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# Assessing the sustainable incentive on worker performances as a means of conquering new frontiers in Enugu state, Nigeria

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#### Abstract

Incentive is one of the motivational approach, which has an energizing force that induces or compels and maintain performance of every worker. Thus, it will be of important if the impact of standardized and sustainable incentives is implied to every worker in construction industry. The aim of the paper is to assess the sustainable incentive on worker performances by assessing the relative significance index score for different types of incentives; and identifying the average level of impact for the three groups of incentives for workers' performances. The targeted population of this study were contractors, architects, quantity surveyors, engineers in Enugu state. Data collection was done through a questionnaire survey self-administered on 80 randomly selected construction professionals involved in a nearly completed or recently completed construction projects. This was analyzed using descriptive statistics and analyses of variance (ANOVA). Results of the study indicate a disparity of the ranking of the degree of occurrence and impact among the group. Based on the composite of incentive factors the study established its likelihood of various occurrence of both financial and non-financial incentives. The study recommended that those with highly impacted incentives should be put in place in which it will become a means of conquering the new frontier with a solid sustenance. Finally, the study also concluded that they should implement an efficient, standardized and effective of the three groups of the incentives on workers in order to gear toward fully sustainable commitment, solid participation and loyal performances.

Keyword: Sustainable; Worker; Incentives; Performance; Frontier

#### 1. Introduction

Construction activities across the world are key of the economic, development and social progress of any country, which create more opportunities across other sectors. Moreover, Nigeria has been experiencing a remarkable growth in the number, size and complexity of large-scale infrastructure project with a rich heritage and traditional craftsmanship as noted by [1] and Mike [2]. Since incentives is one of the motivational approach which has an energizing force that induces or compels and maintain behaviour of every worker. Thus, it will be of important if the impact of standardized and sustainable incentives is implied to every worker in construction industry. This is also in line that the survival and the success of any organization are largely determined by the way in which workers are remunerated and rewarded as cited by [3] and [4]. It is also tested that the reward system and motivating incentives will determine the level of employees' commitment, capability and their attitude to perform. Therefore, employees play very important part in the daily operations of any organization especially where the construction works are very competitive and have everchanging environment [5].

Construction workers productivity in Enugu, Nigeria has been shown to be very low and this has been the trend for over a decade [6] and [7]. Lack of incentives toward workers as highlighted by [3] has the effect such that on average workers

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spend approximately half of their working day including breaks on productive work while the remaining time is not spent directly on production but rather on waiting, receiving instructions or idling. It has also been observed that most project managers and site supervisors applied poor management towards workers' goal and this constituted to over cost and time, abandonment, frustrated and productivity suffers [3].

Obviously, the incentives and the reward system are normally designed by the top management based on their perceptions without consulting the employee at the lower level. In this case, the incentives and the reward system may not be able to accomplish the employees' satisfaction and such system will not change their attitude and behaviour toward the organization as they feel that their contribution to the organization are not well recognized. In addition, the absence of the suitable incentives may negatively affect the hardworking employee's performance; it may also weaken their productivity at work, which decreases the chances of attaining the promising goals of the institution [8]. What is needed are those sustainable incentives that will lead to increase in commitment and performance of the workers. On this junction, there is need to assessing the sustainable incentive on worker performances as a means of conquering new frontiers with the following objectives; to assess the relative significance index score for different types of incentives; and secondly to identify the average level of impact for different types of incentives.

### 1.1. Concept of Sustainable Incentives

Incentives are variable payments made to employees based on the amount of output or results attained [9]. [10] summarized the concept of incentives as compensation, other than basic wages and salaries that fluctuates according to employees' attainment of some standard, such as pre-determined benchmark, individual or group goals or organizational earning. Generally, incentive can be defined as a reward given to a person to stimulate his or her actions to a desired direction. Incentives are payment schemes, which represent an attempt to influence the behaviour and work performance of workers through the provision of cash or cash equivalent reward additional to basic salary. This is with intention to exert influence or induce the work behaviour of the workforce. It means additional remuneration or benefit given to an employee in recognition of achievement or better performance. Incentives provide a spur or zeal to the employee for better performance [11].

Incentives have motivational powers and are widely employed by individuals and large organizations to motivate workers. They can have classified into monetary or non-monetary [12]. The monetary Incentives are financial incentives used mostly by employers to motivate employees towards meeting their targets e.g money, being a symbol of power, status and respect plays a big role in satisfying the social-security and physiological <u>needs</u> of a person. However, Money seizes to be a strong motivator when the psychological and security needs are satisfied. At that point, it becomes a confidence factor [13]. The scholars' further stress that organizational performance increases in direct proportion to increases in sustainable efficiency and effectiveness of the employer's/ top managers. This succinctly conform to the effectiveness of any organization in fulfilling its purpose. When an incentive is being applied to an employee, he/she must be responsive to a definite goals and objectives, because there is an extra commitment. Incentive is one of the policies of managers to increase effectual job management amongst employees in organization [14].

Employee motivation is one of the policies of managers to increase effectual job management and tasks fulfil amongst employees in organization (shadier et al. as cited by [15]. A motivated employee is responsive of the definite goals and objectives he/she must achieve, therefore in that direction. Incentive formulates an organization more successful because it provoked workers constantly looking for improved practices to do a work especially in strenuous circumstances. These are various incentive plans such as bonuses, conveyance allowance, medical allowance, increase salary, monthly leaves, promotion, recognition are included. These incentives encourage the employees and hence this assist in enhancing productivity by affecting the sustainable performance, efficiency, satisfaction, responsibility, effectiveness and commitment of employees. As a result, it is essential for organisations to persuade incentive of their workers (Kalimullah et al. as cited by [15].

Some of the needs for incentives which can work to accomplish the organization goals include: to increase productivity; to drive or arouse a stimulus work; to enhance commitment in work performance; to psychologically satisfy a person which leads to job satisfaction and avoid turnover; to shape the behaviour or outlook of subordinate towards work increasing efficiency; to inculcate zeal and enthusiasm towards work; to get the maximum of their capabilities so that they are exploited and utilized maximally to achieve their personal goals as well as organizational goals (Management Study Guide, as cited by [16].

#### 1.2. Different types of Incentives

Incentives are classified according to different scholars and have been recognized by [17]. They are

- Non-financial
- Semi-Financial
- Financial.

Non-financial incentive schemes are those with no form of monetary benefit, it directly or indirectly attach to; for example, recognition, praise for achievement or hanging a picture on the wall of best worker of the month, a plaque for excellent service and the like. However, this is sufficient enough only to supplement the financial incentives for this cannot stand alone. It also varied and flexible to apply than financial.

Semi-financial incentives: these are indirect monetary benefit but not directly linked with wages. Examples include company car, promotions, and the likes.

Financial incentives: they are the most popular and sustain form of incentives. They have benefit of option value; such as workers can do whatever they wish with it, which gives it more room over other forms of incentives [18]. Moreover, this can of incentives could be awarded to individuals or groups. Under the individual incentive plan, each worker is rewarded based on his individual performances. This individual incentive has been found to be substantially more effective than the group incentives [17]. Group incentives compensate a number of workers that are part of a team for their combined effort in achieving the desired outcome. When creating an incentive program to motivate employees, decision makers and company owners should understand that the reward or incentive does not compromise quality nor loyalty but just to encourage workers by meeting their goals with the help of bonus. [19] explains some of the common examples of monetary incentives as thus;

- **Pay Raise** These are mostly offered to workers who have worked in a company for a significant and considerable longer period of time. Some companies also give pay rises to employees who have reached a certain level of production or those who have completed the required training programs. Some also offer annual salary increment to loyal workers.
- **Piece Rates** This is generally used in production industries where employees are given a certain amount of money on each produced piece. Piece rates encourage and motivate employees to work harder and quickly to produce more pieces as each has a monetary incentive attached to it. However, when issuing piece rates, production supervisors must ensure quality is not compromised.
- **Contests** These are mostly offer exist among sales and production personnel. Where additional price or bonus is given to the employee or to a team with the highest production level. Again, employers can offer cash rewards to employees with best suggestions just to encourage more input in terms of positive ideas that improve on sales, production or performance
- **Bonuses** This is another good form of monetary incentive where bonuses are issued to the best staff of the company. These might be bonuses to individuals who have met their sales quotas or even bonuses to teams that have completed their projects in time or have surpassed their production targets. Some companies give yearly Christmas bonuses to long serving employees as a way of rewarding loyalty.
- **Sharing Profits** This is another excellent way of rewarding employees. A small profit portion is shared with employees based on their position, duration with the company and input in attaining the overall set goals. Most companies prefer profit sharing since it gives employees a sense of belonging and ownership.

#### 1.3. Effect of Sustainable incentives

The genesis of this study was driven by assessing the sustainable incentive on worker performances as a means of conquering new frontiers. This looks into the best ways of implementing incentives in order to striving towards achieving optimum productivity for the new frontiers in construction industry in Enugu State, Nigeria. [20] observed the effect of different incentives on workers and concluded that younger workers / artisans react more dramatically and positively with higher intrinsic motivation when paid on plans with higher incentive proportion.

In general, sustainable incentives could be considered as one of the most effective factors in encouraging the workers into working honestly, when there are suitable rates that satisfy the individual's needs. On the contrary, while low and unfair rates are a major factor in neglecting the required work and low productivity [21]. Positive effect of sustainable incentives are as follows

• Maximum quantity of the effort: This provokes more effort as regards to physical or mental energy that the individual spends in a specific period in the work, it promote speed in performance. It gives more strength to frontiers

- Quality of the Effort: This attracts increase on the level of the quality of work done which centres mostly on the quality of work done in order to ensure required standard. The desire to be promoted and earn enhanced pay and motivate employees for more effort.
- Manner of Performance: since [4] notes that devising effective methods for motivating employees is one of the major factors in improving the performance of an organization. This automatically ensure that work duties are done effectively as well as efficiently in tackling measuring problem-solving strategies or in problem detecting.
- Rates of Performance: It refers to the process in which the evaluator increases the employee's productivity in order to determine the efficiency, the quality and the amount of the employee's work in a specific period. Then, he compares the employee's done work with the specified rate [22].
- Increases information and communication: As being identified by [23] that Profit sharing plans, premium pay and cash bonus are the types of financial benefits enjoyed by these professionals, which enhanced their motivation to work.
- It reduces truancy, abandonment of project, negligence, over time and cost, poor coordination and frontloaded in construction industry [24], since money remains the most significant motivational strategy in achieving greater productivity.
- There will be more room to create confidence, tranquillity, security and respect in an honest and actual manner among the construction site

### 1.4. Theoretical framework

Several management scholars have given several definitions of incentive based on their different perspectives. However, their definitions geared toward motivating the worker in order to enhance a greater productivity within a desired and specified period.

The Maslow's theory of Hierarchy Needs: Abraham Maslow developed a need-based theory of motivation. People are extraordinary complex creatures with different motives and intentions for behaviours' on and off the job. Maslow recognized and evaluated five basic needs of human being, which he believed can triggered all human behaviours', these needs relate to physiology (the needs for food, water, air, shelter, clothing and sex) security (safety, the absence of illness), society or affiliation (friendship, interaction, love) esteem (respect and recognition), and self-actualization (the ability to reach one's potentials). These are perceptions for higher performance and productivity of individuals.

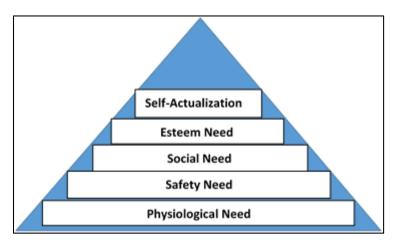


Figure 1 A Maslow Human Hierarchy Needs

Before Maslow, most managers assumed that one of the most effective factors in encouraging the workers into working honestly is money; it is primarily motivator for people. With Maslow's theory, managers can assess their own activities, their companies conduct and their individual philosophies about people. Maslow's needs theory presented a workable incentive framework for managers for perfect performance toward workers. Based on observation, it will be of important if Maslow's theory is being used as a guide when developing or creating awareness for incentive measure for workers, for this will attract the new frontier into the construction industry. This will energize them, change their attitudes and equal give them new hope for survival because they believed that they are been used and dumped as observed by [20]. Finally, when Maslow theory is enacted into action will react to more dramatically and positively to younger workers / artisans in accomplishing the employees' satisfaction.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This research covers project participants in construction project, primarily Contractors, Architects, Quantity Surveyors, engineers in Enugu state of Nigeria were data was collected. Data collection was done through a questionnaire survey self- administered on 80 randomly selected construction professionals involved in a nearly completed or recently completed construction projects. The questionnaire was based on a rank scale of 1-5 to be ranked among the various incentives that can be applied in construction firms. A total of eighty (80) questionnaires were distributed but fifty eight (58) (72.50%) of the data were retrieved. The data provided by the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistic and analyses of variance (ANOVA). The survey feedback includes two groups of data, the likelihood of occurrence of each incentives by the managers and its level of impact on performance. Incentive significance, denoted by IS, can be described as the function of these two attributes as follows:

IS=  $f(\alpha_{\beta})$  ------(1)

A survey questionnaire was designed to collect a required data about these two attributes. In other to assess the importance of each factor, an incentive significance index was established by calculating a significance score for each factor. An alternative for calculating a significance score is to multiply the probability of occurrence by the degree of impact. Thus the significance score for each incentive assessed by each responded can be calculated through Eq.2

 $\int_{j}^{i} = \dot{\alpha}_{j}^{i} \,_{\beta j}^{i} - \dots$  (2)

Where

 $\int_{i}^{i}$  = is the significance score for incentive i, as acknowledge by respondent j

 $\dot{\alpha}_{j}^{i}$  is the probability of increasing performance, as acknowledge by respondent j

 $_{\beta j}^{i}$  is the level of degree of impact of incentive as acknowledge by respondent j

Thus the RSIS can be calculated through the following model:

$$RSIS^{i} = \left(\frac{\Sigma_{J}^{N} = 1\int_{j}^{i}}{N}\right)$$
(3)

Where

*RSIS<sup>i</sup>* Is the relative significance index score for incentive i

 $\int_{i}^{i}$ . Is the significance score for incentive i, as acknowledge by respondent j

N is the number of the respondent

To calculate  $\int_{i}^{i}$  the following numerical conversion for the rating was adopted for the conversion of the rating attribute

**Table 1** Corresponding numerical conversion for the rating attributes

А	
Rating	Numerical
Attributes	Conversion
Low	0.1
Medium	0.5
High	1.0
β	
Rating	Numerical
Attributes	Conversion
1	0.00

2	0.20
3	0.40
4	0.60
5	1.00

The point scales for  $\dot{\alpha}$  (low, medium and high) and  $\beta$  (neglected impact, very small impact, small impact, medium impact, heavy impact, and very heavy impact) need to be converted into numerical scales. "High" or "highly" takes a value of 1, "medium" takes a value of 0.5, and "less" or "low" takes a value of 0.1. The index score was used to rank incentives identified.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Table 2 Respondent's destination

Respondent destination	Distributed	Returned	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Contractors	15	10	17.24	17.24
Architects	15	10	17.24	34.48
Engineers	20	18	31.03	65.51
Project Managers	15	12	20.69	86.20
Quantity Surveyors	8	5	8.63	94.83
Others	5	3	5.17	100
Total	78	58(74.36%)	100	

The study was conducted with fifty-eight (58) respondents, who were construction professionals; Table 2 shows that 17.24% of the questionnaires were returned by contractors, 17.24% by Architects, 31.03% by Engineers, 20.69% by Project managers, 8.63% by Quantity Surveyors, while 5.17% were returned by other professionals who were related to construction activities.

Table 3 Relative significance Index Score (RSIS) for the types of incentives (Financial Incentives)

Financial Incentives	RSIS	Std.Dev.	Co. of Var	Rank
Prompt payment of wages	0.9154	0.1040	0.5324	1
Earned bonus/overtime pay	0.2343	0.0986	0.4211	2
Profit Sharing	0.2126	0.0997	0.4688	3
Allocation Shares	0.1480	0.0758	0.5122	4
Pension Scheme	0.1320	0.0953	0.7222	5

The result in Table 3 shows that Prompt payment of wages (RSIS=0.9154, ST.Dev. =0.1040), Variation by client (RSIS=0.2343, ST.Dev. =0.0986), Earned bonus/overtime pay (RSIS=0.2126, ST.Dev. =0.0997), Allocation Shares (RSIS=0.1480, ST.Dev. =0.0758), Pension Scheme (RSIS= 0.1320, ST. Dev. =0.0953). These RSIS represent the relative importance of different types of incentives (Financial incentives) in Enugu state, Nigeria. The relative importance between one factor and the other is express through their relative score. Under financial incentives, prompt payment of wages has the highest significant factor followed by Earned bonus/overtime pay etc.

Semi Financial Incentives	RSIS	Std.Dev.	Co. of Var	Rank
Provision of Housing & Transportation	0.3114	0.1051	0.3374	1
Health & Safety Services	0.2486	0.0887	0.3568	2
Hospital Services	0.1840	0.0898	0.4881	3
Accident Insurance Scheme	0.1811	0.0643	0.3552	4
Better Canteen Services	0.0223	0.0204	0.9176	5

Table 4 Relative significance Index Score (RSIS) for the types of incentives (Semi Financial Incentives)

The result in Table 4 shows that Provision of Housing & Transportation (RSIS=0.3114, ST.Dev.=0.1051), Health & Safety Services (RSIS=0.2486, ST.Dev.=0.0887), Hospital Services (RSIS=0.1840, ST.Dev.=0.0898), Accident Insurance Scheme (RSIS=0.1811, ST.Dev.=0.0643), Better Canteen Services (RSIS= 0.0223, ST. Dev.=0.0204). These RSIS represent the relative importance of these types of incentives (semi financial incentives) in Enugu state, Nigeria. The relative importance between one types and the other is express through their relative score. Provision of Housing & Transportation, Health & Safety Services has the highest significant factor followed by Hospital Services etc.

Table 5 Relative significance Index Score (RSIS) for the types of incentives (Non Related Financial Incentives)

Non Related	RSIS	Std.Dev.	Co. of Var	Rank
Conducive work environment	0.3154	0.1280	0.4057	1
Employee Training & Development	0.1257	0.0657	0.5228	2
Prospect of Promotion	0.1240	0.0754	0.6083	3
Awards for the best workers	0.1206	0.0664	0.5509	4
Job security	0.1006	0.0503	0.5000	5

The result in Table 5 shows that Conducive work environment (RSIS=0.3154, ST.Dev. = 0.1280), Employee Training & Development (RSIS=0.1257, ST.Dev. =0.0657), Prospect of Promotion (RSIS=0.1240, ST.Dev. =0.0754), Awards for the best workers (RSIS=0.1206, ST.Dev. =0.0664), Job security (RSIS= 0.1006, ST. Dev. =0.0503). These RSIS represent the relative importance of these types of incentives (Non Related Financial Incentives) in Enugu state, Nigeria. The relative importance between one factor and the other is express through their relative score. Conducive work environment, Employee Training & Development has the highest significant factor followed by Prospect of Promotion etc

Table 6 Average Level of Impact for the different risk factors for the types of incentives (Financial Incentives)

Financial Incentives	Average Impact	Std.Dev.	Co. of Var	Rank
Profit Sharing	0.5886	0.2948	0.5009	1
Earned bonus/overtime pay	0.5257	0.1821	0.3463	2
Pension Scheme	0.4914	0.2077	0.4227	3
Prompt payment of wages	0.4743	0.2063	0.4349	4
Allocation Shares	0.4514	0.2241	0.4964	5

The result in Table 6 shows that Profit Sharing (AV. Impact =0.5886, ST.Dev. =0.2948), Earned bonus/overtime pay (AV. Impact=0.5257, ST.Dev. =0.1821), Pension Scheme (AV.Impact=0.4914, ST.Dev. =0.2077), Prompt payment of wages (AV. Impact= (0.4743, ST.Dev. =0.2063), Allocation Shares (AV. Impact= 0.4514, ST. Dev. =0.2241). These average impacts represent the degree of different risk factors on the types of incentives (Financial Incentives). The average impact of the risk factors is express as their relative score on worker performances.

Semi Financial Incentives	RSIS	Std.Dev.	Co. of Var	Rank
Accident Insurance Scheme	0.7314	0.2166	0.2962	1
Provision of Housing & Transportation	0.7086	0.2672	0.3771	2
Hospital Services	0.5543	0.2914	0.5257	3
Health & Safety Services	0.4057	0.2141	0.5278	4
Better Canteen Services	0.3600	0.2265	0.6291	5

**Table 7** Average Level of Impact for the different risk factors for the types of incentives (Semi Financial Incentives)

The result in Table 7 shows that Accident Insurance Scheme (AV. Impact =0.7314, ST.Dev. =0.2166), Provision of Housing & Transportation (AV. Impact=0.7086, ST.Dev. =0.2672), Hospital Services (AV.Impact=0.5543, ST.Dev. =0.2914), Health & Safety Services (AV. Impact= (0.4057, ST.Dev. =0.2141), Better Canteen Services = 0.3600, ST. Dev. =0.2265). These average impacts represent the degree of different risk factors on the types of incentives (Semi Financial Incentives) in the construction industry. The average impact of the risk factors is express as their relative score on worker performances

**Table 8** Average Level of Impact for the different risk factors for the types of incentives (Non Related Financial Incentives)

Non Related	RSIS	Std.Dev.	Co. of Var	Rank
Job Security	0.7086	0.2020	0.2851	1
Prospect of Promotion	0.6057	0.2400	0.3963	2
Employee Training & Development	0.4914	0.2884	0.5868	3
Conducive work environment	0.4343	0.2589	0.6268	4
	0.4057	0.2543	0.2851	5

The result in Table 8 shows that Job Security (AV. Impact =0.7086, ST.Dev.=0.2020), Prospect of Promotion (AV. Impact=0.6057, ST.Dev.=0.2400), Employee Training & Development (AV. Awards for the best workers Impact=0.4914, ST.Dev.=0.2884), Conducive work environment (AV. Impact=(0.4743, ST.Dev.=0.2063), Awards for the best workers (AV. Impact= 0.4057, ST. Dev.=0.2851). These average impacts represent the degree of different risk factors on the types of incentives (Non Related Financial Incentives) in the construction industry. The average impact of the risk factors is express as their relative score on worker performances.

## 4. Conclusion

This paper investigated the likelihood of occurrence and the impact, in case of occurrence of some identified incentive factors in construction industry. The paper concludes that the likelihood of occurrence of incentive factor was found to be in financial incentives with RSIS of 0.9154, semi- financial incentives with RSIS of 0.3154 and non-financial of 0.3114. The perceived impact of incentives in case of occurrence was found to be in financial incentives with highest average impact (AV. IMP.) of 0.7086, semi- financial with highest average impact of 0.7314 and Non-financial with the highest average impact of 0.5886. Whilst this order is not a surprise in traditionally procured projects, which form the basis of the majority of the responses to the study survey, it provides an invaluable piece of information to the construction stakeholders as regards to the incentives. It enables them to concentrates more on incentive sustainability in order to promote workers performance. Based on the composite of incentive factors it is established that there is a likelihood of various occurrence of both financial and non-financial incentives. The study recommended that those with highly impacted incentives should be put in place in which it will become a means of conquering the new frontier with a solid sustenance. In addition, an efficient, standardized and effective of the three groups of the incentives should be implemented on workers in order to gear toward fully sustainable commitment, solid participation and loyal performances.

## **Compliance with ethical standards**

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## Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the preparation and submission of this paper.

### Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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