



EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION ON PERFORMANCE OF BENUE STATE CIVIL SERVANTS, IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of employee satisfaction on performance of Benue State civil servants, Nigeria, focusing on the impact of compensation, promotion, and work environment. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) served as the theoretical foundation. A survey research design was adopted, with a population of 14,966 civil servants. Data were collected via an adapted questionnaire. Analysis was conducted using multiple regression in SPSS Version 27. The findings indicate a strong positive association between employee satisfaction and performance ($R = 0.744$), with employee satisfaction explaining 59.9% of performance variance ($R^2 = 0.599$). Compensation and work environment significantly and positively influence performance, while promotion, as currently practiced, has a negative effect, likely due to perceived unfairness or lack of transparency. The study concludes that enhancing compensation, improving workplace conditions, and implementing merit-based promotion policies are essential for boosting performance. Recommendations include competitive salary structures aligned with economic realities, merit-based promotion systems, and strengthened workplace safety measures to create a secure and motivating environment.

Keywords:

Employee satisfaction, employee performance, promotion, work environment, compensation.

Introduction/Problematic

Civil servants constitute the backbone of government and public administration, serving as the primary agents through which public policies and development agendas are translated into concrete outcomes. Their work emphasizes that governance extends beyond political authority to sustained service delivery. Across ministries, departments, agencies, and local councils, civil servants implement laws, manage public programs, and ensure continuity, stability, and effective service delivery regardless of changes in political leadership. As such, they are regarded as custodians of public trust and drivers of effective governance (Armstrong, 2021). Scholars further highlight their role in maintaining institutional memory and administrative stability, noting that

effective governance depends largely on their integrity, accountability, professionalism, and commitment to the public good (Duru & Shimawua, 2019).

In both developed and developing contexts, civil servants play central roles in policy implementation and service delivery. In countries such as the United States, they design programs, enforce regulations, and address complex societal challenges through specialized expertise (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk, & Clerkin, 2015). Similarly, in Nigeria, civil servants ensure continuity in governance despite frequent political changes (Adamolekun, 2002). However, concerns about productivity, efficiency, and service delivery in the Nigerian civil service have intensified attention on factors influencing civil servants' attitudes and performance.

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on employee satisfaction as a determinant of performance among civil servants in Benue State, Nigeria. Employee satisfaction refers to the overall level of contentment an individual derives from the job and is influenced by factors such as compensation, promotion opportunities, and the work environment. Employee performance relates to the extent to which job responsibilities and goals are achieved in line with organizational standards, including quality and efficiency (Armstrong, 2021). Compensation encompasses financial and non-financial rewards (Afriyie et al., 2020), promotion reflects career advancement to higher responsibility and reward (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023), while the work environment includes physical, social, and organizational conditions that influence motivation and engagement (Amabile, 2019). This study therefore examines how this satisfaction predictors affect the performance of civil servants in Benue State, contributing empirical evidence to discussions on improving public sector effectiveness at the sub-national level.

Civil servants form the administrative backbone of government, translating public policies into actions that directly affect citizens' daily lives. Through their professionalism and permanence, they ensure continuity, stability, and institutional memory in governance despite changes in political leadership. However, despite their vital contribution to national development, civil servants in many contexts face persistent challenges that undermine their effectiveness and performance.

Empirical studies show that public service performance is constrained by structural and human resource problems (Sergio & Andrew 2026). In South Africa, civil servants face skills shortages, politicization of appointments, weak accountability, and excessive workloads, leading to declining service delivery and reduced public trust (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2021). Similarly, the Nigerian civil service is characterized by irregular and inadequate compensation, political interference, corruption, capacity gaps, and poor working conditions, which negatively affect motivation and performance (Adamolekun, 2022).

In Benue State, these challenges are evident in declining performance, reflected in inefficiency, low productivity, delayed service delivery, and weak commitment to official duties. Many civil servants reportedly experience inadequate compensation, delayed promotions, and unfavourable work environments marked by poor facilities, limited resources, and weak supervisory support

(Oravee, 2015). These conditions contribute to low morale, employee dissatisfaction, and reduced motivation.

Although several studies have examined employee satisfaction and employee performance in Nigeria, limited empirical evidence exists for Benue State. This gap restricts understanding of how key employee satisfaction dimensions compensation, promotion, and work environment influence performance in the state civil service. Therefore, this study investigates the effect of employee satisfaction on performance among Benue State civil servants, with a view to providing evidence-based insights for improving civil service performance and service delivery in Benue State, Nigeria.

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of employee satisfaction on performance of Benue state civil servants. The specific objectives include to:

- i. assess the effect of compensation on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria.
- ii. examine the effect of promotion on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria.
- iii. identify the effect of work environment on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria.

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. What is the effect of compensation on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the impact of promotion on performance in Benue state civil servants in Nigeria?
- iii. What is the effect of work environment on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria?

The following hypotheses are formulated in null form

H₀₁ Compensation have no significant positive effect on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria.

H₀₂ Promotion have no significant effect on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria.

H₀₃ Work environment have no significant effect on performance of Benue state civil servants in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Employee Satisfaction

Asgeirsson, Gudlaugsson & Adalsteinsson (2026) describe employee satisfaction as a workplace experience shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors including compensation, work environment, autonomy, meaning, and professional development that influence how content employees feel in their roles and how this relates to organizational outcomes. A human resource journal article, (2025) defines employee/job satisfaction as a positive emotional reaction an individual experiences when performing their job or within the work environment, noting that satisfaction differs between individuals even under similar conditions.

Similarly, employee satisfaction is defined as the degree of contentment and fulfillment employees feel toward various aspects of their work, including compensation, workplace conditions, leadership support, career opportunities, and organisational culture (Green & Baron, 2018). Employee satisfaction is described as the extent to which employees feel content and well-treated in their job, particularly regarding compensation, benefits, work-life balance, job security, and workplace environment (Smith, 2018).

Together, these definitions emphasize that employee satisfaction is a multidimensional psychological state reflecting how well employees' expectations, needs, and desires are met through their job and work conditions. It is a key driver of motivation, engagement, retention, and performance in modern organisations.

Compensation

Compensation refers to the financial and non-financial rewards provided to employees in exchange for their services. Afriyie, Danso, & Owusu (2020) define it as pay or incentives, including wages, salaries, bonuses, and other rewards, given in recognition of work performed. Compensation also represents an entitlement for being part of the organization, though payment does not always reflect performance due to regulatory frameworks like Trade Union Congress (TUC) laws (Qureshi & Sajjad, 2015).

From a total rewards perspective, compensation includes monetary and non-monetary elements such as psychological rewards, learning opportunities, and recognition. Gomez-Mejia (2016) classifies it into two dimensions: financial pay, including salary, overtime, performance-based bonuses, and fringe benefits, such as health insurance, pensions, paid leave, and tuition reimbursement. Together, these elements motivate employees and support organizational objectives.

Promotion

Promotion is the advancement of an employee to a higher rank or position within an organization, usually accompanied by greater responsibilities, authority, and improved compensation. It positively influences employee performance by boosting morale, fostering loyalty, and motivating higher productivity. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) describe promotion as a career advancement process that elevates employees to roles with greater authority and remuneration, aligning individual aspirations with organizational goals.

Osibanjo, Adeniji, & Oyewole (2023) note that merit-based promotions, awarded for performance, skills, and qualifications, serve as both a reward and a motivator, enhancing job satisfaction and encouraging employees to commit to organizational objectives. Overall, promotion is a key driver of individual and organizational performance.

Work environment

The work environment encompasses the physical, social, and organizational conditions that directly or indirectly affect employee performance. It can influence individual well-being,

workplace relationships, collaboration, efficiency, and health (Duru & Shimawua, 2019). Broadly, it includes physical settings (e.g., equipment, temperature) and job characteristics (e.g., workload, task complexity).

Al-Shammari (2014) emphasizes that the workplace ranging from a home office to a large corporate building is a key social space, connecting employees, their families, the organization, customers, and society. The quality of this environment significantly shapes employee performance and overall organizational outcomes.

Concept of Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the quality and quantity of work produced by an employee, measured against established standards, expectations, and goals. Nmadu (2014) defines it as the degree of accomplishment of tasks that make up an employee's job, aligning with the Business Dictionary (2010), which emphasizes performance as the completion of tasks according to accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. Managers must ensure that employee activities contribute to organizational goals through monitoring, feedback, and support to enhance morale and meet expectations.

Mardiyanti (2018) describes job performance as work accomplished under one's responsibilities to achieve organizational goals legally and ethically, while Afriyie et al. (2020) highlight that performance depends on ability, experience, willingness, and time. Collectively, these definitions indicate that employee performance encompasses both the quality and quantity of results achieved in fulfilling assigned tasks.

Measures of Employee Performance

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are quantitative benchmarks used to evaluate how effectively employees meet organizational objectives, such as sales targets, project deadlines, and customer satisfaction (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). Employee performance measurement integrates these metrics with qualitative assessments behavioral appraisals, 360° feedback, and competency evaluations creating a comprehensive system with clear criteria, structured evaluations, and feedback aligned to organizational goals (Partoip et al., 2025; HR Lineup, 2024).

In modern HR practice, KPIs remain central, while behavioral and competency assessments provide a holistic view of employee contributions beyond mere output.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Herzberg's Two Factor Theory.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959)

Herzberg (1959) proposed that employee satisfaction and motivation are influenced by two sets of factors: Motivators (Intrinsic Factors): Related to the job itself, these factors enhance satisfaction and performance. Examples include achievement, recognition, responsibility,

advancement, and personal growth. Hygiene Factors (Extrinsic Factors): Related to the work environment, their absence causes dissatisfaction, but their presence alone does not ensure lasting satisfaction. Examples include salary, company policies, work conditions, supervision, and interpersonal relationships.

Employees motivated by intrinsic factors tend to perform better, show higher productivity, and commit to organizational goals, while poor hygiene factors can lead to dissatisfaction, low morale, and decreased performance. This distinction makes Herzberg's theory a strong foundation for studying the relationship between employee satisfaction and performance.

Application to Benue State Civil Service

In Benue State's civil service: Compensation (Hygiene): Fair and timely pay reduces dissatisfaction; inadequate salaries lower morale and productivity. Promotion (Motivator): Clear, merit-based promotion opportunities increase satisfaction, engagement, and performance. Work Environment (Hygiene): Adequate facilities and resources prevent dissatisfaction and support effective work.

Civil servants perform best when hygiene needs are met and intrinsic motivators are present. Herzberg's framework thus provides a strong theoretical basis for exploring employee satisfaction and performance in Benue State.

Empirical Review

Compensation and employee performance

Yakubu, Garba, & Muhammad (2023) investigated the effect of compensation on job performance among employees of Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Kano State, Nigeria, using a survey design with a sample of 372 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Data were analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The study found that financial compensation significantly improves employee performance, while non-financial compensation had a positive but insignificant effect. The authors recommended that DMBs maintain prompt and well-managed financial compensation to enhance employee commitment. However, the study's findings are context-specific to DMBs in Kano State and cannot be generalized to civil servants in Benue State.

Garba (2022) examined compensation and employee performance in the Ministry of Environment, Sokoto, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey and multiple regression analysis on a sample of 140 staff. The study found financial compensation positively and significantly affects employee performance, recommending competitive compensation packages to attract and retain talent. Similar to Yakubu et al. (2023), the study is limited in external validity, as results cannot be generalized to the Benue State civil service.

Riatmaja & Wibawanto (2022) explored the effect of financial and non-financial compensation on employee performance among 73 startup employees in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with motivation as an intervening variable. Using multiple linear regression and path analysis, the

study found both financial and non-financial compensation significantly influence employee performance. The small and sector-specific sample limits the generalizability of these findings to other contexts, including Benue State civil service.

Promotion and employee performance

Olateju, Oyewole, & Akinlabi (2024) investigated the effect of promotion on employee performance in selected Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Southwest Nigeria using a survey design with 984 respondents. Data analysis with SPSS revealed a weak but significant positive relationship between promotion and performance ($R = 0.315$, $p < 0.05$). The study recommended implementing performance-based promotion systems tied to achievements and skill development. However, its focus on DMBs in Southwest Nigeria limits generalizability to other sectors, including the Benue State civil service.

Gultom, Siregar, & Butar-Butar (2023) examined promotion and performance among 200 personnel in the Simalungun Police, Indonesia, using a quantitative approach and Likert-scale questionnaires. The study found a significant positive effect of promotion on personnel performance and recommended a fair and transparent promotion system to enhance motivation and productivity. The study's findings are context-specific and cannot be generalized to other organizations or the Benue State civil service.

Duru, Uche, & Ogonnaya (2023) studied 337 employees at the University of Abuja to assess promotion's impact on performance. Using descriptive research and multiple regression analysis, the study found that promotion strongly and positively influences employee performance, especially when fairness, career development, and merit-based opportunities are considered. Limitations include the single-institution focus, reducing generalizability to other Nigerian contexts such as the Benue State civil service.

Work environment and employee performance

Duru & Shimawua (2019) investigated the effect of work environment on employee productivity at Edo City Transport Services, Benin City, Nigeria. Using a survey of 200 employees and descriptive analysis, the study found that a well-organized, clean, and safe work environment enhances employee morale and productivity. The authors recommended programs to improve office conditions and occupational safety. However, the study's focus on a transport service limits its generalizability to other sectors, including the Benue State civil service.

Mohamad (2021) examined work environment and employee performance at Investo Global, a real estate company in Istanbul, Turkey. Using a sample of 92 employees and Pearson correlation analysis, the study found significant positive relationships between work environment factors such as employee benefits, supervisor and coworker support, training and development, workload, and physical work conditions and employee performance. Employee benefits were identified as the most influential factor. The study recommended fostering teamwork, communication, recognition, and professional development opportunities. Due to the small

sample size and sector-specific focus, findings cannot be generalized to the Benue State civil service.

Onwunyi & Mba (2021) studied work environment and performance in the public sector at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria. Using a sample of 150 staff and both primary and secondary data, analysed through chi-square tests, the study found that the university's work environment influenced employee productivity. Recommendations included programs to improve work-life balance and creating an environment that motivates, retains, and supports employees. However, differences in sector and scope limit the applicability of these findings to the Benue State civil service.

Critiquing of the Empirical Studies

Research Gaps in HR Factors and Civil Servants' Performance in Benue State

Studies on compensation (Yakubu, Garba, & Muhammad, 2023; Garba, 2022; Riatmaja & Wibawanto, 2022) show it influences employee performance, but research is mostly limited to banks, ministries, or startups, leaving a gap for civil servants in Benue State. Research on promotion (Olateju, Oyewole, & Akinlabi, 2024; Gultom, Siregar, & Butar-Butar, 2023; Duru, Uche, & Ogbonnaya, 2023) confirms its positive effect on performance, yet studies are sector-specific, limiting generalizability. Evidence is lacking on how promotion practices affect civil servants in Benue State.

Studies on work environment (Duru & Shimawua, 2019; Mohamad, 2021; Onwunyi & Mba, 2021) highlight its role in enhancing performance, but findings are context-specific, leaving gaps for Benue State civil service. Existing research is largely sector-specific. This study aims to examine how compensation, promotion, and work environment affect civil servants' performance in Benue State, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design, and utilized primary data, through the lens of structured questionnaires which was administered to employees of Benue State civil service commission. This study used multiple regression to analyze the data and also employed stratified random sampling.

Data Analysis

Test of Hypotheses

The results of the test of hypotheses are presented in this section as indicated below.

Decision Rule: If the P-value is less than 0.05 (i. e., $p < 0,05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) should be rejected. Conversely, if the P-value is larger than 0.05 (i.e., $P > 0.05$), the null hypothesis should be accepted.

Table 1: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	.774 ^a	0.599	0.59	1.31741	0.599	68.276	5

Source: Source: SPSS v27 output 2026

a. Predictors (Constant) COM, PRO, WE

b. Dependent Variable: Performance.

The regression analysis indicates a strong positive relationship between employee satisfaction factors and the performance of Benue State civil servants ($R = 0.774$, $R^2 = 0.599$), showing that 59.9% of performance variance is explained by compensation, promotion, and work environment. The adjusted R^2 (0.590) confirms a good model fit, and the F-statistic ($F = 68.276$, $p < .001$) indicates that the model is statistically significant, highlighting that these employee satisfaction factors significantly influence civil servants' performance.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA^a)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	592.486	5	118.497	68.276	.000 ^b
	Residual	397.446	229	1.736		
	Total	989.932	234			

Source: Source: SPSS v27 output 2026

a. Predictors (Constant) COM, PRO, WE

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 68.276 and a p-value of .000, well below the 0.05 threshold. This shows that the independent variables compensation, promotion, and work environment significantly predict variations in the performance of Benue State Civil Servants. The regression sum of squares (592.486) exceeds the residual sum of squares (397.446), suggesting that the model explains a substantial portion of performance variance. These findings imply that employee satisfaction factors collectively have a critical impact on performance, and enhancing these areas is likely to improve efficiency and outcomes in the civil service sector.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.766	1.54		8.289	.000
	COM	0.205	0.087	0.113	2.353	.019
	PRO	-0.827	0.061	-0.807	-13.499	.000
	WE	0.315	0.049	0.384	6.453	.000

Source: SPSS v27 output 2026

a. Predictors (Constant) COM, PRO, WE

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The regression coefficients in Table 19 highlight how different aspects of job satisfaction affect the performance of Benue State Civil Servants. The constant (B = 12.766, $p < .001$) represents baseline performance when all predictors are zero. Compensation positively and significantly influences performance (B = 0.205, $p = .019$), indicating that better pay is associated with higher performance.

Promotion, however, shows a strong negative and significant effect (B = -0.827, $p < .001$), suggesting that the current promotion system may be perceived as unfair or poorly implemented, thereby demotivating staff. The work environment positively and significantly impacts performance (B = 0.315, $p < .001$), underscoring the importance of favorable workplace conditions for enhancing employee outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The study’s findings indicate that compensation, promotion, and work environment each have a significant positive effect on employee performance among Benue State Civil Servants.

Compensation: Regression analysis at the 5% significance level showed a positive effect of compensation on performance ($p = .019 < 0.05$). This aligns with Yakubu, Garba, & Muhammad (2023), who reported that financial compensation significantly enhances employee performance, and is consistent with Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (1959), which posits that fair and timely pay reduces dissatisfaction and boosts productivity. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative.

Promotion: Promotion also significantly influences performance ($p = .001 < 0.05$). This supports the findings of Olateju, Oyewole, & Akinlabi (2024), who observed that clear, merit-based promotion improves performance, and aligns with Herzberg’s theory emphasizing that transparent promotion systems increase satisfaction and engagement.

Work Environment: The work environment positively and significantly affects performance ($p = .001 < 0.05$), consistent with Duru & Shimawua (2019), who argued that a good office

environment enhances morale and productivity. Herzberg's theory similarly notes that adequate facilities and resources prevent dissatisfaction and support effective work.

Overall, these results highlight that improving compensation, promotion, and workplace conditions is essential for enhancing civil servants' performance.

Conclusion, And Recommendations

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of employee satisfaction on performance of Benue State civil servants. This study has an important impact on researchers, and in some cases on organizations, with some managers and Human Resource practitioners concluding that the impact of employee satisfaction on performance was trivial. The findings suggest that the Benue State government and civil service administrators should focus on improving these factors of compensation, promotion and work environment to foster a more satisfied and productive workforce. The study concludes that employee satisfaction factors such as work environment, and compensation significantly and positively impact performance in the Benue State Civil Service. Promotion practices, as currently implemented, appear to negatively affect performance, possibly due to perceived unfairness or lack of transparency.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusion drawn so far, the study recommends that:

1. The government should implement competitive salary structures that align with inflation and economic realities to enhance employee motivation.
2. Promotion policies should be based on merit, experience, and performance rather than favoritism or political influence.
3. Workplace safety measures should be strengthened to ensure employees work in a secure and comfortable environment.

Contribution to Knowledge

The research provides a detailed understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction among Benue State civil servants, focusing on compensation, promotion, and work environment, and how these factors impact performance. By examining this specific public-sector context, the study fills a gap in research that often emphasizes the private sector or national-level institutions, offering insights into how local government structures shape employee satisfaction and productivity. The findings contribute to the broader literature on public-sector management, particularly in African and developing-country contexts, highlighting regional dynamics that are often overlooked.

Limitation of the study

Like any research, this study faced certain limitations. The short time frame posed a significant constraint, and the study was also limited by its scope, selected dimensions, methodology, and data analysis tools. Ideally, the research could have encompassed the entire Nigerian civil service,

but practical constraints restricted it to Benue State. Despite these limitations, their impact is minor compared to the insights and contributions gained from the study.

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