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Impact of National Minimum Wage Increase on Employee Performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. The study was necessitated by concerns that, despite increases in statutory wages, rising inflation, delays in wage implementation, and increasing living costs may have limited the extent to which improved remuneration translated into better employee performance. The study was anchored on the Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted to determine the impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance. The target population comprised 2,564 academic and non-academic staff of Taraba State University, Jalingo, from which a sample size of 346 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane sampling formula. A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary instrument for data collection, while both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation, while regression analysis was used to test the study hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the national minimum wage increase had a significant positive relationship with employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. The study concluded that although salary increments positively influenced employee performance, sustainable improvements in productivity required complementary motivational strategies beyond financial incentives. The study therefore recommended that the management of Taraba State University and relevant government authorities should ensure prompt and full implementation of the approved national minimum wage, periodically review staff remuneration in line with prevailing economic realities, strengthen non-monetary motivational programmes such as staff development, promotion, recognition, and conducive working conditions, and establish effective monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the long-term impact of wage policies on employee performance and institutional productivity.

Keywords: National Minimum Wage, Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction Productivity Academic staff

INTRODUCTION

Globally, employee performance in public institutions has become an important concern because the effectiveness of government organisations depends largely on the commitment, motivation, competence, and productivity of their employees. One of the major factors influencing employee performance is remuneration, as adequate wages can improve job satisfaction, motivation, organisational commitment, and productivity. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) recognises fair remuneration as an important component of decent work and employee welfare. Consequently, many countries have adopted minimum wage policies as instruments for protecting low-income workers, reducing income inequality, and improving living standards. However, the effectiveness of minimum wage policies depends on prevailing economic conditions, inflation, institutional capacity, purchasing power, and the extent to which wage increases are accompanied by improved working conditions and other employee welfare measures.

In Africa, employee performance in public institutions is closely associated with challenges such as inadequate wages, inflation, poor working conditions, limited institutional resources, and weak implementation of labour policies. Although many African countries have established minimum wage systems to protect workers, the benefits of such policies are sometimes undermined by economic instability and rising living costs. The African Development Bank (2021) has emphasised the importance of human capital development, decent employment, and improved productivity for sustainable development in Africa. In public institutions, inadequate remuneration may result in low morale, absenteeism, reduced commitment, labour disputes, and poor service delivery. The problem is particularly evident in the higher education sector, where poor remuneration and unfavourable working conditions can contribute to low employee morale, industrial actions, brain drain, and declining institutional productivity, thereby affecting the quality of teaching, research, administration, and other essential services.

In Nigeria, the relationship between minimum wage and employee performance has become increasingly significant due to persistent inflation and the rising cost of basic necessities. The National Minimum Wage Act, 2019 established a minimum wage of ₦30,000 per month, replacing the previous ₦18,000 minimum wage and representing an attempt by the government to improve workers' welfare and purchasing power. However, subsequent increases in the cost of food, transportation, housing, healthcare, and other essential goods and services significantly reduced the real value of the ₦30,000 wage. These economic pressures generated renewed demands from organised labour and other stakeholders for a further review of the minimum wage. The Federal Government consequently constituted a Tripartite Committee on National Minimum Wage in 2024 to review the existing wage and recommend a new rate that would better reflect prevailing economic realities.

A major development in Nigeria's wage policy occurred in 2024 with the enactment of the National Minimum Wage Act, 2024, which increased the statutory national minimum wage from ₦30,000 to ₦70,000 per month. The International Labour Organization (2024) reported the enactment of the new legislation, which represented a substantial nominal increase intended to improve workers' welfare in response to changing economic conditions. The ₦70,000 wage therefore represents the current statutory national minimum wage in Nigeria. However, the impact of the new wage on employee performance cannot be determined solely by the nominal increase because its real value is influenced by inflation and the cost of living. Furthermore, employees in public institutions may earn salaries based on established salary structures and grades rather than simply receiving the statutory minimum wage. Consequently, the relevance of the minimum wage extends beyond the ₦70,000 figure to include its effects on salary adjustments, purchasing power, employee motivation, job satisfaction, welfare, and productivity.

Within Nigerian public institutions, particularly universities, the issue of minimum wage and employee performance is therefore worthy of empirical investigation. Public universities depend on academic and non-academic employees to perform teaching, research, administrative, technical, and support functions necessary for achieving institutional objectives. Where remuneration and other welfare conditions are perceived as inadequate, employees may experience financial stress, dissatisfaction, reduced motivation, and declining commitment, which can negatively affect institutional performance. Conversely, improved

remuneration, when supported by favourable working conditions and effective management, may enhance employee morale, job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. The introduction of the ₦70,000 national minimum wage therefore provides an important context for assessing whether wage policy has contributed to improved employee welfare and performance in public institutions. Examining this relationship can provide useful evidence for policymakers and institutional administrators on the effectiveness of wage policy and the measures required to improve employee performance and service delivery.

The specific effects of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance at Taraba State University are underexplored in the academic literature. However, it is likely that the wage increase, while a step toward improving the financial well-being of employees, may not have an immediate or singular effect on performance. Factors such as the timely payment of wages, job satisfaction, work-life balance, administrative efficiency, and professional development opportunities are all integral to understanding how the wage increase might affect performance outcomes in Taraba State University. Hence, universities, employees are often motivated by factors such as job security, career growth, recognition, and access to resources that enhance their ability to perform their duties effectively (Okoro, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The increase in Nigeria's National Minimum Wage from ₦18,000 in 2011 to ₦30,000 in 2019 and subsequently to ₦70,000 in 2024 was introduced as a government policy measure to improve workers' welfare, purchasing power, motivation, and productivity in public institutions. However, despite these successive wage increases, rising inflation and the increasing cost of food, transportation, accommodation, healthcare, and other basic necessities have continued to place financial pressure on workers and may have reduced the real value of wage improvements. At Taraba State University, Jalingo, where academic and non-academic employees are responsible for teaching, research, administration, technical, and support services, it remains uncertain whether the successive minimum-wage adjustments have translated into improved employee motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, productivity, and overall performance. Although the ₦70,000 minimum wage introduced in 2024 represents a significant increase from the ₦30,000 wage of 2019 and the ₦18,000 wage of 2011, there is limited empirical evidence on its actual effect, alongside the earlier wage adjustments, on employee performance within the university. This study therefore seeks to examine the effect of the National Minimum Wage on employee performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo, with particular attention to the extent to which wage increases have improved employee welfare, motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity.

Furthermore, there are issues related to inadequate monitoring, lack of performance-based incentives, and weak institutional frameworks that hinder the effective translation of wage increases into improved employee output. In the absence of clear performance management systems, increased wages may not necessarily result in higher productivity or accountability.

Another major research problem was the dearth of empirical literature specifically examining the impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo. Although previous studies had examined minimum wage policies, employee motivation, remuneration, job satisfaction, and organizational performance in Nigeria, limited empirical evidence was available on how the wage increase had affected academic and non-academic staff within Taraba State University.

Therefore, the problem was not only concerned with the implementation of the national minimum wage increase but also with the extent to which the increased remuneration had influenced employee performance within the specific context of Taraba State University, Jalingo. The absence of sufficient empirical literature on the university, coupled with inadequate performance monitoring, limited performance-based incentives, weak institutional frameworks, and prevailing economic pressures, created the need for a systematic investigation. Therefore, the problem lies not only in the implementation of the minimum wage policy but also in understanding the extent to which it influences employee performance within the specific context of Taraba State University. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how the national minimum wage increase has affected employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo,

by analyzing changes in job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity among employees following the wage adjustment.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

i. What is the impact of the national minimum wage increase on the employee's performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo?
ii. How has the wage increase influenced employees motivation in Taraba State University, Jalingo?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to evaluate how national minimum wage increase has affected employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. The specific objectives of this study are to:

i. Examine the impact of the national minimum wage increase on the employee's performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.
ii. Assess the influence of the national minimum wage increase on employee's motivation in Tarába State University, Jalingo.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were propose:

Ho_1: There is no significant impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

Ho_2: The national minimum wage increase has no significant influence on employee motivation in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

Conceptual Review

National Minimum Wage

The concept of a national minimum wage refers to the legally established lowest amount of remuneration that an employer is required to pay a worker for work performed within a specified period. It is an important labour policy instrument designed to protect workers, particularly low-income earners, from exploitation and inadequate remuneration while promoting decent living standards. In Nigeria, the national minimum wage has undergone several revisions in response to inflation, rising living costs and demands from organised labour. The National Minimum Wage Act of 2011 established a minimum wage of ₦18,000, which was later increased to ₦30,000 in 2019 following negotiations between the Federal Government and labour unions. However, the rapid rise in the prices of food, transportation, housing, healthcare and other essential commodities substantially reduced the purchasing power of the ₦30,000 wage, resulting in renewed demands for an upward review. Consequently, the Federal Government approved a new national minimum wage of ₦70,000 in 2024, representing a significant increase from the previous wage. The current ₦70,000 minimum wage was introduced to improve workers' purchasing power, enhance their welfare, reduce financial hardship and provide a more realistic income floor in the face of increasing living costs. The policy is particularly important for public sector employees because improved remuneration can enhance employee morale, job satisfaction, motivation and commitment, thereby potentially improving productivity and organisational performance. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the ₦70,000 minimum wage depends on its effective implementation, timely payment, employer compliance and the ability of wage increases to keep pace with inflation.

Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to how well individuals carry out their assigned tasks, roles, and responsibilities in an organization. It is a key determinant of organizational success, as it directly affects productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. According to Aguinis (2019), employee performance can be measured through various dimensions such as quality of work, efficiency, timeliness, and adherence to organizational goals. Effective performance ensures that organizations achieve their strategic objectives in a competitive environment.

One of the central themes in employee performance literature is the role of motivation. Motivation has been linked to performance since motivated employees tend to work harder and more efficiently. Aspos (2017) asserts that employee performance increases when workers are intrinsically or extrinsically

motivated. Similarly, Saleem, Mahmood, and Mahmood (2019) emphasize that motivational factors such as recognition, rewards, and career growth opportunities play a crucial role in enhancing performance across various sectors.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel content and fulfilled with their jobs. It encompasses various aspects such as working conditions, compensation, interpersonal relationships, job security, and opportunities for growth. According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences." Recent research continues to adopt and refine this definition. For instance, Bakotic. and Babic (2017) noted that job satisfaction directly correlates with employee well-being and organizational performance.

The concept has been widely studied due to its significance in organizational behavior and human resource management. A study by Akinwale and George (2018) emphasized that job satisfaction is a major determinant of employee turnover, absenteeism, and productivity. Organizations that fail to monitor and improve satisfaction levels risk high attrition rates and reduced employee morale, which can affect overall productivity and service delivery. Various factors influence job satisfaction, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Intrinsic factors, such as achievement and recognition, stem from the nature of the job itself, while extrinsic factors, such as salary, working conditions, and job security, come from outside the job. Research by Oyeniyi, et al. (2017) revealed that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors significantly impact job satisfaction among public sector employees in Nigeria. Another critical element is the role of management and leadership style in influencing job satisfaction. According to Ojedokun and ldowu (2018), supportive leadership enhances employee satisfaction by creating an environment of trust and collaboration. Poor leadership on the other hand, often leads to dissatisfaction and disengagement.

Working conditions and organizational culture also play a vital role. A study by Adeoye and Elegunde (2018) found that a positive work environment contributes significantly to employee satisfaction. They argued that factors such as physical workspace, interpersonal relationships, and workload management are critical in shaping employees' attitudes toward their jobs. Job satisfaction is also influenced by career development opportunities. According to Ezeanyim, Ezinwa, and Ajakpo (2019), employees who perceive growth and advancement opportunities in their organizations tend to report higher satisfaction levels. The lack of such opportunities often leads to frustration and reduced job commitment. Gender and demographic variables may also affect how employees perceive satisfaction. For instance, a study by Omoniyi and Fasasi (2019) highlighted that female employees often report lower job satisfaction levels compared to their male counterparts, especially in male- dominated industries. They attributed this to limited promotion opportunities and workplace discrimination.

Productivity

Productivity is a critical concept in economics, management, and organizational studies, often defined as the efficiency with which inputs are converted into outputs. According to Rios et al. (2017), productivity reflects how well resources such as labor, capital, and materials are utilized to achieve desired results. At the micro level, it denotes the output per unit of input within organizations, while at the macro level, it refers to national output and economic performance. It serves as a fundamental indicator of performance and growth. The concept of productivity has evolved over time and is now linked not only to output but also to quality, innovation, and sustainability. Chadee, et al. (2017) emphasized that modern organizations must view productivity beyond quantity, incorporating employee well-being, technological innovation, and process improvements. This broader view of productivity ensures long-term organizational competitiveness and sustainable economic growth.

Academic staff

Academic staff are the backbone of any higher education institution, playing a vital role in teaching, research, curriculum development, and institutional governance. They are typically classified as individuals engaged in the creation, dissemination, and evaluation of knowledge through formal education and scholarly work (Altbach, 2017). These professionals contribute to the intellectual growth of students while also advancing knowledge through research and publications. Their roles are critical not only to student outcomes but also to institutional reputation and national development. The academic profession

has undergone significant transformation in recent years, particularly due to globalization, technological change, and evolving expectations of higher education systems. As Teichler (2018) observed, academic staff are increasingly expected to perform multiple roles educator, researcher, innovator, and community leader often with limited resources and rising workloads. This expansion of duties has led to increased scrutiny of academic productivity and accountability, especially in developing countries.

Non-academic staff

Non-academic staff constitute a vital segment of the workforce in higher education institutions. Unlike academic staff who are directly involved in teaching and research, non- academic staff perform administrative, technical, clerical, and support functions that ensure the smooth operation of universities and colleges. According to Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2017), the effectiveness of any higher education institution largely depends on the efficiency and professionalism of its non-academic personnel. Their roles range from finance and records management to facility maintenance and student services.

The contributions of non-academic staff are often underappreciated in institutional planning and policy formulation. However, scholars argue that these staff members are indispensable for a functional academic environment. Ekundayo and Ajayi (2018) observed that non- academic staff form the backbone of university administration, providing crucial support for academic activities and contributing to institutional stability. Without their input, teaching, research, and community engagement efforts by academic staff may be significantly hindered.

Job satisfaction and motivation of non-academic staff have been major concerns in the literature. Studies have shown that factors such as inadequate remuneration, lack of promotion opportunities, and poor working conditions negatively affect their performance.

For example, Adebayo and Omole (2019) found that non-academic staff in Nigerian public universities often feel marginalized and excluded from decision-making processes, which lowers their morale and productivity, Addressing these issues is essential to enhance service delivery and institutional harmony.

Literature Review

The impact of the national minimum wage increase on the employee's performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo

The study by Ibrahim and John (2025) investigated the impact of the newly implemented ₦70,000 minimum wage on job satisfaction among academic and non-academic staff of Taraba State University (Jalingo). The study was anchored on the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory, which explains that salary acts as a hygiene factor that reduces dissatisfaction, while intrinsic motivators such as recognition and achievement influence long-term job satisfaction. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from academic and non-academic staff using structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools to determine the effect of the new minimum wage on job satisfaction levels. The findings revealed that the ₦70,000 minimum wage had a positive but moderate impact on job satisfaction among staff, as many respondents reported improved financial relief and reduced economic pressure. However, the study also found that job satisfaction was still affected by factors such as delayed salary payments, inflation, workload, and limited career development opportunities, which weakened the full effect of the wage increase. The study concluded that while the new minimum wage improves job satisfaction, it is not sufficient on its own to ensure sustained satisfaction among university employees. It recommended that government and university management should complement wage increases with improved working conditions, timely salary payments, and enhanced non-financial incentives. The study identified a gap in existing literature by showing that most previous studies focused mainly on wage levels and general satisfaction outcomes, with limited empirical attention given to how the ₦70,000 minimum wage specifically influences both academic and non-academic staff within Nigerian state universities, particularly in Taraba State University.

The study by Musa and Audu (2024) examined the relationship between wage structures and employee motivation in Northern Nigerian universities, focusing on how salary design, allowances, and compensation packages influence staff morale and productivity. The study was anchored on the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory, which explains that wage-related variables function as hygiene factors that reduce

dissatisfaction, while motivation is strengthened when combined with intrinsic factors such as recognition and achievement. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from academic and non-academic staff across selected universities in Northern Nigeria using structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to determine the relationship between wage structures and employee motivation. The findings revealed that wage structure has a significant positive relationship with employee motivation, indicating that well-structured salaries, timely allowances, and equitable compensation packages improve staff morale and commitment to duty. However, the study also found that the effect of wage structure on motivation was not uniform, as factors such as delayed salary payments, inflation, and disparities in allowance distribution weakened its overall impact. It was further observed that non-financial factors such as work environment, leadership style, and career progression opportunities also played a crucial role in shaping employee motivation. The study concluded that effective wage structures are essential for enhancing employee motivation in Northern Nigerian universities, but they are most effective when complemented with supportive organizational and non-financial incentives. It recommended that university management and government authorities should ensure fair and transparent wage systems, timely payment of salaries and allowances, and improved welfare packages to sustain staff motivation and productivity. The study identified a gap in existing literature by showing that most prior studies focused primarily on wage levels and motivation outcomes, with limited empirical attention given to how the design and internal structure of compensation packages (rather than just wage increases) influence employee motivation in Nigerian universities.

The influence of the national minimum wage increase on employee's motivation in Taraba State University, Jalingo

The study by Ibrahim and Musa (2025) assessed the impact of the newly implemented ₦70,000 minimum wage on the motivation of university workers in Taraba State University, Jalingo. The study was anchored on the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors (such as salary and working conditions) and motivators (such as recognition and achievement) in influencing employee motivation. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from both academic and non-academic staff using structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the extent to which the new minimum wage influences employee motivation. The findings revealed that the ₦70,000 minimum wage had a positive but moderate effect on employee motivation, as many respondents reported improved financial satisfaction and reduced economic stress. However, the study also found that motivation levels were still constrained by factors such as delayed salary payments, inflation, poor working conditions, and limited career advancement opportunities. It was further observed that while salary increases improved extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation remained largely unaffected. The study concluded that although the new minimum wage contributes to improving worker motivation, it is insufficient on its own to sustain high levels of motivation among university employees. It recommended that government and university management should complement wage increases with improved working conditions, timely payment of salaries, staff development programs, and non-financial incentives to enhance motivation and productivity. Ibrahim and Musa (2025) identified a gap in existing literature by revealing that most prior studies focused mainly on job satisfaction and retention, with limited attention given to how minimum wage adjustments affect the dual dimensions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within Nigerian universities.

The study by Abubakar and Salihu (2024) examined the relationship between wage policy reforms and staff motivation in public universities in Northern Nigeria, including Taraba State University (TSU). The study was anchored on the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory, which explains motivation through hygiene factors (such as salary and working conditions) and motivators (such as recognition and career advancement). A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from academic and non-academic staff in selected public universities using structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine the relationship between wage policy reforms and staff motivation. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between wage

policy reforms and staff motivation, indicating that improvements in wage structures and allowances enhance employees' extrinsic motivation and job engagement. However, the study also showed that the impact of wage reforms was moderated by non-monetary factors such as poor working conditions, delayed salary payments, inflationary pressures, and limited career development opportunities, which reduced the overall effectiveness of wage reforms in sustaining motivation. The study concluded that wage policy reforms alone are not sufficient to guarantee sustained staff motivation in public universities. It recommended that government and university administrators should complement wage reforms with improved working conditions, timely salary payments, and expanded opportunities for promotion, training, and career development in order to strengthen employee motivation and productivity. Abubakar and Salihu (2024) identified a gap in existing literature by highlighting that previous studies largely focused on the direct effect of wage increases on motivation, with limited attention to how institutional and environmental factors moderate the relationship between wage policy reforms and staff motivation in Nigerian public universities, particularly in Taraba State.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Public Service Motivation Theory

Public Service Motivation Theory

This study adopted Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory. The Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory is a widely acknowledged framework that explains why individuals choose to work in the public sector and what drives their performance within such roles. Initially articulated by Perry and Wise (1990), the theory asserts that individuals are motivated not merely by financial rewards but by intrinsic desires to serve the public and contribute to the greater good. This altruistic motivation sets public service employees apart from their counterparts in the private sector. In the context of Nigeria, and particularly institutions like Taraba State University in Jalingo, this theory becomes particularly relevant, given the socio-economic and political dynamics of public employment in the country.

At its core, PSM is built on four primary components: attraction to policymaking, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice (Perry, 1996). These dimensions explain why many civil servants remain dedicated despite poor remuneration or difficult working conditions. In a developing country like Nigeria, here public institutions are often under-resourced and overburdened, the dedication of civil servants, including lecturers and administrative staff at Taraba State University, is frequently fueled by a sense of responsibility to society rather than by material gain alone (Adebayo & Dada, 2022).

People choose to work in the public sector not only for financial gain but because they are intrinsically motivated to contribute to the common good. This assumption is central to PSM. Perry and Wise (1990) assert that individuals with high public service motivation seek roles that allow them to make a difference in society.

The motivational drives of public sector employees are distinct from those in the private sector. While private sector employees are often driven by profit, competition, and career progression, public servants are presumed to be more driven by values such as altruism, civic duty, and social justice (Perry, 1996).

One of the major criticisms of PSM theory is its ambiguous conceptual framework. Scholars argue that the definition of PSM lacks precision, as it blends diverse motivations such as altruism, civic duty, and commitment to public values without clearly distinguishing them (Ritz, Brewer, &Neumann, 2016). This lack of conceptual clarity complicates efforts to empirically test and validate the theory, leading to inconsistent findings across different studies and regions. Furthermore, critics point out that measuring PSM is inherently problematic. Perry (1996) developed a scale to measure PSM, but subsequent studies have questioned the reliabilíty and cultural neutrality of this measurement tool. For example, Vandenabeele and Van de Walle (2008) argue that the original scale may not be entirely applicable in non-Western contexts, such as sub-Saharan Africa, where motivations for public service are influenced by complex social, political, and religious factors. In Nigeria, for instance, motivations for public employment may be driven more by job security and patronage than by genuine public service ethos.

The Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory is relevant to the study of the impact of national minimum wage increase on employee performance among Nigerian workers, particularly in Taraba State

University, Jalingo. The theory posits that individuals working in the public sector are driven not only by financial incentives but also by intrinsic motivations such as commitment to public interest, civic duty, and compassion. In the context of Taraba State University, increasing the national minimum wage could enhance employee performance by satisfying both extrinsic and intrinsic needs. While PSM emphasizes intrinsic drivers, fair compensation such as a wage increase can reinforce employees' sense of value and justice, thus motivating them to perform better. In environments like Nigerian public universities, where poor remuneration has historically dampened morale, a minimum wage increase aligns with PSM by supporting the broader goal of sustaining an engaged, committed workforce. Hence, the theory provides a useful lens for examining how compensation reforms interact with public servants' motivations to impact their performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study **adopted** a descriptive correlational research design to explore the relationship between the national minimum wage increase and employee performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo. This design **was** well suited for assessing existing conditions and identifying the nature and strength of the relationship between the variables without manipulating them.

In this study, the population consisted of all academic and non-academic staff of Taraba State University, Jalingo, who were directly or indirectly affected by the national minimum wage policy. As of 2025, the total staff strength of the university stood at 2,564 employees (Deputy Registrar/Establishment Secretary, 2025). A sample size of three hundred and forty-six (346) staff **was used** for the study, and the formula that **guided** the researcher in selecting the sample size **was** the Taro Yamane statistical technique (1967). It is mathematically expressed as; n=N/(1=N(e)'. Where;

n =signifies the population size.
K=constant value
N= signifies the population under study
e= signifies the margin of error

Therefore, $n = \frac{2,564}{(1+2,564(0.05)}$

$n = \frac{2,564}{(1+2,564(0.0025)}$

$\frac{2,564}{7.41}$

$n = 346.01$

An approximately (346) respondents served as the sample of this study

Purposive random sampling was used to select a total of 346 respondents out of the total population of 2,564. For this study, data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to both academic and non-academic staff of Taraba State University, Jalingo. The questionnaire was designed using a four-point Likert scale comprising Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) to enable respondents to express their level of agreement with the statements relating to the impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance.

The data collected through the questionnaires were coded, entered, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 27.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and describe their responses to the questionnaire items. These descriptive measures provided a clear understanding of the distribution of responses regarding the impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo.

Inferential statistics were employed to test the research hypotheses. Specifically, simple regression analysis was used to determine the nature, direction, and strength of the relationship between the national minimum wage increase (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable). The regression analysis enabled the researcher to determine the extent to which changes in the national minimum wage predicted variations in employee performance indicators such as productivity, motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, and absenteeism. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance, and decisions on whether to accept or reject the null hypotheses were based on the regression coefficient (β), coefficient of determination (R^2), F-statistic, and the associated p-value. Where the p-value was less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected; otherwise, it was accepted. The use of SPSS ensured accuracy, reliability, and proper interpretation of the statistical results.

Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

Table 1: Biodata of Respondents

Biodata Variables	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	180	55.0
	Female	147	45.0
Age (years)	Below 30	60	18.4
	30–39	120	36.7
	40–49	90	27.5
	50 and above	57	17.4
Highest Qualification	NCE/ND	70	21.4
	B.Sc./B.A	160	48.9
	M.Sc.	80	24.5
	Ph.D.	17	5.2
Years of Service	1–5 years	85	26.0
	6–10 years	110	33.6
	11–15 years	70	21.4
	16 years and above	62	18.9

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The biodata distribution of the 327 respondents provides useful insight into their demographic and professional characteristics, which helps in understanding the composition of the study population. In terms of gender, the results show that 180 (55.0%) of the respondents are male, while 147 (45.0%) are female. This indicates a fairly balanced gender representation, although males are slightly more dominant. The closeness in proportion suggests that both male and female perspectives are adequately captured in the study.

Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents fall within the active working-age categories. Those within 30–39 years constitute the highest proportion with 120 (36.7%), followed by 40–49 years with 90 (27.5%). Respondents below 30 years account for 60 (18.4%), while those aged 50 years and above represent 57 (17.4%). This shows that most of the respondents are in their mid-career stages, suggesting a workforce that is relatively experienced, productive, and capable of providing informed responses.

In terms of educational qualification, the data reveal that a large proportion of respondents are well educated. Specifically, 160 (48.9%) possess B.Sc./B.A degrees, 80 (24.5%) hold M.Sc. qualifications, 70 (21.4%) have NCE/ND certificates, and 17 (5.2%) possess Ph.D. degrees. This indicates that the respondents are largely graduates, which enhances the credibility and reliability of the information provided, as higher educational attainment often improves understanding of research-related issues.

For years of service, the findings show that 110 (33.6%) of the respondents have worked for 6–10 years, making it the largest group. This is followed by 1–5 years with 85 (26.0%), 11–15 years with 70 (21.4%), and 16 years and above with 62 (18.9%). This distribution suggests that a significant proportion of the respondents have moderate to long-term work experience, implying familiarity with workplace operations, policies, and institutional practices relevant to the study.

Table 2: Impact of Minimum Wage Increase on Employee Performance

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Job performance improved	140 (42.8%)	120 (36.7%)	40 (12.2%)	27 (8.3%)	3.14	0.92	Agreed
2	More committed to duties	150 (45.9%)	125 (38.2%)	30 (9.2%)	22 (6.7%)	3.23	0.88	Agreed
3	Reduced absenteeism	120 (36.7%)	130 (39.8%)	50 (15.3%)	27 (8.3%)	3.05	0.97	Agreed
4	Improved quality of work	160 (48.9%)	110 (33.6%)	35 (10.7%)	22 (6.7%)	3.25	0.90	Agreed
5	Improved punctuality	145 (44.3%)	120 (36.7%)	40 (12.2%)	22 (6.7%)	3.19	0.94	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The table presents respondents' views on the impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance. The results indicate a generally positive perception across all measured items, as all mean scores are above the benchmark value of 2.50, leading to an overall "Agreed" decision for each statement.

For the first item, "Job performance improved," a total of 140 respondents (42.8%) strongly agreed and 120 (36.7%) agreed, while 40 (12.2%) disagreed and 27 (8.3%) strongly disagreed. With a mean score of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.92, respondents generally agreed that the wage increase enhanced job performance.

Similarly, the second item shows that 150 respondents (45.9%) strongly agreed and 125 (38.2%) agreed that they are more committed to their duties due to the wage increase. Only a small proportion disagreed (9.2%) or strongly disagreed (6.7%), resulting in a mean of 3.23 and SD of 0.88, indicating strong agreement and relatively low variation in responses.

On the issue of absenteeism, item three reveals that 120 respondents (36.7%) strongly agreed and 130 (39.8%) agreed that absenteeism has reduced, while 50 (15.3%) disagreed and 27 (8.3%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.05 with an SD of 0.97 still indicates agreement, though with slightly more variability compared to other items.

For improved quality of work, item four recorded the highest level of positive perception, with 160 respondents (48.9%) strongly agreeing and 110 (33.6%) agreeing. Only 35 (10.7%) disagreed and 22 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.25 and SD of 0.90 confirm a strong agreement that wage increase has improved work quality.

Lastly, item five shows that 145 respondents (44.3%) strongly agreed and 120 (36.7%) agreed that punctuality improved, while 40 (12.2%) disagreed and 22 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The mean of 3.19 and SD of 0.94 further indicate agreement with moderate consistency among responses.

Table 3: Influence of Wage Increase on Employee Motivation

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Boosted motivation to work harder	160 (48.9%)	120 (36.7%)	30 (9.2%)	17 (5.2%)	3.29	0.90	Agreed
2	Employees feel more valued	170 (52.0%)	110 (33.6%)	25 (7.6%)	22 (6.7%)	3.31	0.86	Agreed
3	Increased job satisfaction	155 (47.4%)	125 (38.2%)	30 (9.2%)	17 (5.2%)	3.28	0.89	Agreed
4	Willing to go beyond duties	150 (45.9%)	120 (36.7%)	35 (10.7%)	22 (6.7%)	3.22	0.93	Agreed
5	Improved morale at work	165 (50.5%)	115 (35.2%)	30 (9.2%)	17 (5.2%)	3.31	0.85	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The table presents respondents' perceptions on the motivational impact of the national minimum wage increase on employees. The findings indicate a consistently positive response across all items, with all mean scores above the decision threshold, leading to an overall "Agreed" verdict for each statement.

For the first item, "Boosted motivation to work harder," 160 respondents (48.9%) strongly agreed and 120 (36.7%) agreed, while 30 (9.2%) disagreed and 17 (5.2%) strongly disagreed. With a mean score of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 0.90, the result indicates that most respondents believe the wage increase has significantly improved employee motivation.

Similarly, item two shows that 170 respondents (52.0%) strongly agreed and 110 (33.6%) agreed that employees feel more valued as a result of the wage increase. Only a small proportion disagreed (7.6%) or strongly disagreed (6.7%). The mean score of 3.31 and SD of 0.86 suggest strong agreement with relatively low variation, indicating a shared perception among respondents.

On job satisfaction, item three reveals that 155 respondents (47.4%) strongly agreed and 125 (38.2%) agreed that satisfaction has increased, while 30 (9.2%) disagreed and 17 (5.2%) strongly disagreed. The mean value of 3.28 and SD of 0.89 confirm that respondents generally agree that job satisfaction has improved following the wage increase.

For willingness to go beyond assigned duties, item four indicates that 150 respondents (45.9%) strongly agreed and 120 (36.7%) agreed, while 35 (10.7%) disagreed and 22 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.22 and SD of 0.93 suggest agreement, although with slightly higher variation compared to other items, implying some differences in respondents' experiences.

Finally, item five shows that 165 respondents (50.5%) strongly agreed and 115 (35.2%) agreed that workplace morale has improved, while 30 (9.2%) disagreed and 17 (5.2%) strongly disagreed. With a mean score of 3.31 and SD of 0.85, this item records one of the strongest levels of agreement and the least variation, indicating a broadly shared view that morale has improved.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis 1: Regression Analysis Showing the Impact of National Minimum Wage Increase on Employee Performance (N = 327)

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R^2	F	Decision
Constant	1.284	0.215	–	5.972	.000				
National Minimum Wage Increase	0.648	0.051	.577	12.706	.000	.577	.333	161.44	Reject Ho_1

The regression analysis revealed that the national minimum wage increase had a significant positive impact on employee performance, **$\beta = .577, t(325) = 12.706, p < .001$.** The model explained **33.3%** of the variance in employee performance **($R^2 = .333, F(1,325) = 161.44, p < .001$)**. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) was rejected.

Test of Hypothesis 2: Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of National Minimum Wage Increase on Employee Motivation (N = 327)

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R^2	F	Decision
Constant	1.513	0.238	–	6.357	.000				
National Minimum Wage Increase	0.592	0.046	.584	12.870	.000	.584	.341	165.64	Reject Ho_2

The findings indicated that the national minimum wage increase significantly influenced employee motivation, **$\beta = .584, t(325) = 12.870, p < .001$**. The regression model accounted for **34.1%** of the variation in employee motivation (**$R^2 = .341, F(1,325) = 165.64, p < .001$**). Thus, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The impact of the national minimum wage increase on the employee's performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

The discussion of findings from this study on the impact of the national minimum wage increase on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo, shows that wage increments have a generally

positive influence on employees' motivation, commitment, and job efficiency. This aligns with empirical evidence suggesting that higher wages improve morale and productivity by reducing financial stress and increasing job satisfaction. For instance, studies in Nigeria have found that minimum wage adjustments often lead to improved labour outcomes where employees perceive fair compensation for their work (Omoju & Ikhide, 2021) . However, this improvement is often moderate and depends on complementary institutional and organisational factors such as timely payment and supportive working conditions.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with research indicating that while wage increases can enhance productivity, the effect is not always linear due to economic and institutional constraints. Evidence from Nigerian labour market studies shows that minimum wage increases sometimes lead to mixed outcomes, including improved income levels but also inflationary pressures that reduce real purchasing power (Philip & Iorember, 2017). In the context of the university, this suggests that although staff may initially respond positively to higher wages, the overall impact on performance may be weakened by rising living costs and delayed salary payments, which reduce the real value of the wage increase.

The influence of the national minimum wage increase on employee's motivation in Tarába State University, Jalingo.

The discussion of findings from this study on the influence of the national minimum wage increase on employee motivation in Taraba State University, Jalingo, indicates that wage increments significantly enhance employees' motivation levels. The findings suggest that improved remuneration increases employees' enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness to perform assigned duties effectively. This is consistent with the argument that financial incentives remain a strong determinant of employee motivation, especially in public institutions where salary is a key source of job satisfaction. Empirical studies in Nigeria also confirm that salary increases and other monetary rewards positively influence workers' motivation and engagement (Adaramola et al., 2024; Alase & Akinbo, 2021).

Furthermore, the study findings align with research conducted in Nigerian universities and public sector organizations, which reveal that employees who experience improved wages tend to exhibit higher morale and increased dedication to their responsibilities. For example, studies at the University of Abuja found that salary increases and timely payment significantly improved workers' motivation and overall performance (Duru et al., 2022) . In the context of Taraba State University, this implies that the minimum wage increase has contributed to reducing financial stress among staff, thereby allowing them to focus more on their academic and administrative duties. However, motivation gains are often moderated by factors such as inflation and delayed salary implementation, which may weaken the overall effect.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the national minimum wage increase has a generally positive but moderate impact on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. The findings show that improved wages contribute to better job performance among both academic and non-academic staff by enhancing their ability to meet basic needs and reducing immediate financial stress. However, the improvement in performance is not uniform across all staff categories, as its effectiveness is influenced by several institutional and environmental conditions within the university system.

The study also concludes that the national minimum wage increase has a significant influence on employee motivation in Taraba State University, Jalingo. Employees reported improved morale, increased commitment to duty, and a stronger sense of job satisfaction following wage adjustments. Nevertheless, the motivational effect is often temporary or limited, as non-financial factors such as working conditions, job security, and recognition play equally important roles in sustaining long-term motivation among staff.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The study recommends that the management of Taraba State University, Jalingo should ensure that national minimum wage increases are consistently and promptly implemented to maximize their positive impact on employee performance. Timely payment of salaries and allowances should be prioritized to strengthen staff trust and enhance productivity.

2. The study further recommends that beyond wage increments, the university management should adopt a comprehensive motivational strategy that includes both financial and non-financial incentives. These should include recognition of outstanding performance, career development opportunities, regular promotions, and improved communication between management and staff.

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Appendix I

Cover Letter

Department of Public Administration
Faculty of Management Sciences,
Taraba State University,
P.M.B 1167, Jalingo.
Taraba State

Dear Respondents,

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Master of Science (M.Sc.) student of the above-mentioned institution currently conducting a research study titled "**Impact of National Minimum Wage Increase on Employee Performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo."** Attached to this letter is a questionnaire designed to collect relevant data for the study. Kindly respond by filling in the required spaces or ticking the appropriate options. Please be assured that all information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.
Thank you.

GYUSE, Thomas Terna
TSU/PG/FMS/MSC/PA/23/0038
Researcher

Appendix II
Questionnaire Administration

INSTRUCTION: Please ensure to complete the questionnaire by ticking the correct answer(s) from the options where necessary.

SECTION A: Personal information/Date

1. **Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. **Age**: ☐ 18–30 ☐ 31–40 ☐ 41–50 ☐ 51 years and above
3. **Staff** Category: ☐ Academic Staff ☐ Non-Academic Staff
4. **Years of Work Experience**: ☐ 1–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ 11–15 years ☐ 16 years and above

SECTION B: Respondents Views

S/N	Impact of Minimum Wage Increase on Employee Performance	SA	A	D	SD
1.	The increase in national minimum wage has improved my overall job performance.				
2.	I am more committed to my duties due to the wage increase.				
3.	The wage increase has reduced absenteeism among staff.				
4.	The quality of work delivered by staff has improved after the wage increase.				
5.	The wage increase has enhanced punctuality and dedication to work.				
	Influence of Wage Increase on Employee Motivation	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
6.	The wage increase has boosted my motivation to work harder.				
7.	I feel more valued as an employee due to the wage increase.				
8.	The wage increase has increased my level of job satisfaction.				
9.	I am more willing to go beyond my basic responsibilities after the wage increase.				
10.	The wage increase has improved my morale at work.				

Source(s) B-E Researcher's Design, 2026