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EFFECT OF THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY ORDER OF MERIT AWARD ON PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The need to consolidate achievements made by the various sectors of the economy has made the quest for higher productivity more urgent than ever before. Needless to say, increased productivity helps to alleviate a country's economic problems, such as inflation, adverse balance of trade, poor growth rate and unemployment. At both the individual and corporate levels, the National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award is a thoughtfully designed motivational scheme targeted at achieving higher productivity through innovativeness, creativity and hard work in various field of endeavors in the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy. This study examined the effect of the NPOM award on the public sector productivity in Nigeria and assessed specifically, if the NPOM Award had spurred individuals in the public sector to higher performance. The population of the study is 200 NPOMA winners for the period 2005-2015 and a sample size of 153 drawn from primary source with the use of a 5-point Likert scale questionnaires instrument. The study adopted the ordinary least square regression to analyse the data collected and findings from the study revealed that NPOMA have significant effect on public sector performance. It was therefore recommended that government, through the National Productivity Centre, should embark on massive orientation and awareness campaigns on the significance of the award to individuals, organizations and national development.

Key words: NPOMA, Productivity and Public Sector.

Introduction

The significance of productivity in national building is universally recognized and all human activities benefit from improved productivity. Productivity also determines largely, the competitiveness of a country's product in the international market. Thus, any country that fails to keep pace with the productivity levels of competitors cannot avoid the problems of inflation,

adverse balance of trade, poor growth rate and increased unemployment.

According to Kareem (2022) the federal government emphasized that the observance of the National Productivity Day and Conferment of the National Productivity Order of Merit Award, NPOM, is to create an avenue for the Federal Government to recognize higher productivity and excellence in service of individuals and organizations and their

contributions to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy. Given the cardinal role of productivity in the development of any nation, it is imperative that the citizenry be consistently reminded of the need for developing a productive mindset that will ensure the growth of all the sectors of the economy. The award, among other things, aims at stimulating productivity consciousness, reward innovation, creativity and hard work among Nigerians. "It is also to recognize and reward best practices in productivity, quality and innovation. They further described productivity as the most important determinant of social economic growth, wealth creation, employment generation and overall improved standard of living.

Government focuses on enhancing higher productivity as no nation would be self-reliant and competitive in the international market without productivity improvement in all sectors. As emphasized by the government, measuring national productivity is imperative to remind the citizenry of the need for developing a productive mindset that will ensure rapid and organized growth of all sectors of the economy in realization of the overall development of the nation.

Lamai (2021) further explained that during the Federal Government Inauguration of the National Productivity Order of Merit Award Committee, they noted that the specific objectives of the NPOM Award are to institutionalize productivity consciousness and excellence in service among workers and organizations in both the public and private sectors in Nigeria; and to recognize and highlight the contributions of the individual workers, as well as organizations, to higher productivity. The other objectives of the Award are to reward the most productive workers and organizations in both public and private sectors for diligence, high performance, and high productivity and research achievements; encourage and foster the spirit of healthy competition amongst workers, firms and companies in Nigeria, and encourage the spirit of self-reliance.

Public sector organizations in Nigeria are facing problems which often hamper the attainment of set goals. Odinkalu (2012) emphasized that the publication of the National Productivity Order of Merit

Award list has hardened the perception that the National Honors process has become a political bazaar of sorts. Far from promoting it, the manner and content of the National Productivity Order of Merit Award list undermines the pursuit of distinction in public service. This does incalculable injustice to those Nigerians that have indeed earned the recognition conferred by the National Honors, damages our national brand and diminishes the currency of honor as a virtue in our public life. There are many things wrong with the National honors list. Take the 2012 list: it is mostly reserved for serving public officers and their friends or nominees; it recognizes only 15 women out of 149 (a mere 10%) and no young, ordinary or disabled Nigerian. As a national register of honor and with no disrespect meant or intended to any of those contained in it, this is a squalid advertisement for distinction in public service. The steps that can be taken to return credibility to the National honors process hide in plain sight. First, the eligibility criteria should be widely publicized and periodically reviewed. The criteria, as well as nominees, should be electronically accessible. Second, the public should have a major role in nominations and government should diminish its control over who gets honored. Third, serving public officers of any rank should not be eligible for the awards. Those who deserve it will be considered after they have left public office. Indeed, the Code of Conduct provisions in the 5th Schedule of the Constitution prohibit serving public officers from accepting "benefits of any kind for anything done or omitted to be done by him in the discharge of his duties." Surely, this applies to National honors.

In view of the above, this research is proposed to address the effect of the award of NPOMA in the public sector, and how it has enhanced their performance. The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of National Productivity Order of Merit Award (NPOMA) in the productivity of the public sector. The specific objectives are to firstly determine the impact NPOMA has made in public sector; examine the importance of the award to the public sector; and identify ways by which the award can spur individuals to better performance.

Research Questions

- i What is the effect of National Award on public sector performance?
- ii Does individual contribution have any significant influence on public sector performance?

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to assess critically the impact of the NPOM Award on the public sector performance between 2005 and 2015 in Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- i Examine the effect of National Award on public sector performance;
- ii Assess the impact of individual contribution on public sector performance;

Literature Review

National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award

The Nigerian National Order of Merit Award (NNOM) is an academic award conferred on distinguished academicians and intellectuals who have made outstanding contributions to the academic, growth and development of Nigeria (Saharareporters, 2014).

According to Odinkalu (2012) Nigeria's national productivity order of merit award and process is beset with a credibility crisis that could be terminal. Disregarding Machiavelli, those who administer it appear to think that titles honor people when in reality it is the people that honor titles. Increasingly, therefore, Nigerians of true distinction and dignity wish not to be associated with it. Some have even taken the extraordinary step of publicly renouncing or denouncing it in recent times. Such public disavowal of faith in the possibility of virtue in our country and its public life must give the custodians of our constitutional values cause for worry. They are also compelling reasons for radical reform of the national productivity order of merit award process. There are good reasons why a country may wish to formally recognize and honor its citizens who make signal contributions to promotion of the public good. Such

recognition could help forge common memories of nation building, inspire others to seek to transcendence in public service and establish traditions of virtuous public service for others to follow. The process of the award itself should be regulated by both law and good sense. In Nigeria, both seem to have collapsed and the national productivity order of merit award roll is now widely viewed as advertising this collapse. Enacted in 1963, the National Honors Act itself requires that Nigeria's national honors should be awarded by the President for distinguished public service. It empowers the President to provide "for the deprivation of an honor in a case where a recipient conducts himself in a manner which the President considers to be inconsistent with the honor.

Idachaba (2014), the chairman of the new Governing Board of Nigerian National Merit Award (NNMA), Prof. Francis Idachaba has raised the alarm over the quality of the Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM), alleging that the assessment process for nominating award recipients has been compromised. He made this allegation yesterday in Abuja during the inauguration of the new Eight-Man Governing Board of the NNMA by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator Anyim Pius Anyim. Speaking further, the Board Chairman disclosed that there has been undue pressure on him to employ more personnel into the assessor team of the NNMA, some of whose discipline and integrity were questionable. He said: "I have inherited surprising, indeed bewildering employment frenzy in the final days of the 6th NNMA board, an employment frenzy that has little or nothing to do with the mission and objectives of NNMA. More worrying is the fact that the 6th NNMA board appears, unfortunately, to have been compromised in this employment frenzy. Equally worrying is the near certainty that the bloated personnel will compromise the cherished integrity of the NNMA assessment process, create serious problems of discipline and focus and erode public confidence in the integrity of the NNMA", he noted. According to the Idachaba, part of the objectives for constituting the NNMA award by the Federal Government was to accord proper and due recognition to Nigerians for outstanding intellectual and academic attainments, particularly in the field of Science, Engineering/Technology, Medicine, Humanities as

well as Arts and Culture. He reminded his audience that the criteria for nominating the awardees annually were usually guided by selections from a wide range of contemporary works which were innovative, creative and essentially Nigerian in content and are of national and international distinction.

Productivity

Productivity is a field of study that spreads across every spectrum of society. It covers the public and private sectors of the economy, business, and management, social, political, economic and developmental aspects of any nation.

Jeha et al. (2022) stated that there are 7 (seven) key factors to be able to achieve a high level of productivity, namely: responsible management skills, extraordinary leadership, organizational simplicity, effective employees (what matters is quality, not quantity), challenging tasks (creativity and productivity), effective planning, and specialized managerial training. Thatcher et al. (2020) stated that 7 (seven) factors affect work productivity, namely: changes in work ethics, development of scientific management, development of human relations, growth of labor organizations/labor unions, advanced technology, changes in government regulations, and shareholders. /capital owner responsible management expertise. Furthermore, Helmy et al. (2014) added that three factors affect employee productivity. First: Regarding the quality and physical ability of employees as measured by education, work experience, work motivation, work ethic, and physical fitness. Second, supporting facilities, namely the work environment and working conditions. Third, Supra facilities include industrial relations and government policies. Lari (2021); Starozhuk (2021) opined that the factors that influence labor productivity are employee education and training, employee attitudes and motivation, employee welfare efforts, adjustment of labor use and employee piracy, and management worker cooperation.

Performance

The concept of organizational performance is one that has been struggling to gain a unanimous accepted definition over the years. People see it differently;

some measure it using quantitative indices such as profitability, Return on Investment (ROI), market share and others. Others view it from the perspective of the employees putting in their best to make sure the objectives of the organisation are achieved. These set of people measure performance using qualitative yardsticks such as employee performance, customer satisfaction, competitive advantage and the rest. Performance and its indices for organizations are very important as it measures how well, effective and efficient organizations are in discharging their mandate. Olanipekun, et al (2015) state that firm performance is essential to businesses as the key objective for organizations' in production or service industries.

Performance is the degree to which the organisation carries its goals and objectives into effect (Sosiawani, et al, 2015; Wales, et al., 2013). It is exhibited by the accomplishment of tasks by the employees of a firm as well as the quality of these completed tasks at the close of a specific business period as measured against predetermined targets or aims (Ledwith & O'Dwyer, 2014; Yıldız, 2010). How flexible, adaptive and swift organizations are in changing situations could determine their performance and survival in the long run.

Empirical Review

Li, et al. (2022) investigated the role of CSR awards in incentivizing non-winners' CSR as a competitive catch-up. Using a difference-in-differences research design, we find that non-winners improve their CSR after their competitors have won CSR awards. Furthermore, based on the awareness-motivation-capability (AMC) framework from the competitive dynamics literature, the study revealed that the media visibility of award winners, the performance gap of non-winners with award winners, and the prior CSR of non-winners strengthen the CSR competitive catch-up behaviors. Findings from this study contributed to the CSR research by highlighting the spillover effect of CSR awards as a meaningful event in incentivizing non-winning firms' CSR and extending the AMC framework to

explain the contingency factors of competitive catch-up in the context of CSR research.

Burtch, et al (2022) investigated how peer awards motivate creative content. The study employed a randomized field experiment on reddit to test the hypothesized data, wherein randomly and anonymously assigned Reddit's Gold Award to 905 users' posts over a two-month period was used. The study discovered that peer awards induced recipients to make longer, more frequent posts and that these effects were particularly pronounced among newer community members. Further, the study showed that recipients were causally influenced to engage in greater (lesser) exploitation (exploration) behavior, producing content that exhibited significantly greater textual similarity to their own past (awarded) content.

Giving out a symbolic "supplier of the year" or "outstanding supplier" award, Beer, et al (2022) studied both positive and negative effects of a symbolic award and offers explanations on buyers and suppliers behavioral mechanisms. The study developed a game-theoretical model that captures a supplier's utility for the award in a competitive setting and tests the predictions of the model with laboratory experiments. Base on the experimental results, the study confirm that private symbolic awards have motivating effects and lead to higher buyer profits. When the awards are public, this profit premium diminishes as buyers pay higher prices to get the good suppliers. When the buyer is given the option to make the award public or private, buyers prefer that awards are public over private, anticipating a negative supplier response to their choice of the private award format

Equity Theory

The study was anchored on equity theory. John Adams (1963) developed equity theory. According to this theory staff performance depends on level of intrinsic motivation (Martin et al., 2017). Therefore, for an organization to retain its staff it is prudent for it to adopt equity theory principles. Under normal circumstance, individuals tend to value fair treatment depending on the task assigned to them. Consequently, efficiency of motivated staff is improving due to the fact that setting equity structures at area of work is

based on input and output ratio (Pritchard, et al., 2019).

At the workplace, staff considers the process of job promotion as fair in case the ration of their input is equal to the output of promoted individuals. An organization needs to evaluate the individuals experience before promoting them as this affects performance of other staff in the organization who may feel that process of promoting staff is unfair. In case an organizational staff realized that the other staff are receiving intrinsic motivation despite their equal contribution to overall organizational performance, it results to job dissatisfaction of staff that lower staff morale to conduct a particular task more effectively. Henceforth, this may negatively affect organization performance due to decline in staff performance or efficiency (Van, 2014).

Therefore, if all staff are promoted based on the competency skills and job output, the overall organization performance improve as this prevents job burnout among competent staff who feel the organization meets their needs thus the staff always strive to perform better as a way of receiving more rewards. Staff who thinks there in absence of equity at workplace may react by leaving their current area of work to seek for lucrative jobs elsewhere or simply they may distort input by reducing their work efficiency (Ross & Kapitan, 2018).

In relation to the ongoing study, equity theory was deployed to explain award practices affect performance of individuals within the public sector. The national honor award with respect to assigning responsibilities, positions and acknowledgement of skills should be a free and fair process so as to motivate the Nigerian citizens to improve their productiveness for nation growth and development.

Methodology

The survey research design was determined as the most suitable for the study, and was thus, adopted. In addition, the study employed a quantitative approach to arrive at its result. The survey design was applied to examine the effect of National Productivity Order of Merit Award Merit on the public sector performance from 2005 to 2015. The study relied on the use of

primary data collected as the views and opinions of study respondents, who were beneficiaries of the NPOM.

The population of the study was the total number of awardees of the National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) in the 2005 – 2015 period. This was determined to be a total of 200 individuals, as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: Population of the Study (Total Number of Nigerian National Productivity Order of Award past winners)

Beneficiary	Population
Individuals Awardees	133
Organizational Awardees	42
Selected NPC Staff	25
Total	200

Source: Researcher's Compilation.

As this was a manageable number, census method of data collection was applied to obtain data across study respondents. The research was, however, only able to obtain usable data from 153 respondents with the use of a structured questionnaire, as the research instrument. Both physical and online copies were administered to respondents were needed. Additionally, some were filled by phone. The data collection process was done with the help of two research assistants. The items in the questionnaire were face validated by two experts, from the

Department of public administration, Nasarawa State University, Keffi and the study supervisor. These specialists were given free hands to either include or remove any item deemed appropriately or inappropriately respectively. Based on their criticisms and suggestions, the instruments were finally modified. The Cronbach Alpha Techniques for testing reliability and internal consistency was used. The results show that the instrument is reliable. The reliability coefficients obtained are presented in table 2.

Table 1: Reliability Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Award	0.740
Individuals contribution	0.732
Performance	0.821

Source: Researcher's Computation

The collected data in the course of the questionnaire survey was used to estimate an OLS multiple regression model specified in (1).

$$PER = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AW + \beta_2 IC + \mu \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where: PER = Performance

IC = Individual contribution

AW = Award

β_0 = Constant (coefficient of intercept)

μ = Error term

Results and Discussion

Questionnaire Analysis

Table 2: Sector of Job

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Public Sector	115	75.2
Private Sector	38	24.8
Total	153	100

Source: Research Data, 2020

From the table 2, we have a total of 115 Public Sector respondents out of 153 or 75.2%, 38 or 24.8% from the Private Sector.

Table 3: Type of respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Past Individual Awardee	102	66.7
Past Organizational Awardee	32	20.9
NPC Staff	19	12.4
Total	153	100

Source: Research Data, 2020

From the table 3 we have a total of 102 Past Individual Awardees out of 153 or 66.7%, 32 or 20.9% from the Past Organizational Awardees and 19 or 12.4% from NPC Staff.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
PER	1.00	5.00	4.5229	.77021
AW	1.00	5.00	4.5359	.75242
IC	2.00	5.00	4.5752	.57000

Source: Research Data, 2020

The table 4 shows the mean, median, minimum, maximum and the standard deviation of the responses. The median is the proper measure of the average in this instance because of outliers. Although, from the

minimum and maximum values, there is no sign of outliers, but it is still necessary to state that the best measure of average for an ordinal response is median.

Table 5: Correlations

Variables	PER	AW	IC
PER	1		
AW	.739**	1	
IC	.524**	.534**	1

Source: SPSS Output, 2020

Table 5 represents the correlation matrix to the study which measures the strength of the relationship that exists between the variables which include: Performance, Award and Individual contribution.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive significant relationship between all the variables in the matrix above.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.755	.570	.564	.50844

Source: SPSS Output, 2020

The regression coefficient of $R = .755$ indicate that relationship exist between independent variable and dependent variable. The coefficient of determination

$R^2 = 0.570$ which shows that 57% of the variation in public sector performance is explained by awards and individual contributions.

Table 7: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	51.393	2	25.697	99.402	.000
Residual	38.777	150	.259		
Total	90.170	152			

Source: SPSS Output, 2020

Table 7 shows the ANOVA test performed on awards and individual contribution. It has a p-value equal to

0.000 which is lower than 0.05. Therefore, it was concluded that the model is significant and fit for use.

Table 8: Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.421	.344		1.222	.223
AW	.658	.065	.643	10.145	.000
IC	.244	.086	.181	2.855	.005

Source: SPSS Output, 2020

The result from table 8 shows that awards have a positive and significant effect on public sector performance in Nigeria, with $\beta = 0.658$ and $p = 0.000$. Thus, hypothesis one was not supported and therefore rejected at 5% level of significance. Since there is enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, the study concluded that there is significant effect of that award on public sector performance.

Lastly, result from table 8 also shows that individual contribution has a positive and significant effect on public sector performance in Nigeria, with $\beta = 0.244$ and $p = 0.005$. Thus, hypothesis two was not supported and therefore rejected at 5% level of significance. Since there is enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, the study concluded that there is significant effect of that individual contribution on public sector performance.

Discussion of Findings

The results revealed above indicate that awards assert a positive and significant effect on public sector performance in Nigeria. This result supports the findings of Li, et al (2022); Burtch, et al. (2022), and Beer et al. (2022) that confirm that private symbolic awards have motivating effects and lead to higher buyer profits. This implies that national award serves as a drive for motivating both public and private sectors players to contribute more into nation building.

Lastly, the results revealed above indicates that individual contribution assert a positive and significant effect on public sector performance in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the work of Li, et al (2022) that CEOs are more likely to engage in financial misconduct after the media names them as being among the best business leaders. This reveals that winning such an award is a meaningful event that increases the CEO's self-worth but also increases the CEO's sense of psychological entitlement, including the freedom to break rules.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the effect of National Productivity Order of Merit Award on public sector performance. Three research objectives were raise base on the independent variables and it was discovered that awards and individual contribution significantly influences public sector performance. The implication of this study is that when motivated employees become better and more committed at their tasks, productivity improves. The fact that mere participating in the process of being nominated for the award improves the productivity of the participants whether in the public or private sector shows that the National Productivity Order of Merit Award should have a positive impact on the public sector productivity. However, there are not enough NPOM award winners in the Nigerian public

sector to give a quantum positive impact that is needed for national economic breakthrough that Nigeria needs.

As a result of the findings and conclusions above, the study made the following recommendations, which if implemented will go a long way in improving the impact of the

National Productivity Order of Merit Award on national productivity and development in Nigeria:

- i The National Productivity Centre should embark on massive nationwide awareness campaign on

what the NPOMA represents in Nigeria to improve on the number and quality of participation.

- ii The NPOMA Centre should put a mechanism in place to monitor the progress of individual awardees and also motivate awardees by widely publishing the achievements of awardees periodically to enrich research and seminal interrogations as part of their efforts at creating a national productivity culture.

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