



Impact of Reward System on Employee Productivity of Non-Academic Staff of Private Polytechnics in Enugu State

Emeka Ejim

Department of Business Administration, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu, Nigeria

Correspondence: Emeka Ejim, Department of Business Administration, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

Reward systems shape the employer-employee relationship and prior Nigerian research has found that non-academic staff productivity in tertiary institutions is substantially conditioned by the adequacy of reward structures. An earlier 2022 study of non-academic staff across three private polytechnics in Enugu State found that neither career development nor prompt salary payment alone showed a statistically significant positive impact on productivity. This quantitative explanatory survey of 200 non-academic staff across the same three institutions (Marist Polytechnic, Mater Dei Polytechnic, and Our Saviour Institute of Science, Agriculture and Technology) re-examined the relationship using multiple regression. Financial reward ($\beta = .31, p < .001$) and non-financial recognition ($\beta = .28, p < .001$) significantly predicted employee productivity; career development opportunity did not reach significance ($\beta = .09, p = .142$). The combined model explained 29% of the variance in productivity ($R^2 = .29, F(3, 196) = 26.71, p < .001$). The findings partially corroborate the earlier Enugu study regarding career development while affirming the productivity contribution of financial reward and non-financial recognition, consistent with Herzberg's distinction between hygiene factors and motivators. Implications for reward policy in Enugu State's private polytechnic sector are discussed.

Keywords: reward system, employee productivity, non-academic staff, private polytechnics, Enugu State, explanatory research, Nigeria

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Ejim, E. (2026). Impact of reward system on employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State. *African Journal of Management and Administration*, 1(1), 26-31. <https://www.afjma.org>

1. Introduction

Reward systems occupy a central place in organisational human resource management, functioning as the mechanism through which an employer signals what it is willing to give in exchange for employee contribution, and by extension shaping motivation, retention, and productivity (Nweze et al., 2022). This relationship is particularly consequential in resource-constrained settings such as Nigeria's private tertiary education sector, where a coherent reward platform is considered a precondition for assembling and retaining a capable non-academic workforce (Nweze et al., 2022). Comparable research across Nigerian tertiary institutions has generally supported this proposition: financial rewards significantly influenced task performance at Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic, Lafia (Ayema et al., 2026), and reward systems exerted a measurable influence on non-academic employee commitment at the University of Ibadan (Akinyooye, 2023).

Set against this broadly supportive literature, a 2022 study of non-academic staff across three private polytechnics in Enugu State, Marist Polytechnic Umuchigbo, Mater Dei Polytechnic Ugwuoba, and Our Saviour Institute of Science, Agriculture and Technology, found that neither career development opportunities nor prompt salary payment alone showed a statistically significant positive impact on employee productivity (Nweze et al., 2022). This divergence raises an unresolved empirical question: what is the actual relationship between financial compensation, career development, and non-financial

recognition and employee productivity among non-academic staff at Enugu State's private polytechnics today? This study re-examines that question through a quantitative explanatory survey.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Non-academic staff form the operational backbone of tertiary institutions, yet prior research specific to Enugu State's private polytechnics produced an ambiguous picture of how reward system components relate to their productivity, finding that neither career development nor prompt salary payment demonstrated the expected significant positive impact (Nweze et al., 2022). Comparable studies at other Nigerian tertiary institutions have found financial rewards and reward-driven commitment to be significant drivers (Ayema et al., 2026; Akinyooye, 2023). Without updated explanatory evidence isolating the specific contribution of financial reward, career development, and non-financial recognition, institutional administrators lack a clear, current evidence base for reward policy design. This study addresses that gap.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

To determine the extent to which financial reward explains variation in employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State.

To determine the extent to which career development opportunity explains variation in employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State.

To determine the extent to which non-financial recognition explains variation in employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State.

To develop a combined explanatory model of the relationship between reward system components and non-academic staff productivity.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. To what extent does financial reward explain variation in employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State?

2. To what extent does career development opportunity explain variation in employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State?

3. To what extent does non-financial recognition explain variation in employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State?

H₀₁: Financial reward has no statistically significant impact on employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State.

H₀₂: Career development opportunity has no statistically significant impact on employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State.

H₀₃: Non-financial recognition has no statistically significant impact on employee productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is of value to the management of Marist Polytechnic, Mater Dei Polytechnic, and Our Saviour Institute of Science, Agriculture and Technology, the National Board for Technical Education, human resource practitioners in Nigeria's private tertiary education sector, and researchers examining reward management and employee productivity in resource-constrained institutional settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reward Systems and Employee Productivity in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Reward systems establish guidelines for managing financial and non-financial rewards and for evaluating the relative worth of jobs, ensuring staff are rewarded fairly and consistently with their input (Nweze et al., 2022). Empirical research across Nigerian tertiary institutions has generally found reward systems to be a significant productivity driver. At Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic, Lafia, financial rewards significantly influenced task performance, with respondents agreeing that salaries motivate effective duty performance (Ayema et al., 2026). At the University of Ibadan, reward systems exerted a statistically significant influence on non-academic employee commitment (Akinyooye, 2023).

2.2 The Enugu Private Polytechnic Context

A prior study of non-academic staff across the same three private polytechnics examined here found that, contrary to expectation, career development showed no positive impact on employee productivity, and prompt payment of salary similarly showed no positive impact (Nweze et al., 2022). This finding stands in tension with the broader Nigerian literature and with international research indicating that non-financial incentives such as career development typically complement financial rewards when systems are perceived as fair and transparent (Boadi et al., 2025). The tension motivates the present re-examination.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes hygiene factors (including salary and working conditions), whose absence causes dissatisfaction but whose presence does not necessarily motivate superior performance, from genuine motivators (including recognition, achievement, and growth opportunities), which more directly drive enhanced performance (Boadi et al., 2025). Applied here, the framework offers one possible explanation for the earlier Enugu finding: if salary and career development function primarily as hygiene factors within these institutions, their mere presence may not guarantee productivity gains, while non-financial recognition may operate more directly as a motivator.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, explanatory research design, using multiple regression analysis to explain the relationship between reward system components and employee productivity, consistent with the regression-based approach used in comparable Nigerian tertiary institution reward research (Akinyooye, 2023).

3.2 Population, Sample, and Sampling

The target population comprised non-academic staff of Marist Polytechnic, Mater Dei Polytechnic, and Our Saviour Institute of Science, Agriculture and Technology (OSISATECH). A sample of 200 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling, allocated proportionally across the three institutions.

3.3 Research Instrument and Variable Definitions

A structured questionnaire measured the dependent variable (employee productivity: task completion, work quality, attendance/punctuality) and three independent variables: financial reward (salary adequacy, bonus/allowance provision, pay equity), career development opportunity (access to training, promotion pathways, skill-development support), and non-financial recognition (verbal/formal recognition, involvement in decision-making, work-environment support). All variables used five-point Likert-scale items. Face and content validity were established through expert review; a pilot yielded Cronbach's alpha of 0.86.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were computed for all variables. Multiple linear regression was conducted with employee productivity as the dependent variable and the three reward

components as predictors. Model fit was evaluated using R , R^2 , adjusted R^2 , and the overall F -test; individual predictor significance was assessed using standardised beta coefficients and t -tests at $p < .05$.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Respondents were distributed across Marist Polytechnic (38%), Mater Dei Polytechnic (34%), and OSISATECH (28%). The sample was 54% female and 46% male. Years of service were mixed: 32% less than 5 years, 41% 5-10 years, and 27% above 10 years.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Institution	Marist Polytechnic	76	38.0
	Mater Dei Polytechnic	68	34.0
	Our Saviour Institute (OSISATECH)	56	28.0
Gender	Male	92	46.0
	Female	108	54.0
Years of service	Less than 5 years	64	32.0
	5-10 years	82	41.0
	Above 10 years	54	27.0
Total		200	100

Note. Stratified sampling across the three institutions.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Mean scores indicated moderate-to-positive perceptions across all variables. Non-financial recognition scored highest ($M = 3.58$), followed by financial reward ($M = 3.42$) and career development opportunity ($M = 3.21$). Employee productivity averaged 3.61.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 200)

Variable	N	M	SD	Rank
Non-financial recognition	200	3.58	0.94	1
Employee productivity	200	3.61	0.88	,
Financial reward	200	3.42	1.02	2
Career development opportunity	200	3.21	1.08	3

Note. Items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

4.3 Multiple Regression Model Summary

The combined model of financial reward, career development opportunity, and non-financial recognition significantly predicted employee productivity, $R = .54$, $R^2 = .29$, adjusted $R^2 = .28$, $F(3, 196) = 26.71$, $p < .001$. The three predictors together explained 29% of the variance in productivity.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F (df1, df2)
Combined predictor model	.54	.29	.28	26.71 (3, 196)

Note. Dependent variable: employee productivity. Overall model significant at $p < .001$.

4.4 Multiple Regression Coefficients

Financial reward significantly predicted productivity ($\beta = .31$, $t = 4.62$, $p < .001$); H_{01} is rejected. Non-financial recognition also significantly predicted productivity ($\beta = .28$, $t = 4.18$, $p < .001$); H_{03} is rejected. Career development opportunity did not reach statistical significance ($\beta = .09$, $t = 1.48$, $p = .142$); H_{02} is retained. Thus, financial reward and non-financial recognition each make independent contributions to productivity, while career development opportunity, in this sample, does not.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	1.24	0.28	,	4.43	< .001
Financial reward (H_{01})	0.29	0.06	.31	4.62	< .001
Career development opportunity (H_{02})	0.08	0.05	.09	1.48	.142
Non-financial recognition (H_{03})	0.26	0.06	.28	4.18	< .001

Note. B = unstandardised coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardised coefficient. Significance threshold set at $p < .05$.

5. Discussion

The findings provide a nuanced update to the earlier Enugu private-polytechnic study (Nweze et al., 2022). Consistent with that study, career development opportunity did not significantly predict productivity in the present sample. This supports the interpretation, grounded in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, that career development may function more as a hygiene factor than as a direct motivator within these institutional contexts, its absence may depress satisfaction, but its mere presence does not reliably elevate productivity when other conditions remain constrained (Boadi et al., 2025).

In contrast to the earlier finding regarding salary, financial reward emerged as a significant positive predictor. This aligns more closely with the broader Nigerian tertiary literature, including the Lafia polytechnic and University of Ibadan studies (Ayema et al., 2026; Akinyooye, 2023). The discrepancy may reflect changes in pay practices or measurement differences between studies; the present instrument captured salary adequacy, bonus/allowance provision, and perceived pay equity rather than promptness of payment alone.

Non-financial recognition was the second significant predictor and the highest-scoring independent variable descriptively. This is consistent with Herzberg's characterisation of recognition as a true motivator and with international evidence that non-financial incentives complement financial rewards when systems are perceived as fair (Boadi et al., 2025). For resource-constrained private polytechnics, formalising low-cost recognition practices, public acknowledgment, involvement in decision-making, supportive work climate, offers a high-leverage, relatively low-cost productivity lever alongside attention to financial reward.

The combined model explained 29% of productivity variance, indicating that reward system components matter but that substantial unexplained variance remains, likely attributable to workload, leadership quality, physical working conditions, and individual differences. Limitations include self-report measures, the cross-sectional design, and restriction to three private institutions. Future research should incorporate supervisor ratings, longitudinal designs, and comparison with public polytechnics.

6. Recommendations

Prioritise timely, equitable salary and bonus administration as a foundational productivity measure, given the significant contribution of financial reward.

Investigate whether existing career development programmes are perceived as accessible and credible by non-academic staff, rather than assuming their mere existence suffices, consistent with the non-significant result here and in the earlier Enugu study (Nweze et al., 2022).

Formalise low-cost recognition mechanisms, public acknowledgment, involvement in decision-making, and supportive work-environment practices, alongside financial reward structures.

Share findings across the three sampled institutions to support harmonised, evidence-based reward policy development within Enugu State's private polytechnic sector.

Extend future research to a comparative study including public polytechnics in Enugu State, to determine whether ownership structure moderates the relationship between reward systems and non-academic staff productivity.

7. Conclusion

This explanatory survey finds that financial reward and non-financial recognition significantly predict employee productivity among non-academic staff of three private polytechnics in Enugu State, while career development opportunity does not. The combined model accounts for 29% of productivity variance. The results partially corroborate the earlier Enugu private-polytechnic study regarding career development, while affirming the productivity contribution of financial reward and recognition in line with broader Nigerian and Herzbergian evidence. Institutional reward policy that attends both to equitable financial compensation and to formal, low-cost recognition practices is likely to yield the strongest productivity returns in this sector.

References

- Akinyooye, F. E. (2023). Influence of reward system and career development programmes on non-academic employees' commitment in University of Ibadan. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 40(2), 22-30.
- Ayema, S., Kabir, N. M., & Mohammed, H. (2026). Employee welfare and job performance at Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic, Lafia. *Impact International Journals and Publications*, 2(1).
- Boadi, S., Lartey, A. E., & Amoako, R. (2025). The effect of reward systems on motivation and employee performance among technical universities. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(14), 350-364.
- Nweze, A. U., Ejim, E. P., Ekwochi, E. A., & Ajagu, E. H. (2022). Impact of reward system on employee's productivity of non-academic staff of private polytechnics in Enugu State. *International Journal of Academic Management Science Research*, 6(1), 13-23.