

EFFECTIVENESS OF NON-FINANCIAL MOTIVATIONAL SCHEME ON CONSTRUCTION WORKERS OUTPUT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria's labour intensive construction industry, ways of motivating workers to ensure high productivity and enhanced job performance are regarded as important factors for long-term survival of firms. Financial motivation is adjudged a lower level motivator and should not be treated as a prime motivator by many authors. This study investigates the effectiveness of non-financial motivational schemes employed by construction firms within the Lagos metropolis. A survey research design was adopted. The survey instrument comprises two sets of close ended questionnaires administered to skilled and semi-skilled workers and the management staff. The findings of the study reveal that the most effective non-financial motivation to skilled and semi-skilled workers include provision of personal protective equipment, love and belongingness, leadership by example, free transportation and free medical facilities. The most effective non-financial motivation to management staff include provision of residential accommodation, company car with free fuel allocation, pension scheme and opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self-esteem. The value of this study for national development is in view of the slow response of the construction industry of developing countries to mechanization of construction operation, which leaves them with large workforce, necessitating the need to adopt an effective means of motivation to enhance productivity.

Keywords: Construction Industry, Labour, Motivation, Productivity, Nigeria.

Introduction

According to Mee-Edoie and Andawei (2002), employees in the civil and building construction industry of any country are the largest compared to other single industries. The output of the industry also accounts for over 50% of the country's gross capital formation (Fagbenle *et al.*, 2004), and 3% - 8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in most countries (Aiyetan and Olotuah, 2006). The continuous decline in the productivity of the construction industry of developed and developing economy has been widely reported (Kaming *et al.*, 1998; Arditi and Mokhtar, 2000; Akindede, 2003). The construction industry in Nigeria like any other developing country is labour intensive because of its slow response to mechanisation of construction operations necessitating the need to adopt an effective means of motivation to enhance productivity. Hewage and Ruwanpuwa, (2006) acknowledge the fact that Productivity improvement is one of the key focus areas in the construction industry in Alberta, as well as in North America.

Olomolaiye and Price (1989) argued that construction work contains some inherent

intrinsic motivators and that in order to motivate workers, the management should provide a congenial working climate for motivators such as the work itself, feelings of accomplishment by the worker and recognition of efforts. They further claimed that financial motivation or pay (in form of salary) is a lower level motivator and should not be treated as a prime motivator. Olomolaiye (1990), in his study on bricklayers' motivation in the United Kingdom concluded that motivation does not influence the rate of working but rather what determines how fast a worker produces is more of a function of his equipment and skill employed. Workers who are inadequately motivated according to Ng *et al.*, (2004) become apathetic or even resentful of their work. They further argued that low productivity can be attributed to the presence of a number of demotivators and therefore motivation cannot manifest in improved productivity unless these demotivators are first removed. Demotivation of construction workers may be mitigated through the recognition of basic human needs, giving praise, and providing adequate management support (Ng *et al.*, 2004). Fagbenle *et al.* (2004) in a study of bricklayer's

productivity concluded that non-financial incentives are preferred as methods of motivating employees in the Nigerian construction industry. However, nothing has been done on assessing the effectiveness of non-financial motivation on workers' productivity in the construction industry. Besides, previous research in this area has been trade specific particularly for bricklayers in southwest, southeast and northern Nigeria (Fagbenle *et al.*, 2004). However, this research will concentrate only in Lagos metropolis but on a wide spread of craftsmen including bricklayers, carpenters, steel fixers and construction professionals. This undoubtedly represents a gap in knowledge that this study intends to fill. The objectives of the current study therefore are to identify the types of non-financial motivational schemes adopted by construction firms toward improved productivity, and to assess the effectiveness of the identified motivational scheme in increasing workers output and job performance

Methodology

Study Area

The study was conducted in Lagos metropolis. Lagos is located in South-West Nigeria with a population of about 17million in 2007 and a growth rate (3.2%). Being a former federal capital, it is adjudged the commercial nerve centre of the country and listed as one of the 25 megacities of the world. There are numerous construction projects in Lagos executed by both the private and public sector to meet the housing, economic and infrastructure requirements of the emerging megacity.

Sample Collection

Two sets of questionnaires were prepared for data collection in this study, based on the Likert type scale of zero to five (0-5) to sample the opinion of two hierarchies of construction workers, the management staff on one hand and the skilled and semi-skilled workers on the other hand. Ninety four skilled and semi skilled workers and 48 management staff were sampled using stratified random sampling technique.

Instrument for data collection

The questionnaire used for the survey included (among other items) 28 non-financial motivational schemes identified through interview and from the literature. The respondents were asked to indicate the types of motivational scheme used in their employment using a five point Likert scale ranging from not

at all (1) to all the time (5). They were also required to indicate the degree of effectiveness of the 28 identified non-financial motivational scheme in increasing workers productivity on a five point Likert scale from poorly effective (1) to extremely effective (5).

Data Analyses

The tools used for data analysis are relative index to determine the premium placed on each variable of non-financial motivation, percentages and mean score.

Results and discussion

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The trade category of the skilled and semi-skilled workers is shown in Figure 1 below. It can be seen that a wide response was received from different categories of construction workers including iron benders (or steel fixers) 14%, carpenters 13%, bricklayers 24%, painters 12%, electricians 13%, welders 5%, plumbers 5% and tilers 4%. The reason for the variation in response rate is because different workers are employed in any particular site based on the stage of work at that site. For instance, at the foundation stage, more carpenters, iron benders and masons are needed but during the later stages of a project, the finishing experts are required e.g. painters, tilers, plumbers etc. Construction work was at different stages on different sites at the time of administering the questionnaire.

The job category of the management staff as shown in Figure 2 revealed that a wide range of responses were received from different categories of management staff including project managers 8%, site supervisors 15%, site managers 8%, site surveyors 13%, architects 4%, quantity surveyors 4%, site engineers 17%, M/E engineers 13%, personnel officers 4%, quality and safety officers (QSE) 8% and cost controller 6%. The difference between quantity surveyor and cost controller is that while the quantity surveyor is in charge of monitoring the cost of the project and making sure that it does not exceed its budget, by measuring the quantity of work done in accordance with the bill of quantities, the cost controller is concerned more with payment of workers' salaries, deductions of loans given and other site expenses.

Figure 3 shows the marital status for management staff and skilled and semi-skilled workers respectively.

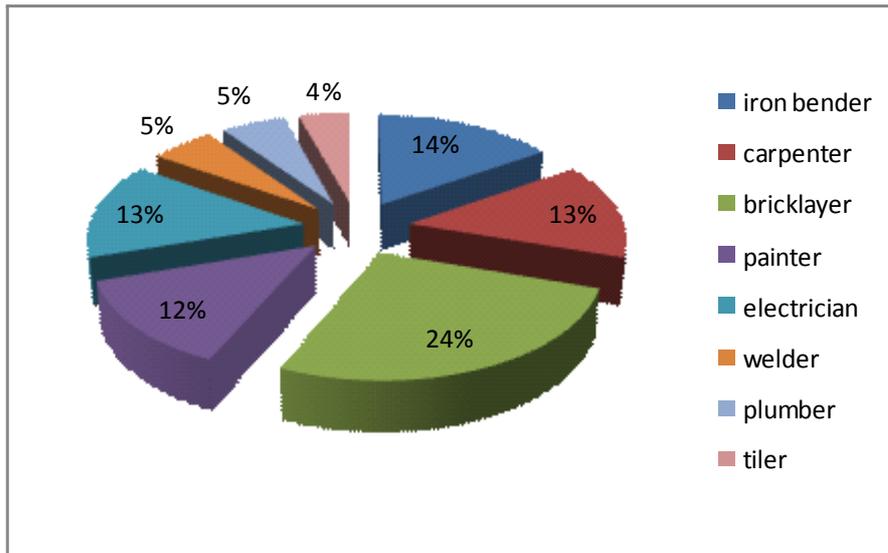


Figure 1 Trade category for skilled and semi-skilled workers

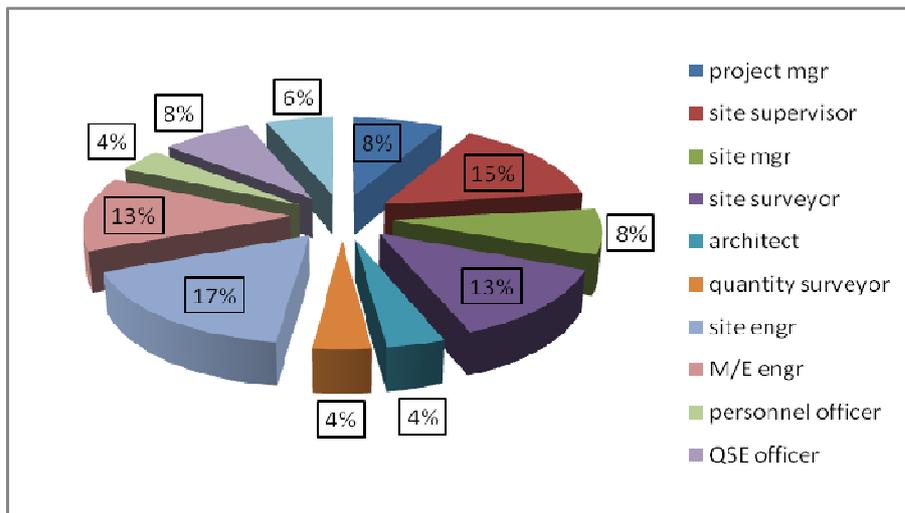


Figure 2 Job category for management staff

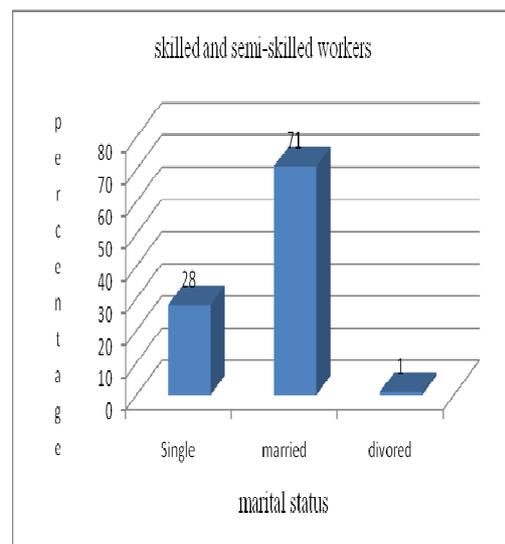
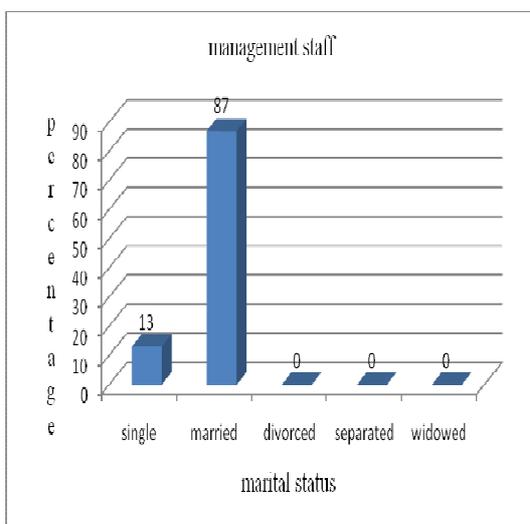


Figure 3 Marital status for management staff and skilled & semi-skilled workers

This reveals that 71% of workers and 87% of professionals are married while 28% and 13% of workers and professionals respectively are single. This implies that the majority of the work force are married and in african traditional family setting, a typical household comprises of atleast three dependants excluding extended family members and well wishers who all look up to the bread winner for their livelihood.

Non-financial motivational scheme

The respondents (comprising of skilled and semi-skilled workers and management staff) were asked to indicate the type of non-financial motivational schemes often employed in their organisation using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Not at all (1) to All the time (5). The result of the response is presented in Table 1 for skilled and semi-skilled workers. The results show that provision of personal protective equipment, opportunity to observe national holidays, free transportation, love and belongingness, opportunity to learn new skills or techniques, free medical facilities top the list of twenty non-financial motivational schemes for skilled and semi-skilled workers.

The findings of this study corroborated the study of Ibironke *et al.* (2011) which concluded that staff work best when working equipment and facilities are adequately provided. The outcome of this study also compares favourably with that of previous studies (Olomolaiye and Ogunlana, 1988; Kaming *et al.*, 1998; Aiyetan and Olotuah, 2006) all who concluded that of the motivational factors available in the Nigerian construction industry, the most used for higher performance includes healthcare services and provision of transportation facilities to and from site, good relationship with mates, opportunity for challenging job, job security, recognition on the job and good welfare conditions.

The highest ranking accorded the provision of personal protective equipments e.g nose masks, eye goggles, hand gloves, overalls e.t.c is a manifestation of the fact that construction firms recognize the advantages of providing appropriate working tools for safety of individual workers as major labour-saving devices for productivity improvement. The implication of this finding is that most workers today now regard safety as a top booster to productivity. Also when given the opportunity to observe national holidays workers tend to return to work and put in their best performance. Transportation and healthcare facilities which is free put confidence into workers to work hard so

that they do not have to worry about how to get home after a hard day's work because they will be transported freely and when they are sick they will be taken care of without spending money out of their own pocket.

The least popular non-financial reward schemes are free food vouchers which ranked 20th among the rank, support for family educational needs (19th), provision of recreational facilities (18th) and provision of residential accommodation (17th). This shows that most firms do not give accommodation to workers. The likely reason that can be adduced for this is the large capital outlay involved in providing accommodation for all the workers. On the other hand, the result shown in Table 2 shows that pension scheme, opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self-esteem, provision of accommodation, opportunity to utilize skills and techniques, opportunity for challenging work, health, life and insurance cover, opportunity to observe national holidays, provision of company car top the list of the different twenty-eight (28) non-financial motivation scheme provided to management staff.

Pension is the sum of money made available to a worker for his welfare after retirement. Usually, every employee is entitled to his pension together with other retirement benefits after a certain age of retirement. This is stipulated in the labour laws of Nigeria governing worker's welfare. While the employee makes his own contribution every month into an account, the employer also makes a contribution every month on behalf of the employee. The employee cannot collect this money until after a certain number of years though he can know how much is in his account. Various pension schemes have been put in place by different organizations which the employees benefit from. We can therefore adduce that this is a most popular motivational reward system presently available in the construction industry.

Further findings of this study imply that provision of accommodation is another popular motivation given to management staff but which is not provided to skilled and semi-skilled workers due to the huge capital involved. Management staff are also given the opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self-esteem as this tends to boost their confidence and increase their morale to perform better. When given the opportunity to utilize skills and knowledge, opportunity for challenging work

and opportunity to observe national holidays, management staff in turn put in their best efforts to achieve company goals and objectives.

The least popular of these motivational reward schemes for management staff are company sponsoring employee of the year to visit holiday resorts, mention in monthly magazine, club membership, achieving points to qualify for sporting activities, obtaining canteen vouchers by accumulation points for achievements and employee of the month trophy. The reason for their unpopularity is because they are not being practised by most construction firms. Perhaps, if some firms would consider implementing some of these reward systems, they might serve as productivity booster.

Effectiveness of Motivational Scheme

The respondents were asked to rank the effectiveness of the various motivational schemes in improving job performance/productivity using six-point likert scale ranging from extremely effective (ranked 5) to not effective (ranked 0). The result as presented in Table 3 for skilled and semi-skilled workers indicates that provision of personal protective equipment, love and belongingness, leadership by example, finish and go and free transportation top the list of the twenty different motivational systems in terms of their effectiveness in improving productivity. These findings are similar to that of Fagbenle *et al.*, 2004 who studied the impact of non-financial incentives on bricklayer productivity in Nigeria. They concluded that provision of working tools and equipment, free transportation to and from site and leadership by example are the top three effective motivational schemes for productivity.

The term “finish and go” commonly used in the construction industry simply means to complete an assigned task and close for the day. Usually an agreed portion of work is given to a worker by his supervisor and when it is concluded satisfactorily and approved by the supervisor, the worker is then free to go home. Some of the workers enjoy this because it gives them the free time to go home and rest before resuming the following day. Some may choose not to go on break and face the work squarely to finish on time. This phenomenon tends to boost productivity as this cut down on idle time of workers.

Emergency loan/IOU is another effective motivational reward scheme put in place by various organizations to give workers access to money in times of emergency when they may

not have received their salary. IOU simply means “I OWE YOU” and it is like cash advance pending when the worker received his weekly or monthly wages. Workers tend to enjoy this a lot as it enables them to have some money to take care of family needs or other urgent needs that arises during the course of their work.

The least effective non-financial motivational scheme are free food vouchers (20th), support for family educational needs (19th), health/life or accident insurance (18th), support for family medical needs (17th) and support for education/training (16th). The implication of this is that construction firms do not provide any form of support for the medical or educational needs of employees’ family, this can be due to the capital involved to implement these schemes.

The results obtained for management staff are given in Table 4. The results from Table 4 reveals that the most effective non-financial motivational scheme for professionals are provision of accommodation which placed (1st) among the rank, company car (2nd), free fuel allocation (3rd), opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self-esteem (4th), provision of mobile phones and recharge card for free conversation (5th).

The least effective non-financial motivational scheme are employee of the month trophy (23rd), formal praise from superior in form of certificates (24th), achieving points to qualify for sporting activities (25th), obtaining canteen vouchers by accumulating points for good performance (26th), company sponsoring employee of the year to visit holiday resort (27th) and mention in monthly magazine (28th).

Conclusion

This study has dealt extensively with identifying the various types of non-financial motivational scheme presently being employed by construction firms within the Lagos metropolis. It also examined the effectiveness of various non-financial motivation in improving job performance or productivity of skilled and semi-skilled workers as well as management staff.

The various types of non-financial motivational scheme identified by skilled and semi-skilled workers include provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as eye goggles, nose masks, helmet, safety shoes, overalls, reflective jackets etc. Others are opportunity to observe national holidays, free

transportation, love and belongingness, opportunity to learn new skills or techniques, free medical facilities, emergency loan/IOU, pension scheme, leadership by example and gifts during festive seasons.

The various types of non-financial motivation identified by management staff include pension scheme, provision of accommodation, company car, free fuel allocation, mobile phones and recharge cards for free conversation, rapid promotion opportunities, vacation leave, job security, free tea/coffee at work, opportunity to utilize skills and knowledge, opportunity for challenging work. Others are provision of utilities, opportunity to learn new things and opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self-esteem.

The most effective of these non-financial motivation systems as identified by skilled and semi-skilled workers with mean value ≥ 3.5 include provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), love and belongingness, leadership by example, finish and go (no delay after day's work), free transportation, opportunity to observe national holidays and free medical facilities.

The most effective of the non-financial motivation systems as identified by management staff with mean value ≥ 3.5 include opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self-esteem, pension scheme, accommodation, opportunity to utilize skills and knowledge, opportunity for challenging work, health/life insurance cover, opportunity to observe national holiday, provision of company car and free fuel allocation.

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Table 1 Non-financial motivational scheme employed by construction firms to motivate skilled and semi-skilled workers

S/N	NON-FINANCIAL MOTIVATIONAL SCHEME	Frequency of use					Points Total	MEAN	RI	RANK
		Not at all	Rarely used	Sometimes used	Most times	All the time				
		1	2	3	4	5				
1	Provision of personal protective equipment	3	0	10	9	72	429	4.56	0.91	1st
2	Opportunity to observe national holidays	1	7	20	37	29	368	3.91	0.78	2nd
3	Free transportation	18	4	8	6	58	364	3.87	0.77	3rd
4	Love and belongingness	11	6	5	39	33	359	3.82	0.76	4th
5	Opportunity to learn new skills or techniques	2	20	18	15	39	351	3.73	0.75	5th
6	Free medical facilities	6	3	35	19	31	348	3.7	0.74	6th
7	Leadership by example	13	7	8	36	30	345	3.67	0.73	7th
8	Finish and go , no delay after day's work	14	5	6	42	27	345	3.67	0.73	7th
9	Flexible work hours	12	19	16	9	38	324	3.45	0.69	9th
10	Emergency loan/IOU	23	3	19	24	25	307	3.27	0.65	10th
11	Job security	28	13	13	16	24	277	2.95	0.59	11th
12	Pension scheme	35	11	7	13	28	270	2.87	0.57	12th
13	Gift during festive periods	29	15	22	14	14	251	2.67	0.53	13th
14	Health, life or accident insurance	40	12	11	4	27	248	2.64	0.52	14th
15	Support for family medical needs	34	24	17	8	11	220	2.34	0.47	15th
16	Support for education or training	45	17	13	15	4	198	2.11	0.42	16th
17	Provision of residential accommodation	60	2	13	7	12	191	2.03	0.41	17th
18	Provision of recreational facilities	47	19	24	0	4	177	1.88	0.38	18th
19	Support for family educational needs	59	21	6	4	4	155	1.65	0.33	19th
20	Free food vouchers	78	3	3	1	9	142	1.51	0.3	20th

RI = Relative Index

Table 2 Non-financial motivational scheme provided by construction firms to management staff

S/N	NON-FINANCIAL MOTIVATIONAL SCHEME	Frequency of use					Points Total	MEAN	RI	RANK
		Not At all 1	Rarely used 2	Sometimes used 3	Most times 4	All the time 5				
1	Pension scheme	1	1	8	14	25	206	4.30	0.87	1st
2	Opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self esteem	0	1	7	17	23	206	4.29	0.86	2nd
3	Accommodation	5	1	4	11	28	203	4.21	0.84	3rd
4	Opportunity to utilize skills and knowledge	1	0	8	19	20	201	4.19	0.83	4th
5	Opportunity for challenging work	0	0	12	25	11	191	3.98	0.80	5th
6	Health, life insurance cover	7	2	5	12	22	184	3.83	0.77	6th
7	Opportunity to observe national holidays	0	3	20	16	9	175	3.65	0.73	7th
8	Company car	10	2	4	15	17	171	3.56	0.71	8th
9	Free fuel allocation	10	2	2	19	15	171	3.56	0.71	8th
10	Mobile phones with recharge cards	6	3	18	6	15	165	3.43	0.69	10th
11	Free tea/coffee at work	8	0	19	6	15	164	3.42	0.68	11th
12	Rapid promotion opportunities	2	6	21	15	4	157	3.27	0.65	12th
13	Vacation leave	5	8	18	10	7	150	3.13	0.63	13th
14	Opportunity to learn new things	0	1	10	20	17	147	3.06	0.61	14th
15	Job security	10	8	10	10	10	146	3.04	0.61	15th
16	Provision of utilities	14	1	12	13	8	144	3.00	0.60	16th
17	Stimulating physical/work environment	8	10	15	5	10	143	2.98	0.60	17th
18	Informal Praise from superior (thank you)	6	12	17	10	3	136	2.83	0.57	18th
19	Flexible work hours	6	11	25	6	0	127	2.65	0.53	19th
20	Education /training assistance	11	5	25	7	0	124	2.58	0.52	20th
21	Symbolic gifts e.g.caps, t-shirt	17	10	15	4	2	108	2.25	0.45	21st
22	Formal praise from superior (certificate)	18	10	14	5	1	105	2.19	0.44	22nd
23	Employee of the month trophy	20	15	8	5	0	94	1.96	0.39	23rd
24	Obtaining canteen vouchers by accumulating points	28	20	0	0	0	68	1.42	0.28	24th
25	Club membership	36	8	4	0	0	64	1.33	0.27	25th
26	Achieving points to qualify for sporting activities	35	12	1	0	0	62	1.29	0.26	26th
27	Mention in monthly magazine	35	12	1	0	0	62	1.29	0.26	26th
28	Company sponsoring employee of the year to visit holiday resort	38	10	0	0	0	58	1.21	0.24	28th

Table 3 Effectiveness of non-financial reward scheme as perceived by skilled and semi-skilled workers

S/N	Non-financial motivational Scheme	Response per frequency					No effect	Total	Mean	RI	Rank
		Ext. high	High	Average	Fair	Poor					
1	Provision of personal protective equipment	24	46	8	2	10	4	342	3.64	0.73	1st
2	Love and belongingness	17	40	20	9	6	2	329	3.50	0.70	2nd
3	Leadership by example	15	40	22	9	6	2	325	3.45	0.69	3rd
4	Finish and go, no delay after day's work	17	41	17	7	3	9	317	3.37	0.67	4th
5	Free transportation	12	44	14	9	6	9	302	3.21	0.64	5th
6	Opportunity to observe national holidays	12	24	38	10	3	7	293	3.11	0.62	6th
7	Free medical facilities	9	38	24	6	11	6	292	3.10	0.62	7th
8	Emergency loan/IOU	5	38	31	7	6	7	290	3.08	0.62	8th
9	Opportunity to learn new skills or techniques	8	15	45	9	8	9	261	2.77	0.56	9th
10	Flexible work hours	5	22	32	18	4	13	249	2.64	0.53	10th
11	Gift during festive periods	8	4	46	20	8	8	242	2.57	0.51	11th
12	provision of residential accommodation	11	10	33	13	11	16	231	2.45	0.49	12th
13	pension scheme	9	7	33	20	11	14	223	2.37	0.47	13th
14	Job security	3	4	45	9	18	15	202	2.14	0.43	14th
15	Provision of recreational facilities	6	4	32	16	15	21	189	2.01	0.40	15th
16	Support for education or training	2	7	31	20	17	17	188	2.00	0.40	16th
17	support for family medical needs	7	9	14	28	18	18	187	1.98	0.40	17th
18	Health, life or accident insurance	7	9	15	8	30	25	162	1.72	0.34	18th
19	Support for family educational needs	3	2	16	23	23	27	140	1.48	0.30	19th
20	Free food vouchers	3	4	9	4	20	54	86	0.91	0.18	20th

RI= Relative Index

Table 4 Effectiveness of non-financial reward scheme as perceived by management staff

S/N	Non-financial motivational Scheme	Response per frequency						Total	Mean	RI	RANK
		Ext. eff.	Eff.	Mod. eff.	Fairly eff.	Poorly eff.	Not eff.				
		5	4	3	2	1	0				
1	Accommodation	32	13	3	0	0	0	221	4.60	0.92	1st
2	Company car	22	20	6	0	0	0	193	4.02	0.87	2nd
3	Free fuel allocation	21	20	7	0	0	0	206	4.29	0.86	3rd
4	Opportunity to do something that gives a sense of self esteem	15	20	13	0	0	0	194	4.04	0.81	4th
5	Mobile phones for free conversation	17	15	16	0	0	0	193	4.02	0.80	5th
6	Pension Scheme	6	32	10	0	0	0	193	4.02	0.80	5th
7	Job security	17	17	11	3	0	0	192	4.00	0.80	7th
8	Opportunity to utilize skills and knowledge	13	21	14	0	0	0	191	3.97	0.80	8th
9	Health, life insurance cover	13	20	14	1	0	0	189	3.93	0.79	9th
10	Opportunity for challenging work	11	19	18	0	0	0	185	3.85	0.77	10th
11	opportunity to learn new things	9	19	20	0	0	0	181	3.77	0.75	11th
12	Provision of utilities	10	20	15	2	1	0	180	3.75	0.75	12th
13	Rapid promotion opportunities	12	14	20	2	0	0	180	3.75	0.75	12th
14	Vacation leave	4	25	18	0	0	1	174	3.62	0.73	14th
15	Education /training assistance	10	14	16	7	1	0	169	3.52	0.70	15th
16	Informal Praise from superior (thank you)	3	20	18	7	0	0	163	3.39	0.68	16th
17	Symbolic gifts e.g .caps, t-shirt	0	19	23	6	0	0	157	3.27	0.65	17th
18	Opportunity to observe national holidays	3	19	15	8	0	3	152	3.16	0.63	18th
19	Free tea/coffee at work	0	17	24	5	0	2	150	3.12	0.62	19th
20	Stimulating physical/work environment	1	8	35	4	0	0	150	3.12	0.62	19th
21	Club membership	7	13	6	17	3	2	142	2.95	0.59	21st
22	Flexible work hours	0	14	16	14	4	0	136	2.83	0.57	22nd
23	Employee of the month trophy	0	9	26	10	0	3	134	2.79	0.56	23rd
24	Formal praise from superior (certificate)	0	10	20	15	3	0	133	2.77	0.55	24th
25	Achieving points to qualify for sporting activities	0	5	15	23	2	3	113	2.35	0.47	25th
26	Obtaining canteen vouchers by accumulating points	0	6	8	12	16	6	98	2.04	0.41	26th
27	Company sponsoring employee of the year to visit holiday resort	1	6	6	14	8	13	83	1.72	0.35	27th
28	Mention in monthly magazine	0	4	4	7	13	20	55	1.14	0.23	28th