

Reward Systems and Employee Performance in Selected Private Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract : The research work examined the effect of reward systems on employee performance in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, focusing on Afe Babalola University, Crown Polytechnic, and Fabotas College of Health Sciences and Technology. The research work was driven by inadequate reward structures, worker displeasure, and their institutional performance. Specifically, the research investigated the effect of monetary rewards, non-monetary rewards, and employees' perceptions of reward fairness on performance outcomes. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 264 academic staff members; while a sample size of 159 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula and selected through proportional sampling techniques. Data were gathered through structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used such as frequencies and percentages were used for data analysis, while Chi-square statistics tested the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. Findings shown that both monetary and non-monetary rewards significantly influence employee performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. Salary increments, bonuses, recognition, promotion opportunities, job security, and professional development were found to positively affect employee commitment and productivity. The Chi-square results showed significant relationships between monetary rewards and employee performance ($\chi^2 = 129.71, p < 0.05$), non-monetary rewards and employee motivation ($\chi^2 = 151.03, p < 0.05$), as well as reward fairness perceptions and employee performance ($\chi^2 = 100.84, p < 0.05$). However, budget limit, poor communication, and weak performance evaluation systems were identified as challenges affecting effective reward implementation. This was concluded that a well-adjusted, nondiscriminatory, and translucent reward system is to improving employee performance and organizational effectiveness in private tertiary institutions. The study recommends solidification reward policies, cultivating communication, and supporting performance evaluation structures with recognized reward structures.

Keywords: Reward System, Employee Performance, Monetary Rewards, Non-Monetary Rewards, Private Tertiary Institutions, Organizational Performance.

1. Introduction

Human resources remain central to organizational survival, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. In service-intensive institutions such as universities and polytechnics, employee performance constitutes a critical determinant of institutional effectiveness, academic quality, and stakeholder satisfaction. The critical examination of reward system is imperative, as evidenced by recurring workplace disruptions such as murmurs, go-slows, strikes. Armstrong, 2012; Shields, Brown, Kaine, Dolle- Samuel (2015) opines that these actions often stem from perceptions of inequality, where employees feel their compensation is biased compared to their peers in similar roles of institutions. Many private universities are plagued by underdeveloped or non-existences reward structures, a scarcity that often leads to a disengaged and uncommitted work forces. Basically, an actual reward system serves to support the value of employees by ensuring their contributions are formally approved and remunerated. An organizational reward system includes all structured and unstructured methods used to appreciate and remunerate employees for their work and accomplishments. These systems are typically composed of two categories: financial and non-financial rewards. The financial, or monetary, component covers base pay, bonuses, and other performance-based financial incentives. Conversely, non-monetary rewards involve opportunities for professional growth, formal recognition, more engaging job roles, and a positive work environment (Njanja, Maina, Kibet, & Kageni, 2013). Establishing a comprehensive and equitable reward structure is therefore vital for boosting job satisfaction, improving overall performance, and retaining valuable staff (Shields et al., 2015).

Reward systems is determined by noticeable signs of employee displeasure within the academic sector, including numerous whispers, work-to-rule actions (go-slows), and strikes. These disorders often originate from alleged imbalances in compensation when employees compare their remuneration packages to those of counterparts in similar institutions. A prevailing issue in many private universities is the existence of inadequate or ill-defined reward structures, which directly contributes to a workforce lacking in obligation and engagement. At its core, an effective reward system functions to validate employees' worth by ensuring their organizational contributions are formally recognized and appropriately compensated (Armstrong, 2012). An organizational reward system can be defined as a strategic framework designed to deliver various incentives to employees in return for their work, performance, and specific accomplishments. The fundamental purpose of such a system is to foster employee motivation, increase productivity, and ensure that individual efforts are in harmony with the institution's strategic objectives (Njanja et al., 2013). These incentives are broadly classified into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic rewards are tangible, external compensations provided by the employer, including financial payments like salaries and bonuses, as well as the quality of

the physical work environment. In contrast, intrinsic rewards are the psychological satisfactions inherent to the work itself, such as feelings of personal accomplishment, professional growth, and the sense of contributing meaningfully to society (Shields et al., 2015). Shields *et al.* (2015) stated that reward systems should be based upon the differing needs of employees and should be a combination of monetary and non-monetary aspects. The reward system is one of the strategies used by Human Resource Managers for attracting and retaining suitable employees, as well as facilitating them to improve their performance through motivation and to comply with employment legislation and regulation (Njanja *et al.*, 2013).

Kotelnikov (2010) ascertain that, the only way employees will fulfill the employer's dream is to share in their dream these mechanisms can encompass a wide range of elements, from formal awards and public recognition to promotions, non-monetary bonuses such as vacation packages, or even simple verbal appreciation and specifically investigated the impact of reward systems on the organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. Its primary objective was to assess the extent to which key dimensions of reward systems namely, employee salary increases and promotion opportunities influence organizational performance. Within the Nigerian context, private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, including Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), Crown Polytechnic, and Fabotas College have witnessed significant growth in recent years. These institutions are key players in the provision of quality higher education and are heavily reliant on the dedication and competence of their workforce. However, there have been growing concerns about the adequacy and effectiveness of the reward systems in place. Issues such as delayed salary payments, lack of career development opportunities, and limited recognition of employee contributions have been identified as potential demotivators. Given the strategic importance of human resources in the education sector, it becomes imperative to conduct an in-depth investigation into the existing reward systems within these institutions and evaluate their impact on employee performance. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the dynamics between reward systems and employee performance in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, with a view to providing practical recommendations for improvement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Regardless of growth in private tertiary education in Ekiti State, anxieties persist regarding adequacy and effectiveness of reward systems. Delayed salary payments, weak promotion structures, inconsistent recognition mechanisms, and communication gaps may undermine employee motivation and performance. Thus far evidence regarding how these reward dimensions affect performance in private tertiary institutions remains limited.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

- i. Identify reward systems implemented in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State;
- ii. Examine the effect of monetary rewards on employee performance in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State;
- iii. Evaluate the influence of non-monetary rewards on motivation and job satisfaction in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State;
- iv. Assess employee perceptions regarding fairness of reward systems in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State;
- v. Identify challenges affecting implementation of effective reward systems in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

Ho1: Monetary rewards do not significantly influence employee performance.

Ho2: Non-monetary rewards do not significantly influence employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Ho3: Perceived fairness in reward administration does not significantly influence employee performance.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Reward System

The concept of a Reward System (RS) encompasses the financial incentives, tangible benefits, and other compensations employees receive in exchange for their contributions within an organization. In essence, a reward represents the value an employee gains from executing a task, providing a service, or fulfilling a responsibility (Waruni, 2014). It can also be described as the compensation an individual earns as a return for work performed or services rendered to the organization (Lin, 2017).

Obiaga & Itakpe, 2021, opines that human capital is said to be one of the global valuable resources in organizations, and effective reward mechanisms remain a key tool for motivating, engaging, and optimizing employee performance. In the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), reward systems are often emphasized as a strategy for influencing performance outcomes and driving organizational growth, private institutions, in particular, seek to align reward strategies with overall business strategies to foster harmony between employee goals and organizational objectives (Hoole & Hotz, 2016). Reward systems enhance employee performance by recognizing and appreciating good efforts while simultaneously encouraging continuous improvement. Rewards may take the form of additional pay, bonuses, or non-monetary benefits that signal

appreciation for achievements and outstanding performance. According to Mehmood, Ramzan and Akbar (2013), reward mechanisms are instrumental in shaping employee attitudes, boosting productivity, and minimizing dissatisfaction in the workplace. Moreover, organizations adopt reward systems not only to retain high-performing employees but also to attract competent talent in a highly competitive labor market (Mehmood, 2013). Properly designed systems serve as motivational tools, encouraging employees to commit extra effort and deliver quality results. However, it is important that reward strategies align with the culture and long-term objectives of the organization to achieve sustained competitive advantage (Uzochukwu, 2023). In summary, the conceptual foundation of reward systems highlights their dual role: as instruments of employee motivation and as strategic levers for organizational success. When properly implemented, they bridge the gap between individual performance and institutional objectives, thereby ensuring growth and sustainability in both the short and long term. Reward systems refer to the policies, processes, and practices used by organizations to compensate, recognize, and motivate employees. Armstrong (2021) conceptualized reward management as a strategic approach aimed at developing policies that enhance employee contribution and organizational outcomes. The existing rewards perspective suggests effective reward systems syndicate compensation, benefits, recognition, development opportunities, and work-life support (WorldatWork, 2022), such integration improves motivation and strengthens employee commitment.

2.1.2 Reward System

It is usually granted after the individual has demonstrated evidence of commitment and positive contribution to organizational objectives. The fundamental purpose of a reward is to communicate appreciation for work already accomplished and to make employees feel that their input is valued. Rewards also serve as a means of enhancing job satisfaction, stimulating higher productivity, and encouraging the delivery of quality results. A reward system, on the other hand, can be viewed as a structured approach through which an organization motivates its workforce and sustains high levels of performance. It is designed to attract competent employees, retain existing talent, and promote dedication and teamwork. According to Mehmood et al. (2013), an effective reward system is essential for organizations seeking to recruit, develop, and maintain skilled personnel in a competitive business environment. They further emphasized that a well-implemented reward strategy energizes employees to exert greater effort and perform their duties more effectively in pursuit of organizational success. Reward system as a factor of motivation can be viewed to be the situation whereby a particular organization provides some services which are of motivational value to the employees in general these services will actually increase the morale of the workers concerned (Basset,

2014). Therefore, reward system can be viewed in two perspectives, that is reward system in the sense of looking the physical needs of employees and reward, in the sense of financial provision.

2.1.3 Types of Reward System

While there are numerous ways to reward employees, here are two major options that may be implement to help enhance employees performance:

Extrinsic / Monetary Rewards

Monetary rewards are financial incentives provided to employees for achieving specific goals or performance to excel in their roles and contribution to the organizations success (Kasser and Ahuvia, 2012) These are tangible, financial incentives aimed at motivating employees through direct monetary compensation, it can come in form of bonuses, salary increases, incentives, profit-sharing, allowances, commissions and can be based on performance, merit, or seniority. It is a stipulated amount given to an employee to complete a task. Monetary rewards create a positive atmosphere at work and make employees more likely to go the extra mile for the company because money provide a clear target for attention and achievement. Diener and Biswas-Diener (2012) assert that, the idea of using monetary factors as inducements for employees to work well is not a new one, as there are records of some payment schemes as far back as the seventeenth century. Recently reward system such as bonus scheme, profit sharing, merit rating, psychological motivation, promotion, fringe benefits, social incentives and welfare have been introduced as better ways of motivating people at work for maximum productivity (Milkovich & Wigdor, 2017; Srivastava, Locke & Bartol, 2017).

Intrinsic / Non-monetary Rewards

Intrinsic or non-monetary rewards refer to the internal satisfaction and sense of fulfillment that employees derive from successfully completing their work or contributing meaningfully to organizational goals. Unlike financial incentives, these rewards are psychological in nature and are influenced by an individual's personal effort, competence, and motivation. intrinsic rewards trigger positive emotional responses that encourage employees to sustain good performance, engage more deeply with their work, and make constructive behavioral improvements when necessary, for instance, when an employee accomplishes a challenging task, they often experience feelings of pride, achievement, and self-worth. Such internal satisfaction serves as a motivating force that drives the employee to maintain or even surpass their current performance levels. Common examples of intrinsic rewards in the workplace include a sense of accomplishment, personal growth, recognition and respect from colleagues and supervisors, trust from management, enjoyment derived from one's duties, and the opportunity to learn new skills or participate in preferred projects and teams Ryan and Deci (2020).

Salary and Organizational Performance

In the context of an organization, development incentives include formal education, training, and various forms of support such as competitive salaries and cash bonuses, which facilitate both professional and personal growth for employees (Noe, Clarke & Klein, 2014). A prevailing notion in the existing literature is that employee salaries are among the most crucial development incentives that organizations can provide. Bell, Tannenbaum, Ford, Noe, & Kraiger, 2017; London, 2011; Molloy & Noe, 2010, affirm that employee salaries are crucial for fostering significant growth. When employees receive fair compensation, their motivation to contribute effectively to the organization's success tends to increase (Bedwell, Weaver, Salas & Tindall, 2011). Previous empirical research has demonstrated that higher employee salaries are correlated with enhanced organizational growth and success. However, despite these findings, there has been a notable scarcity of empirical studies examining the influence of employee salaries on organizational performance, particularly within public tertiary institutions in Nigeria; this study aims to address that gap.

2.1.4 Monetary Reward on Employee Performance

In higher education, competitive remuneration can enhance retention and motivate academic productivity. Diener and Biswas-Diener (2012) and Kasser and Ahuvia (2012) assert that, the idea of using monetary factors as inducements for employees to work well is not a new one, as there are records of some payment schemes as far back as the seventeenth century. In recent times, reward system such as bonus scheme, profit sharing, merit rating, psychological motivation, promotion, fringe benefits, social incentives and welfare have been introduced as better ways of motivating people at work for maximum productivity (Milkovich & Wigdor, 2017; Srivastava, Locke & Bartol, 2017). The importance of money as a motivator has been consistently downplayed by most behavioral scientists like Herzberg who point out the value of challenging jobs, feedback, cohesive work teams and other nonmonetary factors as stimulants to motivation (Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2013). However, money is the crucial incentive to work motivation because it is the vehicle by which employees can purchase the numerous needs satisfying things they desire (Robbins, 2013). Bates (2016) indicates, for money to motivate, merit pay rises must be at least seven percent of base pay for employees to perceive them as motivating and to catch anybody's attention. Studies by Locke (2018) on the four methods of motivating employees indicated that money rated the second among lower-level employees. Though, such evidence demonstrates that money may not be the only motivator, but it's difficult to argue that it does not motivate.

Non-Monetary Rewards and Motivation Non-monetary rewards include recognition, promotion opportunities, autonomy, training, and supportive work environments. Such rewards meet employees' psychological needs and promote intrinsic motivation (Ryan &

Deci, 2020). **Employee Performance**

Mandibaya and Khan (2022) define performance in tertiary institutions as the extent to which universities effectively align their core functions in human capital development, research, community service, and innovation, within academic settings, performance is often driven by intrinsic factors such as intellectual curiosity, the pursuit of knowledge, and the desire for scholarly achievement, many academics, contributing to knowledge and advancing research serves as a key internal motivator. Hensley and Utlely 2020, note that academic staff who are given the autonomy to pursue research interests, engage in scholarly discussions, and introduce innovative ideas tend to demonstrate higher performance levels, largely due to the fulfillment and purpose associated with such independence. Nonetheless, extrinsic rewards also play a vital role in shaping performance in higher education. This was highlighted that external incentives such as career progression, tenure opportunities, and recognition for academic excellence are significant motivators for staff. Academics striving for tenure often maintain consistent productivity because such rewards ensure job security and professional advancement. In addition, research grants, teaching awards, publication incentives, and other performance-based rewards provide concrete recognition of achievement, thereby promoting sustained excellence (Clark). this represents the combined outcome of effort, competence, and task perception. In academic institutions, performance is commonly assessed through teaching effectiveness, research output, and community engagement, all of which contribute to institutional reputation. Reward systems are closely tied to motivation and improved performance outcomes. However, identifying the most effective mix of reward strategies remains a challenge for many organizations. Ogbonna emphasizes that well-structured rewards enhance employee well-being and engagement, both of which are essential for sustained performance. Financial and non-financial incentives alike contribute to employee satisfaction and commitment. When employees are adequately rewarded—whether through recognition, praise, or financial benefits—they are more likely to remain dedicated and productive. Conversely, ineffective reward systems can result in dissatisfaction and higher turnover intentions. Therefore, organizations must strike a balance between intrinsic rewards, such as recognition and appreciation, and extrinsic incentives, including salaries, bonuses, and promotions, to achieve optimal employee performance.

2.2 Theoretical Review

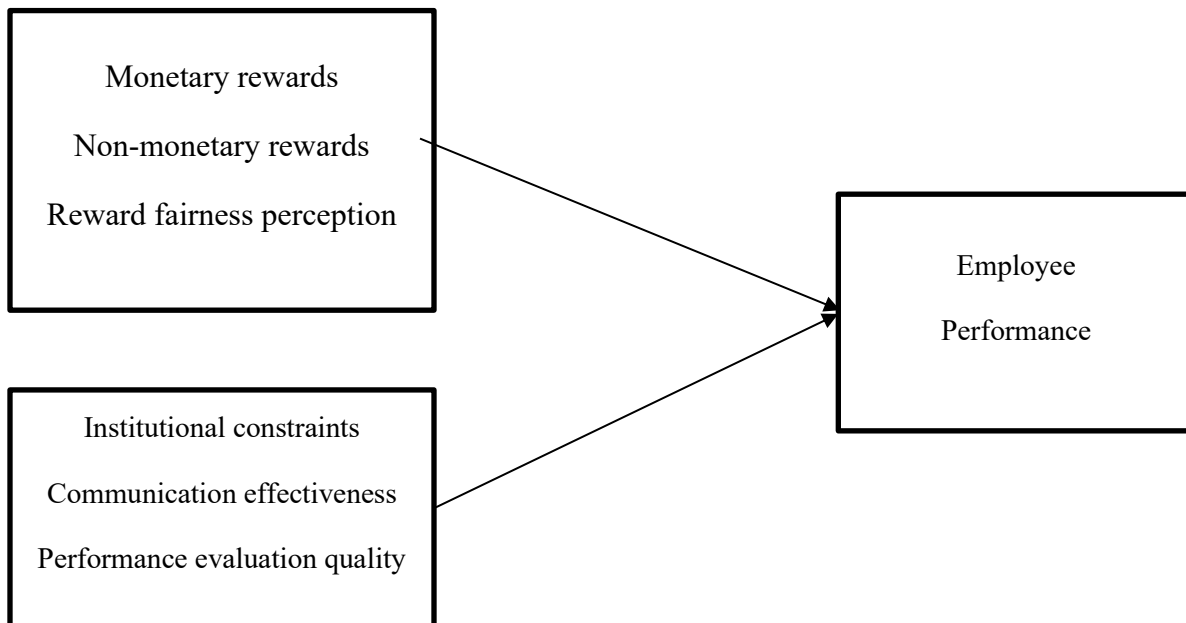
- i. **The Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory:** Maslow's theory suggests employees are motivated by progression through physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Monetary rewards may satisfy lower-order needs, while recognition and career growth address higher-order needs. The main idea in

Maslow's theory is that organizations should seek to help satisfy employees lower needs, ensuring the way for them to become self-actualized. Failure to satisfy this need, the worker will perform with little interest in striving to be as productive as possible on the job. In contrast, employees who are self-actualized work up to their creative potentials and can be considered valuable assets to their organization. Furthermore, providing an adequate salary helps ensure that workers physiological and safety needs are satisfied by enabling them to afford adequate food and housing. Social needs are often satisfied in an organization by coordinating company social gathering for executives and so on. Through various forms of formal and informal recognition such as giving awards at company banquets may help satisfy their members. Esteem needs have been met through the example given here, it is possible for workers to become self-actualized and thereby to perform at the height of their potential and maximize the effective use of the organization human resources.

- ii. **Acquired-Needs Theory of David McClelland:** McClelland identified needs for achievement, affiliation, and power as drivers of motivation. Reward systems can be designed to satisfy these needs through recognition, promotion, and performance-linked incentives. McClelland significantly advanced the understanding of human motivation through his Acquired-Needs Theory, which identifies three primary motivational drives influencing individual behavior at work. These are the need for power, the need for affiliation, and the need for achievement.
 - i. **Need for Power:** This represents an individual's desire to encourage, direct, or control the behavior of others people with a strong need for power often seek leadership positions where they can guide decision-making processes and shape group outcomes, this tend to be self-confident, credible, and outspoken, enjoying situations that allow them to express authority or impact others, Such persons frequently excel in management and administrative roles where influence and communication are central.
 - ii. **Need for Affiliation:** People with such need derive satisfaction from forming close interpersonal relationships and being accepted by others. They seek harmony and social approval and often prefer cooperative rather than competitive work environments. These individuals thrive in roles that involve teamwork, social interaction, and collaboration, as they value emotional connections and belonging within a group setting.
 - iii. **Need for Achievement:** Goals and to receive feedback on performance outcomes. Those with high achievement motivation are usually goal-oriented, determined, and willing to take moderate risks to attain success. They gain

satisfaction from personal accomplishments rather than external rewards. McClelland suggest that such individuals are often suited for careers that involve entrepreneurship, sales, engineering, management, and other performance-driven professions where results can be measured and rewarded. This theory suggests that understanding an individual's dominant need among these three can help organizations design appropriate motivational strategies that enhance productivity and job satisfaction.

2.3 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's computation (2026)

3 Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This research work shall employ descriptive survey design, which is suitable for obtaining data directly from respondents regarding their perceptions and experiences. The design allows for the systematic collection, organization, and analysis of quantitative data to examine the relationship between reward systems and employee performance. It is particularly appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to observe existing conditions without manipulation, draw logical inferences, and make generalizations based on the responses gathered from participants.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population for this research shall cover all academic staff of three selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. These institutions are Afe Babalola University (ABUAD), Crown Polytechnic, and Fabotas College of Health Sciences and Technology. The combined population represents the total number of teaching personnel across these institutions who are directly involved in academic activities.

Table 3.1

S/N	Institutions	Population
1	Afe Babalola University	151
2	Crown Polytechnic	62
3	Fabotas College	51
	TOTAL	264

Source: Academic Department of various institutions (2026)

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was determined using the Yamane (1967) statistical formula, which provides a simplified method for calculating sample size from a known population:

Where:

n= sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error (set at 0.05 for this study)

Given that the total population (N) consists of 264 academic staff members, the calculation is as follows:

$$= (264) / (1 + 264(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = (264) / \{1 + 264(0.0025)\}$$

$$n = (264) / (1 + 0.66)$$

$$n = 264 / 1.66$$

n =159 Respondents.

Therefore, the appropriate sample size for this study is 159 respondents.

To ensure fair and proportional representation of participants from each institution, the sample was distributed using the proportional allocation formula:

Table 3.2

S/N	Institution	Calculation	Total
1.	Afe Babalola University	$(151 \div 264) \times 159$	91
2.	Crown Polytechnic	$(62 \div 264) \times 159$	37
3.	Fabotas College	$(51 \div 264) \times 159$	31
Total			264

Therefore, the study shall draw 91 respondents from ABUAD, 37 respondents from Crown Polytechnic, and 31 respondents from Fabotas College of Health Sciences and Technology.

3.3 Research Instrument

Primary data shall be used for this study. The questionnaire is organized into two distinct sections to obtain relevant information from respondents.

Section A focuses on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including variables such as age, gender, educational qualification, job position, and years of work experience.

Section B contains items that assess issues related to reward systems (covering both monetary and non-monetary rewards) and employee performance indicators such as productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation.

All questionnaire items are formatted on a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). This scale allows for the quantification of respondents' opinions and perceptions for statistical analysis.

3.4 Validity of the Research Instrument

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the instrument was subjected to expert evaluation. Supervisors and professionals in the field of Human Resource Management reviewed the items to confirm that they effectively measure the intended variables. Their feedback was used to refine the structure, clarity, and relevance of the questions, thereby enhancing both content validity and face validity of the research instrument.

3.5 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study conducted among selected academic staff members of a private tertiary institution that was not included in the main study sample. Data obtained from the pilot test were analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. A coefficient value of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument is reliable for data collection and capable of producing consistent results across repeated applications.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

The data collection shall be conducted electronically to ensure efficiency and wide reach. The questionnaire was designed and administered using Google Forms. The link to the questionnaire shall be distributed to potential respondents through various online platforms, including WhatsApp class groups and university email directories. This method facilitated easy access for the respondents and allowed for the immediate collation of responses in a database, minimizing data entry errors.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents will be analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Specifically, frequency distributions and percentages will be employed to summarize and present the research findings in a clear and organized manner. These statistical tools will help describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and interpret their responses to the questionnaire items, thereby providing meaningful insights into the relationship between reward systems and employee performance.

4 Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected through the administration of questionnaires. The data collected have been analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages. The findings are then discussed in line with the research questions.

4.1 Social Demographic Information

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents Table1

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	85	53.46%
Female	74	46.45%
Total	159	100%
Educational Qulaification	Frequency	Percentage
HND/BSC	46	28.95%
MSC/MBA	59	37.11%
PHD	46	28.93%
ND/NCE	8	5.03%
Total	159	100%
Year Of Service	Frequency	Percentage
10 And Above	45	17.6%
7-9years	30	26.5%
4-6years	44	37.3%

1-3years	40	10.8%
Total	159	100%
Department Unit	Frequency	Percentage
Management Science	40	25.16%
Community Health	26	16.35%
College Of Law	26	16.35%
Computer Science	13	8.18%
Medical Lab. Tech.	11	6.92%
Management Studies	15	9.43%
Computer Studies	5	3.14%
Business Administration	6	3.77%
Life Science	8	5.03%
English	9	5.66%
Name Of Institution	Frequency	Percentage
Abuad	60	37.74%
Crown Polytechnic	56	35.22%
Fabotas	43	27.04%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field Survey. (2026)

Gender Distribution

The sample comprises of 53.46% male and 46.54% female respondents, showing that both genders are adequately represented. This balance enhances the reliability of findings and ensures that opinions on reward systems are not gender-biased.

Educational Qualification

The respondents possess advanced degrees (MSc/MBA and PhD). This suggests that employees in private tertiary institutions are well educated, capable of understanding reward policies, and can provide informed opinions on how these affect performance.

Years of Service

Most respondents have worked between 4–6 years, indicating sufficient experience to evaluate their institution’s reward system. Employees with longer years of service can assess the consistency and fairness of reward systems over time.

Department Unit

Respondents were drawn from multiple departments including Management Science, Community Health, Law, and others. This cross-departmental representation strengthens the study's validity by including diverse work experiences.

Institutions Represented

Respondents were from ABUAD (37.74%), Crown Polytechnic (35.22%), and Fabotas College (27.04%). This balance provides fair representation of private tertiary institutions within Ekiti State, ensuring broad insight into reward practices.

4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis summarizes the process used by researchers for reducing data to a study and interpreting it to derive insight. In this chapter data are organized into tables so that statically and logical conclusion were collected in this research work, the simple percentage tabular presentation in presenting the primary data generated from the field work which enable easy, convenience, clarity and vetted comprehension all the questions were provide answers to the researchers identified problem and all presentations and analysis were with questionnaire items and responses.

Question 1: What types of reward system are currently implemented in ABUAD, Ctown Polytechnic, and Fabotas?

Question: Both monetary and non- monetary rewards are used in my institution?

Table 2

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	100	62.89%
Agree	43	27.04%
Undecided	8	5.03%
Disagree	6	3.77%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.26%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Approximately 90% of respondents agreed that both financial and non-financial rewards are used. This balance supports comprehensive motivation, combining material and psychological incentives.

Question: Promotion and recognition are part of the reward system in my institution?

Table 3

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	94	59.12%
Agree	54	33.96%
Undecided	6	3.77%
Disagree	3	1.89%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.26%
Total	159	100%

Question 3: The reward system in my institution aligns with employees' job performance

Table 4

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	71	44.65%
Agree	50	31.45%
Undecided	15	9.43%
Disagree	16	10.06%
Strongly Disagree	7	4.4%
TOTAL	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

About 76% of respondents agreed that their reward system aligns with performance. This finding supports the performance-based approach and validates equity theory, which emphasizes fair reward for effort.

Question 4: The criteria for rewards are well communicated to all staff members

Table 5

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	60	37.74
Agree	55	34.69
Undecided	20	12.58
Disagree	8	5.03%
Strongly Disagree	16	10.06%
TOTAL	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Roughly 73% of respondents agreed that reward criteria are communicated to all staff. Clear communication promotes transparency and reduces potential conflict regarding reward allocation

Question 2: How do monetary rewards affect employee performance in the selected institution?

Salary increments motivate me to perform better in my job

Table 6

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	80	50.31%
Agree	50	31.45%
Undecided	10	6.29%
Disagree	9	5.66%
Strongly Disagree	10	6.29%
TOTAL	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Over 82% of respondents agreed that salary increments motivate better job performance. This shows that consistent financial incentives play a direct role in improving productivity.

Question: Bonuses and allowances encourage me to meet work targets

Table 7

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	70	44.03%
Agree	50	31.45%
Undecided	20	12.58%
Disagree	10	6.29%
Strongly Disagree	9	5.66%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Around 76% of respondents confirmed that bonuses and allowances encourage them to meet targets. This reveals that short-term financial incentives are effective tools for driving employee commitment.

Question 12: Financial incentive improves employee productivity in my institution?

Table 8

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	70	44.3%
Agree	40	25.16%

Undecided	10	6.29%
Disagree	19	11.95%
Strongly Disagree	20	12.58%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Roughly 70% of respondents agreed that financial incentives improve productivity. This finding confirms the positive link between remuneration and output.

Question 13: Employees are more committed when their financial efforts are recognized?

Table 9

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	60	37.74%
Agree	34	21.38%
Undecided	25	15.72%
Disagree	30	18.87%
Strongly Disagree	10	6.29%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

More than 60% of respondents agreed that flexible working conditions and job security enhance motivation. Employees perform better when they feel secure and supported by management.

Question 5: Delay or irregular payment of salary affects my job performance negatively?

Table 10

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	50	31.45
Agree	59	37.11
Undecided	20	12.58
Disagree	15	9.43
Strongly Disagree	15	9.43
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Roughly 69% of respondent agree that irregular payment of salary affect job performance negatively. Employees perform better when payment are made regularly.

Question 3: In what ways do monetary rewards influence employee motivation and job?

Recognition and praise from management boost my morale?

Table 11

Question 8: Recognition and praise from management boost my morale?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	78	49.06%
Agree	60	37.74%
Undecided	6	3.77%
Disagree	11	6.92
Strongly Disagree	4	2.52
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Around 87% respondent confirms that appraisals from management boost their morale and encourage them to work more.

Table 12

Question 9: Opportunities for professional training increase my job satisfaction?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	79	49.69%
Agree	57	35.85%
Undecided	5	3.14%
Disagree	15	3.14%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.89%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Roughly 86% respondent agreed that opportunities provided by management increased job satisfaction.

Table 13

Question 10: Flexible working conditions motivate employees to perform better?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	77	48.43%
Agree	28	17.61%
Undecided	29	18.24%
Disagree	19	11.95%
Strongly Disagree	6	3.77%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

This table present 66.04% of respondent agreed that a good and flexible working conditions motivate them to perform their works better.

Table 14

Question: Job security and promotion opportunities improve staff motivation?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	79	49.69%
Agree	55	34.59%
Undecided	11	6.92%
Disagree	8	5.03%
Strongly Disagree	6	3.77%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Over 84% agreed that job security and promotion improve staff morales and encourage to do more.

Table 15

Question: Teamwork and a supportive environment enhance employee performance?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	78	49.06%
Agree	65	40.88%
Undecided	7	4.4%
Disagree	8	5.03%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.63%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Approximately 90% agreed that some staff resist new reward policies due to poor communication or mistrust.

Question 4: What is the perception of employee regarding the fairness and effectiveness of the reward system?

Question: Rewards are distributed fairly among staff?

Table 16

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	74	46.54%
Agree	45	28.3%
Undecided	11	6.92%
Disagree	25	15.72%
Strongly Disagree	4	2.52%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Almost 75% of respondents agreed that rewards are fairly distributed among staff. This suggests that most institutions maintain equity in reward allocation.

Question: The current reward system reflects employees' level of effort and contribution?

Table 17

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	58	36.48%
Agree	62	38.99%
Undecided	17	10.69%
Disagree	17	10.69%
Strongly Disagree	51	3.14%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Over 75% of respondents agreed that the reward system reflects effort and contribution. This promotes a strong performance culture within institutions.

Question: The reward system encourages healthy competition among employees?

Table 18

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	97	61.01%
Agree	50	31.45%
Undecided	2	1.26%
Disagree	6	3.77%
Strongly Disagree	4	2.52%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Question 14: Employees are involved in decisions about the reward system?

Table 19

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	98	61.64%
Agree	30	18.87%
Undecided	10	6.29%
Disagree	17	10.69%
Strongly Disagree	4	2.52%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Approximately 81% agreed that they are involved in reward-related decisions. Participation enhances ownership, fairness, and acceptance of reward outcomes.

Question: I am satisfied with how rewards are implemented in my institution?

Table 20

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	92	57.86%
Agree	40	25.16%
Undecided	7	4.4%
Disagree	10	6.29%
Strongly Disagree	10	6.29%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Over 83% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the way rewards are implemented. This suggests that institutions' reward systems effectively motivate employees.

Question 5: What challenges do management face in the implementation of effective reward system?

Question: Budget limitations affect management's ability to provide adequate rewards?

Table 21

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	97	61.01%
Agree	50	31.45%
Undecided	6	3.77%
Disagree	4	2.52%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.26%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

About 92% agreed that financial constraints affect the ability of management to provide adequate rewards. This indicates that funding limitations remain a major challenge.

Question: Lack of proper performance evaluation makes reward allocation difficult?

Table 22

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	73	45.91%
Agree	61	38.36%
Undecided	7	4.4%
Disagree	16	10.06%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.26%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Approximately 84% agreed that absence of structured performance appraisal hinders fair reward allocation

Question: Management faces resistance from employees in implementing reward policies?

Table 23

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	69	43.4%
Agree	74	46.54%
Undecided	10	6.29%
Disagree	5	3.14%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.63%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Closely 90% agreed that some staff resist new reward policies due to poor communication or mistrust.

Question: There is inadequate communication between management and staff about rewards?

Table 24

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	60	37.74%
Agree	64	40.25%
Undecided	11	6.92%
Disagree	16	10.06%
Strongly Disagree	8	5.03%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

Around 78% agreed that reward information is not effectively communicated, reducing transparency.

Question: Inconsistency in reward implementation reduces employees' trust and morale?

Table 25

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	86	54.09%
Agree	43	27.04%
Undecided	11	6.92%

Disagree	12	7.55%
Strongly Disagree	7	4.4%
Total	159	100%

Source: Field survey, 2026

About 81% agreed that irregular reward practices lower employee morale and trust in management.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

This section presents the statistical testing of the three research hypotheses using Chi-square analysis to determine the significance of relationships between reward systems and employee performance.

4.2.1 Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between monetary rewards and employee performance in private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State.

To test this hypothesis, data from Table 4 "Salary increments motivate me to perform better in my job" was analyzed using Chi-square test. The observed frequencies were compared against expected frequencies assuming no relationship (uniform distribution).

Table 4.1: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis One

Response Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	(O-E) ² /E
Strongly Agree	80	31.8	73.07
Agree	50	31.8	10.42
Undecided	10	31.8	14.94
Disagree	9	31.8	16.34
Strongly Disagree	10	31.8	14.94
TOTAL	159	159	129.71

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 129.71

Degrees of Freedom = 4

Critical Value ($p < 0.05$) = 9.488

Decision Rule: Reject H₀ if χ^2 calculated > χ^2 critical

Result: Since 129.71 > 9.488, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between monetary rewards and employee performance in private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State.

4.2.2 Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Non-monetary rewards do not significantly influence employee motivation and job satisfaction in private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State.

This hypothesis was tested using data on "Recognition and praise from management boost my morale" to examine the relationship between non-monetary rewards and employee motivation.

Table 4.2: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis Two

Response Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	(o-E) ² /E
Strongly Agree	78	31.8	67.23
Agree	60	31.8	25.00
Undecided	6	31.8	20.93
Disagree	11	31.8	13.60
Strongly Disagree	4	31.8	24.30
TOTAL	159	159	151.03

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 151.03

Degrees of Freedom = 4

Critical Value ($p < 0.05$) = 9.488

Result: With 151.03 > 9.488, we reject the null hypothesis. This confirms that non-monetary rewards significantly influence employee motivation and job satisfaction in the studied institutions.

4.2.3 Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Employees' perceptions of reward system fairness do not have a significant impact on their performance.

The hypothesis was tested using data from "Rewards are distributed fairly among staff" to examine the impact of fairness perceptions on employee performance.

Table 4.3: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis Three

Response Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	(o-E) ² /E
Strongly Agree	74	31.8	56.00
Agree	45	31.8	5.48
Undecided	11	31.8	13.60
Disagree	25	31.8	1.45
Strongly Disagree	4	31.8	24.30
TOTAL	159	159	100.84

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 100.84

Degrees of Freedom = 4

Critical Value ($p < 0.05$) = 9.488

Result: Since $100.84 > 9.488$, we reject the null hypothesis. This demonstrates that employees' perceptions of reward system fairness significantly impact their performance.

4.2.4 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.4: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis Statement	Chi-Square Value	Critical Value	Decision
H ₀₁ No significant relationship between monetary rewards and employee performance	129.71	9.488	Rejected
H ₀₂ Non-monetary rewards do not significantly influence employee motivation	151.03	9.488	Rejected
H ₀₃ Reward system fairness perceptions do not significantly impact performance	100.84	9.488	Rejected

4.2.5 Discussion of Hypothesis Testing Results

The statistical analysis provides strong evidence to reject all three null hypotheses. The significant chi-square values (all exceeding the critical value of 9.488 at $p < 0.05$) indicate that:

1. Monetary rewards have a statistically significant relationship with employee performance, supporting the descriptive findings that 81.76% of respondents agreed salary increments motivate better performance.
2. Non-monetary rewards significantly influence employee motivation and job satisfaction, consistent with the 86.8% agreement that recognition and praise boost morale.
3. Fairness perceptions significantly impact employee performance, aligning with the 74.84% agreement that rewards are distributed fairly among staff.

These findings collectively demonstrate that both monetary and non-monetary reward systems, when perceived as fair, significantly contribute to enhanced employee performance in private tertiary institutions

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The discussion connects the empirical results with the research questions, objectives, the theoretical framework, and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

4.4.1 Discussion on the Types of Reward Systems Implemented

The study revealed that the selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State implement a combination of both monetary and non-monetary rewards overpowering majority of respondents (89.93%) confirmed this integrated approach (Table 2). Furthermore, a significant 93.08% acknowledged that promotion and recognition are integral parts of the reward system (Table 3).

This finding aligns with the conceptual framework of Armstrong (2012) and Njanja et al. (2013), who posit that a comprehensive reward system should encompass both financial and non-financial elements to cater to the diverse needs of employees. The presence of such a balanced system in these institutions suggests an understanding that while monetary rewards satisfy physiological and security needs (as outlined in Maslow's Hierarchy), non-monetary rewards like recognition and promotion cater to higher-level needs such as esteem and self-actualization. This also resonates with McClelland's Acquired-Needs Theory, where promotions can satisfy the need for achievement (nAch) and power (nPow), while a positive work environment fulfills the need for affiliation (nAff).

4.4.2 Discussion on the Effect of Monetary Rewards on Employee Performance

The data demonstrates a strong positive relationship between monetary rewards and employee performance. A significant 81.76% of respondents agreed that salary increments motivate them to perform better (Table 6), and 75.48% affirmed that bonuses and allowances encourage them to meet work targets (Table 7). The research work provides robust empirical support for rejecting the first null hypothesis (H_{01}) and confirms the assertions of scholars like Diener & Biswas-Diener (2012) and Robbins (2013), who argue that money remains a crucial motivator as it enables employees to satisfy various personal and family needs. The results is also consistent with the study by Babagana and Dungus (2015), which found a strong positive correlation between remuneration and employee productivity. The data clearly indicates that timely and performance-based financial incentives are powerful tools for enhancing commitment and output among academic staff. Conversely, as shown in Table 10, delays or irregularity in salary payments were found to negatively affect performance, highlighting the critical importance of financial reliability.

4.4.3 Discussion on the Influence of Non-Monetary Rewards on Motivation and Job Satisfaction

The study found that non-monetary rewards are equally, if not more, potent in influencing employee motivation and job satisfaction. An impressive 86.8% of respondents stated that recognition and praise from management boost their morale (Table 11), and 85.54% reported that opportunities for professional training increase their job satisfaction (Table 12). These results led to the rejection of the second null hypothesis (H_{02}). Which strongly support the concepts of intrinsic motivation outlined by Ryan & Deci (2020), who emphasize the importance of psychological satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. The findings also corroborate the study by Puspita, Charles, and Unang (2020), which found that job promotion (a non-monetary reward) had a more significant impact on performance than compensation alone. Furthermore, factors like job security, a supportive environment, and flexible working conditions (Tables 14 & 15) were highly

valued, underscoring the importance of a holistic and empathetic management approach as suggested in the works of Shields et al. (2015).

4.4.4 Discussion on Employee Perceptions of Fairness and Effectiveness

Employee perceptions of the reward system's fairness and effectiveness were largely positive, which is a critical determinant of its success. About 74.84% of respondents believed that rewards are distributed fairly (Table 16), and 75.47% felt that the system reflects their level of effort and contribution (Table 17). This finding necessitated the rejection of the third null hypothesis (H_{03}) and is fundamental to Equity Theory. When employees perceive the reward allocation as fair and equitable, it fosters a positive work attitude and enhances performance. The high level of satisfaction (83.02% as per Table 20) and the sense of involvement in reward-related decisions (80.51% as per Table 19) indicate that the institutions have, to a large extent, succeeded in creating a transparent and inclusive reward environment. This aligns with Armstrong's (2012) view that effective reward systems are those that are perceived as just and are clearly communicated.

4.4.5 Discussion on Challenges in Implementing Effective Reward Systems

Despite the generally positive picture, the study identified significant challenges. The most prominent challenge is budget limitations, with 92.46% of respondents agreeing that it hinders management's ability to provide adequate rewards (Table 21). This is a practical constraint that aligns with the economic realities faced by many private institutions in Nigeria. Other major challenges include the lack of proper performance evaluation (84.27% agreement, Table 22), resistance from employees often due to mistrust or poor communication (89.94% agreement, Table 23), and inadequate communication between management and staff (78% agreement, Table 24). These findings are consistent with the empirical study by Garlick (2019), which highlighted that even well-intentioned reward systems can fail due to poor implementation, lack of transparency, and insufficient dialogue with employees. The inconsistency in implementation, noted by 81.13% of respondents (Table 25), further erodes trust and morale, underscoring the need for consistency and clear communication channels.

5. Summary of the Study

This research conducted to critically examine the relationship between reward systems and employee performance in selected private tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, namely Afe Babalola University (ABUAD), Crown Polytechnic, and Fobotas College. The study was motivated by the need to address recurring issues of employee dissatisfaction and perceived inequity in remuneration, which often manifest as disengagement and low productivity. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. A population of 264 academic staff was identified across the three institutions, from which a sample size of 159 was determined using Yamane's formula. Data were collected through a structured

questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Chi-Square test) to test the formulated hypotheses.

The key findings of the study revealed that:

1. Institutions should implement a balanced mix of monetary and non-monetary reward systems, which largely perceived as fair and effective by the employees.
2. Monetary rewards, particularly salary increments and bonuses, have a statistically significant and positive effect on employee performance.
3. Non-monetary rewards, such as recognition, professional development opportunities, and job security, play a critical role in enhancing employee motivation and job satisfaction.
4. Challenges to effective implementation include budget constraints, inadequate performance evaluation systems, employee resistance, and poor communication.

Conclusion

Holistic reward system that integrates both monetary and non-monetary components is essential for motivating the diverse workforce in private tertiary institutions. This approach satisfies a wider spectrum of employee needs, from basic financial security to higher-order psychological needs for recognition and growth. In essence, this study concludes that a well-structured, communication transparent reward system is a strategic imperative for enhancing employee performance and achieving organizational excellence in private tertiary institutions.

Derived from the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

A. For the Management of Private Tertiary Institutions (ABUAD, Crown Polytechnic, Fabotas College):

- 1. Maintain a Balanced Reward Portfolio:** Continue to invest in and refine a blend of monetary and non-monetary rewards. Regularly review salary scales to remain competitive and consistently apply non-monetary incentives like public recognition, timely promotions, and funded training opportunities.
- 2. Strengthen Performance Management:** Develop a robust, transparent, and objective performance evaluation system that clearly links individual and team outcomes to reward allocation. This will enhance the perceived fairness and motivational impact of rewards.
- 3. Enhance Communication and Involvement:** Establish clear and continuous communication channels to explain reward policies, criteria, and processes. Involve employees in the design and review of these systems through committees or surveys to foster ownership and reduce resistance.

4. Ensure Consistency and Reliability: Uphold consistency in the implementation of reward policies. Most importantly, ensure the timely and regular payment of salaries, as uncertainty in this area severely damages morale and trust.

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