

REWARD SYSTEMS AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based reward systems on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Guided by three research questions and corresponding null hypotheses, the study adopted a correlational research design. A total of 267 school principals were drawn through a census sampling technique to participate in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and using direct delivery method. Data collected were analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The findings revealed statistically significant positive relationships between the three reward systems and teachers' job performance. Performance-based reward systems showed a moderate positive correlation ($r = .620, p < .05$) with teachers' job performance. Merit-based reward systems exhibited a moderate positive relationship ($r = .589, p < .05$) with job performance. Incentive-based reward systems demonstrated a moderate to strong positive relationship ($r = .639, p < .05$), with job performance. It recommended the implementation of transparent, equitable, and sustainable reward mechanisms, alongside the active involvement of teachers in the design and evaluation of these systems. These measures are expected to improve teacher morale, promote accountability, and contribute to the overall quality of education in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Keywords: Job performance, performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based, reward systems, teachers, secondary schools, Anambra State

Introduction

The effectiveness of any educational system largely depends on the quality of its teachers and their level of job performance. Job performance among teachers is a critical determinant of the quality of education delivered in public secondary schools. However, in many educational systems, including those in Anambra State, teacher job performance has been persistently low due to factors such as inadequate motivation, poor working conditions, and insufficient recognition of their contributions. Teachers' job performance encompasses various dimensions, including instructional delivery, classroom management, student engagement, and participation in extracurricular activities. When these aspects are compromised, students' academic achievements and overall educational outcomes suffer. One significant challenge lies in the lack of effective motivation systems tailored to address teachers' professional and personal needs. Many public secondary schools in Anambra State operate under resource-constrained conditions, which exacerbate issues like absenteeism, poor instructional quality, and low teacher morale. Additionally, the lack of equitable and transparent reward systems undermines teachers' commitment and engagement. According to Okoli, et al. (2024), unfavourable work conditions are directly linked to low levels of job commitment, highlighting the pressing need to address this issue.

Job performance refers to the extent to which an individual successfully fulfils their roles, responsibilities, and tasks within an organization, contributing to the achievement of its goals (Kiprop, 2018). In the context of education, teacher job performance encompasses a range of activities, including lesson planning and

delivery, classroom management, student engagement, and participation in extracurricular activities (Mtesigwa & Otieno, 2022). High levels of teacher performance are critical for improving student outcomes and the overall quality of education in schools.

Teacher job performance is multifaceted, involving several critical dimensions. The ability of a teacher to effectively design and deliver lessons that enhance student understanding and engagement is a core aspect of job performance (Okaforcha, et al., 2024). Teachers who consistently deliver high-quality instruction contribute significantly to student academic achievement. Maintaining discipline, fostering a conducive learning environment, and effectively managing classroom dynamics are essential for high performance. As noted by Okoli, et al. (2024), poor work conditions and excessive workloads can negatively impact teachers' ability to manage classrooms effectively. Engaging students actively in the learning process is another key indicator of teacher performance. Teachers who employ innovative and participatory teaching methods often achieve better student outcomes (Ughamadu, et al., 2024). Beyond the classroom, teachers' participation in extracurricular activities, such as sports, clubs, and mentorship programs, can also reflect their overall contribution to school life and student development.

In public secondary schools, teachers' job performance can include activities such as lesson planning, classroom management, effective delivery of instruction, and the ability to inspire and engage students toward achieving academic success. Given the critical role teachers play in shaping students' outcomes, there has been growing concern over how to ensure teachers remain motivated and committed to their work. Reward systems have been identified as one of the most effective tools for enhancing teacher performance, particularly in public secondary schools where motivation challenges, such as limited career progression, poor remuneration, and high workload, are prevalent.

A reward system refers to a structured set of policies, practices, and tools used by organizations to recognize, motivate, and incentivize employees for their contributions, achievements, and commitment to organizational goals (Kiprop, 2018). Reward systems are typically designed to align with the organization's objectives, ensuring that employees are driven to perform tasks that contribute to the overall success of the organization. These systems as Kiprop noted include both financial and non-financial rewards, such as salaries, bonuses, promotions, recognition, professional development opportunities, and other forms of acknowledgment. The ultimate goal of a reward system is to enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance by providing incentives that meet their professional and personal needs.

Reward systems are structured strategies implemented by educational institutions to acknowledge and incentivize teachers' efforts and contributions toward achieving institutional goals. These systems are broadly categorized into performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based rewards, each with its distinct approach to motivating employees. Performance-based rewards are linked to measurable outcomes, such as students' academic success, extracurricular achievements, and teacher attendance or punctuality. In the context of public secondary schools in Anambra State, this type of reward system is particularly relevant due to the growing demand for accountability and results in education. Performance-based rewards incentivize teachers to focus on improving student outcomes, fostering competition, and driving innovation in teaching practices. However, the effectiveness of these rewards depends on how fairly and transparently performance metrics are defined and assessed.

Ughamadu, et al. (2024) emphasized that perceptions of organizational justice play a critical role in influencing teachers' behaviour and commitment. If performance-based rewards are administered unfairly, they may lead to dissatisfaction and disengagement rather than improved performance. Okoli, et al. (2024) similarly noted that favourable work conditions, including fair compensation systems, directly correlate with higher teacher commitment and job satisfaction. Their findings suggest that performance-based rewards must account for teachers' workload and job stress to be effective.

Merit-based rewards are designed to recognize individual teachers for their exceptional contributions, skills, and dedication to their roles. This could include awards for innovative teaching methods, leadership in extracurricular activities, or consistent professional development. In Anambra State's public secondary schools, where opportunities for career advancement are often limited, merit-based rewards can help retain top-performing teachers and boost their morale. However, the perception of fairness in distributing such rewards is critical, as favouritism or bias can undermine their intended motivational effect. Ughamadu, Ezeaku, et al. (2024) highlighted that school cultural norms significantly influence teacher commitment. Thus, for merit-based rewards to succeed, they must align with the prevailing cultural and institutional values. For instance, fostering teamwork and collaborative excellence may resonate more in environments where collective achievement is highly valued. Moreover, Okaforcha, et al. (2024); Mbonu and Azuji (2021), found that principals' leadership styles, including their ability to acknowledge and reward individual

contributions, are closely tied to teacher commitment and satisfaction. This underscores the importance of integrating recognition practices into school leadership strategies.

Incentive-based rewards offer tangible benefits such as bonuses, housing allowances, paid vacations, or training sponsorships to motivate teachers. This type of reward system is especially significant in Anambra State, where many teachers face financial challenges and resource constraints in their professional environment. Incentive-based rewards provide immediate and practical benefits that can directly improve teachers' quality of life, thereby encouraging sustained effort and loyalty to the institution. Mtesigwa and Otieno (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of financial and non-financial incentives in reducing absenteeism and improving teacher dedication in Tanzania. This finding is particularly relevant to Anambra State, where similar challenges of teacher retention and motivation exist. Malebe, et al. (2023) also found that head teachers' ability to provide targeted incentives positively influenced teacher morale and productivity in Kenyan schools. These findings indicate that incentives tailored to the specific needs of teachers, such as housing allowances or access to teaching resources, can lead to sustained improvements in performance.

Teachers are the backbone of educational institutions, tasked with the responsibility of preparing students for future challenges. However, their effectiveness is often undermined by issues such as inadequate salaries, heavy workloads, and a lack of professional recognition. Reward systems, therefore, play a vital role in bridging the gap between institutional expectations and teachers' motivation to perform optimally. Reward systems in Anambra State's public secondary schools hold particular importance due to the prevailing challenges faced by the teaching workforce. Teachers in this region often contend with irregular payment of salaries, inadequate teaching facilities, and limited opportunities for career progression. These challenges, if unaddressed, can lead to low morale, reduced job satisfaction, and declining performance, which ultimately impact students' academic outcomes.

The effectiveness of any reward system depends on its alignment with teachers' expectations and institutional realities. Ogada, et al. (2020) stressed that reward systems must be equitable and transparent to foster job satisfaction. Ogada, et al. (2020) conducted a study on reward systems in Kenya and found that comprehensive reward systems significantly enhance teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Their findings are consistent with those of Kiprop (2018), who observed that teachers in Kericho County, Kenya, were more motivated when rewards were equitably distributed and tied to clear performance indicators. Both studies provide a comparative framework for understanding how the implementation of reward systems in Anambra State could lead to similar outcomes.

While various reward systems, including performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based models, are theoretically applicable to public education, their practical implementation in Anambra State remains inconsistent and underdeveloped. Performance-based rewards, for instance, are often criticized for their reliance on subjective or poorly defined metrics. Ughamadu, et al. (2024) emphasized that perceived organizational justice significantly influences teachers' behaviour, underscoring the importance of fairness in reward distribution. Similarly, merit-based rewards are hindered by cultural and administrative barriers, such as favouritism and a lack of alignment with institutional goals (Ughamadu, et al., 2024).

Despite the extensive body of research on teacher motivation and job commitment, few studies have systematically examined the specific influence of structured reward systems on teachers' job performance in Anambra State's public secondary schools. Existing research often focuses on broader issues like workload, remuneration, and organizational justice, without adequately addressing how tailored reward systems could bridge the gap between teacher expectations and institutional outcomes. On the other hand, most studies on reward systems and teacher performance are conducted in different contexts, such as corporate organizations or private schools, and may not account for the unique challenges faced in public secondary schools in Anambra State (Mtesigwa, et al., 2023). Also, previous research in Anambra State has typically focused on isolated factors, such as workload (Okoli, et al., 2024) or management practices (Okaforcha, et al., 2024), without integrating these into a comprehensive framework of reward systems. Thus, there is a gap in understanding the influence of performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based rewards in improving job performance. This study aims to fill the identified gaps by examining the influence of performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based reward systems on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of education in public secondary schools is largely dependent on the commitment, motivation, and job performance of teachers. However, in many public secondary schools, particularly in Anambra State, Nigeria, concerns about declining teacher performance have become increasingly prevalent. This decline is evident in poor instructional delivery, inadequate classroom management, low levels of student engagement, and subpar participation in extracurricular activities. These issues are exacerbated by systemic challenges such as insufficient recognition of teachers' efforts, inequitable reward systems, and the absence of performance-driven motivation frameworks.

Reward systems are fundamental to enhancing teacher performance by incentivizing excellence, commitment, and innovation. Performance-based rewards, which are tied to measurable outcomes like student academic success or teacher attendance, offer a means of aligning individual efforts with organizational goals. Similarly, merit-based rewards recognize exceptional contributions, while incentive-based systems aim to provide additional motivation through financial or non-financial benefits. Despite their potential, these reward systems often remain underutilized or improperly implemented in public secondary schools.

Research has shown that the effectiveness of reward systems is contingent on fairness, transparency, and alignment with teachers' expectations and professional goals. However, evidence suggests that in many schools, these principles are not upheld, leading to dissatisfaction, reduced morale, and diminished job performance. The lack of structured, equitable, and performance-driven reward systems creates a significant gap between the potential and actual performance of teachers, thereby affecting the overall quality of education delivered. Furthermore, previous studies have predominantly focused on general factors influencing teacher performance, such as work conditions and school cultural norms. However, there is limited empirical evidence on the specific relationship between reward systems (performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based) and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purposes of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine reward systems (performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based) as correlates of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study specifically aimed to:

1. Evaluate the relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Examine the relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Examine the relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

The study adopts a correlational research design, suitable for examining relationships and their strengths between variables. As noted by Ifeakor (2018), this design effectively analyzes data to reveal how different aspects of the work environment relate to teachers' job performance. The research was conducted in Anambra State, located in South-East Nigeria, which features diverse cultural, geographical, and economic

characteristics. The state's significant emphasis on education, with 267 public secondary schools across six education zones, makes it a suitable locale. The study's focus is heightened by the dual roles many teachers undertake, balancing business ventures with teaching duties, potentially impacting their job performance.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population consists of 267 principals from all the public secondary schools in Anambra State. As these individuals are directly responsible for overseeing teachers' performance, they provide invaluable insights into the study's focus. The study employed a census sampling technique, encompassing the entire population of 267 principals. This approach is justified due to the manageable size of the population, ensuring inclusivity and comprehensive data collection.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two structured questionnaires were utilized: The questionnaires include the Reward System Questionnaire (RSQ), and the Questionnaire on Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (QTJP). The questionnaires were structured as follows:

The Reward System Questionnaire (RSQ) is an instrument consisting of 44 items designed to measure three aspects of a reward system: Merit-based, incentive-based, and performance-based reward systems. Each system consisted of a specific number of items, with the merit-based reward system consisting of 15 items, the incentive-based reward system consisting of 15 items, and the performance-based reward system consisting of 14 items. The instrument was rated on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) with a value of 4, Agree (A) with a value of 3, Disagree (D) with a value of 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) with a value of 1.

The Questionnaire on Teachers' Job Performance (QTJP) was a structured tool designed to assess various aspects of teachers' professional conduct and effectiveness in public secondary schools. The questionnaire was meant to be completed by school principals, who are in a key position to evaluate teachers' behaviours and contributions to the learning environment. It consisted of 15 items, each focusing on different dimensions of job performance, such as attendance, instructional quality, professional ethics, collaboration, and involvement in school activities. The 20 items were measured on a 4-point rating scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." This format allowed for the measurement of principals' perceptions of teachers' job performance

Face and construct validation were conducted by experts in educational management and measurement, ensuring clarity and relevance of items. Construct validity was further tested using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), yielding a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.835 and significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < .000$). These findings confirmed the robustness of the instrument. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, with values indicating high internal consistency: RSQ clusters; 0.774 for the merit-based reward system; 0.809 for the incentive-based reward system; 0.778 for the performance-based reward system; and 0.808 for QTJP.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were collected through a direct delivery method, where the researcher and five trained assistants distributed and retrieved questionnaires from respondents in their schools, ensuring a high response rate. Data analysis employed SPSS software version 23. Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, while hypotheses were tested using Pearson r test for significant correlation. The correlation coefficients were interpreted using Price et al.'s (2017) scale, ranging from very low to very high relationships. Hypotheses will be accepted or rejected based on a significance level of 0.05.

Results

Data were analysed and presented in tables as follows:

Research Question 1: what are the relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Coefficient test of Significance of the relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Performance-Based Reward	Teachers' Job Performance
Pearson Correlation	1	.620

Performance-Based	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Reward System	N	267	267
Teachers' Job	Pearson Correlation	.620	1
Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	267	267

Findings in Table 1 revealed that a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.620 was obtained, indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than the threshold significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance is statistically significant. The null hypothesis (H_{01}) that there is no significant relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State is rejected.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient on the significant relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools

		Merit-Based Reward	Teachers' Job Performance
Merit-Based Reward System	Pearson Correlation	1	.589
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	267	267
Teachers' Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.589	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	267	267

Table 2 revealed that a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.589 was obtained, indicating a moderate positive relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. This confirms that the relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance is statistically significant. Based on the statistically significant positive correlation, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) that "There is no significant relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State" is rejected. This suggests that merit-based reward systems significantly contribute to improving teachers' job performance.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient on the significant relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

		Incentive-Based Reward	Teachers' Job Performance
Incentive-Based Reward System	Pearson Correlation	1	.639
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	267	267
Teachers' Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.639	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	267	267

Table 3 revealed a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.639, indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is below the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) that "there is no significant relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State" is rejected. This result indicates that incentive-based reward systems have a significant and positive influence on teachers' job performance.

Discussion

Performance-Based Reward Systems and Teachers' Job Performance

The study revealed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between performance-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicates that as performance-based rewards are implemented and enhanced, there is a corresponding improvement in teachers' job performance, including instructional delivery, classroom management, and overall professional effectiveness. These findings align with the notion that performance-based rewards, which are tied to measurable outcomes such as students' academic achievement or teachers' attendance and punctuality, can act as a strong motivator for educators. By recognizing and rewarding high-performing teachers, schools foster a culture of accountability and excellence. This is particularly crucial in the context of Anambra State, where there is increasing demand for accountability and measurable improvements in the education sector. The positive relationship observed is consistent with the study by Ughamadu, et al. (2024), which found that organizational justice significantly predicts teachers' organizational behaviour. When teachers perceive that reward systems are fair, transparent, and performance-based, they are more likely to exhibit positive work attitudes and behaviours that enhance their job performance. Similarly, Okaforcha, et al. (2024) reported that principals' management practices, including fair and performance-oriented rewards, correlate with teachers' commitment and professional effectiveness. However, while the relationship is moderate, the findings highlighted that performance-based rewards alone may not fully account for teachers' job performance. Other factors could also play significant roles. Okoli, et al. (2024) emphasized that conducive work environments significantly impact teachers' job commitment and performance. This suggested that performance-based rewards should be integrated with broader supportive measures to maximize their effectiveness.

Moreover, the transparency and fairness of performance evaluation criteria are critical to the success of performance-based reward systems. Without clear metrics and unbiased assessments, such systems could lead to dissatisfaction and reduced morale among teachers. This perspective aligns with the findings of Ogada, et al., (2020), who stressed that perceived fairness in reward systems significantly influences job satisfaction and performance among teachers.

Merit-Based Reward Systems and Teachers' Job Performance

The study revealed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between merit-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This result indicates that as merit-based reward systems are implemented, teachers' job performance improves moderately, highlighting the importance of recognizing and rewarding individual achievements, skills, and contributions. Merit-based rewards, which focus on individual accomplishments such as professional development, exceptional teaching practices, or contributions to extracurricular activities, appear to positively influence teachers' motivation and commitment. These findings align with the observations of Ughamadu, et al., (2024), who reported that cultural norms that emphasize recognition of individual achievements significantly predict teachers' job commitment. Teachers who feel their efforts are acknowledged and valued tend to exhibit greater dedication and enthusiasm in performing their roles.

Furthermore, the study reinforces the notion that merit-based rewards enhance intrinsic motivation by acknowledging teachers' professional growth and efforts. This is supported by Okaforcha, et al., (2024), who found that effective management practices, including fair distribution of rewards based on merit, correlate strongly with teachers' professional commitment and participation in school activities. Merit-based rewards, therefore, not only motivate teachers to perform better but also encourage active engagement in extracurricular and co-curricular responsibilities.

However, despite the observed positive relationship, the moderate strength of the correlation suggests that other factors may also influence teachers' job performance. For instance, Okoli, et al., (2024) noted that working conditions and support structures are critical to enhancing teacher commitment and performance. Moreover, perceived fairness in the allocation of merit-based rewards is crucial. If rewards are perceived as biased or unjust, they may have a demotivating effect, as noted by Ogada, et al., (2020), who highlighted the role of fairness in shaping teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, in the context of public secondary schools in Anambra State, systemic challenges such as resource limitations and administrative inefficiencies may hinder the effective implementation of merit-based reward systems. Teachers may feel demoralized if merit-based rewards are inconsistent or if their contributions are overlooked due to subjective evaluation criteria.

Incentive-Based Reward Systems and Teachers' Job Performance

The study established a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between incentive-based reward systems and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This result

suggests that as incentive-based rewards are implemented and managed effectively, teachers' performance improves significantly. Incentive-based rewards, such as bonuses, allowances, and material incentives, have proven to be strong motivators in enhancing teachers' satisfaction and commitment to their duties. Incentive-based rewards align closely with Mtesigwa and Otieno's (2022) findings, which highlighted the influence of incentives on teachers' performance in Tanzania. They noted that incentives contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, encouraging teachers to exceed expectations in instructional delivery and classroom management. Similarly, Malebe, et al., (2023) found that material and financial incentives by head teachers positively impacted teachers' work performance, fostering increased dedication and reduced absenteeism. The study also aligns with the broader perspective that incentives address both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational needs. Teachers who feel that their efforts are rewarded tangibly often exhibit greater enthusiasm and efficiency in their roles. This reflects the findings of Ogada, et al., (2020), who emphasized that financial and non-financial rewards boost job satisfaction, ultimately enhancing job performance. Despite the observed positive relationship, the effectiveness of incentive-based reward systems can depend on several factors. As highlighted by Ughamadu, et al., (2024) perceptions of fairness in reward allocation are critical. If incentives are perceived as being distributed unfairly, they may lead to dissatisfaction rather than improved performance. Financial constraints in public secondary schools may limit the consistent provision of incentives, potentially eroding trust and motivation over time.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based reward systems on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings revealed that all three reward systems have a statistically significant and positive relationship with teachers' job performance, with varying degrees of strength. The study reinforces the critical role of reward systems in enhancing the quality of education in public secondary schools. By adopting balanced and strategic approaches to performance-based, merit-based, and incentive-based rewards, educational institutions can improve teacher performance and contribute to the overall success of students and schools alike.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the effectiveness of reward systems in improving teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State:

1. School administrators and policymakers should establish clear, measurable, and fair criteria for performance-based rewards. Regular training sessions should be conducted to ensure teachers understand how their performance will be evaluated. Additionally, mechanisms for providing constructive feedback and recognizing diverse contributions should be incorporated to foster fairness and inclusivity.
2. Merit-based rewards should be expanded to include diverse forms of recognition, such as professional development opportunities, awards, and career progression. Policies should ensure that exceptional contributions in areas like instructional delivery, extracurricular activities, and community engagement are consistently acknowledged. A system for peer nominations and student feedback could also enhance credibility and teacher motivation.
3. Incentive-based reward systems, including monetary and non-monetary benefits, should be strengthened. Administrators should prioritize timely payment of salaries, bonuses, and other financial incentives. Non-monetary incentives, such as housing benefits, health insurance, and recognition programs, should also be emphasized to improve job satisfaction and overall teacher morale.
4. The government and school boards should ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to sustain the reward systems. Equity in the distribution of rewards should be maintained to avoid perceptions of favoritism, which can undermine morale and create workplace conflict.

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