reason why people work is to earn income in money terms. This is needed to meet some personal and domestic needs such as, clothing, feeding, and payment of rent, school fees etc. Salaries have a large motivating tendency in it. It is not the increase in salaries, wages that only matters but also, prompt and regular payment of it. Salary can be described as the money that an employee receives for doing his job. Akinwumi (2020) posits that, money is believed to have a great tendency of bringing out a higher satisfaction in employee when he is adequately paid. It is believed that man is an economic being, whose attitude to work can only be influence by money. Wages and salaries paid to workers are important because with money, people can satisfy needs for status, security, recognition and affiliation. For example, in Nigeria, a person's social worth depends largely on

the size of his earnings or acquired monetary wealth exhibited in either building raised, types of houses he can afford to live in the type of car he uses.

However, Ejiogu (2017) observed that what the typical low-income earning employees earn is a sizeable salary increase that would significantly enhance their commitment and satisfaction. He equally noted that money serve as a status symbol for those who have it and can save it, spend it conspicuously or give it generously. It has status value when it is being spent and when it is being received, it represents what employer thinks of his working which is more than mere economic terms.

Statement of the Problem

One main problem facing the Nigerian academic staff of state universities today seems to be lack of job satisfaction leading to intention to leave for greater pasture. It is widely believed that a worker who is well motivated and satisfied with his or her job is likely to perform his or her duties very efficiently and be willing to remain on the job. The duties of academic staff are quite enormous. Attitude of academic staff is affected by workforce conditions such as a positive and safe work environment, promotion, career progression, salary, team work, and the job itself. Also, when university authorities make decisions and behave as if academic staff opinions are not needed, the academic staff would feel slighted and demoralized which may lead to negative consequences such as low productivity, intentional absenteeism, brain drain, apathy and low job performance. It is sad to note that because of lack of job satisfaction, academic staffs leave the universities for the industrial and oil sectors of the economy. Persistent problems like irregular salary and allowance payments, delayed promotions, a dearth of research grants, inadequate infrastructure, few opportunities for capacity building, and rising campus insecurity have beset Nigerian state universities for the past ten years. Academic staff job satisfaction has been negatively impacted by these circumstances, and many have expressed dissatisfaction, a lack of commitment, and a wish to quit the system (Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2022). The incentive to stay in academic work is even more brittle in the North-west, where universities additionally deal with issues including remote locations, inadequate state finance, and insecurity brought on by banditry and kidnappings (Abubakar & Salisu, 2023).

Academic staff in higher institutions in Nigeria are supposed to be happy and fulfilled doing their jobs. They are supposed to be satisfied in terms of salary bonuses, incentives, payment of salaries, promotion as at when due, flexible work conditions and attractive health and social welfare packages but what is obtainable now is the opposite (Nidhi, 2020). These days there are little or no incentives and motivations for academic staffs in Nigeria; salaries are paid late, unnecessary deductions from their monthly income, no adequate allowances among others different forms of motivational techniques which can affect job satisfaction and retention among academic staff of tertiary institutions and once they are not satisfied the effect will lead to truancy and refusal to carry out their responsibilities and duties, in the long run, students will be more affected because they will not get the required knowledge (Adegoke, 2022).

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study were to examine the Influence of Prompt Payment of Salaries on Academic Staff Job Satisfaction and Retention in State Universities in North- West Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to:

1. Examine the influence of prompt payment of salaries on academic staff job satisfaction in state universities in North -West Geo-political Zone, Nigeria.
2. Examine the influence of prompt payment of salaries on academic staff retention in state universities in North -West Geo-political Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of this study:

1. To what extent does prompt payment of salaries influence academic staff job satisfaction in state universities in North -West Geo-political Zone, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does prompt payment of salaries influences academic staff retention in state universities in North -West Geo-political Zone, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study:

- Ho₁ There is no significant influence of prompt payment of salaries on the academic staff job satisfaction in state universities of North -West Geo-political Zone, Nigeria.
- Ho₂ There is no significant influence of prompt payment of salaries on the academic staff retention in state universities of North -West Geo-political Zone, Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. This design was used because the study possesses the features of a survey study. This assertion is supported by Offo and Igu (2021) who defined survey as the structure that guides the researcher on the procedure for generating data and provides the basis upon which the generated data is analysed. Descriptive research design is an exploration of an observed phenomenon or describing a precise form of the characteristic's phenomenon of individual or group of people.

The population for this study comprised of all the academic staff from the state universities in North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. Which was made up a total of five thousand, and sixty-six (5066) academic staff. The North-West Zone was made up of seven states and situated at the north-western geo-political zone of Nigeria. The states include, Katsina, Kano, Kaduna Jigawa, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi States.

The sample size of 357 academic staff was drawn from a total population of 5,066 using the Research Advisor (2006) table at a 95% confidence level and $\pm 5\%$ margin of error. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed, with each state university in the North-West Zone of Nigeria treated as a stratum. Respondents were selected based on the proportion of academic staff in each university. All state universities in the North-West Zone were included to ensure proper representation, avoid bias, and enhance the generalibility of the findings across the zone.

The instruments for this study were adapted from the questionnaire developed by Maurice (2023), which was originally designed to measure the Influence of Motivational Strategies on Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Primary Schools in Bungoma East Sub-County, Kenya.

The original instruments consisted of two sections, each containing five items, structured to assess various aspects of motivational strategies and their relationship with teachers' job satisfaction.

For the purpose of the present study the instruments were renamed and modified to measure the "Influence of Prompt Payment of Salaries Questionnaire (IPPSQ)" and "Academic Staff Job Satisfaction and Retention Questionnaire (ASJSRQ)". The instruments were carefully modified to suit the university context, population, and variables under investigation. Specifically, the questionnaire items were restructured to reflect the realities of academic staff in universities rather than teachers in primary schools. In addition, new sections were introduced to measure academic staff retention alongside job satisfaction, while motivational techniques were reframed to capture practices relevant to management in universities.

The analysis of the data was based on the data collected through the use of questionnaire. The collected data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive Statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentage) were used to summarize demographic data and responses to research questions. For Inferential Statistics, Simple Linear Regression Analysis was employed to determine the extent to which the independent variables (payment of salary) predict each of the dependent variables (job satisfaction and academic staff retention). In addition, the Simple Linear Regression method was used at 0.05 level of significance, data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0 to measure the influence of management motivational techniques on academic staff job satisfaction and retention.

Analysis of the Results

In this study, two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance as follows:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of prompt payment of salaries on academic staff job satisfaction in state universities in North -West Geo-political Zone, Nigeria

Table 1: Simple Linear Regression Showing the Influence of Prompt Payment on Job Satisfaction

Variable	B	t	Sig.	R ²	F	P-value
Prompt Payment						
Job Satisfaction	.367	7.328	.000	.135	53.697	.000b

Results from Table 1 revealed that prompt payment of salaries has a significant influence on job satisfaction among academic staff in state universities of North-West, Nigeria ($F(1,355) = 53.697$; $R^2 = .135$; $p < .05$). This implied that 13.5% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by prompt payment, while other factors account for the remaining variance. The regression coefficient ($\beta = .367$, $t = 7.328$, $p < .05$) indicates that prompt payment significantly predicts job satisfaction among academic staff. Therefore, the null hypothesis one was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of prompt payment of salaries on the academic staff retention in state universities in North -West Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Showing the Influence of Prompt Payment on Retention

Variable	B	T	Sig.	R ²	F	P-value
Prompt Payment						
Retention	.248	4.758	.000	.062	22.640	.000b

Results in Table 2. Indicated that prompt payment of salaries significantly predicts academic staff retention in state universities ($F(1,355) = 22.640$; $R^2 = .062$; $p < .05$). This shows that prompt payment of salaries explains 6.2% of the variance in staff retention, suggesting that regular salary payment is an important determinant of employees' decision to remain in their institutions. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = .248$, $t = 4.758$, $p < .05$) confirms a positive and significant influence, meaning that as promptness in salary payment improves, academic staff are more likely to stay committed to their institutions. This finding underscores the importance of consistent remuneration in reducing turnover rates and promoting workforce stability. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding revealed that prompt payment of salaries significantly influenced job satisfaction among academic staff ($\beta = .367$, $t = 7.328$, $p < .05$). In support of the findings, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) posits that adequate remuneration and job security are key hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction. When salaries are paid promptly, employees feel valued, reducing financial stress and increasing satisfaction with the work. This result aligned with Adegoroe (2025) who find out that in his findings it's strongly indicates that a well-defined and perceived-as-fair salary structure is a pivotal driver of academic staff job satisfaction, influencing their teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and professional development. He further added that when the salaries of academic staff are inadequate, that it would be difficult for them (academic staff) to meet up with the basic necessities of life. The salaries when compared with other employees with the same qualifications and experience, but are in other sectors of economy such as Bank, Engineering Companies and Hospitals can be described as unfavourable. This result agreed with Olatunji and Awoyemi (2018), who found that regular salary payment had a positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction in Oyo State. Similarly, Abdullahi (2020) posited that delay in payment of salaries was a major demotivator among university lecturers in Northern Nigeria. These studies corroborate the current finding that financial stability enhances work morale, satisfaction, and organizational loyalty.

The findings further revealed that prompt payment of academic staff salaries significantly influence staff retention ($\beta = .248$, $t = 4.758$, $p < .05$). This finding is supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), and Herzberg two-factor theory which identifies physiological and security needs fulfilled by timely remuneration as foundational motivators for staying in an organization. When staff receive their salaries promptly, they experience financial assurance, leading to stronger commitment and reduced turnover intentions. This result aligned with Adiele (2025) It was found that there is significant correlation between salaries and employee retention with a correlation and mean of 0.88 and 3.6, the study found

there is significant relationship between salaries and employee retention. Oladejo and Yinus (2022) assert that most workers are leaving Nigeria organisations to join organisations abroad because of low work benefits, especially salaries. If the government could implement the current proposed new labour wage of 2024, most workers will have reason to remain in public sector like the universities. It was recommended that academic staff of the Universities should have a unique salary system which will encourage people to stay on their job and reduce the challenges of poor employee retention. In the same line, Ahmed and Hassan (2019) posited that irregular salary payments contributed to attrition in public universities. Therefore, prompt salary payment is a crucial administrative strategy to enhance workforce stability.

Conclusion

The study investigated the influence of management motivational techniques on prompt payment of salaries, promotion, training, and award recognition on job satisfaction and retention of academic staff in state universities across the North-West Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. The findings have demonstrated that effective motivation is a critical driver of academic staff productivity, institutional loyalty, and professional fulfilment.

The study concluded that prompt payment of salaries is fundamental in enhancing academic staff satisfaction and retention. When salaries and allowances are paid promptly, staff feel financially secured and appreciated, leading to greater enthusiasm and work commitment. It was also concluded that promotion, when implemented fairly and transparently, strengthens staff loyalty and retention, though it does not necessarily translate to immediate satisfaction unless combined with other intrinsic motivators. Furthermore, staff training and professional development emerged as the strongest predictors of both job satisfaction and retention. Academic staff who receive continuous training perceive such investment as a form of appreciation and empowerment, leading to improved morale and a stronger desire to remain in service. Award recognition was equally found to be an important non-financial motivator, boosting self-worth and reinforcing commitment to institutional goals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- 1- State governments and university management should ensure prompt and regular payment of salaries and allowances to enhance academic staff job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions.
- 2- The university management should ensure that regular salary criteria should be clear, merit-based, and consistently implemented to build trust and encourage institutional commitment and reduce turnover intention.

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