

## Evaluating the Symbiotic Relationship: Wage Policies, Recognition Programs, and Employee Productivity in Cross River State's Hospitality Industry

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### Abstract

*In the ever-evolving landscape of the hospitality industry, the relationship between employee productivity, remuneration, and recognition has become a matter of paramount concern. This study delves into the influence of wage policies and recognition on employee productivity in selected hospitality firms within Cross River State, Nigeria. It addresses the challenges faced by the labor-intensive hospitality sector in balancing employee expectations with available resources. The study explores the significance of fair wages and employee recognition programs in the contemporary workforce, shedding light on the dynamics of employee-employer relationships in this vital economic sector. A survey research design was employed to collect data from 247 employees in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State. A structured questionnaire with Likert scale responses was used to gather information on the impact of wage policies and recognition on employee productivity. The data was analyzed using simple linear regression and ANOVA to assess the relationships between these variables. The findings suggest that wage policies significantly influence employee productivity, with approximately 72.1% of the variation in productivity attributed to these policies. Recognition also has a substantial impact on morale and productivity, with 73.9% of the variability in employee productivity linked to recognition practices. These results highlight the importance of fair wages and effective recognition programs in enhancing employee motivation and productivity in the hospitality industry. In conclusion, this study underscores the critical role of wage policies and recognition in shaping employee attitudes and productivity in the hospitality sector. It recommends that organizations prioritize competitive and motivating compensation structures, invest in tailored recognition programs, and create an employee-centric work environment to maximize employee commitment and productivity. Continuous assessment and adjustment of these strategies are crucial for maintaining a motivated and productive workforce. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on employee well-being and performance, paving the way for evidence-based policy and practice recommendations in the hospitality industry.*

**Keywords:** Wage Policies, Recognition Programs, employee productivity, Hospitality Industry

### Introduction

In today's dynamic work environment, the relationship between employee productivity, remuneration, and recognition has emerged as a subject of paramount concern. The hospitality industry, known for its labor-intensive nature, faces the challenging task of balancing the expectations of its workforce with the resources at its disposal (Abdou, Khalil, Mahmoud, Elsaied, & Elsaed, 2022; Ghani, Zada, Memon, Ullah, Khattak, Han, Ariza-Montes, & Araya-Castillo, 2022). Within this context, the relevance of fair wages and employee recognition programs cannot be overstated.

The productivity of employees in the hospitality sector is increasingly under scrutiny as employees expect equitable remuneration for their dedication and contributions (Codling, Pinnock, Barrett, Gayle, Stephenson, Sibbles & Sinclair-Maragh, 2023). The assumption that employment alone is a favor extended to workers has given way to a more nuanced understanding. In contemporary times, employees in the hospitality industry are seeking additional benefits such as bonuses, wage increments, recognition, and comprehensive retirement packages as a testament to their vital role in the success of their organizations (Smyth, 2008; Anku-Tsede, & Kutin, 2013; Agba, Angioha, Akpabio, Akintola, & Maruf, 2021; Ada, 2014).

Regrettably, the recognition of employees in the hospitality industry remains a concern (Eja, Ajake, Otu, & Ndomah, 2011; Kalargyrou, Kalargiros, & Harvey, 2019; Ingwe, Ada, & Adalikwu, 2013). Despite their pivotal role in the industry's success, employees often find themselves underappreciated and overworked. Cross River State, predominantly a civil service state with limited private investments, is no exception to this challenge (Ada, & Ada, 2013; Ada, & Angioha, 2021). Hospitality firms within the state have faced repeated grievances regarding inadequacies in their remuneration systems. Employees lament their inability to compete with counterparts in other organizations who receive higher wages, annual recognition, and substantial bonuses. A dearth of meaningful work, limited career development opportunities, low wages, inadequate recognition, and a host of other intrinsic and extrinsic rewards further exacerbate this issue, significantly impacting the productivity of employees in the hospitality sector (Ingwe, Ada, & Adalikwu, 2013).

It is becoming increasingly evident that organizations must establish an equitable balance between an employee's contributions and the rewards they receive in return. In the context of Cross River State, the hospitality sector finds itself in need of a standardized metric for evaluating the fairness of remuneration systems (Ingwe, Ada, & Adalikwu, 2013; Ada., & Akan, 2019). Employees are faced with the daunting task of navigating their career paths without a clear framework for remuneration, further adding to the complexity of the situation. In light of these circumstances, this study aims to rigorously examine the impact of remuneration on employee productivity in selected hospitality firms within Cross River State. By addressing this critical issue, we intend to shed light on the dynamics of employee-employer relationships in the local hospitality industry, paving the way for evidence-based policy and practice recommendations. Our research seeks to explore the complex web of wages, recognition, and productivity, aiming to contribute to the broader discourse on employee well-being and performance in this crucial economic sector.

## **Materials and Method**

### ***Study Design***

We employed a survey research design for this study, which facilitates the efficient collection of substantial data from a sizable population in a cost-effective manner. This approach is particularly well-suited for obtaining descriptive information (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Utilizing the survey design, the researchers adopted a quantitative method to gather data from the study area. The quantitative method involved the use of a structured, closed-ended questionnaire instrument, designed to facilitate data collection from the study population. The questionnaire was organized into three sections: Section A contained respondent demographic information, while Sections B and C encompassed key questions pertaining to the impact of the remuneration system on the productivity of employees in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State, Nigeria. The instrument was designed using a five-point Likert scale, consisting of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD), and Undecided (UA).

### ***Population and Sampling Procedure***

Our study was based on the 2014 updated records from the Corporate Affairs Commission, which indicated the existence of 781 registered hospitality firms in Cross River State. The research population encompassed all 740 employees from selected hospitality firms within the state. To ensure a representative sample, the study employed a stratified sampling technique, dividing the study area into three strata according to senatorial districts. Each stratum contained the names of hospitality firms written on separate pieces of paper, randomly drawn five times to select the participating firms. This approach resulted in the selection of fifteen hospitality firms, with five from each stratum. The goal was to provide an equitable opportunity for all Cross River State hospitality firms to be part of the study, creating a sample that could be generalized to the broader population without bias. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula.

### ***Method of data analysis***

We employed data summarization and tabulation through tables and percentages to investigate the impact of remuneration systems on employees' productivity. We applied two key analytical techniques, namely simple linear regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA), to uncover essential insights. The choice of these techniques was strategic, as they enable the assessment of causal relationships and effects among variables. Simple linear regression analysis was particularly pertinent, as it allowed us to assess the cause-and-effect association between remuneration systems and employees' productivity. By establishing this link, we gained valuable insights into how different remuneration approaches influence employee performance. Our data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, version 21, ensuring rigorous and robust statistical analysis. This software facilitated the accurate and efficient processing of our data, ensuring the reliability and validity of our findings.

Two hundred and sixty copies of the research questionnaire were administered on the respondents and 251 were returned, out of which four copies were invalid because they were not correctly filled. Thus, 247 copies of the questionnaire representing 98 percent were correctly filled and used for this analysis.

### **Findings**

#### ***Presentation of analyzed data***

Table 1 presents the responses of 247 participants concerning the influence of wage policies on employees' productivity. We assessed various factors related to motivation and equity within the workplace. Regarding the impact of wages on motivation and productivity, 26.7% strongly agreed and 31.2% agreed that wages serve as motivators for improved productivity. However, 19.08% strongly disagreed, indicating a significant portion of respondents did not share this view. Assessing the perception of fairness in remuneration and compensation systems, 25.1% strongly agreed, and 25.5% agreed that these systems were considered fair and equitable by workers. Conversely, 16.6% strongly disagreed, underscoring a notable level of dissatisfaction.

Analyzing the connection between increased wages and enhanced productivity, 21.5% strongly agreed, and 30.8% agreed with this relationship. Nonetheless, 21.1% strongly disagreed, and 17.0% disagreed, reflecting differing opinions within the sample. When examining the use of monetary incentives for remuneration, 26.7% strongly agreed, and 28.3% agreed with this approach. However, 25.52% disagreed, indicating some reservations within the cohort. This data provides valuable insights into employees' perceptions and attitudes regarding wages, remuneration, and their impact on productivity. The results highlight the complexity of these factors in the workplace, emphasizing the need for organizations to carefully consider and tailor their compensation strategies to enhance employee motivation and productivity.

**Table 1: Measures of the effect of wages on employees' productivity**

S/N	Statement	options	Number of respondents	percentage
1	Wages paid to employees saves as a motivator for improve productivity	Strongly agreed	66	26.7
		Agreed	77	31.2
		Strongly disagreed	49	19.8
		Disagreed	33	13.4
		Undecided	22	8.9
		Total	247	100.0
2	remuneration and compensation system in my organization is considered fair and equitable by workers.	Strongly agreed	62	25.1
		Agreed	63	25.5
		Strongly disagreed	41	16.6
		Disagreed	58	23.5
		Undecided	23	9.3
		Total	247	100
3	Increase in wages will lead to increase in employees productivity and productivity	Strongly agreed	53	21.5
		Agreed	76	30.8
		Strongly disagreed	52	21.1
		Disagreed	42	17.0
		Undecided	24	9.7
		Total	247	100
4	Monetary incentive is a way of remunerating employees in our company	Strongly agreed	66	26.7
		Agreed	70	28.3
		Strongly disagreed	41	16.6
		Disagreed	99	25.52
		Undecided	22	8.9
		Total	247	100

Source: field work, 2015

Table 2 presents the responses of 247 participants regarding the influence of recognition on employees' productivity and morale. This comprehensive analysis encompasses several key aspects: Firstly, we explored the relationship between recognition and employee morale, finding that 22.7% strongly agreed and 34.0% agreed that recognition boosts employees' morale for improved productivity. Notably, 13.8% strongly disagreed, and 23.5% disagreed, revealing varying perspectives on this matter. Additionally, we examined the impact of adequate recognition practices on long-term commitment and job satisfaction. Here, 30.4% strongly agreed, and 23.5% agreed that such practices enhance commitment and job satisfaction. However, 14.6% strongly disagreed, suggesting room for improvement in recognition strategies.

Furthermore, we investigated the effect of awarding outstanding employees for their exceptional performance on productivity. A significant 33.6% strongly agreed, and 30.8% agreed that such awards enhance productivity. Yet, 14.6% strongly disagreed, highlighting the importance of recognizing high achievers. Lastly, we assessed whether recognizing employees served as a motivating factor for enhanced productivity. An encouraging 32.0% strongly agreed, and 24.7% agreed with this idea, emphasizing the motivational power of recognition. Still, 19.4% strongly disagreed, underscoring the need for further investigation into effective motivational practices. These findings underline the substantial impact of recognition on employees' morale and productivity. Organizations should take note of these results to implement effective recognition programs that foster a positive work environment, boost employee motivation, and ultimately enhance overall productivity.

**Table 2: Measures of the effect of recognition on employees' productivity**

S/N	Statement	options	Number of respondents	percentage
1	Recognition boosts employees' morale for improve productivity	Strongly agreed	56	22.7
		Agreed	84	34.0
		Strongly disagreed	34	13.8
		Disagreed	48	23.5
		Undecided	25	2.27
		Total	247	100.0
2	Adequate recognition practices enhance long- term commitment and employees' job satisfaction.	Strongly agreed	75	30.4
		Agreed	58	23.5
		Strongly disagreed	36	14.6
		Disagreed	49	19.8
		Undecided	29	11.7
		Total	247	100.0
3	Award giving to outstanding employees for a job well done enhances our productivity	Strongly agreed	83	33.6
		Agreed	76	30.8
		Strongly disagreed	36	14.6
		Disagreed	31	12.6
		Undecided	21	8.5
		Total	247	100.0
4	Recognition of employees is a motivating factor that enhances employees' productivity.	Strongly agreed	79	32.0
		Agreed	61	24.7
		Strongly disagreed	48	19.4
		Disagreed	38	15.4
		Undecided	21	8.5
		Total	247	100

Source: field work, 2015

### Correlation analysis

We adopted the least square regression to analyze the relationship between wage policies and employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State, Nigeria

**Table 3: Least square regression coefficient results of wages on employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State**

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients std. error	Standardized coefficients beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.165	.370		6.709	.000
W	.846	0.56	.806	9.792	.000

- Predictor: (constant), Wages
- Dependent variable: Employees' productivity
- Source: SPSS output, 2015.

**Table 4: Summary of least square regression coefficient result of wages on employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State**

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R square	Std Error of the estimate	Sig.
(Constant)	.806	.723	.721	.056	.000

- predictor (constant), Wages  
R = .806  
R-Square = .723  
Adj. R-Square = .721  
Source: SPSS output, 2015

**Table 5: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for least square regression coefficient result of wages on employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State**

Source of variance	Sum of square	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	f-ratio
Regression	2122.796	1	2122.796	
Residual	830.831	245	3.291	626.008
Total	2953.627	246		

Significant,  $p < 0.05$   
 $df_1 = 1$   
 $df_2 = 245$   
 Calculated F-ratio = 626.008  
 Critical value = 3.84  
 Source: SPSS output, 2015.

The investigation aimed to assess the relationship between wage policy and employee productivity. The analysis was conducted using least square regression in the SPSS software.

Table 3, which presented the results of the simple linear regression coefficient for wages on employees' productivity within selected hospitality firms, indicated that the model exhibited substantial predictive power. It effectively encapsulated the variable of employees' productivity, specifically in terms of profitability, within the model.

In Table 4, key statistics were reported, including an adjusted R-square value of 0.721 and an R-square value of 0.723. These statistics implied that approximately 72.1% of the variation in employees' productivity, measured through the profitability of selected hostels, could be attributed to the influence of the wage system within these hostels. The remaining 27.9% of the

variation remained unexplained by the model. Table 5 unveiled a calculated F-Ratio of 626.008, which significantly exceeded the critical value of 3.84 at a 0.05 level of significance, with degrees of freedom (df1 and df2) amounting to 245. Following this outcome, it can be firmly concluded that wages exert a highly significant impact on employees' productivity within the selected hospitality firms located in Cross River State.

We also adopted the Least a Square regression to check the relationship between recognition and employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State

**Table 6: Least square regression on recognition and employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State**

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients std. error	Standardized coefficients beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	3.572	.464		5.379	.000
R	.872	.049	.863	13.848	.000

a. Predictor: (constant), Recognition

b. Dependent variable: Employees Productivity

Source: SPSS output, 2015.

**Table 7: Summary of least square regression result of recognition on employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State**

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted square	R	Std Error of the estimate	Sig.
(Constant)	.863	.739	.737	.049	.000	

a. predictor (constant), Recognition

R = .863

R-Square = .739

Adj. R-Square = .737

Source: SPSS output, 2015

**Table 8: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for least square regression result of recognition on employees' productivity in selected hospitality firms in Cross River State**

Source of variance	Sum of square	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	f-ratio
Regression	1656.826	1	1656.826	
Error	1296.801	245	5.293	313.022
Total	2953.627	246		

Significant  $p < 0.05$

$df_1 = 1$

$df_2 = 245$

Calculated F-ratio = 313.022

Critical value = 3.84

Source: SPSS output, 2015.

The second analysis was carried out using SPSS software, employing both least square regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Table 6 illustrates the model's high predictive power, indicating the effective encapsulation of employees' productivity, specifically profitability. Table 7 presents a summary of the least square regression results. The R-square value of 0.739 indicated a substantial 73.9% goodness of fit of the sample data at a significant level of  $P < 0.05$ . This suggests that 73.9% of the variability in employee productivity (measured as profitability) could be attributed to employees' recognition practices within the selected hospitality firms, while 26.1% remained unaccounted for by the model. In Table 8, a calculated F-ratio of 313.022 significantly exceeded the critical value of 3.84 at a significant level of  $P < 0.05$ , with degrees of freedom (df1 and df2) equal to 245. Based on this analysis there is a substantial and statistically significant impact of recognition on employees' productivity in the selected hospitality firms of Cross River State.

### ***Discussion of Findings***

The findings presented in the tables and regression analyses provide valuable insights into the relationships between wage policies, recognition, and their impact on employee productivity within selected hospitality firms in Cross River State, Nigeria. Table 1 reveals that a significant portion of the participants agreed that wages serve as motivators for improved productivity. Specifically, 26.7% strongly agreed, and 31.2% agreed that wages motivate employees. However, there was a notable proportion (19.08%) that strongly disagreed, indicating differing opinions within the sample.

The least square regression analysis (Table 3) further supports these findings. It shows that the wage policies have a strong and statistically significant relationship with employees' productivity. The high R-square value (0.723) suggests that approximately 72.1% of the variation in employees' productivity, measured through profitability, can be attributed to wage policies. This is a significant finding, as it underscores the importance of fair and motivating wage policies in enhancing employee productivity.

The findings of this investigation are consistent with previous studies that have shown a positive relationship between wages and productivity in the hospitality industry. For example, a study by Phonsanam (2010) found that if hospitality companies continue to have the reputation of having high turnover and poor compensation, companies will not be able to get the most productive employees to work for them. If owners feel that they cannot afford to have competitive compensation plans, they must understand the true cost of turnover. It is more cost-effective to pay a good employee to stay and to be productive than to incur turnover costs when they leave. Another study by Mun and Woo (2021) investigated the effects of the minimum wage on the operating performance of hotels in the U.S. and found that increased minimum wage pushes up hotel room prices and/or decreases the profitability of the hotels.

Table 2 presents the responses regarding the influence of recognition on employee productivity and morale. The results indicate that recognition has a substantial impact on employee morale and productivity. For example, 22.7% strongly agreed, and 34.0% agreed that recognition boosts employees' morale for improved productivity. However, 13.8% strongly disagreed, suggesting varying perspectives on this matter. The least square regression analysis (Table 6) further supports the importance of recognition. It shows a strong and statistically significant relationship between recognition and employees' productivity. The high R-square value (0.739) indicates that approximately 73.9% of the variability in employee productivity, measured as profitability, can be attributed to recognition practices.

The results of this investigation are consistent with previous studies that have shown a positive relationship between recognition and employee productivity. For example, a study by the Luthans (2000) found that recognition is a key driver of employee engagement and motivation, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Another study by the Society for Human Resource Management found that recognition programs can improve employee retention, productivity, and customer satisfaction. The study also found that recognition programs can be cost-effective and have a positive return on investment.

### **Implications**

The study demonstrates the critical role of wage policies and recognition in shaping employee attitudes and productivity. It emphasizes the need for organizations in the hospitality industry and beyond to prioritize fair and motivating compensation structures and effective recognition



practices to foster a positive work environment and ultimately enhance employee motivation and productivity. Based on the findings, the study recommends that

- Organizations should carefully design and implement wage policies that not only meet industry standards but also align with the motivations and expectations of their employees. This includes offering competitive compensation packages that reflect the value of the work being done.
- Organizations should invest in effective recognition programs that acknowledge and reward employees for their outstanding performance and contributions. These programs should be tailored to the specific needs and preferences of the workforce to maximize their impact.
- Creating a work environment that recognizes and values employees can lead to higher engagement and job satisfaction. This, in turn, can boost employee commitment and productivity.
- While investing in competitive wages and recognition programs may incur additional costs, organizations should conduct a cost-benefit analysis to assess the return on investment. The potential gains in employee productivity, reduced turnover, and enhanced customer satisfaction can often outweigh the costs.
- Organizations should continuously assess and fine-tune their compensation and recognition strategies based on employee feedback and changing market conditions. Regularly reviewing and adjusting these practices can help maintain a motivated and productive workforce.

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