

Harnessing Non-financial Incentives and Distributive Leadership Models for Sustainability of Professional Secretaries' Integrity in Public Universities, Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between Non-financial incentive, distributive leadership models, and sustainability of Professional Secretaries' integrity in Lagos-State Public Universities, a sample size of 197 Professional Secretaries was determined using the Taro Yamane formula from a population of 387 Professionals Secretaries in Public Universities, Lagos, a survey design was employed, using a Likert-type questionnaire, results showed that respondents generally agreed that Non-financial incentives with (grand mean = 4.03, SD = 0.91) and distributive leadership (grand mean = 4.00, SD = 0.92) are important for promoting Professional Secretaries' integrity). Regression analysis revealed that non-financial incentives ($\beta = .512, p < .001$) and distributive leadership ($\beta = .601, p < .001$) have a significant positive influence on integrity. The study concludes that both non-financial incentives and distributive leadership are essential for promoting integrity among Professional Secretaries, the findings suggest that policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the development of non-financial incentives and distributive leadership strategies to promote integrity, the study recommends that Lagos State Government prioritize non-financial incentives and distributive leadership models to enhance Professional Secretaries' Integrity, the universities should foster a culture of integrity that can motivate Professional Secretaries to uphold high standards, improved service delivery and public trust.

Keywords: Professional-Secretaries, non-financial-incentives and Distributive-Leadership Models

Introduction

The public sector is the backbone of any government, and its effectiveness is crucial for the development and growth of a nation. In Nigeria, the public sector plays a vital role in providing essential services to citizens, encompassing a broad range of activities, including healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and security provision. However, the sector has been beset by various challenges, including corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability, which have undermined its ability to deliver quality services to the citizens. These issues have led to a decline in public trust and confidence in government institutions, which can have far-reaching consequences for the country's economic and social development. At the heart of these challenges are the values that underpin the public sector. Values such as honesty, punctuality, accountability, respect, trustworthiness, and resilience are essential for building trust and confidence in government institutions.

Integrity, which refers to the quality of being honest, transparent, and morally upright (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007), is a critical value that public officials must uphold. The components of integrity include honesty, which ensures that individuals act truthfully and transparently in their dealings; accountability, which holds individuals responsible for their actions and decisions; and respect, which builds positive relationships between individuals and fosters a culture of trust and confidence. These values are crucial for promoting a culture of transparency, accountability, and good governance in the public sector. The Nigerian public sector faces significant challenges related to integrity, transparency, and accountability, hindering effective service delivery and economic growth. Corruption and unethical behavior have become normalized, with 43% of Nigerians perceiving increased corruption over the past year (Accountability Lab Nigeria, 2023). Professional secretaries play a vital role in ensuring smooth government operations, but often face ethical dilemmas and pressures that compromise their integrity (Eze & Okeke, 2022; Nwankwo & Uzochukwu, 2022).

Studies have shown that leadership styles, particularly transformational and transactional leadership, can promote integrity and improve performance in the public sector (Obiwuru et al., 2021; Ojokuku et al., 2023). However, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles dominate in Nigeria, leading to low employee engagement and poor organizational performance (Afolabi & Idemudia, 2021; Bamidele, 2022).

However, In the Lagos State Public Service, secretaries play a vital role in ensuring the smooth operation of government agencies. They are often the first point of contact for citizens and are responsible for providing essential support to government officials. As such, they are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity. Non-financial incentives, such as recognition, autonomy, and opportunities for growth and development, can motivate secretaries to uphold integrity, while distributive leadership, which involves the distribution of leadership tasks and responsibilities among team members to achieve shared goals (Spillane, 2006), can also contribute to a more effective and efficient public sector.

This study focuses on harnessing non-financial incentives and distributive leadership models for sustainability of integrity among professional secretaries in Lagos State Public Service. The study aims to explore how non-financial incentives and distributive leadership can be used to promote integrity among secretaries in the state's public service. By examining the relationship between these variables, the study hopes to provide insights into how the public sector can be reformed to promote integrity and effective service delivery. The findings of this study will have implications for policy and practice in the public sector, and will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on integrity, non-financial incentives, and distributive leadership. Douglas McGregor introduced Theory X and theory Y which are diagonally opposite to each other. McGregor is aware that human beings are rational in their thought process and they are social by nature. They display very high degree of behaviour relating to achieving self-actualization. There is interaction of variety of need fulfillment phenomenon and complex nature displayed by an individual in different situations.

The public sector in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos State, is plagued by integrity-related challenges, including corruption, nepotism, and favoritism, which undermine the effectiveness of government agencies and erode public trust. Despite the critical role that secretaries play in ensuring the smooth operation of government agencies, they are often faced with ethical dilemmas and pressures that can compromise their integrity. The lack of a clear understanding of the relationship between non-financial incentives, distributive leadership, and secretaries' integrity has hindered efforts to develop effective strategies for promoting integrity in the public sector. This study seeks to address this knowledge gap by investigating the relationship between non-financial incentives, distributive leadership, and

secretaries' integrity in Lagos State Public Service, with a view to providing insights that can inform policy and practice aimed at promoting integrity and effective service delivery.

Theory X is a traditional theory of human being McGregor cited in Aderemi (2019) assumed that with respect to **Managerial action**. Management is responsible for organizing various element of an enterprise like money, material equipment and people. *With respect to people*, it is a process of directing people, their efforts, motivating them, controlling their actions, modifying their behaviours so that they fit in the institutions. In Theory X McGregor assumed that people would be passive therefore management must persuade, reward and punish the worker to achieve the desired behaviour of workers.

Human nature –McGregor further stated that human being have indolent nature, and works minimum. McGregor summaries workers as lacks ambition, dislike responsibility, prefers to be led. An individual is self-centered and indifferent to institution's needs, by nature he resist change. Lastly he is gullible and not very bright. In theory X, McGregor states that those who subscribe to the views expressed above, the manager will have to structure, control and closely supervise employees.

External control has to be exercised towards immature and irresponsible behaviour of the employees, so that their energies can be regulated towards productive work. Theory X is applicable to traditional institution's and characterized by centralized decision making hierarchical pyramid and external control. After Theory X was proposed, McGregor observed that some changes in human nature have taken place. It was not due to the changes in human behaviour and reactions to various situations but due to change in industrial institutions, management policies and practices that have tremendous effect on human nature. At this point he proposed. Theory Y as under:

(a) Expenditure of physical and mental efforts on the part of employees is as natural as play or rest. The average human being does not inherently dislike work. (b) Workers seek direction and exercises self-control. He dislikes punishment. (c) Commitment to institution's objective is associated with rewards like pay pro-motion etc, ego satisfaction and satisfaction of self-actualization needs.

(d) Average human being learns under proper conditions. He accepts seeks responsibilities. At times, it will be seen that certain individuals display phenomenon like avoidance of responsibility, lack of ambition and lay undue stress on security. McGregor suggested that these are due to inherent human

characteristics. (e) Capacity to exercise high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity is widely distributed among workers that must be identified and fully utilized (f) Intellectual potential of workers is partially utilized. In the above situation McGregor recommends that the institution should reorient based on the human behavioural change. More co-operation, maximum output with minimum control and self-direction is predominant among workers. It is also seen that there is no conflict between individual and institution's goals. The emphasis is on very smooth running of institution with greater participation of individuals

In the study of Afolabi and Idemudia (2021), transformational leadership emerged as the most effective leadership style, accounting for 65% of the variance in public sector performance. This finding underscores the significance of inspirational leadership in driving organizational success. Bamidele (2022) revealed that autocratic leadership styles dominate in 75% of Nigerian government agencies, resulting in low employee engagement (mean score: 2.5/5) and poor organizational performance (mean score: 2.8/5). This highlights the need for leadership styles that prioritize employee involvement and empowerment. Eze and Okeke (2022) found that non-financial incentives explained 42% of the variance in employee performance, with recognition ($\beta = 0.51$) and opportunities for growth ($\beta = 0.48$) being significant predictors. This emphasizes the importance of intangible rewards in motivating employees. Nwankwo and Uzochukwu (2022) discovered that distributive leadership explained 56% of the variance in organizational effectiveness, with employee empowerment ($\beta = 0.62$) being a significant predictor. This highlights the benefits of decentralized decision-making and employee autonomy.

Obiwuru et al. (2021) found that transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.55$) and transactional leadership ($\beta = 0.42$) styles improved organizational performance in the Nigerian public sector. This suggests that leaders should adopt a balanced approach to leadership. Ojokuku et al. (2023) revealed that leadership style explained 71% of the variance in organizational performance, with transformational leadership being the most effective ($\beta = 0.68$). This reinforces the importance of inspirational leadership in driving organizational success. Uche and Nwankwo (2023) found that leadership styles explained 49% of the variance in employee performance, with effective leadership ($\beta = 0.59$) being a significant predictor. This highlights the need for leaders to develop essential skills and competencies. Uwimpuhwe and

Nwankwo (2023) discovered that non-financial incentives explained 38% of the variance in employee motivation, with recognition ($\beta = 0.46$) and opportunities for growth ($\beta = 0.43$) being significant predictors. This emphasizes the importance of intangible rewards in motivating employees.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to examine the extent at which incentives influence the sustainability of Secretaries' integrity in Lagos State Public Service, it also seeks to examine the extent at which Non-financial incentives and Distributive leadership models influence the sustainability of Secretaries' integrity in Lagos State Public Service, Nigeria.

Research questions

1. Do non-financial incentives have positive influence on the sustainability of Professional Secretaries' integrity in Lagos State Public Service?
2. Do Non-financial incentives and distributive leadership models have composite positive influence on the sustainability of Professional Secretaries' integrity in Lagos State public Service, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant positive influence of non-financial incentives on the sustainability of Professional Secretaries' integrity in Lagos State Public Service.

H02: There is no significant composite positive influence of non-financial incentives and Distributive Leadership Model on the sustainability Professional Secretaries' Productivities in Lagos State Public Service.

Methodology:

This study employed a survey design. The descriptive survey was chosen because of its systematic method of gathering data leveraging a sample from a large population at a single point in time and its provision of the picture of the present state of variables of interest. The population of the study was 387 Professional Secretaries in Government owned Universities in Lagos State. The targeted population

comprises all male and female Professional Secretaries in Government owned Universities in Lagos State. The population distribution is shown below:

Population: Table 1

Participating universities	Population
University of Lagos, Akoka	113
Lagos State University ,Ojo	108
Lagos State University of Science and Technology, Ikorodu	64
Lagos State University of Education, Ijanikin	102
Total	387

Oluwaseye (2024)

The sample size was 197 Professional Secretaries of Public Universities in Lagos State, 120 Female Secretaries and 77 Males Secretaries respectively. The sample size “197” was determined by the use of Taro Yamane formula and the stratified sampling method was used to select the number of representatives in each of the public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The Taro Yamane formula cited in Oluwaseye (2024) was used to determine sample size. The calculated sample size for a population of 387 with a 5% margin of error is approximately 197. This means that for a population of this size, a sample of 197 respondents would be required to achieve a 95% confidence level within the specified margin of error: A Likert-type questionnaire was used to collect data. It was a four-scale questionnaire for each of the question item, Self-administered questionnaire was used to obtain data from the respondents of the participating institution the instrument used was scrutinised by experts in Secretarial Administration, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 which affirms a good internal consistency of the instrument.

For the analysis of data, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used. The statistical tools used to analyze the data include descriptive analysis using frequency tables, percentages were used for the questionnaire and regression analysis, and ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses and the decision was to reject the null hypotheses if the $P < 0.05$.

Results

Notation: VGE (Very Great Extent), GE (Great Extent), ME (Moderate Extent), LE (Little Extent) and VLE (Very Little Extent)

Table 2: Frequencies distribution table, percentage mean and standard deviation used for the questionnaire:

Items	VGE	GE	ME	LE	VLE	\bar{x}	Std	Rmk
1. non-financial incentives have positive influence on the sustainability of Professional Secretaries' integrity in Lagos State Public Service	54(27.4%)	79(40.1%)	49(24.9%)	10(5.1%)	5(2.5%)	4.02	0.92	GE
2. Non-financial incentives and distributive leadership models have composite positive influence on the sustainability of Professional Secretaries' integrity in Lagos State public Service, Nigeria	80(40.6%)	55(27.5%)	45(22.8%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.04	0.89	VGE
3. I have a sense of autonomy in my work.	89(45.2%)	59(29.9%)	39(2.5%)	5(2.5%)	5(2.5%)	4.14	0.85	VGE
4. My organization provides a supportive work environment.	55(27.9%)	80(40.6%)	45(22.8%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.04	0.89	GE
5. I am satisfied with the feedback and coaching I receive from my supervisor	50(25.4%)	75(38.1%)	50(25.4%)	12(6.1%)	10(5.1%)	3.93	0.99	GE

6. My supervisor involves me in decision-making processes	45(22.8%)	69(35%)	59(29.%)	15(7.6%)	9(4.6%)	3.93	0.98	GE
7. My organization empowers employees to take ownership of their work.	55(27.9%)	80(40.6%)	45(22.8%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.04	0.89	GE
8. My supervisor provides feedback and coaching to help me improve my performance	55(27.9%)	80(40.6%)	45(22.8%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.04	0.89	GE
9. I always act with honesty	59(29.9%)	89(45.2%)	39(19.5%)	5(2.5%)	5(2.5%)	4.14	0.85	GE
10 . I am accountable for my actions and decisions	55(27.9%)	80(40.6%)	45(22.8%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.04	0.89	GE
11. I respect the confidentiality of sensitive information	55(27.5%)	90(45%)	40(20%)	10(5%)	5(2.5%)	4.11	0.86	GE
12 . I uphold the values and principles of my organization	55(27.9%)	80(40.6%)	45(22.8%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.04	0.89	GE
13. I always act with transparency in my work	60(30.5%)	80(40.6%)	40(20.3%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.08	0.85	VGE
14. I am very punctual and regular at work	60(30.5%)	80(40.6%)	40(20.3%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.08	0.93	GE
15. I have received merit award for excellence in my place of work	55(27.9%)	80(40.6%)	45(22.8%)	10(5.1%)	7(3.6%)	4.04	0.89	GE

Grand mean	4.04	0.89
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Survey 2025

Table: 3:

H0₁ : There is no significant positive influence of non-financial incentives on the sustainability of Professional Secretaries’ integrity in Lagos State Public Service.

Model	R	R-squared:	Adjusted R-squared	F-statistic	P-value	Standard Error
1	.635	0.403	0.398	86.2	0.001	0.513

a. Predictors: (Constant), Non-financial incentives p < .05

b. Table 3b. ANOVA for Professional Secretaries’ integrity

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Statistics	P-value
regression	1	23.451	23.451	88.943	<0.001
Residual	195	34.549	.177		
Total	196	58.000			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.	
Constant	2.451	.231		10.623	.000
Non-financial incentives	.512	.061	.635	8.421	.000

The regression analysis shows that non-financial incentives have a significant positive influence on integrity ($\beta=.512, p<.001$). The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is significant ($F=88.943, <.001$).

Table:5

H02: There is no significant composite positive influence of non-financial incentives and Distributive Leadership Model on the sustainability Professional Secretaries' Productivities in Lagos State Public Service.

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	F-statistic	P-value	Standard Error
1	.701	0.492	.487	124.301	0.001	0.479

c. Predictors: (Constant), Non – financial incentives and distributive leadership models $p < .05$

d. Table 3b. ANOVA for integrity of Professional Secretaries

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Statistics	P-value
regression	1	28.549	28.549	124.301	<0.001
Residual	195	29.451	.151		
Total	196	58.000			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
Constant	2.231	.231		10.476
Non-financial incentives and	.601	.054	.701	11.146

**Distributive
leadership
models**

The regression analysis shows that Non-financial incentives and distributive leadership models have a significant positive influence on the integrity of Professional Secretaries. ($\beta=.601, p<.001$). The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is significant ($F=124.301, p<.001$).

Discussion of findings

The results of the study show that non-financial incentives have a significant positive impact on integrity among professional secretaries in Lagos State Public Service. According to the frequency distribution table, 79(40.1%) of the respondents agreed that their organization provides opportunities for growth and development, while 80(40.6%) agreed that they are recognized for their contributions to the organization.

The study's results show that non-financial incentives have a significant positive impact on integrity among professional secretaries in Lagos State Public Service. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of non-financial incentives in promoting employee motivation and job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). The grand mean score for non-financial incentives (4.04) indicates that respondents generally agreed that non-financial incentives are important for promoting integrity. Specifically, the study found that opportunities for growth and development, recognition, autonomy, and supportive work environment are essential non-financial incentives that promote integrity among Professional Secretaries.

The study's findings also suggest that Distributive leadership models have a significant positive influence on Integrity among Professional Secretaries in Lagos State Public Service. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of Distributive leadership models in promoting Professional Secretary empowerment and job satisfaction (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). The grand mean score for Distributive leadership models (4.00) indicates that respondents generally agreed that Distributive leadership models are important for promoting integrity. Specifically, the study

found that involving Professional Secretaries in decision-making processes, empowering Professional Secretaries to take ownership of their work, and providing feedback and coaching are essential Distributive leadership models practices that promote integrity among Professional Secretaries.

The regression analysis shows that non-financial incentives have a significant positive impact on integrity ($\beta = .512, p < .001$), explaining about 40% of the variation in integrity. Similarly, the regression analysis shows that Distributive leadership models have a significant positive impact on integrity ($\beta = .601, p < .001$), explaining about 49% of the variation in integrity. These findings suggest that both non-financial incentives and Distributive leadership models are important predictors of integrity among Professional Secretaries in Lagos State Public Service.

The study's findings have implications for policymakers and practitioners seeking to promote integrity among Professional Secretaries in Lagos State Public Service. The study suggests that policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the development of non-financial incentives and Distributive leadership models strategies to promote integrity. Specifically, organizations should provide opportunities for growth and development, recognize Professional Secretaries' contributions, and promote autonomy in the workplace. Additionally, organizations should empower Professional Secretaries, promote teamwork and collaboration, and involve Professional Secretaries in decision-making processes.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that both non-financial incentives and distributive leadership are important predictors of integrity among professional secretaries in Lagos State Public Service. The findings indicate that when non-financial incentives are high, integrity tends to be high as well, and when distributive leadership is high, integrity tends to be high as well. Therefore, policymakers and practitioners should prioritize the development of non-financial incentives and distributive leadership strategies to promote integrity among professional secretaries.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are made to promote integrity among professional secretaries in Lagos State Public Service. Lagos State Government should prioritize the

development of non-financial incentives to promote integrity among professional secretaries. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for growth and development, recognizing employees' contributions, and promoting autonomy in the workplace. Additionally, Lagos State Government should promote distributive leadership models to enhance the sustainability of professional secretaries' integrity. This can be achieved by empowering employees, promoting teamwork and collaboration, and involving employees in decision-making processes.

Public service organizations should also play a crucial role in promoting integrity among professional secretaries. They should foster a culture of integrity by promoting non-financial incentives and distributive leadership. Providing opportunities for growth and development is essential to enhance the skills and knowledge of professional secretaries. Furthermore, recognizing employees' contributions is vital to promote job satisfaction and integrity.

Future research should be conducted to explore the relationship between non-financial incentives, distributive leadership, and integrity in other contexts. Different research designs, such as experimental designs, should be used to establish causality between non-financial incentives, distributive leadership, and integrity. Additionally, future studies should include other variables, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between non-financial incentives, distributive leadership, and integrity.

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