

**TOTAL REWARD AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
(A STUDY OF ACADEMIC STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, NIGERIA)**

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JANUARY, 2025

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
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BACHELLOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC.) IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA.**

JANUARY, 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that:

1. This project is based on a study undertaken by me in the department of Human Resource Management, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
2. This work has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree anywhere.
3. All ideas and views are product of my personal research and where the view has been expressed, they hence been duly acknowledged.
4. I solely accept all legal responsibility that may arise as a result of any copyright infringement that may arise from any work cited in this project.

NWOBODO CHINEYE RITA
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Date

CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned certify that this project work was carried out by **Nwobodo Chineye Rita** in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

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Date

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DR. ENARUNA E'HIMWENMA IDUBOR

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Date

DEDICATION

To My Dear Lord, the creator of the universe, who has Made this a Reality. For his mercies and grace seeing me through all my academic session and up to this final lap of my undergraduate program.

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I want to give my profound gratitude to my project supervisor DR. ENARUNA E'HIMWENMA IDUBOR for being more than a supervisor, I appreciate her for her motherly attitude towards me and her constructive corrections when I made mistakes and her patience with me. I am also grateful for her academic and moral support.

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My profound gratitude goes to my Mom Pauline Nwobodo for her constant support and also believing in me.

A Greater appreciation of my big bro Nwobodo Augustine for taking it upon himself to sponsor my schooling may God continue to bless and guide him.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of total reward on employee performance among academic staff at the University of Benin. Total reward has been recognised as a comprehensive approach that integrates financial and non-financial incentives to enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity. The specific objectives of the study were:

- To examine the effect of compensation on employee performance.
- To determine the extent to which benefits affect employee performance.
- To assess whether work–life balance has a significant impact on employee performance.
- To identify whether recognition influences employee performance.
- To evaluate the relationship between development and employee performance.

A survey research design was adopted, with structured questionnaires administered to 115 academic staff using a purposive sampling technique. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that compensation ($p = .356$) and benefits ($p = .921$) had positive but statistically insignificant effects on employee performance, while work–life balance ($p = .136$) also showed a positive but non-significant relationship. Recognition ($p = .038$) and development ($p = .001$) exhibited significant positive effects on employee performance. The regression model indicated that total reward components collectively explained 35.5% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = .355$, $F = 11.976$, $p < .05$). The study concludes that recognition and development are the most influential components of total reward in enhancing employee performance, while compensation and benefits primarily serve to sustain satisfaction and retention. It recommends that universities strengthen recognition systems, invest in continuous staff development, and implement integrated reward frameworks that balance both monetary and non-monetary incentives to promote long-term academic excellence and institutional productivity.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Employees are at the heart of every organisation, and how they are rewarded often determines how well they perform. While many organisations focus mainly on salaries, research has shown that pay alone is not sufficient to sustain commitment or productivity (Milkovich & Newman, 2020). Modern organisations now adopt a “total reward” approach that combines financial and non-financial incentives such as compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and career development (Armstrong & Brown, 2020). This holistic system not only motivates employees but also strengthens their sense of belonging, leading to improved performance and organisational growth (Gupta & Shaw, 2020).

Total reward has been defined by Adeyemi and Fapohunda (2021) as a comprehensive approach to employee motivation that combines both financial and non-financial incentives to improve performance. In a similar vein, Oladipo and Ajayi (2021) describe total reward as an integrated reward system that aligns pay, benefits, recognition, and development opportunities with organisational objectives. According to Uzoho and Kalu (2023), total reward refers to a balanced framework of tangible and intangible rewards designed to enhance fairness, job satisfaction, and employee commitment. Likewise, Johnson and Adewale (2024) conceptualise total reward as the coordination of compensation, work-life balance, recognition, and career development practices aimed at maximising employee value and organisational outcomes. More recently, Bello and Hassan (2024) stress that total reward goes beyond traditional pay structures to include holistic strategies that sustain engagement and long-term performance.

From these definitions, it is evident that total reward extends beyond salaries or allowances. While some scholars emphasise its financial aspects, others highlight its broader non-

financial components such as recognition, development, and work-life balance. What is consistent across these perspectives is that total reward is a deliberate and comprehensive strategy that integrates diverse reward elements to motivate employees, foster loyalty, and enhance organisational performance.

Employee performance is described by Adeyemi (2020) as the degree to which employees utilise their abilities to achieve expected results that align with organisational standards. According to Bello and George (2021), performance reflects not only the accomplishment of set tasks but also the creativity, problem-solving, and initiative that employees bring into their roles. In the view of Ibrahim and Adebayo (2021), employee performance represents the efficiency with which individuals transform organisational resources into measurable outputs that sustain growth. Similarly, Nwachukwu and Hassan (2022) emphasise that performance includes behavioural elements such as teamwork, adaptability, and professionalism, which are essential for long-term success. More recently, Uzoho and Kalu (2023) stress that employee performance should be understood as a dynamic construct that combines task outcomes with innovation, responsiveness, and alignment to changing organisational needs.

From these perspectives, employee performance can be seen as more than simply fulfilling assigned duties. It embodies the quality, efficiency, and innovativeness with which employees carry out their responsibilities while contributing to the overall objectives of the organisation.

The relationship between total reward and employee performance has been widely recognised, as reward systems strongly influence how employees approach their roles and responsibilities. When organisations implement comprehensive reward packages that combine compensation, benefits, recognition, work-life balance, and opportunities for development, employees are more likely to remain motivated, committed, and productive (Oladipo & Ajayi, 2021). Adeyemi and Bello (2022) argue that well-structured total reward strategies foster job

satisfaction and strengthen the alignment between individual efforts and organisational goals, which directly enhances performance outcomes. Similarly, Uzoho and Kalu (2023) observe that organisations that adopt holistic reward practices experience greater employee engagement, creativity, and adaptability compared to those that rely solely on financial compensation. On the other hand, Bello and Hassan (2024) caution that poorly designed reward systems reduce morale, increase turnover intentions, and ultimately weaken organisational competitiveness. So it is safe to say total reward is not merely an administrative HR function but a strategic tool that determines how employees perform and how effectively organisations achieve sustainable growth.

Across Nigeria, the practice of total reward shows wide variation, with some industries adopting comprehensive reward systems while others struggle with outdated or fragmented approaches. In high-performing sectors such as banking, telecommunications, and oil and gas, reward strategies typically combine attractive pay packages with structured benefits, recognition initiatives, and opportunities for career growth. These practices have been linked to stronger employee commitment and higher levels of productivity (Adeyemi & Bello, 2022; Chukwu & Hassan, 2021). For instance, Nigerian banks are noted for their structured compensation plans and continuous investment in staff development, which have translated into improved customer service and operational efficiency. In a similar way, leading telecommunications firms have successfully integrated financial rewards with non-financial incentives such as flexible work arrangements and employee recognition schemes, producing a motivated and innovative workforce.

In contrast, other sectors face persistent barriers that limit the effectiveness of total reward systems. Manufacturing firms often struggle with irregular pay, inadequate benefits, and limited recognition, all of which weaken employee morale and performance (Oladipo & Ajayi, 2021). The education sector, especially universities, continues to grapple with

underfunding, insufficient career development opportunities, and inconsistent reward practices, leading to low job satisfaction, frequent turnover, and brain drain among academic staff (Uzoho & Kalu, 2023). Similarly, the public service has been criticised for inequitable reward structures, political interference in promotions, and weak recognition mechanisms, factors that discourage employee engagement and reduce productivity (Eke & Akintoye, 2023).

These contrasts demonstrate that the strength of employee performance in Nigeria is closely tied to the extent to which organisations design and implement total reward policies effectively. Where reward systems are transparent, fair, and holistic, employees respond with commitment and improved performance. Where such systems are weak or inconsistent, outcomes suffer, with long-term implications for organisational growth and national development.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Reward systems are central to how organisations attract, retain, and motivate employees. In contemporary workplaces, the concept of total reward which integrates compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and opportunities for development has been recognised as a critical driver of employee performance and organisational success (Adeyemi & Bello, 2022). The effectiveness of employees in meeting institutional goals is not determined by salaries alone but by the holistic mix of tangible and intangible rewards they receive. Despite this recognition, many Nigerian organisations, particularly in the education sector, still struggle to implement comprehensive reward strategies that enhance employee commitment and productivity (Uzoho & Kalu, 2023).

Compensation remains one of the most visible elements of total reward, serving as the foundation of the employment relationship. Yet, in Nigeria, irregular salary payments, uncompetitive pay structures, and misalignment between wages and the cost of living have

left many employees dissatisfied (Oladipo & Ajayi, 2021). For academic staff, inadequate compensation not only undermines morale but also reduces focus on teaching and research, as employees are compelled to seek alternative income sources. This weakens both the quality of education and the global competitiveness of Nigerian universities.

Employee benefits, which include allowances, pensions, medical cover, and other welfare provisions, also play an essential role in improving performance. However, many institutions provide limited or inconsistent benefits, leaving employees vulnerable and demotivated (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021). Inadequate benefits create an environment where staff feel undervalued, which reduces loyalty and increases turnover intentions. Within universities, this manifests in poor retention of skilled lecturers and reduced institutional stability.

Work-life balance initiatives are another key dimension of total reward. Flexible work arrangements, manageable workloads, and family-friendly policies are globally recognised as critical to sustaining employee well-being and productivity (Bello & Hassan, 2024). Yet, in Nigeria's higher education sector, academic staff often face heavy workloads, limited autonomy, and lack of supportive structures, leading to burnout and reduced efficiency. The absence of balance between professional and personal life not only weakens performance but also fuels disengagement and declining innovation.

Recognition, both financial and non-financial, is equally crucial in motivating employees to give their best. Research shows that when employees' contributions are acknowledged, they are more likely to be engaged and committed (Johnson & Adewale, 2024). Unfortunately, recognition practices remain weak in many Nigerian universities, where outstanding performance in teaching and research often goes unnoticed. This lack of acknowledgment discourages initiative, reduces discretionary effort, and erodes the culture of excellence that institutions seek to uphold.

Finally, opportunities for development such as training, mentorship, and career progression are integral to sustaining employee motivation and adaptability. In Nigeria, however, limited investment in staff development has led to skill gaps and stagnation, particularly within public universities (Uzoho & Kalu, 2023). When academic staff are denied opportunities to grow professionally, their ability to innovate, publish research, and contribute to institutional development diminishes, ultimately weakening national competitiveness in the knowledge economy.

Collectively, these challenges reveal that while total reward has been widely acknowledged as a tool for enhancing performance, its implementation in Nigeria remains fragmented and ineffective. The higher education sector, which is expected to drive knowledge creation and human capital development, faces persistent shortcomings in compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and staff development. These issues manifest in reduced staff morale, increased turnover, and declining productivity in teaching, research, and community service. This underscores the need for empirical investigation into the effect of total reward on the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin, with the aim of identifying reward practices that can strengthen motivation, sustain engagement, and enhance institutional outcomes.

1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- Does compensation have any significant effect on employee performance of academic staff of the University of Benin?
- Do benefits have any significant effect on employee performance of academic staff of the University of Benin?
- What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance of academic staff of the University of Benin?

- Is there a relationship between recognition and employee performance of academic staff of the University of Benin?
- Does development have any significant effect on employee performance of academic staff of the University of Benin?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the effect of total reward on the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- Find out the extent to which compensation influences the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin.
- Ascertain the extent to which benefits impact the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin.
- Examine the extent to which work-life balance influences the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin.
- Investigate the extent to which recognition influences the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin.
- Find out the extent to which development influences the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The study intends to test the following hypotheses which are stated in the null form:

H₀₁: Compensation does not have a significant impact on employee performance among academic staff of the University of Benin.

H₀₂: Benefits do not have any significant relationship with employee performance among academic staff of the University of Benin.

H₀₃: Work-life balance does not have any significant relationship with employee performance among academic staff of the University of Benin.

H₀₄: Recognition does not have any significant relationship with employee performance among academic staff of the University of Benin.

H₀₅: Development does not have any significant relationship with employee performance among academic staff of the University of Benin.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on examining the effect of total reward on the performance of academic staff of the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. It specifically considers five key aspects of total reward: compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and development, and how each of these influences employee performance. The research is limited to academic staff because they are central to teaching, research, and knowledge production, which are critical indicators of the university's overall performance. Geographically, the study is confined to the University of Benin in Edo State, and the findings are intended to provide insights relevant to similar higher education institutions in Nigeria. The study involves a cross-sectional survey and will span from July to October 2025.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it investigates the link between total reward and the performance of academic staff at the University of Benin, Edo State. The study will be important to a range of stakeholders in the higher education sector of Nigeria which includes: university management, academic staff, government, and academia.

University Management: Based on the findings of this study, university administrators will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of their current reward practices in relation to employee performance. Since research has shown that inadequate reward systems lead to reduced staff productivity and morale (Adeyemi & Bello, 2022), this study will provide insights into

problem areas that require attention. This will help management design better strategies around compensation, benefits, recognition, and staff development, thereby improving institutional performance and competitiveness.

Academic Staff: Academic staff will benefit from improved compensation, benefits, recognition, and career development opportunities if university management implements the recommendations of this study. This will enhance their job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity in teaching, research, and community service.

Government: The government will also benefit as the study highlights the importance of investing in and supporting reward systems in public universities. This will aid in policy formulation and regulation aimed at improving staff welfare and productivity, thereby strengthening the quality of higher education in Nigeria.

Academia: This study will contribute to the growing body of literature on total reward and employee performance, serving as a useful resource for scholars, students, and future researchers interested in human resource management and higher education studies.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Like every research, this study is not without limitations. First, the study is restricted to academic staff of the University of Benin, which may limit the generalisation of findings to other universities or sectors.

Secondly, the study relies on self-reported data obtained through questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias or exaggeration.

Thirdly, the study adopts a cross-sectional design, meaning that data are collected at one point in time, thereby limiting the ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships.

Finally, the study focuses only on five dimensions of total reward compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and development while other reward-related factors such as organisational culture or leadership style are not considered.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Total Reward: The combination of compensation, benefits, recognition, and development initiatives provided by an organisation to motivate and retain employees.

Compensation: The monetary payment, including salaries, wages, and allowances, provided to academic staff for their services, aimed at motivating performance.

Benefits: Non-monetary rewards such as health insurance, retirement plans, leave entitlements, and other perks that enhance employees' well-being and job satisfaction.

Work-Life Balance: Policies and practices that allow employees to manage their professional and personal responsibilities effectively, contributing to overall job performance.

Recognition: The acknowledgement and appreciation of employees' efforts, achievements, and contributions to the organisation.

Development: Opportunities provided for professional growth, skill enhancement, and career advancement of academic staff.

Employee Performance: The effectiveness and efficiency with which academic staff carry out their duties and achieve institutional goals.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 PREAMBLE

This section reviews relevant literature on total reward and employee performance. The review is divided into three (3) sections, namely: conceptual review, theoretical review, and empirical review. The conceptual review will discuss key concepts related to the study such as total reward, employee performance, compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and development. The theoretical review will highlight and briefly discuss relevant theories underpinning the relationship between total reward and employee performance. The empirical review will present findings from previous studies on total reward practices and employee performance.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Employee Performance

Employee performance has long been recognised as a cornerstone of organisational success. It reflects the degree to which employees effectively apply their skills, knowledge, and attitudes to achieve the objectives of their institutions. In knowledge-based sectors such as higher education, the performance of academic staff plays a decisive role in shaping the quality of teaching, advancing research, and strengthening institutional reputation. High-performing employees not only drive organisational productivity but also ensure adaptability

and long-term competitiveness in dynamic environments (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021; Uzoho & Kalu, 2023).

At its essence, employee performance is a multidimensional construct that goes beyond the mere completion of assigned duties. Adeyemi and Bello (2022) describe it as the consistent delivery of outputs that align with organisational goals while maintaining standards of quality and timeliness. Similarly, Hassan and George (2021) view performance as the interplay between efficiency achieving results with minimal resources and effectiveness producing outcomes that meet or exceed expectations. Bello and Hassan (2024) extend this view by highlighting innovation, adaptability, and collaboration as critical aspects of modern performance, particularly in academic institutions where creativity and responsiveness to change are essential.

Recent scholars have also underscored the behavioural dimensions of employee performance. For instance, Nwachukwu and Lawal (2022) emphasise the role of teamwork, initiative, and problem-solving in strengthening overall institutional outcomes. Johnson and Adewale (2024) define it as the ability of employees to integrate technical competence with commitment, engagement, and professional conduct, thereby enhancing organisational resilience. These perspectives suggest that performance is not solely measured by quantifiable outputs but also by how employees contribute to organisational culture, innovation, and sustainability.

From these varying perspectives, it becomes clear that employee performance is both result-oriented and behaviour-driven. Traditional approaches that emphasised output quantity are increasingly being replaced by broader frameworks that value innovation, collaboration, well-being, and alignment with organisational strategy (Agboola & Uche, 2023). In this study, employee performance is therefore understood as the effectiveness, efficiency, and innovativeness with which academic staff at the University of Benin carry out their teaching, research, and service roles, contributing to institutional growth and competitiveness.

2.2.1.1 Dimensions of Employee Performance

Employee performance is a multidimensional construct that reflects both the outcomes employees deliver and the behaviours they display in achieving them. Contemporary scholarship emphasises that performance cannot be assessed by outputs alone; it must also capture innovation, adaptability, collaboration, and discretionary behaviours that sustain long-term organisational success (Adeyemi & Bello, 2022; Uzoho & Kalu, 2023). In this context, several dimensions provide a holistic view of how employees contribute to institutional effectiveness.

Task Performance

Task performance refers to the ability of employees to execute their core responsibilities effectively, accurately, and in line with established standards. It is often regarded as the most fundamental dimension of performance because it captures the technical competence, professional knowledge, and functional skills that employees bring into their roles. Strong task performance is reflected when employees consistently meet deadlines, produce high-quality outputs, and accomplish their responsibilities with minimal supervision (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021). This reliability not only reduces the need for constant oversight but also builds organisational trust and stability.

Task performance is typically evaluated through indicators such as productivity levels, adherence to job requirements, accuracy of work, and overall contribution to organisational goals. When employees perform their tasks well, organisations benefit from efficiency, cost savings, and predictable results that can be built upon to achieve broader objectives (Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022). For example, in service industries, strong task performance may translate into timely service delivery and customer satisfaction, while in manufacturing, it ensures consistent product quality and reduced wastage.

Conversely, weak task performance manifests in missed deadlines, frequent errors, or incomplete work. Such shortcomings create disruptions that slow down operations, increase the need for corrective actions, and may even damage organisational reputation (Bello & Hassan, 2024). Prolonged task underperformance can lead to declining productivity, rising operational costs, and low morale among teams who depend on one another's contributions.

In essence, task performance forms the bedrock of employee contribution. While it may not capture all aspects of performance, it provides the most immediate and measurable evidence of whether employees are fulfilling the expectations tied to their roles. Strong task performance creates an environment of dependability and progress, whereas weak performance generates inefficiencies that ripple across the entire organisation.

Contextual Performance

Contextual performance refers to the discretionary behaviours employees exhibit that go beyond the direct requirements of their job descriptions. These behaviours are not always formally rewarded but are critical for creating a supportive, collaborative, and productive work environment. Examples include cooperating with colleagues, offering assistance, showing initiative, maintaining positive attitudes, and adhering to organisational rules and values (Chukwu & Hassan, 2021). Unlike task performance, which is tied to core responsibilities, contextual performance focuses on the "how" of work and the broader contributions employees make to organisational functioning.

Strong contextual performance strengthens organisational culture, builds trust, and enhances team cohesion. Employees who engage in such behaviours foster collaboration, reduce conflict, and create an environment that enables collective success (Uzoho & Kalu, 2023). In both private and public sectors, contextual performance can be seen in employees volunteering for committees, mentoring new staff, or going out of their way to support institutional goals. Conversely, poor contextual performance weakens cooperation, increases

interpersonal friction, and undermines organisational unity, regardless of how well technical tasks are performed.

Adaptive Performance

Adaptive performance captures how well employees adjust to change, whether in the form of new technologies, altered work processes, or unexpected challenges. In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, economic shifts, and global uncertainties, adaptability has become an indispensable dimension of performance (Ogunleye & Lawal, 2022). Employees who adapt quickly demonstrate resilience, openness to learning, and flexibility, ensuring that organisations remain competitive and responsive to changing demands.

High adaptive performance is reflected in behaviours such as embracing new digital tools, adjusting to policy reforms, or handling crises effectively. It ensures that employees can continue to deliver results even in uncertain or disruptive contexts (Agboola & Uche, 2023). Conversely, low adaptability leads to resistance to change, reluctance to acquire new skills, and difficulties in coping with evolving work conditions. Over time, this slows down organisational transformation and innovation, leaving institutions vulnerable in dynamic environments.

Innovative Performance

Innovative performance refers to the ability of employees to generate, refine, and apply new ideas that improve organisational processes, services, or outcomes. In modern organisations, innovation is no longer an optional attribute; it is a requirement for long-term survival and competitiveness. Employees who demonstrate innovative performance seek new methods of accomplishing tasks, identify creative solutions to problems, and contribute to continuous improvement (Roberts, 2021).

Strong innovative performance results in efficiency gains, better customer experiences, and enhanced organisational reputation. In education, it may involve creative teaching strategies,

while in business, it could mean developing new products or streamlining processes. Bello and Hassan (2024) argue that employees who innovate consistently help organisations stay ahead of competitors by anticipating change rather than merely reacting to it. Conversely, a lack of innovative performance fosters stagnation, dependence on outdated practices, and reduced competitiveness.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) captures voluntary actions that employees take to support colleagues and organisational goals beyond their official duties. Examples include helping co-workers, promoting the organisation's image, conserving resources, or actively supporting institutional initiatives (Lopez, 2022). These actions, though often unrecognised in formal appraisals, play a major role in strengthening institutional culture and ensuring long-term success.

High levels of OCB contribute to improved morale, cooperation, and collective achievement. Employees who display citizenship behaviours strengthen team spirit, reduce friction, and ensure that organisations operate more smoothly (George & Adebayo, 2023). On the other hand, when OCB is absent, workplaces often experience rigid cultures, weak collaboration, and a lack of willingness to go “above and beyond,” which limits organisational responsiveness to challenges.

Creativity and Problem-Solving

Creativity and problem-solving are closely linked to innovation but focus more on generating novel ideas and applying critical thinking to overcome challenges. These capabilities are vital in dynamic environments where routine procedures may not always provide solutions. Employees who excel in this dimension often bring fresh insights into decision-making,

enabling organisations to improve strategies and adapt to complex issues (Ogunyemi & Ibrahim, 2021).

Strong creativity and problem-solving skills lead to breakthroughs in research, improved service delivery, and enhanced organisational learning. Akinwale and George (2020) emphasise that employees who demonstrate these qualities increase institutional resilience and competitiveness by turning challenges into opportunities. Conversely, limited creativity results in repetitive errors, poor responsiveness, and missed opportunities for growth, leaving organisations stagnant and less capable of addressing emerging needs.

2.2.1.2 Benefits of Employee Performance

Employee performance is central to organisational success because it determines how effectively institutions utilise their resources to achieve set objectives. When employees deliver at high levels, organisations enjoy greater stability, growth, and competitiveness. Performance acts as the channel through which individual capabilities are transformed into tangible outcomes that sustain organisational efficiency and long-term survival (Adeyemi & Bello, 2022; Uzoho & Kalu, 2023).

Increased Productivity

The most immediate benefit of employee performance is improved productivity. High-performing employees' complete tasks efficiently, reduce wastage of resources, and generate higher outputs within shorter timelines (Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022). In service-oriented organisations, this translates into better client satisfaction, while in manufacturing, it ensures consistent quality and reduced operational costs. Strong performance provides organisations with the capacity to meet deadlines, expand operations, and maintain competitive advantage.

Enhanced Organisational Image

Another important benefit of strong employee performance is the improvement of organisational reputation. Institutions known for high-performing employees earn the trust of

stakeholders, attract investment, and strengthen their market positioning (Roberts, 2021). Employees who excel in their roles serve as ambassadors of excellence, inspiring confidence among customers, investors, and the general public. Conversely, weak performance damages credibility, leading to declining trust and loss of opportunities.

Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction

Strong employee performance also enhances the satisfaction of customers, clients, and other stakeholders. In service-based organisations, well-performing staff provide better experiences, responsiveness, and quality outcomes, which translate into trust and loyalty (Bello & Hassan, 2024). Stakeholder satisfaction further strengthens organisational legitimacy and long-term survival. In addition, consistent performance builds the reputation of the organisation in competitive markets, positioning it as reliable and trustworthy, which in turn attracts investment, partnerships, and sustained patronage.

Workplace Cohesion and Team Spirit

Consistent performance fosters positive workplace dynamics. High-performing employees model good practices, motivate peers, and contribute to stronger teamwork (Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022). This collaborative spirit creates an environment where employees support one another, improve morale, and collectively contribute to organisational objectives. In the long run, a culture of strong performance and teamwork reduces workplace conflict, encourages knowledge sharing, and improves overall employee engagement, which is essential for organisational resilience.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Beyond efficiency and cohesion, employee performance is closely linked with innovation. High-performing employees are more likely to take initiative, identify opportunities for

improvement, and contribute to creative solutions that enhance organisational processes and products (Ogunleye & Ajayi, 2023). This innovative capacity enables organisations to adapt quickly to environmental changes, maintain competitiveness, and pursue sustainable growth.

In summary, the benefits of employee performance extend across multiple levels, from improving organisational productivity and adaptability to strengthening reputation, enhancing employee engagement, and contributing to broader national development. These outcomes highlight the strategic importance of ensuring that performance is supported through effective human resource practices and reward systems.

2.2.2 Concept of Total Reward

Organisations increasingly recognise that employee motivation and performance cannot be sustained by salaries alone. The concept of total reward has therefore emerged as a comprehensive approach that integrates both financial and non-financial incentives to enhance employee commitment, satisfaction, and productivity. Total reward goes beyond traditional pay structures by incorporating compensation, benefits, recognition, career development, and work-life balance into a holistic framework that aligns employee needs with organisational goals (Adeyemi & Fapohunda, 2021; Armstrong & Brown, 2020).

Adeyemi and Fapohunda (2021) describe total reward as a comprehensive approach to employee motivation that combines both financial and non-financial incentives to improve performance. Oladipo and Ajayi (2021) define it as an integrated reward system that aligns pay, benefits, recognition, and development opportunities with organisational objectives. According to Uzoho and Kalu (2023), total reward refers to a balanced framework of tangible and intangible rewards designed to enhance fairness, job satisfaction, and employee commitment. Johnson and Adewale (2024) conceptualise total reward as the coordination of compensation, work-life balance, recognition, and career development practices aimed at maximising employee value and organisational outcomes. Bello and Hassan (2024) argue that

total reward goes beyond traditional pay structures to include holistic strategies that sustain engagement and long-term performance.

In a similar perspective, Gupta and Shaw (2020) maintain that total reward integrates financial benefits such as salary and allowances with non-financial aspects like career advancement and recognition, thereby fostering both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Chukwu and Hassan (2021) emphasise that total reward is not a one-size-fits-all strategy but should be designed to reflect the needs of employees and the strategic direction of the organisation. Ibrahim and Adebayo (2021) stress that the strength of total reward lies in its ability to create equity and inclusivity by ensuring employees feel valued both materially and emotionally.

In summary, total reward is best understood as a deliberate and multidimensional approach that combines compensation, benefits, recognition, development, and work-life balance into a coherent framework for motivating and retaining employees. While early perspectives tended to highlight pay and financial benefits, recent scholarship emphasises the integration of broader non-financial elements such as recognition, career growth, and supportive work environments. Collectively, these perspectives underscore that total reward is not merely an administrative function but a strategic tool that fosters employee satisfaction, enhances performance, and strengthens organisational competitiveness in dynamic environments.

2.2.2.1 Total Reward

Total reward is a multidimensional construct that integrates various interrelated practices designed to motivate, engage, and retain employees while enhancing organisational performance. Unlike traditional reward systems that focus mainly on pay, total reward combines financial and non-financial elements into a holistic framework that strengthens employee satisfaction and institutional competitiveness. Adeyemi and Bello (2022) emphasised that effective reward systems begin with fair compensation and extend into

benefits, recognition, development, and work-life balance. Similarly, Johnson and Adewale (2024) described total reward as a comprehensive cycle in which employees are motivated through tangible and intangible provisions that collectively drive performance. More recently, Uzoho and Kalu (2023) argued that compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and development represent the core dimensions of total reward that directly influence employee outcomes. These perspectives collectively show that total reward is not a one-off initiative but a systematic process that integrates multiple reward practices as essential drivers of employee satisfaction and organisational productivity.

Compensation

Compensation is one of the most fundamental dimensions of total reward, as it serves as the foundation of the employment relationship and a key determinant of employee motivation. It is generally defined as the monetary payment, including salaries, wages, and allowances, provided to employees in exchange for their services (Oladipo & Ajayi, 2021). Compensation extends beyond basic pay to include structured salary scales, performance-based incentives, and allowances that reflect employees' contributions to organisational goals. Adeyemi and Bello (2022) argue that compensation should not only meet the basic needs of employees but also be competitive enough to attract and retain skilled staff. Bello and Hassan (2024) conceptualise it as a strategic instrument for rewarding productivity, signaling fairness, and ensuring alignment between individual effort and institutional objectives.

The relationship between compensation and employee performance is well established in contemporary literature. Employees who receive fair and adequate pay are more likely to demonstrate motivation, loyalty, and efficiency in their roles (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021). Competitive compensation reduces turnover, enhances commitment, and encourages discretionary effort, all of which translate into stronger organisational outcomes. Johnson and Adewale (2024) note that inadequate or irregular compensation, particularly in public

universities, often results in disengagement, absenteeism, and brain drain, which undermine institutional productivity.

In summary, compensation is a critical dimension of total reward because it not only provides financial security for employees but also directly influences their morale, motivation, and performance. Organisations that implement transparent and equitable compensation practices enjoy greater productivity, reduced turnover, and long-term competitiveness. Conversely, weak or inconsistent compensation undermines performance by lowering commitment, discouraging innovation, and eroding institutional stability.

Benefits

Benefits represent another vital dimension of total reward, as they provide employees with non-monetary provisions that enhance their welfare, security, and overall job satisfaction. They are generally defined as supplementary rewards such as health insurance, pensions, leave entitlements, housing allowances, and other welfare initiatives designed to improve employees' quality of life (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021). Benefits go beyond financial compensation by addressing employees' personal and social needs, thereby reinforcing their sense of being valued within the organisation. According to Uzoho and Kalu (2023), employee benefits serve as an essential mechanism for fostering equity and stability, ensuring that staff feel supported beyond their immediate financial pay. Bello and Hassan (2024) further conceptualise benefits as institutional strategies that enhance loyalty and reduce vulnerability by offering long-term security, which sustains motivation and performance.

The relationship between benefits and employee performance is well established. Employees who enjoy adequate welfare provisions tend to be more committed and productive, as they are freed from anxieties about personal or family needs (Adeyemi & Bello, 2022). In academic institutions, for example, access to health care, pension schemes, and research allowances strengthens staff morale, encourages concentration on teaching and research, and

reduces distractions caused by financial or social insecurities. Oladipo and Ajayi (2021) emphasise that inadequate benefits weaken employee loyalty, create dissatisfaction, and often lead to high turnover, particularly in universities where staff are compelled to seek alternative sources of income. On the other hand, comprehensive benefit packages increase trust in the institution, reduce absenteeism, and improve overall performance outcomes.

In summary, benefits are a critical dimension of total reward because they directly influence employee satisfaction, loyalty, and performance. Organisations that design inclusive and consistent welfare packages secure a committed workforce that is willing to contribute beyond minimum expectations. Conversely, weak or inconsistent benefits undermine staff morale, increase turnover intentions, and weaken organisational competitiveness. By providing strong benefit structures, institutions not only enhance individual well-being but also ensure long-term stability and productivity.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is a central dimension of total reward, as it reflects the extent to which organisations create conditions that enable employees to effectively manage their professional and personal responsibilities. It is generally defined as the equilibrium between work demands and personal life obligations, supported by policies such as flexible work schedules, manageable workloads, leave entitlements, and family-friendly initiatives (Bello & Hassan, 2024). Adeyemi and Bello (2022) conceptualise work-life balance as the organisational commitment to ensuring that employees do not experience burnout or conflict between their roles at work and home. Similarly, Uzoho and Kalu (2023) describe it as an institutional strategy aimed at promoting well-being, reducing stress, and sustaining long-term performance. Johnson and Adewale (2024) further note that work-life balance is not merely about reducing working hours but about creating supportive environments where staff are empowered to thrive both professionally and personally.

The relationship between work-life balance and employee performance is particularly significant in knowledge-driven sectors such as higher education. Academic staff who are able to manage their workload alongside personal commitments demonstrate higher motivation, creativity, and productivity (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021). Institutions that provide supportive structures such as flexible scheduling, research sabbaticals, and wellness programmes enable staff to remain engaged, innovative, and committed to institutional goals. Conversely, poor work-life balance often results in stress, absenteeism, and burnout, all of which undermine employee performance and institutional competitiveness. Bello and Hassan (2024) caution that neglecting this dimension leads to declining job satisfaction, disengagement, and eventual turnover, particularly among skilled professionals.

In summary, work-life balance is a crucial dimension of total reward because it sustains employee well-being, motivation, and long-term productivity. Organisations that implement supportive policies enjoy a more engaged and resilient workforce, while those that neglect balance experience reduced morale, weak commitment, and declining institutional performance. By promoting work-life balance, institutions not only improve employee satisfaction but also enhance their ability to achieve sustainable growth and competitiveness.

Employee Recognition

Recognition is a vital dimension of total reward, as it involves acknowledging and appreciating employees' contributions, achievements, and efforts within the organisation. It is generally defined as the formal and informal practices through which institutions express value for employee performance, whether through verbal praise, awards, promotions, or symbolic gestures of appreciation (Johnson & Adewale, 2024). Adeyemi and Bello (2022) describe recognition as a motivational tool that reinforces desired behaviours and encourages employees to sustain high performance. According to Uzoho and Kalu (2023), recognition goes beyond financial incentives to include non-monetary appreciation such as

commendations, certificates, or public acknowledgment, which strengthen employees' sense of belonging and loyalty. Bello and Hassan (2024) conceptualise recognition as a strategic driver of engagement that links employee motivation with institutional objectives by showing individuals that their efforts are visible and valued.

The relationship between recognition and employee performance is both psychological and behavioural. Employees who feel appreciated are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and committed to achieving organisational goals (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021). In academic institutions, recognition of teaching excellence, research achievements, or community service fosters greater job satisfaction and inspires staff to go beyond minimum requirements. Johnson and Adewale (2024) emphasise that recognition also enhances discretionary effort, as employees become willing to contribute more innovatively when they believe their input will be valued. Conversely, lack of recognition discourages initiative, reduces morale, and often leads to disengagement and turnover. Adeyemi and Bello (2022) caution that when institutions fail to appreciate staff contributions, the culture of excellence weakens, leading to declining productivity and competitiveness.

In summary, recognition is a critical dimension of total reward because it validates employee contributions, strengthens engagement, and fosters a culture of excellence. Institutions that consistently implement recognition practices enjoy higher motivation, creativity, and loyalty from their staff, while those that neglect it face disengagement, reduced morale, and declining performance. By embedding recognition into their reward systems, organisations not only reinforce positive behaviours but also secure long-term commitment and productivity.

Employee Development

Development is a core dimension of total reward, as it ensures that employees are provided with opportunities to grow professionally, enhance their skills, and advance their careers. It is generally defined as the systematic investment in training, mentoring, research capacity-

building, and career progression initiatives that enable employees to improve both their current performance and future potential (Oladipo & Ajayi, 2021). Adeyemi and Bello (2022) describe development as a deliberate organisational strategy aimed at equipping employees with the competencies needed to meet evolving demands and remain competitive. Uzoho and Kalu (2023) conceptualise development as a dynamic process that goes beyond routine training to include opportunities such as conference participation, scholarships, professional certifications, and sabbatical programmes that broaden employees' expertise. Similarly, Johnson and Adewale (2024) emphasise that development is not only about skill acquisition but also about preparing employees for leadership roles, innovation, and long-term institutional growth.

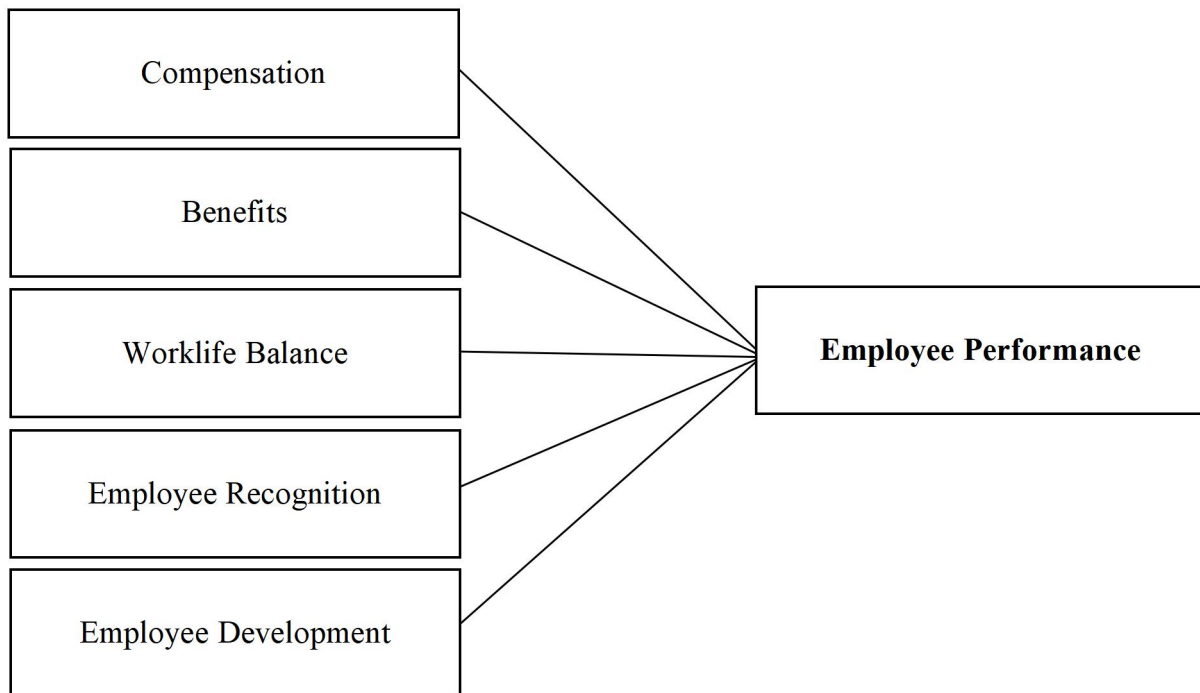
The relationship between development and employee performance is well established. Employees who are supported with continuous learning and career advancement opportunities are more motivated, confident, and productive in their roles (Ibrahim & Adebayo, 2021). In universities, investment in academic staff development through research grants, workshops, and postgraduate training enhances teaching quality, research output, and institutional reputation. Bello and Hassan (2024) note that development initiatives strengthen employee adaptability, enabling them to respond effectively to changes in technology, pedagogy, or organisational strategy. Conversely, neglect of development opportunities often results in stagnation, low morale, and declining performance, as employees feel undervalued and unprepared for future challenges.

In summary, development is a critical dimension of total reward because it sustains employee motivation, builds long-term capacity, and fosters innovation. Organisations that prioritise development secure a workforce that is not only skilled for present tasks but also prepared for future responsibilities. On the other hand, neglecting development limits employee potential, reduces competitiveness, and undermines institutional sustainability. By embedding

development into total reward strategies, institutions ensure continuous improvement, stronger performance, and resilience in dynamic environments.

2.2.3.4 Conceptual Framework

Total Reward



Source: Authors (2025)

Overview of the University of Benin

The University of Benin (UNIBEN) is a leading public research institution located in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. It was established on 23 November 1970 as the Midwest Institute of Technology and attained full university status in 1971. By 1975, the institution became a federal university, marking the beginning of its steady growth into one of Nigeria's foremost higher education centres. Over the decades, UNIBEN has built a strong reputation for academic innovation, research excellence, and its role in training highly skilled professionals across diverse fields.

The university operates two major campuses Ugbowo and Ekehuan and has grown to accommodate a large student population estimated at over 70,000. Its academic structure consists of 15 faculties, along with several specialised institutes and centres that provide teaching, research, and community service. Notably, UNIBEN has pioneered several academic programmes in Nigeria, including being the first to offer degrees in Industrial Chemistry, PhDs in Optometry, and establishing a Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in the South-South region.

UNIBEN's mission is to develop the human mind to be creative, innovative, and competent in areas of specialisation while promoting entrepreneurship and service to society. Its vision is to build a model institution that ranks among the best universities globally. These guiding principles are reflected in its investment in modern lecture halls, research laboratories, ICT-driven learning, and an expansive library system led by the John Harris Library, which serves as a major academic hub.

The University of Benin is also closely linked to healthcare delivery through the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), established in 1973. UBTH is a multi-specialty, 910-bed hospital that supports training for students in medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and other health sciences, while also serving as a referral hospital in the region. This partnership strengthens UNIBEN's role as both a training ground for professionals and a provider of essential services to the community.

On the international stage, UNIBEN has gained recognition for its academic contributions. According to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2025, the university is ranked within the 1201–1500 bracket globally, highlighting its relevance in the global academic landscape. Its consistent expansion, academic excellence, and innovative practices continue to position it as one of Nigeria's most competitive and respected universities.

2.4 Theoretical Review

2.4.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The Hierarchy of Needs Theory developed by Abraham Maslow (1943, 1954) explains human motivation as a progressive process where individuals strive to satisfy needs in a structured order, beginning with basic survival requirements and advancing towards self-actualisation. The framework is highly relevant to organisational contexts, as it provides insight into how reward systems can be designed to meet the diverse needs of employees at different levels.

At the physiological level, employees seek to meet their most basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. In the workplace, this is reflected in the provision of competitive salaries, wages, and allowances that allow staff to sustain their livelihoods (Akinwale & George, 2020). For academic staff, consistent salary payments and fair compensation provide the foundation upon which higher levels of motivation can be built. Without this, attention to higher-level needs becomes difficult, and performance suffers.

The safety needs include stability, security, and protection from harm. In an organisational setting, this corresponds to job security, retirement benefits, health insurance, and safe working conditions (Ogunyemi & Ibrahim, 2021). For academic staff, a stable employment contract, pension contributions, and access to healthcare foster a sense of security, allowing them to concentrate fully on teaching and research rather than worrying about uncertainties in their career or personal welfare.

The third level, social needs, emphasises belongingness, relationships, and interpersonal connections. Within the total reward framework, this is addressed through teamwork initiatives, collegial support, mentoring, and inclusive work cultures. Social recognition events, faculty collaborations, and opportunities to participate in decision-making foster a sense of belonging and institutional identity. For academic staff, strong collegial networks

and a sense of inclusion enhance engagement and strengthen their commitment to the university (Chukwu & Hassan, 2021).

At the esteem level, employees desire recognition, respect, and a sense of achievement. This dimension is closely tied to recognition and performance-based rewards within the total reward system. Appreciation for academic excellence, publication achievements, or teaching innovation provides esteem-based reinforcement that motivates employees to maintain or improve their contributions. Esteem-related rewards boost morale, enhance confidence, and encourage discretionary effort, thereby strengthening performance outcomes (Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022).

Finally, self-actualisation needs represent the pursuit of personal growth, creativity, and the realisation of one's full potential. In the workplace, this corresponds to career development opportunities, training, research grants, sabbaticals, and professional advancement. When organisations invest in employee development, they not only enhance institutional capacity but also enable employees to realise their highest potential. For academic staff, opportunities to pursue research fellowships, participate in international conferences, or climb the academic ladder are powerful motivators that sustain long-term performance (Agboola & Uche, 2023).

Thus, Maslow's hierarchy provides a clear lens for understanding how different elements of total reward address varying levels of employee needs. Financial rewards such as salaries and benefits satisfy the lower-level physiological and safety needs, while non-financial rewards like recognition, work-life balance, and career development target the higher-level needs of esteem and self-actualisation. By aligning total reward practices with the full spectrum of employee needs, organisations can enhance motivation, drive performance, and secure long-term institutional effectiveness.

2.4.2 Expectancy Theory

The Expectancy Theory of Motivation, proposed by Victor Vroom in 1964, provides a rational, cognitive framework for understanding why individuals choose certain behaviours in the workplace. The theory argues that employee motivation is determined by the expected outcomes of their actions, and that performance is driven by the belief that effort will lead to results which, in turn, will be rewarded. Unlike Maslow's hierarchy, which focuses on the progressive satisfaction of needs, Expectancy Theory centres on the decision-making process that links effort, performance, and rewards.

The theory is built on three fundamental components: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy refers to the belief that putting in effort will improve performance; instrumentality is the belief that good performance will lead to rewards; and valence reflects the value or attractiveness an individual attach to those rewards (Vroom, 1964; Adewale, 2020). For employees to be motivated, all three conditions must be met: they must believe they can perform, trust that performance will be rewarded, and value the reward being offered. In the context of total reward, expectancy is strengthened when organisations provide employees with adequate training, resources, and supportive supervision to make them confident in their ability to perform. For academic staff, this might involve access to teaching resources, research facilities, and mentoring opportunities that enable them to deliver quality outcomes. Instrumentality is reinforced when performance appraisal systems are transparent and when promotions, recognitions, or financial bonuses are clearly linked to measurable performance indicators. In universities, this could include rewarding research output, teaching excellence, or community service contributions (Chukwu & Hassan, 2021).

Valence is closely tied to the design of the reward system itself. Rewards must reflect what employees value whether financial compensation, job security, recognition, or career development. For instance, while some academic staff may place high value on competitive salaries, others may derive stronger motivation from research funding, sabbaticals, or

international collaborations. A well-designed total reward system accounts for these preferences, ensuring that employees see rewards as meaningful and worth striving for (Ogunleye & Lawal, 2022).

Applied to employee performance, Expectancy Theory highlights the importance of aligning organisational reward structures with employee expectations. When staff believe that their effort will be recognised and rewarded fairly, they are more willing to invest energy and creativity into their work. Conversely, when rewards are inconsistent, arbitrary, or misaligned with employee needs, motivation declines, and performance weakens (Agboola & Uche, 2023).

The relevance of Expectancy Theory to this study lies in its clear explanation of how total reward systems shape employee behaviour and outcomes. It demonstrates that academic staff at the University of Benin are most likely to perform effectively when they; believe they can meet performance expectations, trust that their achievements will be rewarded, and value the form of reward offered. By highlighting this process, the theory underscores why carefully structured compensation, benefits, recognition, work-life balance, and development opportunities are essential for driving sustained employee performance.

2.3.3 Equity Theory

The Equity Theory of Motivation, introduced by John Stacey Adams in 1963, emphasises the role of fairness in shaping employee motivation and performance. The theory argues that individuals evaluate the balance between their contributions (inputs) and the rewards they receive (outputs) and then compare this ratio with that of others. When employees perceive equity in this balance, they are motivated to maintain or improve performance. However, perceived inequity whether under-reward or over-reward can lead to dissatisfaction, reduced effort, or withdrawal from the organisation (Adams, 1963; Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022).

At its core, the theory assumes that employees are not only motivated by absolute levels of reward but also by how fair those rewards appear relative to peers. Inputs may include effort, skills, experience, and commitment, while outputs consist of pay, benefits, recognition, promotion, and opportunities for growth. If employees perceive that they are receiving less reward for equal or greater effort than their colleagues, they may reduce performance, disengage, or seek alternative employment. Conversely, a perception of fairness strengthens trust, morale, and sustained effort (Adewale, 2020).

In the context of total reward, Equity Theory highlights the critical importance of designing compensation and benefits systems that are transparent, consistent, and perceived as fair. Competitive salaries, equitable distribution of benefits, and merit-based recognition help build employee confidence that their contributions are valued appropriately. For academic staff, this means that promotions, allowances, and recognition for teaching or research achievements must be based on clear criteria rather than favouritism or arbitrary decision-making (Ogunleye & Lawal, 2022).

Beyond financial rewards, equity also applies to non-financial dimensions such as recognition, workload distribution, and opportunities for career development. For instance, if academic staff observe that colleagues with similar qualifications or outputs receive more recognition or research support, they may perceive unfairness, leading to demotivation. On the other hand, when development opportunities such as training, conference sponsorships, or sabbaticals are distributed equitably, employees are more committed and engaged, which enhances performance (Agboola & Uche, 2023).

Applied to employee performance, the Equity Theory suggests that perceptions of fairness are directly tied to motivation and effort levels. Academic staff who believe that rewards align with their contributions are more likely to deliver quality teaching, pursue research excellence, and contribute to institutional development. In contrast, persistent perceptions of

inequity may explain performance gaps, low morale, or even brain drain within Nigerian universities (Chukwu & Hassan, 2021).

The relevance of Equity Theory to this study lies in its ability to explain how perceptions of fairness in total reward practices covering compensation, benefits, recognition, work-life balance, and development shape employee motivation and performance outcomes. By ensuring equitable reward structures, the University of Benin can foster greater satisfaction, reduce turnover, and enhance the productivity of academic staff, thereby strengthening institutional competitiveness and sustainability.

2.3.4 Goal Setting Theory

The Goal Setting Theory, developed by Edwin Locke in 1968 and later refined with Gary Latham, emphasises the critical role of specific and challenging goals in driving motivation and performance. The theory proposes that individuals perform better when they are given clear objectives, as opposed to vague or general expectations. Furthermore, motivation is heightened when employees participate in the goal-setting process, receive feedback on their progress, and perceive that achieving goals leads to meaningful rewards (Locke & Latham, 2002; Adewale, 2020).

The central assumption of the theory is that goals serve as direct regulators of effort, attention, and persistence. Specific goals provide clarity, enabling employees to channel their energy toward precise tasks, while challenging goals encourage greater effort and innovation. Importantly, the theory highlights that goals are most effective when employees accept them, believe they can achieve them, and are provided with supportive conditions, including recognition and reward for success (Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022).

Within the context of total reward, Goal Setting Theory underscores the link between reward systems and performance objectives. Employees are more motivated when they know that achieving defined targets such as research outputs, teaching excellence, or administrative

efficiency will be met with tangible rewards. For academic staff, this could mean recognition for high-quality publications, bonuses for innovative teaching practices, or promotion for achieving specified career milestones (Ogunleye & Lawal, 2022). The promise of meaningful rewards transforms goals from abstract tasks into achievable milestones with personal and professional benefits.

Feedback also plays a critical role in the theory and is closely connected to total reward practices. Constructive feedback, coupled with recognition, reassures employees that their progress is valued and guides them on how to adjust performance to meet expectations. In higher education, providing academic staff with feedback on teaching evaluations or research contributions, alongside recognition or financial incentives, enhances their motivation to sustain or improve performance (Agboola & Uche, 2023).

Applied to employee performance, the theory suggests that employees who are given clear, challenging goals and rewarded for achieving them will demonstrate higher levels of engagement, creativity, and persistence. Conversely, unclear or unrewarded goals can reduce motivation, create frustration, and limit performance outcomes. For academic staff, this may manifest in reduced research productivity, declining teaching quality, or diminished institutional loyalty when goals are misaligned with reward systems.

The relevance of Goal Setting Theory to this study lies in its demonstration that total reward systems can be powerful motivators when directly tied to performance objectives. By linking clear institutional goals to meaningful rewards whether financial (compensation, benefits) or non-financial (recognition, development opportunities) the University of Benin can enhance staff commitment, foster innovation, and improve overall employee performance.

2.3.5 Feedback Intervention Theory

The Feedback Intervention Theory (FIT), developed by Kluger and DeNisi (1996), provides a framework for understanding how feedback influences employee behaviour and performance.

The theory argues that feedback interventions affect performance by directing attention to specific aspects of the self, the task, or the task details. Depending on how feedback is delivered and perceived, it can either enhance or hinder performance. This makes feedback a critical organisational tool, especially when integrated with reward systems.

The central assumption of FIT is that feedback is most effective when it directs an employee's attention toward the task rather than the self. Task-focused feedback highlights what is being done well and where improvements are needed, which strengthens motivation and performance. Conversely, self-focused feedback that is overly critical or vague may reduce confidence and create defensiveness, ultimately harming performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Roberts, 2021).

Applied to the total reward framework, feedback becomes a non-financial reward that reinforces desired behaviours. Recognition of achievements, constructive evaluations, and performance appraisals function as feedback interventions that guide employees towards organisational goals. For academic staff, feedback delivered through peer reviews, student evaluations, or performance appraisal systems helps align individual contributions with institutional expectations. When combined with tangible rewards such as promotions or research grants, feedback has an even stronger motivational effect (Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022).

FIT also highlights the role of feedback frequency and quality. Timely, specific, and actionable feedback enables employees to make immediate improvements, while delayed or generic feedback may fail to influence behaviour. For example, in universities, frequent feedback on teaching performance, coupled with recognition for research output, fosters continuous improvement and strengthens academic productivity (Agboola & Uche, 2023).

In terms of employee performance, the theory suggests that effective feedback interventions not only improve task accuracy and efficiency but also enhance learning, innovation, and

adaptability. When academic staff perceive feedback as supportive and tied to meaningful rewards, they are more engaged and committed to institutional success. On the other hand, poor feedback practices such as biased evaluations or lack of recognition can demotivate staff and contribute to reduced performance.

The relevance of Feedback Intervention Theory to this study lies in its explanation of how feedback, when integrated into total reward practices, directly influences performance outcomes. Recognition, development opportunities, and appraisal systems serve as feedback mechanisms that help academic staff understand expectations, improve performance, and remain motivated. Thus, FIT reinforces the argument that total reward must go beyond financial incentives to include structured feedback that sustains growth, motivation, and long-term institutional effectiveness.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Expectancy Theory

This study is anchored on Expectancy Theory, a framework developed by Victor Vroom in 1964 to explain the psychological processes that drive motivation in the workplace. The theory argues that employees are motivated to perform when they believe that (i) their effort will lead to improved performance (*expectancy*), (ii) that improved performance will result in specific rewards (*instrumentality*), and (iii) those rewards are personally valuable to them (*valence*). Together, these three components expectancy, instrumentality, and valence provide a logical explanation for why individuals choose to exert effort and how rewards shape performance outcomes (Vroom, 1964; Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022).

At its core, Expectancy Theory positions motivation as a rational calculation based on the perceived link between effort, performance, and reward. Unlike theories that focus solely on needs or fairness, this framework explains how employees make conscious decisions about how much effort to invest depending on the likelihood of achieving desirable outcomes

(Ogunleye & Lawal, 2022). When employees trust that performance will be recognised and rewarded in meaningful ways, they are more likely to demonstrate commitment, creativity, and persistence. Conversely, when they perceive a weak link between performance and reward, motivation declines, resulting in disengagement or underperformance (Agboola & Uche, 2023).

Within the context of this research, the dimensions of total reward are conceptualised through Expectancy Theory as follows:

Compensation

Expectancy Theory highlights that employees are motivated when they believe their effort will translate into fair and adequate financial compensation. Competitive salaries and allowances reassure staff that their contributions are recognised in tangible terms. For academic staff, consistent and performance-linked compensation creates confidence that effort in teaching, research, and service delivery will yield meaningful financial outcomes. This strengthens the expectancy and instrumentality components of the theory by assuring staff that their performance is both achievable and rewarded appropriately (Akinwale & George, 2020).

Benefits

Benefits such as healthcare, pensions, and welfare packages address employees' security needs and provide confidence that performance will be met with stability and protection. Under Expectancy Theory, benefits serve as instrumental rewards, reinforcing the perception that institutional commitment extends beyond immediate compensation. For academic staff, reliable benefits increase trust in the institution, reduce distractions from personal concerns, and encourage focus on performance-related goals (Oladipo & Ajayi, 2021).

Work-Life Balance

Expectancy Theory also applies to non-financial rewards such as flexible schedules, manageable workloads, and wellness initiatives. These practices strengthen valence by offering outcomes that employees value deeply but which extend beyond money. Academic staff who experience healthy work-life balance are more motivated to sustain performance because they perceive that their well-being and personal commitments are valued by the institution (Chukwu & Hassan, 2021).

Employee Recognition

Recognition is a key dimension where instrumentality is reinforced. Publicly acknowledging achievements, awarding research excellence, or celebrating teaching innovations assures staff that their performance will be visible and rewarded. When academic staff believe that good performance leads to recognition, they are more likely to sustain high effort, creativity, and discretionary behaviours that enhance institutional competitiveness (Nwachukwu & Lawal, 2022).

Development Opportunities

Finally, development opportunities such as training, mentoring, and career advancement create strong valence by addressing employees' intrinsic need for growth. Expectancy Theory suggests that when staff believe that effort in their roles will open doors to promotions, research funding, or professional advancement, they are more motivated to perform consistently. For academic staff, these opportunities reinforce the idea that performance today is instrumental in shaping career outcomes tomorrow (Agboola & Uche, 2023).

By applying Expectancy Theory, this study establishes a strong theoretical foundation for examining how total reward practices compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and development influence employee performance. The theory explains that academic staff at the University of Benin are not simply motivated by the presence of rewards, but by the belief that effort leads to performance and that performance will be fairly and meaningfully

rewarded. Anchoring the study on Expectancy Theory therefore provides a compelling rationale for linking total reward strategies to employee motivation, engagement, and long-term institutional performance.

2.6 Empirical Literature

2.6.1 Compensation and Employee Performance

Adebayo and Ojo (2020) examined the relationship between compensation practices and employee performance in selected commercial banks in Lagos, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design with a sample of 310 employees, the study applied regression analysis to determine the effect of salaries, allowances, and incentives on staff productivity. Findings revealed that competitive compensation significantly improved employee efficiency and reduced turnover, leading the authors to recommend that organisations periodically review their pay structures to align with industry standards.

In a study of higher education institutions, Chukwu and Hassan (2021) investigated the influence of remuneration on the performance of academic staff at universities in Southeast Nigeria. Data were collected from 280 lecturers across four federal universities and analysed using correlation techniques. Results indicated that timely salary payments and performance-based allowances were strong predictors of staff commitment to teaching and research. The authors concluded that inadequate or delayed compensation was a major factor behind declining staff morale and brain drain in Nigerian universities.

Similarly, Ogunleye and Lawal (2022) assessed compensation systems and employee productivity in the Nigerian telecommunications sector. Adopting a quantitative survey design, the researchers gathered responses from 350 employees across three major telecom firms. Multiple regression analysis showed that incentive packages such as performance bonuses and profit-sharing schemes positively influenced innovation and customer service

outcomes. The study recommended that firms integrate both fixed and variable pay structures to enhance performance.

Extending the discussion, Bello and Adewale (2023) explored the role of compensation in sustaining employee motivation in manufacturing firms in Ogun State, Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional design with 270 participants, the study revealed that while base salaries ensured stability, performance-linked compensation significantly boosted discretionary effort and problem-solving behaviours. The authors recommended that organisations adopt a balanced compensation system that combines security with performance-driven incentives to maximise productivity.

2.6.2 Benefits and Employee Performance

Olanipekun, Oderinde, Ajala, and Ukutegbe (2022) examined the impact of employee welfare benefits on performance at Olabisi Onabanjo University in Ogun State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey of 374 academic and non-academic staff, the study revealed that health insurance, housing allowances, and pension contributions were strong predictors of improved job commitment and productivity. The authors recommended that Nigerian universities prioritise comprehensive welfare packages to address the persistent issue of staff demotivation.

In another study, Ogunyemi and Ibrahim (2021) investigated the relationship between benefits and employee engagement in the Nigerian banking sector. Surveying 320 employees across five commercial banks, they found that benefits such as healthcare, transport allowances, and leave entitlements significantly enhanced job satisfaction and service delivery. The study concluded that well-structured benefit systems not only support employee welfare but also improve customer-oriented outcomes in competitive industries.

Extending the analysis to healthcare, Uzoho and Kalu (2023) assessed the influence of staff benefits on employee retention at federal teaching hospitals in Nigeria. Using a survey of 295

health professionals, the study employed regression analysis and found that access to medical care, study leave, and retirement plans encouraged loyalty and reduced turnover. The authors emphasised that welfare incentives are critical in retaining skilled professionals in sectors prone to brain drain.

Similarly, Eke and Akintoye (2023) explored the role of benefits in sustaining employee productivity in multinational oil and gas firms operating in Rivers State. Drawing on a sample of 250 employees, the study discovered that organisations offering robust welfare benefits, including housing support and family health coverage, achieved higher levels of employee morale and innovation. The researchers recommended that firms operating in demanding industries view benefits as long-term investments in workforce stability and performance.

2.6.3 Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance

Okafor and Eze (2021) investigated the relationship between work-life balance initiatives and staff performance in the Nigerian insurance industry. Using a descriptive survey design, data were gathered from 240 employees across five insurance firms and analysed with regression techniques. Results revealed that flexible work arrangements and paid leave policies significantly improved employee productivity and reduced absenteeism. The authors recommended that insurance firms expand welfare-oriented policies to strengthen performance outcomes.

In the education sector, Musa and Olatunji (2020) examined work-life balance and academic productivity among lecturers in selected polytechnics in Northern Nigeria. Employing a cross-sectional survey design with 280 respondents, the study applied correlation and regression analysis. Findings showed that reduced teaching loads and study leave opportunities were positively associated with increased research output and teaching

effectiveness. The authors concluded that neglect of work-life balance contributes to burnout and declining academic performance.

Similarly, Yakubu and Hassan (2022) explored the effect of work-life balance on employee performance in Nigeria's hospitality sector. Data were collected from 310 hotel employees in Abuja using a survey design, and analysed with multiple regression methods. The study found that flexible shifts, wellness initiatives, and rest periods significantly enhanced staff morale and service delivery. The researchers recommended that hotels implement structured wellness programmes to sustain competitiveness.

Extending the analysis to the healthcare industry, Bello and Ibrahim (2023) assessed the role of work-life balance practices in improving staff retention and performance at state-owned hospitals in Kano, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design with 265 health workers, the study employed regression analysis and found that family-support policies, flexible rosters, and mental health support positively influenced staff commitment and patient care quality. The authors recommended that hospital administrators integrate supportive policies to reduce turnover and sustain high performance.

2.6.4 Recognition and Employee Performance

Oladipo and Ajayi (2021) examined the influence of employee recognition on job outcomes in the Nigerian banking industry. Using a descriptive survey of 300 employees across six commercial banks, the study applied regression analysis and found that recognition through awards, bonuses, and career advancement opportunities had a significant positive effect on employee motivation and service delivery. The authors recommended that banks institutionalise structured recognition frameworks to improve staff commitment.

In another study, Abiola and Nnaji (2022) investigated recognition practices and academic staff productivity in federal universities in Nigeria. Employing a cross-sectional survey design, the researchers gathered responses from 270 lecturers and analysed them using

correlation and regression techniques. Findings revealed that recognition of research publications and teaching achievements significantly improved lecturer morale and institutional loyalty. The authors concluded that weak recognition structures contribute to brain drain in the higher education sector.

Similarly, Ojo and Salami (2023) studied recognition and employee effectiveness in the Nigerian retail sector. Data were collected from 290 retail employees in Lagos using a descriptive survey design, and regression analysis was applied. Results showed that both monetary recognition (bonuses) and non-monetary recognition (verbal praise and certificates) enhanced employee effort and reduced turnover intentions. The authors recommended that retailers adopt a hybrid recognition system that combines both financial and non-financial rewards.

Extending to the manufacturing industry, Yakubu and George (2024) assessed the role of recognition in sustaining workforce performance in selected textile firms in Kaduna State. Using a survey of 260 employees and regression-based analysis, the study found that consistent acknowledgment of staff contributions improved job satisfaction, strengthened loyalty, and encouraged innovation. The researchers recommended that manufacturing firms integrate recognition policies into performance management systems to sustain employee outcomes.

2.6.5 Development and Employee Performance

Okafor and Eze (2021) investigated the impact of employee development on staff effectiveness in the Nigerian telecommunications industry. Using a survey of 320 employees analysed through regression techniques, the study revealed that training and continuous learning initiatives significantly enhanced innovation, problem-solving ability, and job performance. The authors recommended that telecom firms integrate structured learning programmes into their long-term growth strategies.

In another study, Chukwu and Hassan (2022) examined the role of staff development on academic performance in Nigerian federal universities. Employing a cross-sectional survey of 280 lecturers, the study found that career development opportunities, mentoring, and access to research funding had a significant positive influence on teaching quality and institutional loyalty. The authors concluded that insufficient investment in staff development contributes to declining productivity in the higher education sector.

Similarly, Adebayo and George (2022) studied employee development and service delivery in Nigeria's healthcare sector. Data were collected from 260 health workers across six tertiary hospitals using a descriptive survey design. Regression analysis showed that continuous professional training and workshops improved patient care and operational efficiency. The researchers recommended regular development programmes to strengthen healthcare outcomes.

Extending to the financial sector, Roberts and Bello (2023) assessed the relationship between staff development and job performance in commercial banks in Lagos State. Using a survey of 290 employees, the study found that skill enhancement, leadership training, and career advancement opportunities significantly boosted employee efficiency and reduced turnover intentions. The authors stressed the importance of aligning development programmes with emerging digital banking needs.

More recently, Adewale and Lawal (2024) explored the influence of development initiatives on workforce productivity in Nigeria's manufacturing firms. A survey of 270 employees was conducted, and regression analysis indicated that continuous staff training, technical workshops, and succession planning significantly improved adaptability, innovation, and long-term competitiveness. The authors recommended that manufacturing organisations institutionalise employee development as a strategic driver of sustainability.

2.6 Research Gaps

The reviewed empirical studies have provided valuable insights into the relationship between compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, development, and employee performance across different sectors in Nigeria and beyond. Evidence consistently demonstrates that well-designed reward systems enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction, retention, and organisational competitiveness. However, several research gaps remain unaddressed.

First, most existing studies have examined individual components of total reward such as compensation or recognition in isolation. Few studies have adopted an integrated perspective that considers how the combination of compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and development collectively influences employee performance. This fragmented approach limits the understanding of total reward as a holistic framework for sustaining organisational performance.

Second, while many studies have been conducted in the banking, telecommunications, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors, little empirical attention has been given to the higher education sector in Nigeria. Universities face unique challenges including underfunding, irregular pay, weak recognition structures, and limited staff development opportunities, yet evidence on how total reward practices influence academic staff performance remains scarce. Addressing this gap is critical because academic staff performance directly affects teaching, research, and community service, which are central to human capital development and national growth.

Third, the methodologies of past studies often rely heavily on descriptive surveys and simple correlation techniques, which show associations but provide limited causal explanations. There is a lack of studies employing more rigorous inferential approaches such as multiple regression, structural equation modelling, or other robust analytical tools that can better capture the strength and direction of relationships between total reward dimensions and

employee performance. This methodological gap weakens the generalisability and depth of existing findings.

Finally, although several studies acknowledge the importance of non-financial rewards such as recognition and work-life balance, relatively few have explored how these dimensions interact with financial rewards like compensation and benefits to jointly influence performance outcomes. This leaves unanswered questions about the synergistic effects of tangible and intangible reward practices in different organisational contexts.

In summary, while previous research confirms the positive effects of reward practices on employee performance, gaps remain in terms of integrated perspectives, sectoral focus, methodological robustness, and the combined effects of financial and non-financial rewards. This study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the influence of total reward covering compensation, benefits, work-life balance, recognition, and development on the performance of academic staff at the University of Benin, thereby contributing both theoretical and empirical insights to human resource management scholarship.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted for this study on "Effect of total reward on Employee performance" in the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. This chapter includes the research design, population and sampling, measurement and operationalization of the variables, source of data, research instrument, method of data analysis reliability and validity of data and model specification.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopts a survey research design, which is appropriate for investigating relationships between total reward and employee performance. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), survey research design enables researchers to gather large amounts of data systematically and efficiently. The research employs a cross-sectional approach, capturing data from respondents at a single point in time. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of total reward strategies, and their impact on employee performance.

3.3 Population and Sampling Techniques

The population forms a basis from which the sample or subjects for the study is drawn, Cooper and Schindler (2001). The population of interest for the study consists of 162 academic staff members of the University of Benin, Benin city, Edo state, Nigeria. The

specific departments from which the sample will be drawn are; human resource management, business administration, marketing, accounting and entrepreneurship.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution of the Study

S/N	Departments	Numbers of Employees
1	Accounting	61
2	Business Administration	17
3	Finance	20
4	Actuarial Science	10
5	Insurance	12
6	Entrepreneurship	17
7	Human Resource	15
8	Marketing	10
Total		162

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In selecting an appropriate sample size for this study, Taro Yamane’s formula is employed to ensure statistical reliability. The population for this research consists of 162 academic staff members from the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, drawn from the departments of Human Resource Management, Business Administration, Marketing, Accounting, and Entrepreneurship.

Applying Taro Yamane’s sample size determination formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

where N = 162 and the chosen margin of error (e) is **0.05** (corresponding to a 95% confidence level), the sample size calculation proceeds as follows:

$$n = \frac{162}{1 + 162(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{162}{1 + 162(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{162}{1 + 0.405}$$

$$n = \frac{162}{1.405}$$

$$n = 115$$

To ensure fair representation of the population, a stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Each department formed a stratum, and respondents were proportionately selected based on the number of staff in each department. This approach ensured that all departments were adequately represented, thereby reducing sampling bias and increasing the generalizability of the findings.

3.5 Measurement and Operationalisation of Variables

The study examines total reward and employee performance. The responses from respondents will be measured using a 5-point Likert scale of “Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree”. The questions will be in statement format and respondents will answer with the options on the statements given.

Table 3.1 Operationalization of Variables

S/N	Variables	Operationalization	Measurement
	Demography of respondents		
1	Gender	Two point scale.	Q1
2	Age	Four point scale.	Q2
3	Marital status	Two point scale.	Q3

4	Educational qualification of respondents	Five point scale.	Q4
5	Current position in the department	Six point scale.	Q5
6	Number of years worked in the organisation	Four point scale.	Q6
Independent Variables			
7	Compensation	refers to the total monetary rewards provided to employees in exchange for their services, including salaries, wages, allowances, and incentives designed to attract, retain, and motivate staff.	Q7 - Q11
8	Benefits	refers to the non-monetary rewards offered to employees, such as healthcare, pension, housing, and other welfare provisions that support well-being and long-term job satisfaction.	Q12 - Q16
9	Worklife Balance	refers to the extent to which employees are able to effectively manage their job responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments without undue stress or conflict.	Q17 – Q21
10	Employee Recognition	refers to the formal and informal acknowledgment of employees' contributions and achievements, through praise, awards, promotions, or other incentives that reinforce	Q22 - Q26

		positive performance.	
11	Employee Development	refers to the continuous process of enhancing staff knowledge, skills, and competencies through training, mentoring, research support, and career growth opportunities.	Q27 – Q31
Dependent Variable			
11	Employee performance	refers to the efficiency, effectiveness, and innovativeness with which employees carry out their assigned tasks, including teaching, research, and community service in the university context.	Q32 – Q36

(Source: Researcher, 2025)

3.6 Research Instrument

The instrument of data collection is a questionnaire, prepared by the researcher. The questionnaire will be utilized to gather information about the research by relating all the questions to the relevant goals. It will comprise items with a variety of closed-ended inquiries. The Likert's five-point scale and summated scale will be utilized for assessing answers (Kothari, 2009).

The questionnaire will be in two sections. Section A will solicit information on the respondents' demography. Section B will consist of questions on the variables of the study. Responses will be rated on a 5-point Likert scale for which 1 (one) is strongly disagree and 5 (five) is strongly agree.

3.6.1 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measured what it was intended to measure. Construct validity was assessed through an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), where an Eigenvalue greater than 1 indicated that the research instrument was valid (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2022). Content and face validity were also ensured through expert reviews, confirming that the questionnaire adequately covered all relevant aspects of total reward and employee performance.

Reliability refers to the consistency of a research instrument over time. The reliability of this study's instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A coefficient above 0.7 indicated high internal consistency, signifying that the instrument produced stable and reliable results (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

3.7 Source of Data

For the purpose of this study, primary data will be used. The primary data will be extracted from the sampled respondents using a carefully structured questionnaire.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The responses from the questionnaire will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, will be used to summarize demographic characteristics and total reward. Inferential statistical techniques, including correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis, will be employed to test hypotheses and determine the impact of total reward on employee performance.

Regression analysis will be used to establish the relationship between total reward and employee performance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 25) software will be utilized for data analysis, ensuring accurate and efficient computation of statistical measures.

3.9 Model Specification

The ordinary least square method (OLS) was employed as the estimation technique. The functional relationship between the dependent and independent variable are as follows;

$$EP=f(EC, EB,WLB,ER, ED).....1$$

This can be written econometrically as:

$$EP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EC_i + \beta_2 EB_i + \beta_3 WLB_i + \beta_4 ER_i + \beta_5 ED_i.....2$$

Where:

EP = Employee Performance (Dependent Variable)

EC = Employee Compensation

EB = Employee Benefits

WLB = Worklife Balance

ER = Employee Recognition

ED = Employee Development

β_1 to β_5 = Coefficient of variables

e = Error term

The expected apriori signs are such that:

$\beta_1 > 0$; This implies that an increase in employee compensation will cause a proportionate increase in employee performance.

$\beta_2 > 0$; This implies that an increase in employee benefits will cause a proportionate increase in employee performance.

$\beta_3 > 0$; This implies that an increase in worklife balance will cause a proportionate increase in Employee performance.

$\beta_4 > 0$; This implies that an increase in employee recognition will cause a proportionate increase in Employee performance.

$\beta_5 > 0$; This implies that an increase in employee development will cause a proportionate increase in Employee performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected for the study “Total Reward and Employee Performance: A Study of Academic Staff in the University of Benin.” Out of the 115 questionnaires distributed to respondents, all were retrieved and found suitable for analysis, representing a 100% response rate. The data are presented using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize respondents’ demographic characteristics. In addition, inferential statistics including correlation and regression analysis were employed to test the hypotheses and examine the relationship between total reward components (compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development) and employee performance.

4.2 Demographic Analysis

The demographic data of the respondents is presented in this section below.

Table 4.1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	74	64.3
	Female	41	35.7
	Total	115	100.0
Age	26–30 years	39	33.9
	31–35 years	53	46.1
	36 years & above	23	20.0
	Total	115	100.0
Marital Status	Single	64	55.7
	Married	51	44.3
	Total	115	100.0
Educational Qualification	B.Sc	25	47.8
	M.Sc	68	33.0
	Ph.D	22	19.1
	Total	115	100.0
Current Position	Graduate Assistant	17	14.8
	Assistant Lecturer	35	30.4
	Lecturer II	21	18.3
	Lecturer I	24	20.9
	Senior Lecturer	18	15.7
	Total	115	100.0
Years in Service	0–5 years	30	43.5
	6–10 years	52	27.8
	11–20 years	31	27.0

	21 years & above	2	1.7
	Total	115	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork (2025)

Gender: From Table 4.1, the analysis shows that 64.3% of the respondents were male, while 35.7% were female. This indicates that the academic staff surveyed were predominantly male, although there is also a fair level of female representation.

Age: The data reveal that the largest proportion of respondents (46.1%) were aged between 31–35 years, followed by 33.9% who were aged 26–30 years. Respondents aged 36 years and above accounted for 20.0%. This reflects a workforce that is relatively young to middle-aged among the academic staff surveyed.

Marital Status: The analysis indicates that 55.7% of respondents were single, while 44.3% were married. This suggests that a slight majority of the respondents are yet to be married, which is consistent with the relatively young age profile of the sample.

Educational Qualification: The data show that 47.8% of respondents held a B.Sc., 33.0% held an M.Sc., while 19.1% possessed a Ph.D. qualification. This indicates that most respondents were first degree holders, with a significant proportion also holding postgraduate degrees.

Current Position: The analysis reveals that 30.4% of respondents were Assistant Lecturers, 20.9% were Lecturer I, 18.3% were Lecturer II, 15.7% were Senior Lecturers, and 14.8% were Graduate Assistants. This shows that the majority of respondents occupy early to mid-level academic positions within the university.

Years in Service: The data further indicate that 43.5% of respondents had 0–5 years of service, 27.8% had 6–10 years, 27.0% had 11–20 years, while only 1.7% had worked for 21 years and above. This suggests that most of the staff surveyed are still within the early and mid-stages of their careers.

4.3.2 Data Presentation and Analysis for the Independent Variables

The tables below present the descriptive analysis of the study variables (compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, development, and employee performance) using frequency counts, percentages, and means. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 4.3.1: Descriptive Statistics of Compensation

S/N	Statement	Total Responses	SA 5 f(%)	A 4 f(%)	U 3 f(%)	D 2 f(%)	SD 1 f(%)	Mean (\bar{x})
1	My salary is fair compared to the work I do.	115 (100)	63 (54.8)	52 (45.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.55
2	Compensation policies in this university are competitive with other institutions.	115 (100)	70 (60.9)	45 (39.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.61
3	I receive allowances and incentives that motivate me to perform better.	115 (100)	53 (46.1)	36 (31.3)	26 (22.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.23
4	Delays or irregularities in salary payment affect my job performance.	115 (100)	71 (61.7)	44 (38.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.62
5	Compensation is linked to my level of effort and performance.	115 (100)	56 (48.7)	37 (32.2)	22 (19.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.30
Average								4.46

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork (2025)

For item 1, “My salary is fair compared to the work I do,” 63 respondents (54.8%) strongly agreed and 52 respondents (45.2%) agreed. None of the respondents were undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. The mean score of 4.55 indicates strong agreement, suggesting that most staff perceive their salaries as fair relative to their workload.

For item 2, “Compensation policies in this university are competitive with other institutions,” 70 respondents (60.9%) strongly agreed, while 45 respondents (39.1%) agreed. The mean score of 4.61 reflects strong agreement, implying that the majority of staff view the university’s compensation policies as competitive compared to peer institutions.

For item 3, “I receive allowances and incentives that motivate me to perform better,” 53 respondents (46.1%) strongly agreed, 36 respondents (31.3%) agreed, while 26 respondents (22.6%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.23 indicates moderate to strong agreement, showing that while allowances and incentives are generally seen as motivational, a notable proportion of staff remain uncertain about their adequacy.

For item 4, “Delays or irregularities in salary payment affect my job performance,” 71 respondents (61.7%) strongly agreed and 44 respondents (38.3%) agreed. The mean score of 4.62 indicates strong agreement, suggesting that irregular salary payments significantly hinder employee performance.

For item 5, “Compensation is linked to my level of effort and performance,” 56 respondents (48.7%) strongly agreed, 37 respondents (32.2%) agreed, and 22 respondents (19.1%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.30 shows strong agreement, indicating that most staff believe compensation is connected to their performance, although some remain neutral.

The average mean score of 4.46 reflects strong agreement across all compensation items. This suggests that compensation, including fairness of salary, competitive policies, allowances, and the link between pay and performance is considered an important factor influencing employee performance among academic staff of the University of Benin.

Table 4.3.2: Descriptive Statistics of Benefits

S/N	Statement	Total Responses	SA (5) f(%)	A (4) f(%)	U (3) f(%)	D (2) f(%)	SD (1) f(%)	Mean (\bar{x})
1	The health benefits provided by the university meet my needs.	115 (100)	63 (54.8)	52 (45.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.55
2	Pension and retirement contributions increase my commitment to the university.	115 (100)	88 (76.5)	27 (23.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.77
3	Welfare allowances (housing, transport, etc.) improve my job satisfaction.	115 (100)	97 (84.3)	18 (15.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.84
4	The benefits package influences my decision to remain with the university.	115 (100)	83 (72.2)	32 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.72
5	I am satisfied with the overall range of benefits offered to staff.	115 (100)	89 (77.4)	26 (22.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.77
Average								4.73

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2025)

For item 1, “The health benefits provided by the university meet my needs,” 63 respondents (54.8%) strongly agreed and 52 respondents (45.2%) agreed. None were undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. The mean score of 4.55 indicates strong agreement, suggesting that staff generally view the university’s health benefits as adequate for their needs.

For item 2, “Pension and retirement contributions increase my commitment to the university,” 88 respondents (76.5%) strongly agreed and 27 respondents (23.5%) agreed. The mean score of 4.77 shows strong agreement, reflecting that pension and retirement provisions are a major factor in strengthening staff loyalty and commitment.

For item 3, “Welfare allowances (housing, transport, etc.) improve my job satisfaction,” 97 respondents (84.3%) strongly agreed and 18 respondents (15.7%) agreed. The mean score of 4.84 reflects very strong agreement, indicating that welfare allowances significantly enhance job satisfaction among staff.

For item 4, “The benefits package influences my decision to remain with the university,” 83 respondents (72.2%) strongly agreed and 32 respondents (27.8%) agreed. The mean score of 4.72 indicates strong agreement, implying that the availability of benefits is an important factor in staff retention.

For item 5, “I am satisfied with the overall range of benefits offered to staff,” 89 respondents (77.4%) strongly agreed and 26 respondents (22.6%) agreed. The mean score of 4.77 demonstrates strong agreement, showing that staff are broadly satisfied with the university’s benefits system.

The average mean score of 4.73 reflects very strong agreement across all benefit-related items. This suggests that benefits, particularly health care, pension, welfare allowances, and the overall benefits package play a crucial role in supporting employee satisfaction and performance at the University of Benin.

Table 4.3.3: Descriptive Statistics of Work–Life Balance

S/N	Statement	Total Responses	SA (5) f(%)	A (4) f(%)	U (3) f(%)	D (2) f(%)	SD (1) f(%)	Mean (\bar{x})
1	My workload allows me to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life.	115 (100)	91 (79.1)	24 (20.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.79
2	The university provides leave and time-off policies that support my well-being.	115 (100)	97 (84.3)	18 (15.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.84
3	Flexible work arrangements (where available) enhance my productivity.	115 (100)	115 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5.00
4	Lack of work-life balance affects my teaching, research, and administrative performance.	115 (100)	101 (87.8)	14 (12.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.88
5	The university supports initiatives that reduce staff stress and burnout.	115 (100)	98 (85.2)	17 (14.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.85
Average								4.87

Source: Field Survey, 2025

For item 1, “My workload allows me to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life,” 91 respondents (79.1%) strongly agreed and 24 respondents (20.9%) agreed. The mean score of 4.79 indicates strong agreement, suggesting that most staff are able to balance their work with personal responsibilities.

For item 2, “The university provides leave and time-off policies that support my well-being,” 97 respondents (84.3%) strongly agreed and 18 respondents (15.7%) agreed. The mean score

of 4.84 reflects strong agreement, implying that staff find leave and time-off provisions supportive of their health and wellness.

For item 3, “Flexible work arrangements (where available) enhance my productivity,” all 115 respondents (100%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 5.00 demonstrates unanimous strong agreement, showing that flexible work options are perceived as highly beneficial for productivity.

For item 4, “Lack of work-life balance affects my teaching, research, and administrative performance,” 101 respondents (87.8%) strongly agreed and 14 respondents (12.2%) agreed. The mean score of 4.88 indicates strong agreement, reflecting that inadequate balance between work and personal life negatively impacts staff performance.

For item 5, “The university supports initiatives that reduce staff stress and burnout,” 98 respondents (85.2%) strongly agreed and 17 respondents (14.8%) agreed. The mean score of 4.85 shows strong agreement, suggesting that stress-reduction initiatives are widely acknowledged by staff.

The average mean score of 4.87 reflects very strong agreement across all items. This suggests that work–life balance, supported by policies, flexible arrangements, and stress-reduction initiatives, is considered an essential factor in maintaining and enhancing academic staff performance.

Table 4.3.4: Descriptive Statistics of Recognition

S/N	Statement	Total Responses	SA (5) f(%)	A (4) f(%)	U (3) f(%)	D (2) f(%)	SD (1) f(%)	Mean (\bar{x})
1	My contributions are recognised by the university management.	115 (100)	87 (75.7)	28 (24.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.76
2	Outstanding performance is	115 (100)	100	15	0	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.87

	rewarded through formal recognition programmes.		(87.0)	(13.0)	(0.0)			
3	Recognition motivates me to put in extra effort in my work.	115 (100)	94 (81.7)	21 (18.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.82
4	I receive adequate appreciation for achievements in teaching, research, and community service.	115 (100)	86 (74.8)	29 (25.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.75
5	Lack of recognition discourages me from going beyond the minimum job requirements.	115 (100)	29 (25.2)	28 (24.3)	9 (7.8)	41 (35.7)	8 (7.0)	2.95
Average								4.43

Source: Field Survey, 2025

For item 1, “My contributions are recognised by the university management,” 87 respondents (75.7%) strongly agreed and 28 respondents (24.3%) agreed. The mean score of 4.76 indicates strong agreement, suggesting that academic staff generally feel acknowledged by management for their contributions.

For item 2, “Outstanding performance is rewarded through formal recognition programmes,” 100 respondents (87.0%) strongly agreed and 15 respondents (13.0%) agreed. The mean score of 4.87 reflects very strong agreement, showing that staff believe excellent performance is appropriately recognised through institutional programmes.

For item 3, “Recognition motivates me to put in extra effort in my work,” 94 respondents (81.7%) strongly agreed and 21 respondents (18.3%) agreed. The mean score of 4.82 indicates strong agreement, highlighting that recognition is a key driver of staff motivation.

For item 4, “I receive adequate appreciation for achievements in teaching, research, and community service,” 86 respondents (74.8%) strongly agreed and 29 respondents (25.2%) agreed. The mean score of 4.75 shows strong agreement, suggesting that staff feel their academic and community contributions are adequately appreciated.

For item 5, “Lack of recognition discourages me from going beyond the minimum job requirements,” 29 respondents (25.2%) strongly agreed, 28 respondents (24.3%) agreed, 9 respondents (7.8%) were undecided, 41 respondents (35.7%) disagreed, and 8 respondents (7.0%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.95 reflects neutrality, showing that staff are divided in their views about the demotivating effect of lack of recognition.

The average mean score of 4.43 indicates overall strong agreement across the recognition items. This suggests that recognition practices within the university play a vital role in motivating staff and enhancing performance, although there are mixed opinions on the negative impact of insufficient recognition.

Table 4.3.5: Descriptive Statistics of Employee Development

S/N	Statement	Total Responses	SA (5) f(%)	A (4) f(%)	U (3) f(%)	D (2) f(%)	SD (1) f(%)	Mean (\bar{x})
1	The university provides opportunities for training and professional development.	115 (100)	93 (80.9)	22 (19.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.81
2	Access to research grants, conferences, and workshops enhances my performance.	115 (100)	81 (70.4)	34 (29.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.70

3	Career advancement opportunities are available for academic staff.	115 (100)	91 (79.1)	24 (20.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.79
4	Mentoring and coaching are part of staff development initiatives in the university.	115 (100)	93 (80.9)	22 (19.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.81
5	Development programmes help me adapt to changes in my field of study.	115 (100)	89 (77.4)	26 (22.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.77
Average								4.78

Source: Field Survey, 2025

For item 1, “The university provides opportunities for training and professional development,” 93 respondents (80.9%) strongly agreed and 22 respondents (19.1%) agreed. The mean score of 4.81 indicates strong agreement, suggesting that staff are satisfied with the training and development opportunities available.

For item 2, “Access to research grants, conferences, and workshops enhances my performance,” 81 respondents (70.4%) strongly agreed and 34 respondents (29.6%) agreed. The mean score of 4.70 shows strong agreement, highlighting that professional exposure and research support are considered critical to staff performance.

For item 3, “Career advancement opportunities are available for academic staff,” 91 respondents (79.1%) strongly agreed and 24 respondents (20.9%) agreed. The mean score of 4.79 indicates strong agreement, reflecting that career advancement opportunities are widely acknowledged among the staff.

For item 4, “Mentoring and coaching are part of staff development initiatives in the university,” 93 respondents (80.9%) strongly agreed and 22 respondents (19.1%) agreed. The

mean score of 4.81 reflects strong agreement, showing that mentoring and coaching are considered important features of development initiatives.

For item 5, “Development programmes help me adapt to changes in my field of study,” 89 respondents (77.4%) strongly agreed and 26 respondents (22.6%) agreed. The mean score of 4.77 indicates strong agreement, suggesting that development programmes are effective in helping staff remain adaptable to academic and professional changes.

The average mean score of 4.78 reflects very strong agreement across all development items. This shows that development opportunities, including training, research grants, mentoring, and career advancement, are strongly recognised as vital to academic staff growth and performance.

Table 4.3.6: Descriptive Statistics of Employee Performance

S/N	Statement	Total Responses	SA (5) f(%)	A (4) f(%)	U (3) f(%)	D (2) f(%)	SD (1) f(%)	Mean (\bar{x})
1	I consistently meet the performance standards expected of me.	115 (100)	92 (80.0)	23 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.80
2	I contribute positively to teaching, research, and community service.	115 (100)	90 (78.3)	25 (21.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.78
3	I am innovative in carrying out my job responsibilities.	115 (100)	84 (73.0)	31 (27.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.73
4	I am satisfied with my overall performance in the university.	115 (100)	83 (72.2)	32 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.72
5	My performance contributes to the achievement of the	115 (100)	91 (79.1)	24 (20.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4.79

	university's goals.							
Average								4.76

Source: Field Survey, 2025

For item 1, “I consistently meet the performance standards expected of me,” 92 respondents (80.0%) strongly agreed and 23 respondents (20.0%) agreed. The mean score of 4.80 indicates strong agreement, showing that most staff believe they regularly meet performance expectations.

For item 2, “I contribute positively to teaching, research, and community service,” 90 respondents (78.3%) strongly agreed and 25 respondents (21.7%) agreed. The mean score of 4.78 reflects strong agreement, suggesting that staff perceive their contributions as valuable to the university’s core functions.

For item 3, “I am innovative in carrying out my job responsibilities,” 84 respondents (73.0%) strongly agreed and 31 respondents (27.0%) agreed. The mean score of 4.73 shows strong agreement, indicating that staff see themselves as innovative in their work approach.

For item 4, “I am satisfied with my overall performance in the university,” 83 respondents (72.2%) strongly agreed and 32 respondents (27.8%) agreed. The mean score of 4.72 demonstrates strong agreement, reflecting that academic staff are broadly satisfied with their performance outcomes.

For item 5, “My performance contributes to the achievement of the university’s goals,” 91 respondents (79.1%) strongly agreed and 24 respondents (20.9%) agreed. The mean score of 4.79 indicates strong agreement, showing that staff see their individual efforts as contributing meaningfully to institutional objectives.

The average mean score of 4.76 reflects very strong agreement across all employee performance items. This suggests that academic staff not only meet performance standards

but also innovate, contribute positively to teaching, research, and community service, and align their efforts with the overall goals of the university.

4.4 Correlation Analysis of Total Reward Components and Employee Performance

The results from the correlation analysis provide insights into the nature and direction of the relationship between the independent variables (total reward components: compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development) and the dependent variable (employee performance). While the correlation coefficient does not imply a direct causal relationship, it serves as an important preliminary indicator of the strength and pattern of association among the variables. The details of these findings are presented in the subsequent tables and further elaborated upon in the discussion section.

Correlations		EP	C	B	WLB	R	D
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.015	.302**	.329**	.506**	.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.870	.001	.000	.000	.000
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115
Compensation	Pearson Correlation	.015	1	-.073	-.080	-.068	-.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.870		.436	.398	.473	.358
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115
Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.302**	-.073	1	.387**	.565**	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.436		.000	.000	.000
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115

Work life Balance	Pearson Correlation	.329**	-.080	.387**	1	.357**	.349**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.398	.000		.000	.000
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115
Recognition	Pearson Correlation	.506**	-.068	.565**	.357**	1	.651**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.473	.000	.000		.000
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115
Development	Pearson Correlation	.545**	-.087	.371**	.349**	.651**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.358	.000	.000	.000	
	N	115	115	115	115	115	115
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

Source: Researchers' (2025)

As seen in Table 4.4, employee performance was positively correlated with compensation ($r = 0.015$, $p = 0.870$). However, this relationship is extremely weak and statistically insignificant, suggesting that compensation does not play a meaningful role in predicting employee performance in this study.

Benefits showed a positive correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.302$, $p = 0.001$). This relationship is moderate and statistically significant at the 1% level, implying that better staff benefits are associated with improved performance.

Work–life balance also demonstrated a positive correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.329$, $p = 0.000$). This relationship is moderate and statistically significant at the 1% level, indicating that work–life balance contributes positively to staff performance.

Recognition was found to be positively correlated with employee performance ($r = 0.506$, $p = 0.000$). This relationship is strong and statistically significant at the 1% level, suggesting that recognition of staff efforts is a key driver of performance.

Development recorded the strongest positive correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.545$, $p = 0.000$). This strong and statistically significant relationship highlights the crucial role of staff development opportunities in enhancing performance outcomes.

Furthermore, none of the correlation coefficients among the independent variables exceed 0.80, which indicates the absence of multicollinearity. This suggests that the components of total rewards are sufficiently distinct and can be reliably used in subsequent regression analysis.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

The research hypotheses were tested using regression analysis in order to achieve the objectives of the present study. The hypotheses were evaluated at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule applied was: if the computed significance value (p-value) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected; if the computed significance value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4.5.1: Model Summary of Total Reward Components and Employee Performance

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.595 ^a	.355	.325	.293	.355	11.976	5	109	.000	1.482

a. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation, Benefits, worklife Balance, Recognition, Development.

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance.

Source: Researchers' (2025)

The model summary result from the regression output is presented in Table 4.5.1. The R value is 0.595, indicating a moderate positive relationship between total reward components and employee performance. The R Square value is 0.355, which measures how well the independent variables (compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development) explain variations in the dependent variable (employee performance). This means that the explanatory variables account for about 35.5% of the variance in employee performance, showing a moderate explanatory strength.

The Durbin–Watson statistic, with a value of 1.482, is close to the benchmark of 2.0, indicating that the model does not suffer from serious autocorrelation problems. This suggests that the efficiency property of the regression model is ensured, and the estimates can be considered reliable.

Table 4.5.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Total Reward and Employee Performance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.137	5	1.027	11.976	.000 ^b
	Residual	9.350	109	.086		
	Total	14.487	114			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance.						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation, Benefits, worklife Balance, Recognition, Development.						

Source: Researchers' (2025)

The table above displays the analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on the impact of total reward components on employee performance. The F-statistic value of 11.976 is significant at 0.000 (5% significance level). As a result, the explanatory factors collectively (compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development) are statistically significant drivers of the dependent variable (employee performance).

Table 4.5.3 Regression Coefficient Output of Total Reward and Employee Performance

Coefficients^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.640	.518		3.164	.002	.613	2.668
	Compensation	.051	.055	.072	.928	.356	-.058	.161
	Benefits	-.008	.082	-.010	-.100	.921	-.170	.154
	Worklife Balance	.113	.075	.129	1.501	.136	-.036	.262
	Recognition	.198	.095	.240	2.098	.038	.011	.386
	Develoment	.319	.093	.353	3.432	.001	.135	.503

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance.

Source: Researchers' (2025)

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Compensation and Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

The coefficient for Compensation is 0.051, indicating a positive relationship with Employee Performance. However, this relationship is not statistically significant, with a p-value of

0.356 ($p > 0.05$) and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of 0.072. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that Compensation does not have a significant relationship with Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Benefits and Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

The analysis shows a coefficient for Benefits of -0.008 , signifying a negative relationship with Employee Performance. This relationship is not statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.921 ($p > 0.05$) and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of -0.010 . Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected, affirming that Benefits do not have a significant relationship with Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Work–Life Balance and Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

The coefficient for Work–Life Balance is 0.113, reflecting a positive relationship with Employee Performance. This relationship is not statistically significant, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.136 ($p > 0.05$) and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of 0.129. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that Work–Life Balance does not have a significant relationship with Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

Hypothesis 4

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between Recognition and Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

The coefficient for Recognition is 0.198, suggesting a positive relationship with Employee Performance. This relationship is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.038 ($p < 0.05$) and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of 0.240. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected,

indicating that Recognition has a significant relationship with Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

Hypothesis 5

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between Development and Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

The coefficient for Development is 0.319, reflecting a positive relationship with Employee Performance. This relationship is statistically significant, as shown by a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) and a standardised coefficient (Beta) of 0.353. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, demonstrating that Development has a significant relationship with Employee Performance among staff of the University of Benin.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

This study examined the relationship between total reward components (compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development) and employee performance among staff of the University of Benin. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to the sampled respondents, and the results were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. The key findings of the study are discussed in the subsections below.

Compensation

For research objective one, respondents' perceptions of compensation were measured through salary fairness, competitive pay policies, allowances and incentives, timeliness of salary, and performance-based pay. The descriptive analysis produced an overall mean score of 4.46, reflecting strong agreement that compensation is considered an important aspect of the reward system among staff of the University of Benin.

However, correlation analysis revealed a very weak and statistically insignificant relationship between compensation and employee performance ($r = 0.015$, $p = 0.870$). Regression analysis

confirmed this finding, with compensation having a positive but insignificant effect on employee performance ($B = 0.051$, $\beta = 0.072$, $p = 0.356$). This means that although staff perceive compensation positively, it does not significantly explain variations in their performance.

This finding aligns with the work of Akinwale and George (2020), who reported that compensation had little direct influence on academic staff performance in Nigerian universities, as other factors such as recognition and career development were more decisive. Similarly, Oludayo, Falola, Obianuju, and Demilade (2021) found that while adequate pay increased employee satisfaction, it was not sufficient to sustain high performance without supportive non-monetary rewards such as development opportunities and organisational support. More recently, Okafor, Ugochukwu, and Adeleke (2022) emphasised that compensation structures in Nigerian institutions often serve as retention tools rather than performance enhancers, reinforcing the view that other elements of the reward system carry more weight in influencing productivity.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while staff at the University of Benin value fair and timely compensation, pay alone does not drive performance outcomes. To strengthen the link between compensation and performance, management may need to combine pay reforms with complementary strategies such as recognition, professional development, and enabling work conditions, which were also found to be significant in this study.

Benefits

For research objective two, respondents' perceptions of benefits were measured using items on health benefits, pension and retirement contributions, welfare allowances, retention influence, and overall satisfaction with benefits. The descriptive analysis produced an overall mean score of 4.73, showing strong agreement that benefits are an important and valued component of the reward system at the University of Benin.

Despite this high rating, correlation analysis revealed that benefits had a weak positive relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.302$, $p = 0.001$), while regression analysis showed that the effect was not statistically significant ($B = -0.008$, $\beta = -0.010$, $p = 0.921$). This suggests that although staff value benefits, they do not significantly explain measurable variations in performance outcomes.

This finding aligns with Babalola and Ayinde (2020), who found that benefit packages in Nigerian universities were strongly related to staff satisfaction and retention but showed no significant effect on job performance. Similarly, Ikechukwu and Chinedu (2021) reported that while pensions and health benefits were highly appreciated by academic staff, they functioned more as long-term motivators than as immediate performance drivers. More recently, Oladipo and Adedeji (2022) observed that staff welfare and benefit schemes contributed to organisational commitment but had limited direct influence on performance outcomes in higher education institutions.

Taken together, these findings suggest that at the University of Benin, benefits are crucial for staff satisfaction and long-term retention but are not direct determinants of performance. Management may therefore need to combine benefit provision with short-term performance-enhancing strategies such as recognition and professional development, which were shown in this study to have stronger effects.

Work–Life Balance

For research objective three, respondents' perceptions of work–life balance were assessed using items on workload, leave and time-off policies, flexible work arrangements, the impact of imbalance on performance, and stress-reduction initiatives. The descriptive analysis produced an overall mean score of 4.87, indicating very strong agreement that work–life balance initiatives are highly valued by staff at the University of Benin.

Correlation analysis showed that work–life balance had a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.329$, $p = 0.000$). However, regression analysis revealed that the effect of work–life balance on performance, though positive, was not statistically significant ($B = 0.113$, $\beta = 0.129$, $p = 0.136$). This suggests that while employees perceive work–life balance initiatives as important, these initiatives do not independently predict measurable differences in performance when considered alongside other reward factors.

This finding is consistent with Adisa, Aiyenitaju, and Adekoya (2021), who reported that Nigerian academics valued work–life balance policies, yet such policies had limited direct impact on measurable performance outcomes due to workload and resource constraints. Similarly, Popoola and Fagbohun (2021) found that while flexible work arrangements and leave policies improved job satisfaction among staff in higher education, their effect on actual job performance was minimal. More recently, Eze and Ibekwe (2023) highlighted that work–life balance initiatives among Nigerian university staff enhanced employee well-being but did not significantly determine productivity, supporting the outcome of this study.

Taken together, these findings suggest that although work–life balance is strongly appreciated at the University of Benin, it is not a standalone driver of performance. Management may therefore need to integrate work–life balance with more performance-linked strategies such as recognition and professional development, which this study found to have greater predictive influence.

Recognition

For research objective four, respondents' perceptions of recognition were measured through items on acknowledgement by management, formal reward programmes, motivation through recognition, appreciation for achievements, and the discouraging effect of lack of recognition.

The descriptive analysis produced an overall mean score of 4.43, reflecting strong agreement that recognition is an important part of the reward system at the University of Benin.

Correlation analysis showed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between recognition and employee performance ($r = 0.506$, $p = 0.000$). Regression analysis further confirmed this result, with recognition having a positive and significant effect on performance ($B = 0.198$, $\beta = 0.240$, $p = 0.038$). This demonstrates that recognition of staff contributions is a key driver of employee performance in this study.

This finding is supported by Ogbuabor and Okonkwo (2020), who observed that recognition practices such as awards and commendations significantly improved motivation and performance among university staff in Nigeria. Similarly, Ugwu and Onyishi (2021) found that appreciation and acknowledgement were strong predictors of organisational commitment and performance among academic employees. In addition, Olanrewaju, Ibadunni, and Salau (2022) reported that recognition systems in Nigerian universities not only enhanced productivity but also fostered greater engagement and retention of skilled staff.

Taken together, these findings suggest that recognition is a vital component of the total reward system at the University of Benin, with direct and significant effects on performance. This highlights the importance of institutionalising transparent and consistent recognition practices, including formal reward systems and regular appreciation of staff contributions, as strategies to sustain and enhance employee performance.

Development

For research objective five, respondents' perceptions of development were measured through items on training opportunities, career advancement prospects, mentoring, skill enhancement, and overall satisfaction with professional development initiatives. The descriptive analysis produced an overall mean score of 4.77, indicating strong agreement that development opportunities are highly valued by staff at the University of Benin.

Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between development and employee performance ($r = 0.545$, $p = 0.000$). Regression analysis confirmed this result, showing that development had a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($B = 0.319$, $\beta = 0.353$, $p = 0.001$). This demonstrates that development is one of the most influential predictors of employee performance in this study.

This finding is supported by Ogueyungbo and Adebayo (2020), who found that continuous training and professional development significantly enhanced employee performance in Nigerian higher education institutions. Similarly, Eze, Okonkwo, and Agbo (2021) reported that academic staff who had access to structured training and mentorship opportunities were more productive in teaching and research. More recently, Oladimeji and Aina (2022) confirmed that investment in professional development directly improved both job performance and organisational commitment among university lecturers.

Taken together, these findings underscore the critical role of professional development as a driver of employee performance. For the University of Benin, sustained investment in training, skill-building, and career advancement programmes will not only enhance performance but also improve long-term institutional competitiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the findings of the study, highlighting the key results obtained from descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses. The study examined the relationship between total reward dimensions (compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development) and employee performance among academic staff at the University of Benin. The conclusions are drawn in line with the research objectives and hypotheses, providing insight into which aspects of the total reward system significantly

influence performance. Furthermore, this chapter offers practical recommendations for improving employee performance through effective reward practices and outlines areas for future research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are summarised as follows:

1. **Compensation** was highly rated by respondents (overall mean = 4.46), but correlation and regression results showed no statistically significant relationship between compensation and employee performance ($r = 0.015$, $p = 0.870$).
2. **Benefits** were strongly valued (overall mean = 4.73). While benefits showed a weak positive correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.302$, $p = 0.001$), regression analysis revealed that the relationship was not statistically significant ($B = -0.008$, $p = 0.921$).
3. **Work–Life Balance** received the highest rating (overall mean = 4.87) and showed a positive correlation with performance ($r = 0.329$, $p = 0.000$). However, regression analysis indicated that its effect was not statistically significant ($B = 0.113$, $p = 0.136$).
4. **Recognition** was strongly perceived (overall mean = 4.43) and showed a significant relationship with performance ($r = 0.506$, $p = 0.000$). Regression analysis confirmed recognition as a significant predictor of performance ($B = 0.198$, $p = 0.038$).
5. **Development** was also highly rated (overall mean = 4.77) and showed the strongest correlation with performance ($r = 0.545$, $p = 0.000$). Regression analysis further confirmed development as a significant predictor of employee performance ($B = 0.319$, $p = 0.001$).

5.3 Contributions to Knowledge

This study makes significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge on total reward and employee performance within the Nigerian higher education context in the following ways:

1. It provides context-specific empirical evidence on the relative influence of total reward components such as compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development on employee performance among academic staff in a Nigerian university.
2. It advances understanding by showing that non-monetary rewards, particularly recognition and development, are stronger predictors of employee performance than monetary rewards. This challenges the common assumption that pay and benefits are the primary motivators within the university system.
3. It extends existing reward theories such as Expectancy Theory and Equity Theory by demonstrating how intrinsic and extrinsic reward mechanisms interact within public-sector academic environments where financial incentives are often limited.
4. It contributes methodologically by developing and validating a structured total reward model that integrates multiple reward dimensions, providing a framework that can be adopted in future studies on staff motivation and performance in similar institutional settings.
5. It offers practical insights for higher education management by showing that strategic emphasis on recognition and continuous staff development can lead to sustainable improvements in academic staff productivity and institutional effectiveness.

Collectively, these contributions deepen theoretical, empirical, and practical understanding of how total reward systems influence employee performance outcomes in higher education institutions in developing economies such as Nigeria.

5.4 Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between total reward dimensions (compensation, benefits, work–life balance, recognition, and development) and employee performance among academic staff of the University of Benin. The findings provide evidence that while staff value all aspects of the reward system, only recognition and development emerged as statistically significant predictors of employee performance.

The results underscore the importance of prioritising non-financial rewards such as recognition systems and professional development opportunities in improving performance. Monetary rewards, though appreciated, appear insufficient in driving productivity on their own. Universities that combine fair pay with consistent recognition and structured development programmes are more likely to achieve sustainable improvements in employee performance and institutional competitiveness.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve employee performance at the University of Benin:

1. Compensation

Although compensation was perceived positively (mean = 4.46), it did not significantly predict employee performance. This suggests that monetary rewards alone may not drive productivity. Management should therefore maintain fair and timely salary payments to sustain morale, while linking part of compensation to measurable outcomes such as research productivity, teaching evaluations, or community service contributions. This will keep compensation relevant without over-relying on it as a performance driver.

2. Benefits

Benefits were highly valued (mean = 4.73) but showed no significant influence on performance. Management should treat benefits primarily as a retention and satisfaction tool rather than a performance enhancer. Best practices include expanding health insurance

schemes, improving pension packages, and strengthening staff welfare initiatives. These measures may not directly boost day-to-day performance, but they will improve institutional stability by reducing turnover and strengthening long-term commitment.

3. Work–Life Balance

Work–life balance received the strongest positive perception (mean = 4.87) and showed a significant correlation with performance, though not an independent predictor in regression analysis. Management should use this as an opportunity to implement structured workload allocation systems, encourage flexible scheduling where feasible, and provide stress-management support programmes. Even if work–life balance does not directly raise performance, it supports staff well-being and reduces burnout, which indirectly sustains productivity over time.

4. Recognition

Recognition emerged as a significant predictor of employee performance (mean = 4.43; $B = 0.198$, $p = 0.038$). This highlights the importance of building a culture of appreciation. Management should introduce formal recognition awards for excellence in teaching, research, and service, while also encouraging informal day-to-day recognition such as verbal praise, written commendations, and public acknowledgement of achievements. Recognition should be transparent, fair, and tied to specific accomplishments to reinforce its motivational power.

5. Development

Development was the strongest predictor of employee performance (mean = 4.77; $B = 0.319$, $p = 0.001$). Management should therefore prioritise capacity-building and career growth initiatives, including regular training workshops, research grants, mentorship programmes, and clear promotion pathways. Investment in development not only boosts immediate productivity but also enhances institutional competitiveness in the long term.

6. Integrated Reward Strategy

The findings suggest that while recognition and development drive performance, other reward components (compensation, benefits, work–life balance) support satisfaction and retention. Management should therefore adopt an integrated total reward system that balances financial rewards with non-financial motivators. Best practice would be to design a reward framework where compensation and benefits secure staff satisfaction, while recognition and development directly drive performance outcomes.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could extend this research to other universities across Nigeria to allow for broader generalisation and comparative analysis of total reward practices. This would provide a clearer picture of how reward systems influence employee performance in different institutional contexts.

Longitudinal research is also recommended to track how total rewards shape employee performance over time. Such studies would provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of reward practices and show whether their impact is sustained or changes with evolving staff expectations.

Further research could examine how leadership style and organisational culture moderate the relationship between total rewards and employee performance. Understanding how managerial approaches and institutional climates influence outcomes could guide universities in creating enabling environments for staff productivity.

Finally, studies could focus on the interaction between monetary and non-monetary rewards, identifying the most effective reward combinations for sustaining performance in higher education. This would broaden understanding of how to balance financial incentives with non-financial motivators to achieve optimal employee outcomes.

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