

**Job Satisfaction and Employee's Performance among healthcare workers  
in Nigeria's Public Hospital. A study of General Hospital Ukpum Abak,  
Akwa Ibom State**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study explored how job satisfaction influences employee performance among healthcare workers at General Hospital Ukpom Abak in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research was driven by growing concerns about declining staff morale and productivity within the public healthcare sector, largely attributed to ongoing human resource management issues. It pinpointed key challenges such as delayed staff promotions, insufficient recognition of employee efforts, and inadequately designed reward systems as major contributors to dissatisfaction and reduced work performance in the hospital. Although governmental interventions such as staff training and limited incentive schemes have aimed to address these concerns, deeper systemic problems like poor fund management and inadequate staff welfare initiatives continued to hinder effective service delivery. The research adopted both survey and descriptive designs, using a structured questionnaire to collect responses from 152 staff members

drawn from a total population of 250. The sampling approach combined purposive, stratified, and simple random techniques. Quantitative statistical analysis, particularly the Chi-square test at a 0.05 significance level, was used to examine the relationship between factors such as promotion delays, recognition, and reward systems (independent variables) and employee performance (dependent variable). The results indicated that delays in promotion significantly affected employee output ( $\chi^2 = 129.93$ ), resulting in frustration and reduced engagement. Likewise, the absence of recognition ( $\chi^2 = 25.29$ ) negatively impacted morale, especially in demanding work environments such as healthcare. Ineffective reward systems ( $\chi^2 = 129.93$ ) were also found to significantly diminish motivation and efficiency, contributing to substandard service provision. The study concluded that job satisfaction plays a critical role in determining how well healthcare workers perform their duties. It emphasized that issues surrounding promotions, recognition, and rewards must be adequately addressed to improve employee engagement, performance, and the overall quality of healthcare delivery.

**Keywords:** *Job satisfaction, Employee performance, Public healthcare sector, Delayed promotions, Reward systems, Staff welfare, Service deliver.*

## Introduction

Employee motivation is the driving force behind human resource management, as an organization's ability to meet its objectives depends on the energy and commitment its people bring to their work. Motivation determines the intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward goals, while job satisfaction reflects how well a role's characteristics meet an individual's needs. De Savijny and Adam (2019) define job satisfaction as the degree to which job attributes align with personal expectations: higher satisfaction correlates with stronger engagement in organizational goals. Riva (2004) describes satisfaction as an emotional evaluation—whether employees feel content or discontented which in turn shapes their performance.

Research consistently shows that motivated employees are more loyal, dedicated, and productive (Edet, Ebong, & Oki, 2023; Bahati, 2013). To cultivate these outcomes, organizations employ both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic motivators such as financial incentives, bonuses, and promotions offer tangible recognition, while intrinsic motivators mastery of tasks, personal growth, and

enhanced self-esteem address internal needs identified by Lawler and Hall (1970). However, effective motivation goes beyond adding resources: it requires organizational redesign, improved working conditions, and professional development opportunities that allow existing human capital to flourish.

In Nigeria, chronic challenges to work ethic often manifested as indifference or careless attitudes have been identified as barriers to productivity in both public and private sectors. These issues are especially acute in healthcare, where the stakes for performance and patient outcomes are high. Many healthcare workers report low job satisfaction, stemming from inadequate compensation and poorly structured reward mechanisms. Scholars note a pervasive culture of disengagement, underscoring the need for motivational frameworks that resonate with local values and cultural norms.

General Hospital Ukpom Abak in Akwa Ibom State illustrates these broader dynamics. Despite government initiatives to improve compensation and training, staff frequently feel neglected. Chronic understaffing, substandard facilities, and an unreliable remuneration system have led to widespread dissatisfaction among both medical and support personnel. Even though the state government has rolled out various motivation schemes, persistent problems such as delayed promotions, low salaries, poor working conditions, and misappropriated incentive funds continue to erode employee morale and productivity. Further compounding these issues is the politicization of promotion and reward systems, which undermines perceptions of fairness and merit. Failure to recognize hard work, coupled with an inadequate pay structure, deepens disengagement and disrupts the quality of care. In this high-pressure environment, demotivated staff are more likely to experience stress, absenteeism, and turnover trends that jeopardize service delivery across the hospital. Against this backdrop, the study seeks to uncover the root causes of job dissatisfaction in Akwa Ibom's general hospitals, with a specific focus on General Hospital Ukpom Abak. To achieve this, the study will be guided by the following objectives:

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are presented below:

- i. To examine the effect of non-recognition of hard work on job performance in general hospital UkpomAbak, Akwa Ibom State
- ii. To evaluate how poor remuneration affects workers performance in general hospital UkpomAbak, Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

- i. Non-recognition of hard work tends to affect job performance in general hospital UkpomAbak, Akwa Ibom State
- ii. Poor Reward System tends to affect worker performance in general hospital Ukpom Abak, Akwa Ibom State.

## **REVIEW OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Review of Conceptual Literature***

#### ***Concept of Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that reflects an individual's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to their work. It has been defined in various ways, generally pointing to a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job. Dennis (2017) describes job satisfaction as a pleasurable state that arises when a job aligns with an individual's values, while Robbins (2015) sees it as the sum of all feelings an employee has toward their job. Onukwube (2012) adds that job satisfaction occurs when the rewards received are perceived as equitable to one's contributions. Locke (1976) and Judge et al. (2001) expand this understanding by emphasizing that job satisfaction involves both effective and cognitive assessments of job experiences, which can influence employee behavior. Spector (1997) also emphasizes the role of contentment derived from work tasks, the work environment, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Moreover, Deci and Ryan (2000) and Rosso et al. (2010) argue that satisfaction is closely tied to the fulfillment of intrinsic needs such as autonomy, competence, and job meaningfulness, while Adams (1965) and Chen et al. (2009) stress the role of fairness and goal achievement. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) further highlights the importance of good fitness between the employee and their job role.

Theoretical perspectives help to deepen this understanding. Dipboye et al. (1994) categorize job satisfaction theories into dual-factor theories, comparative theories,

and cognitive theories. Dual-factor theory emphasizes intrinsic motivators like achievement and responsibility, although critics argue that extrinsic factors such as pay and working conditions are equally critical (Wright & Davis, 2003; Kim, 2004). Comparative theories suggest that satisfaction arises when there is a balance between expected job outcomes and actual experiences, and cognitive theories focus on individual evaluations of job characteristics. Malthis (2008), as cited by Rosita and Yuniati (2016), lists indicators of job satisfaction to include enjoyment of work, discipline, morale, and performance. However, technological advancement and job mechanization have led to alienation in the workplace, making employees feel unfulfilled, thereby increasing labor turnover and operational costs (Thompson & Terpening, 2003; Smith & Reinow, 2011). Overall, job satisfaction is influenced by a blend of internal values, external rewards, interpersonal relationships, and alignment between personal and organizational goals.

#### **Causes of Job satisfaction:**

Here is the summary in itemized format:

##### **1. Type of Work Itself**

- i. Includes area of specialization (e.g., professional or technical roles).
- ii. Job type affects wages and satisfaction levels.
- iii. Workload must match pay and be clearly defined.

##### **2. Pay or Wages**

- i. Compensation should be clearly stated and fair.
- ii. Includes salaries, retirement pensions, and medical benefits.
- iii. Financial rewards significantly impact job satisfaction.

##### **3. Promotional Opportunities**

- i. Promotion should be accessible and based on merit, not politics.
- ii. Employees should be rewarded for hard work and excellence.
- iii. Recognition such as "Best Worker of the Year" boosts morale.

#### **4. Supervision**

- i. Involves the physical and social work environment.
- ii. Supervisors should guide, correct, and motivate staff.
- iii. Effective supervision promotes accuracy and timely performance.

#### **5. Co-workers**

- i. Positive peer relationships enhance teamwork and productivity.
- ii. Equal opportunity and mutual respect should be promoted.
- iii. Social interaction and support improve job satisfaction.

### **Concept of Employee's Performance**

Performance is a multifaceted concept referring to development, success, or competitiveness of an organization. It encompasses how well individuals or firms achieve strategic goals. Firm performance is measured through both objective and subjective indicators, and it is crucial for strategic planning, resource optimization, and sustainable growth (Dobbs & Hamilton, 2007; Sefiani & Bown, 2013; Barney, 2007). Employee performance refers to how effectively individuals perform tasks in line with organizational expectations. It involves efficiency, adherence to standards, and the use of resources in dynamic environments. Several scholars define it as a product of ability, motivation, and working conditions (Fagbamiye, 2000; Battu, 2008; Okereke & Daniel, 2010).

Measurement approaches include evaluating work commitment, values, coordination, and outcomes such as quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost (Mathis & Jackson, 2009; Bhatia & Jain, 2012). Performance is also behavioral, emphasizing actions over results (Armstrong, 2000). Factors influencing performance include training, motivation, and job satisfaction (Malaolu & Ogbuabor, 2017). Elnaga and Imran (2013) classify performance stages into planning, monitoring, developing, rating, and rewarding, each essential for ongoing performance management. Employee productivity is linked to work environment, organizational structure, and internal motivation (Anwar & Shukur, 2016; Ejiofor, 2016). Additionally, organizational performance is a function of three factors: the worker, the organization, and the external environment (Ejiofor, 2016). Worker performance

depends on ability, motivation, and integrity. Efforts to improve public service in Nigeria often fail due to an overemphasis on incentives without addressing other performance factors (Hussain et al., 2020).

Ultimately, employee performance is central to productivity, as it affects other inputs like technology and capital. It can be measured economically (e.g., net sales per employee) and influenced by motivation, discipline, and work environment (Uğur, 2013; Rohan & Madhumita, 2012).

### **Factors Affecting Employee Performance**

Employee performance is influenced by a variety of interrelated factors that determine productivity and organizational success:

- i. **Experience:** Employees lacking the necessary background or skills for specific roles can hinder productivity. Although training can improve competencies, performance issues that persist may be due to inadequate experience (Smith, 2019; Jones et al., 2020; Brown & Williams, 2018).
- ii. **Work-Life Balance:** Personal issues can spill into work life, affecting performance. Managers should show empathy, engage in supportive conversations, and allow time off when needed, thereby reinforcing the organization's commitment to employee well-being (Lee & Park, 2017; Davis et al., 2019; Taylor & Johnson, 2021).
- iii. **Managerial Interaction:** Frequent and clear feedback from managers significantly impacts performance. Managers must be trained to give constructive feedback and collaborate with employees on improvement plans (Clark & Scott, 2020; Jones & Smith, 2018; Robinson et al., 2019).
- iv. **Goal Setting:** Clearly defined goals help employees understand expectations and improve performance (Khan et al., 2011). According to Arnold, Cooper, and Robertson (2010), other key tools include:
  - a. **Motivation:** Beyond financial rewards, performance is enhanced through career growth opportunities and management involvement.
  - b. **Managerial Standards:** Expectations should align with job descriptions and employee qualifications to avoid performance issues.

- c. **Commitment:** Organizational support through competitive compensation, training, and updated tools fosters employee dedication and improved output.
- d. **Employee Evaluation:** Regular assessments provide feedback, recognize achievements, and guide future development.
- v. **Ability, Environment, and Motivation:** Onah (2008) identifies these as the three foundational factors of performance. Ability includes skills and intellectual capacity; environment refers to resources and infrastructure; and motivation drives employees to excel. Their relationship is expressed as:

$$P=F(M+A+E)P = F(M + A + E)$$

where Performance (P) is a function of Motivation (M), Ability (A), and Environment (E).

Lastly, Anyim, Elegbede, and Gbajumo (2011) assert that optimal performance occurs when employees are motivated, capable, and equipped with adequate resources—deficiency in any of these elements negatively impacts productivity.

### Ways of Improving Employee Performance in Organizations

To enhance employee performance, organizations can adopt six key strategies:

- i. **Identifying Underperformance Issues:** It is essential to recognize and understand the root causes of poor performance such as lack of training, limited resources, or external factors rather than relying on short-term fixes (Evans & Lindsay, 2002).
- ii. **Enhancing Communication Strategies:** Open, transparent, and collaborative communication between employees and management promotes innovation, teamwork, and improved performance.
- iii. **Fostering a Positive Work Environment:** Creating a supportive and friendly workplace where employees feel appreciated boosts morale and productivity (Evans & Lindsay, 2002).
- iv. **Utilizing Data and Platforms:** Leveraging human resource analytics allows organizations to measure performance through objective data like time usage and task quality. This helps employees self-evaluate and improve effectively (Collier, 2003).

- v. **Managing Performance for Growth:** Performance should be managed with a focus on employee development by providing resources, setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-specific) goals, and fostering motivation (Bala, 2010).

### **Relationship between Staff Training and Employee Job Performance in Organization: the Nexus.**

Training holds a central place in any organization's growth strategy, and its value cannot be overemphasized. A growing body of research supports the idea that investing in employee training significantly contributes to long-term profitability. For organizations seeking to remain competitive, prioritizing employee training is essential. In today's dynamic and constantly changing environment, the ability to adapt and stay current with industry trends and practices largely depends on consistent and effective training initiatives. Hill and Lent (2010) highlight that training enhances several facets of organizational performance, such as customer satisfaction, employee productivity, staff morale, succession planning, and overall profitability. Likewise, Stahl (1999), as cited in Ali and Anwar (2021), views training as a powerful tool for skill development, quality improvement, productivity enhancement, and fostering employee commitment and loyalty.

Increased complexity in the workplace, driven by rapid technological changes and evolving business models, has made continuous employee development more important than ever. Organizations now operate in environments influenced by political, economic, social, and technological forces. As such, regular and targeted training becomes vital for maintaining stability and responding effectively to change. Newman, Thanacoody, and Hui (2011) emphasize that training significantly improves employee motivation, confidence, and commitment. They also note that training provides opportunities for recognition, career progression, personal satisfaction, and skill mastery. Furthermore, training helps improve staff availability and quality, thus boosting organizational effectiveness. According to Khan et al. (2011), well-structured training also prepares employees for the successful implementation of new policies and procedures.

Nassazi (2013) asserts that training equips employees with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to perform tasks efficiently, leading to improved organizational performance and higher productivity. Similarly, Ejiofor (2016) notes that well-trained employees are more likely to meet performance targets and contribute to competitive advantage. Training also reduces employee dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover, while promoting a sense of achievement and unlocking latent capabilities. Harrison (2000) adds that bridging the gap between actual and expected performance requires focused training interventions aimed at enhancing employee competence.

Abdullah and Afshar (2019) find that training positively influences workers' knowledge and skills, thereby boosting their job performance and supporting organizational success. Top and Ali (2021), along with Faraj et al. (2021), reinforce that training helps identify employees' development needs and competency levels, which directly impacts performance and goal achievement. Anwar and Climis (2017) argue that learning through training has a direct effect on organizational outcomes by enhancing individual employee performance, a critical factor in reaching corporate objectives. This is echoed by Prabhu, Nambirajan, and Abdullah (2020), who stress that effective training closes the performance gap between expected and actual employee output.

Wright and Geory (2017) further explain that training not only improves current employee performance but also prepares them for future roles by upgrading their skills, knowledge, and attitudes. This ensures that employees can perform tasks efficiently and help the organization achieve its goals competitively. Supporting these points, Gunu, Oni, Tsado, and Ajayi (2013) identify key functions of training, which include:

- i. Enhancing productivity and work quality
- ii. Improving skills, knowledge, and understanding
- iii. Promoting better use of tools and equipment
- iv. Reducing waste, workplace accidents, employee turnover, lateness, and absenteeism

In a nutshell, training is a strategic tool that drives employee and organizational performance. When aligned with company goals, it contributes significantly to employee development, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Mruma (2019) investigated the effect of motivational factors on teacher performance in public schools in Nyamagana District, Tanzania, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Survey and historical research methods were employed, with primary data analyzed via simple percentages. Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory framed the study. The findings linked teacher underperformance and low productivity directly to inadequate and poor reward systems by the government. Based on these results, the study recommended the implementation of effective and attractive reward systems that align with public teachers' interests to enhance productivity.

Akubude (2019) conducted research on employee motivation and job performance in Itu Local Government Council. Using a descriptive research design, the study examined the relationship between salary increments, leave grants, and overall motivation with job performance. The findings revealed a significant relationship between motivation and employee productivity and performance. The study recommended creating an environment that fosters high productivity by promoting staff timely, enhancing communication between management levels, and involving employees in decision-making to boost morale and productivity.

Chukwurah, Uzor, Iwonu, and Chukwueloka (2020) studied capacity building and employee productivity in the Nigeria public sector, focusing on the Anambra State Civil Service Commission, Awka. Using a survey design and organizational development theory (Kurt Lewin, 1950) as a framework, they found that capacity building positively influences quality service delivery. However, factors like lack of training, insufficient funding, and absence of modern technology hinder employee capacity building. The study recommended government policies that encourage continuous training and development to maximize employee potential.

Gifty, George, Babalola, and Isaac (2021) explored employee motivation and its effects on productivity. The study highlighted motivation as a key management

function necessary to align employee satisfaction with organizational goals, especially given diverse cultural influences. The research examined common motivation theories and their applications, concluding that motivation can either increase or decrease employee performance depending on how well it meets individual employee needs. The study emphasized the importance for organizations to understand and address individual motivating factors to improve overall performance.

Tom, Ebong, and Utok (2022) investigated reward administration and worker performance in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. Using equity theory as a theoretical basis, the study combined descriptive and empirical methods, drawing on primary and secondary data. It found that poor performance was linked to inadequate salary packages, lack of allowances, insufficient training, and poor working conditions. The study recommended that the government develop suitable financial and non-financial incentive packages across ministries and departments to enhance worker performance and productivity.

Bassey (2022) carried out a study on employee motivation and organizational performance in Okobo Local Government Council. The study noted longstanding challenges with staff motivation, including delayed promotions and unfair reward systems, which negatively impacted morale and productivity. Employing Abraham Maslow's theory as the framework and using survey and descriptive designs, the study found that poor motivational practices significantly contributed to low productivity. It recommended timely promotions, fair rewards, payment of entitlements, and employee participation in organizational affairs to boost morale and job performance.

### **The Effects of non-recognition of hard work on job performance in Public Hospitals, using Akwa Ibom State as a reference point with a specific focus on general hospital UkpomAbak**

In today's dynamic and fiercely competitive work environments, organizations are in a perpetual quest for strategies that not only optimize job performance but also cultivate a culture of sustained employee engagement and motivation (Jones, 2019). Within this landscape, the recognition of hard work emerges as a cornerstone in

achieving these dual objectives, drawing significant attention within the realms of organizational dynamics and human resource management (Smith & Brown, 2020). Grant's (2008) seminal study offers compelling evidence that employees who receive acknowledgment for their contributions exhibit heightened levels of task performance and a greater propensity for engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors. Such findings underscore the intrinsic motivational impact of recognition on employee behavior, emphasizing its pivotal role in fostering a conducive work environment. Similarly, research by Gerhart and Fang (2015) expands upon these insights, revealing that robust recognition initiatives not only enhance employee morale but also yield tangible improvements in key performance metrics, including sales revenue and customer satisfaction. This empirical evidence underscores the tangible benefits organizations stand to gain by instituting strategic recognition programs that acknowledge and reward employees' hard work.

Conversely, the repercussions of overlooking hard work on workers' job performance cannot be overstated, particularly within specialized contexts such as healthcare settings. Within public hospitals in Nigeria, there is a pressing need to examine the intricate interplay between acknowledgment, motivation, and employee engagement. Studies, such as those conducted by Adebayo et al. (2019), underscore the profound impact of recognition on job satisfaction among healthcare workers. They highlight how failure to acknowledge hard work can lead to decreased morale and motivation, ultimately undercutting job performance within healthcare settings.

Within the context of General Hospital UkpomAbak, the challenges posed by the non-recognition of hard work are particularly salient. Without due acknowledgment, healthcare professionals may experience feelings of frustration and disillusionment (Essien et al., 2023). This lack of recognition not only erodes employee morale but also diminishes their commitment to delivering quality patient care, thereby compromising overall job performance. Furthermore, the absence of recognition impedes career advancement opportunities for healthcare professionals, as evidenced by the study conducted by Udo et al. (2018), which highlights how perceived unfairness in promotion processes can deflate motivation and disincentivize employees from excelling in their roles.

The organizational culture at General Hospital UkpomAbak plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' perceptions of recognition and its impact on job performance. When hard work goes unnoticed or unrewarded, healthcare professionals may become disengaged, leading to decreased productivity and effectiveness in service delivery (Adebayo et al., 2019). Addressing the effects of non-recognition of hard work on job performance necessitates proactive measures aimed at fostering a culture of appreciation and acknowledgment within the hospital. Insights from studies, such as that by Ekpenyong et al. (2020), suggest implementing formal recognition programs, providing regular feedback and praise for exemplary performance, and ensuring transparency in promotion processes as essential steps in mitigating the negative consequences of non-recognition.

### **Relationship between Poor Remuneration and Worker Performance at General Hospital, UkpomAbak, Akwa Ibom State: An Assessment**

Adequate remuneration is a fundamental pillar in motivating employees and enhancing productivity within organizations. It is a key component of the employment relationship, influencing not only workers' financial well-being but also their job satisfaction and overall performance (Herzberg, 1959). Conversely, when compensation is perceived as inadequate or falls short of expectations, it can negatively affect employee morale, motivation, and effectiveness in carrying out their duties (Adams, 1965). This paper examines the complex relationship between poor remuneration and worker performance at General Hospital UkpomAbak in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Organizational behavior and human resource management research emphasize the importance of remuneration in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory identifies adequate pay as a hygiene factor that prevents dissatisfaction but does not necessarily enhance motivation on its own (Herzberg, 1959). In contrast, Adams' Equity Theory explains how employees assess fairness by comparing their input-output balance with that of their peers. Perceptions of inequity in pay can lead to feelings of injustice and decreased motivation (Adams, 1965). These theories help clarify how workers' perceptions of remuneration impact their job performance within organizations.

Empirical studies further reinforce the critical role of remuneration in influencing employee outcomes. Maslow (1943) identified financial security, achieved through fair pay, as a basic need essential for enabling higher levels of motivation. In Nigeria's healthcare sector, Okon et al. (2017) found that healthcare workers expressed dissatisfaction with their compensation, which negatively affected their job satisfaction and commitment. Such findings illustrate how poor remuneration concretely impacts workers' attitudes and behaviors in healthcare settings.

Specific to healthcare environments, studies highlight the harmful effects of inadequate pay on employee performance. Okon et al. (2017) reported that many healthcare professionals in Nigeria feel their remuneration is insufficient, correlating with lowered job satisfaction and motivation. Similarly, Ekpo and Udofia (2019) surveyed nurses in Akwa Ibom State and found widespread salary dissatisfaction, which contributed to reduced performance and diminished commitment to their roles. These findings underscore that inadequate compensation not only lowers morale but also demotivates healthcare workers, leading to reduced engagement and productivity. Addressing remuneration challenges is thus vital for healthcare organizations to safeguard employee well-being and maintain quality patient care.

At General Hospital UkpomAbak, the consequences of poor remuneration are particularly significant. Given the essential healthcare services provided, insufficient compensation affects not just individual staff but also the quality of care patients receive. Low and irregular salary payments, combined with limited career advancement opportunities, contribute to increased stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced motivation among healthcare workers (Okon et al., 2017; Ekpo & Udofia, 2019). This, in turn, compromises both worker performance and patient outcomes. Research by Okon et al. (2017) reveals that many healthcare workers at the hospital struggle with financial strain due to low wages and inconsistent payment schedules. This situation fosters frustration and demoralization, exacerbated by few prospects for career progression. These factors collectively hinder professional growth and reduce employees' enthusiasm and commitment to their duties.

The impact of poor remuneration at General Hospital UkpomAbak manifests in lower productivity, increased absenteeism, and a decline in healthcare service standards (Ekpo & Udofia, 2019). To counter these challenges, hospital management

and stakeholders must take deliberate action. Implementing fair, competitive salary structures, ensuring timely and transparent payments, and creating clear pathways for career advancement are crucial steps to mitigate the negative effects of poor pay. Such measures will help enhance employee motivation, improve performance, and ultimately elevate the quality of patient care at the hospital.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation, which posits that an individual's performance is the result of a multiplicative interaction between motivation and ability, expressed as  $P = M \times A$ . Motivation itself is influenced by three critical factors: valence (the value or attractiveness of the expected outcome), instrumentality (the perceived link between performance and outcome), and expectancy (the belief that effort will lead to desired performance). In essence, Vroom argues that employees are motivated not only by the attractiveness of the reward but also by their perception of how their effort will lead to performance and how that performance will result in the desired outcome (Vroom, 1964).

As noted by Idemobi (2010), the Expectancy Theory is a process-oriented framework that emphasizes the cognitive calculations individuals make regarding effort and outcomes. Vroom suggests that employees' motivation to exert effort on a task depends largely on their expectations about the result of that effort. In this regard, employees often ask themselves three key questions before engaging fully in a task: *Am I capable of completing the task? If I succeed, what will I receive? Is the reward worth the effort involved?* The responses to these questions shape their motivation and performance outcomes. Building upon Vroom's model, Ejiofor (1987) identifies four core variables that influence worker motivation: ability, valence, instrumentality, and infrastructural support (such as access to tools and resources). He argues that each of these components has a direct effect on employee motivation. Of particular importance is the concept of perfect instrumentality system in which there is a clear, consistent, and reliable link between effort and reward. Ejiofor contends that this perfect instrumentality is the missing element in many Nigerian organizations, both public and private. He maintains that even when other factors such as ability, valence, and infrastructural support are present, motivation and

performance will not reach optimal levels in the absence of a fair and transparent reward system.

This study aligns with Ejiofor's (1987) position that instrumentality represents a crucial but often neglected component in the motivational frameworks of many Nigerian institutions. Only when a compensation system is structured around the principle of perfect instrumentality where performance is clearly and directly linked to meaningful rewards can organizations hope to achieve sustained employee motivation and improved performance. Vroom's model, therefore, underscores that expectancy, instrumentality, and valence must all be present for motivation to occur. If employees perceive any of these three elements to be missing or weak, their motivation is likely to diminish. Furthermore, because expectations and values vary between individuals, organizations must understand and tailor their reward systems to align with the individual goals and perceptions of their workforce. In this way, the Expectancy Theory offers a practical and flexible framework for enhancing employee performance through strategically designed motivational policies.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopted a combination of survey and descriptive research designs to collect and analyze data from a sample drawn from the total population of 250 staff members at General Hospital Ukpom and the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health. Using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size table, 152 individuals were initially selected, and 150 valid responses were obtained. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed, involving purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling to ensure accurate and representative selection. Structured questionnaires, aligned with the research objectives, served as the primary data collection tool and were personally administered to ensure proper completion and retrieval. The anonymity of responses enhanced the reliability and honesty of the data. Quantitative analysis was conducted using the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) statistical method at a 0.05 significance level to test hypotheses and determine relationships between variables, allowing the researcher to draw valid conclusions aligned with the study's objectives.

## Testing of Research Hypotheses

**Testing of Hypothesis i: Non-recognition of hard work tends to affect job performance in general hospital UkpomAbak, Akwa Ibom State.**

S/N	Statements	SA	A	SD	D	Total
6	Non-recognition of hard work decreases my motivation to put in extra effort at work.	56	54	22	18	150
7	Lack of recognition for hard work makes me feel dissatisfied with my job.	58	52	20	20	150
8	Failure to recognize hard-working employees leads to reduced job performance in this hospital.	54	55	23	18	150
9	Non-recognition of hard work affects my level of engagement and focus at work.	55	53	22	20	150
10	I feel undervalued when my hard work is not acknowledged, which impacts my job performance.	57	54	21	18	150

Source: Author Computation (2025)

Table 4.2.2: Chi-square calculation for hypothesis II

	SA	A	SD	D	Total	X <sup>2</sup> Cal.	X <sup>2</sup> Tab.
6	56	54	22	18	150		
7	58	52	20	20	150		
8	54	55	23	18	150		
9	55	53	22	20	150		
10	57	54	21	18	150		
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>25.29</b>	<b>21.026</b>

$$\chi^2 = 25.29$$

$$d/f = (R-1)(C-1)$$

$$= (4-1)(4-1)$$

$$\chi^2 = 3 \times 3 = 9$$

$$TV = 21.026$$

### Decision

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 25.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) confirmed that failing to recognize hard work significantly undermines job performance at General Hospital Ukpom Abak.

Unacknowledged employees suffer from diminished motivation, low morale, and reduced productivity effects that are especially damaging in the high-pressure healthcare context where performance directly influences patient outcomes. These results echo Luthans (2011) on the harms of unrecognized effort, Kube et al. (2013) on the benefits of sincere recognition for cooperation and satisfaction, Armstrong's (2014) advocacy for tailored recognition programs, and Obasan and Oludayo's (2020) findings on the link between appreciation and Nigerian healthcare workers' performance. Altogether, the evidence points to an urgent need for regular, meaningful acknowledgment systems to maintain staff engagement and service quality.

**Testing of Hypothesis ii: Poor Reward System tends to affect worker productivity in general hospital UkpomAbak, Akwa Ibom State**

S/N	Statements	SA	A	SD	D	Total
11	Delays in promotion negatively affect my motivation to perform my duties effectively.	55	58	20	17	150
12	Lack of timely promotion reduces my commitment to achieving organizational goals.	50	60	25	15	150
13	Delay in promotion has led to decreased morale among workers in this hospital.	52	57	23	18	150
14	My productivity at work is significantly impacted by delays in receiving deserved promotions.	53	56	22	19	150
15	Delayed promotion makes me feel undervalued in this organization.	54	55	21	20	150

Table 4.2.2: Chi-square calculation for hypothesis III

	SA	A	SD	D	Total	X <sup>2</sup> Cal.	X <sup>2</sup> Tab.
11	55	58	20	17	150		
12	50	60	25	15	150		
13	52	57	23	18	150		
14	53	56	22	19	150		
15	54	55	21	20	150		
Total	264	286	111	89	750	129.93	21.026

Source: Author Computation (2025)

$$\chi^2 = 129.93$$

$$d/f = (R-1)(C-1)$$

$$= (4-1)(4-1)$$

$$\chi^2 = 3 \times 3 = 9$$

$$TV = 21.026$$

### Decision

The analysis ( $\chi^2 = 129.93$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) clearly shows that inadequate reward systems at General Hospital Ukpom Abak significantly undermine employee productivity. When staff feel their efforts go unrewarded—whether financially or through other incentives—their morale, commitment, and output all suffer. These results, consistent with Gohari et al. (2013), Khan et al. (2015), and Obasan and Oludayo (2020), underscore the critical need for fair, meaningful rewards to sustain motivation, reduce turnover, and ultimately improve patient care.

### Discussion of Findings

The empirical evidence gathered from General Hospital Ukpom Abak underscores the pivotal role of timely promotions, employee recognition, and robust reward systems in fostering workforce motivation and performance. First, the significant association between non-recognition of hard work and lowered performance ( $\chi^2 = 25.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) highlights recognition as an indispensable element of staff management. In a high-pressure environment like a hospital where emotional and physical demands are constant failure to acknowledge contributions can accelerate burnout and undermine the quality of patient care. These results mirror Luthans' (2011) assertion that regular, genuine recognition bolsters morale and productivity, and extend the work of Kube, Marechal, and Puppe (2013) by demonstrating how recognition fosters cooperation and job satisfaction in frontline health services.

Second, the analysis of reward mechanisms ( $\chi^2 = 129.93$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) confirms that inadequacies in both financial and non-financial incentives precipitate widespread employee dissatisfaction and absenteeism. Consistent with Gohari et al. (2013), this finding illustrates that without meaningful rewards whether through competitive salaries, performance bonuses, or professional development opportunities staff lack

the extrinsic reinforcement needed to sustain high performance levels. In the context of limited healthcare resources, this demotivation not only impacts individual productivity but also compromises broader service delivery and patient outcomes.

Collectively, these findings paint a clear picture: the prevailing organizational climate at General Hospital Ukpom Abak characterized by delayed promotions, scant recognition, and ineffective rewards creates a feedback loop of demotivation and reduced performance. In alignment with extant organizational behavior literature, employees who do not feel valued are less likely to invest discretionary effort, weakening team cohesion and eroding institutional capacity.

## **Conclusion**

Employee performance at General Hospital Ukpom Abak hinges on three interrelated drivers of job satisfaction: timely promotion, meaningful recognition, and a fair reward system. When promotions are slow, staff feel overlooked and demotivated, leading to frustration and emotional withdrawal dynamics that are especially damaging in high stress environments like hospitals. Likewise, failing to acknowledge employees' hard work saps their commitment and reduces both productivity and the willingness to go above and beyond, directly affecting patient care quality. An inadequate or inequitable reward structure compounds these issues. If bonuses, career advancement, or even simple expressions of appreciation don't match effort and achievement, morale plummets. This can trigger increased stress, absenteeism, and turnover, undermining not only individual performance but also team cohesion and the hospital's overall service standards.

The study confirms that demoralized workers hobbled by delayed promotions, scant recognition, and weak incentives struggle to operate at their best, weakening the hospital's capacity to deliver high quality care. To reverse this trend, the following recommendations are proposed.

## **Recommendations**

- i. General Hospital Ukpom Abak should establish a transparent and timely promotion system based on merit, supported by regular performance evaluations, to enhance employee motivation and improve overall performance.

- ii. The hospital should implement a formal recognition program, combining both formal awards and informal praise, and train managers to regularly acknowledge employee efforts to boost job satisfaction and engagement.
- iii. A comprehensive review of the hospital's compensation system is needed to ensure competitive salaries and benefits, alongside non-financial incentives like career development and training, to increase motivation, productivity, and quality of patient care.

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