

**REMUNERATION PRACTICES AND WORK ENGAGEMENT
AMONG INEC ADHOC STAFF IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS
FOR ELECTORAL INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT: This study evaluates the impact of remuneration practices on the work engagement of adhoc staff employed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) during the 2019 and 2023 General Elections in Nigeria. Recognizing the pivotal role these workers play in the electoral process, from voter registration to vote counting, the research highlights how compensation influences their work engagement. The study employs a descriptive case study design to analyze remuneration challenges, including lack of transparency and timely payment, and their effects on work engagement. Results reveal a significant correlation between fair remuneration practices and staff engagement, suggesting that improvements in these areas could enhance electoral outcomes and contribute to national development. Recommendations are offered for establishing transparent payment mechanisms, fair compensation structures, and effective communication channels to bolster staff engagement and ensure the credibility of Nigeria's electoral processes. Overall, the research underscores the essential link between adequate worker compensation, electoral integrity, and broader national growth.

Keywords: Remuneration Practices, Work Engagement, Adhoc Staff, Independent National Electoral Commission, National Development

INTRODUCTION

The compensation of workers is key in determining work behaviour including work engagement. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in every election circle hires adhoc staff to help execute national elections in Nigeria and the remuneration of the staff just like in any other circumstance no doubt have a significant effect on the effectiveness and integrity of electoral processes. The adhoc workers are involved in the administration of elections and perform several electoral duties and functions in the electoral processes. Some of the duties performed by these staff include sorting of ballot papers and counting of votes. The adequacy of compensation of adhoc workers directly affects their performance, which in turn, impact the overall integrity of the elections. Poor compensation of workers brings about low motivation and engagement (Akuffo-Aduamah, Nurullisa, 2025; Darmawan & Miftahuddin, 2025), which ultimately will affect the quality of electoral processes. Hence, the objective of this study is to evaluate the remuneration

practices and work engagement of Adhoc staff of INEC in the 2019 and 2023 General Elections in Nigeria as it relates to national development.

Overview of INEC Adhoc Staff Roles

As highlighted earlier, adhoc staff under the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) perform significant functions in executing Nigeria's electoral processes. INEC adhoc staff are usually fully involved in voter registration, operation of polling booths, promptly and accurately tabulating as well as announcing results (Onwunyi et al., 2019). Their roles go beyond these critical and sensitive functions as they also render supporting duties such as receiving, organizing, and distributing electoral materials, keeping order on the queues, and many other things. By implication, the staff's quality performance determines the electoral process's integrity and smoothness, making them irreplaceable for a successful democratic process (Bot, 2022). In view of the sensitive nature of the functions and roles occupied by the adhoc staff, their performance assumes an important position in stimulating the general public's confidence and trust in the outcomes of the electoral process.

Onwunyi et al. (2019) further affirm that adhoc staff of INEC have numerous activities that they undertake while conducting elections in Nigeria. One of the main activities is the registration of voters. They register eligible citizens and verify their credentials while entering them into the electoral database. On election day, the staff perform the duties in the polling unit by helping in conducting the voting process and guiding the voters in voting. Furthermore, adhoc staff of INEC also perform the most important duty of vote count, and they are required to ensure that the counting is done without any compromise or disrepute, making it legitimate enough for acceptance. Similarly, they also carryout activities regarding logistics, especially in solving the issues of forming the lines and managing the timing of when the materials are provided for voting, etc. (Abumbe & Owa, 2024).

A core feature that impacts the job environment and motivational disposition in adhoc jobs at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the temporary nature of the job. Adhoc jobs are temporary employment often used to fill short-term periods in particular electoral scenarios. Job security is a major motivational determinant yet INEC staff working in adhoc jobs are in a position where there is no long-term employment certainty. The temporary nature attached to the employment probably fosters feelings of uncertainty and anxiety among workers. Employees may also experience a lack of motivation arising from the perception of their employment as temporary and insignificant (Onwunyi et al., 2019). In the absence of job security, INEC staff working in adhoc jobs may also not be motivated to engage fully with their duties, as they may prefer to focus on the pursuit of permanent job prospects instead of doing excellently in their temporary jobs. This precarious employment pattern is detrimental to work engagement and productivity and could negatively impact the credibility and quality of the electoral process (Bot, 2022).

Remuneration Practice and Remuneration Practices at INEC

Remuneration practices involve the entire system of financial and non-financial rewards employers provide for work, encompassing salary, bonuses, benefits (like health insurance) to attract, motivate

and retain employees. Oftentimes, remuneration practice is structured through systems, considering equity, market rates, and individual performance to create a strategic total rewards offering.

The remuneration policy framework for adhoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission also follows some structure to provide basic financial support. For example, adhoc staff are entitled to payment per electoral duty taken. The payment is meant to be the financial support for the duration of the adhoc staff's service to the electoral organization. There are, however, instances in which the organization extends further financial incentive options in the form of allowances that cover transportation and accommodation to the temporary adhoc staff owing to the logistical challenges involved (Dan-Azumi, 2022). This framework of remuneration also has some shortcomings. For instance, the provisions of financial remuneration have been noted to have faced several challenges in terms of timeliness and adequacy of the payments made to the adhoc staff to facilitate a continuation of engagement to financial stability. Albeit the introductory provision of financial remuneration to the adhoc staff, there is no competitive remuneration against the permanent staff (Onwunyi et al., 2019).

Just like in many other organizations, remuneration of adhoc staff at INEC is different from the regular staff. The adhoc workers are usually paid on a fee-based scale per electoral duty that is done. The pay is expected to compensate for the labour exercised by these workers over the election period. The pay scale is further augmented by stipends that are given to the workers in the form of transport and accommodation allowances (Dan-Azumi, 2022). It aims at mitigating a portion of the responsibilities that the adhoc workers incur. On the other hand, regular INEC workers earn salaries based on a normal work schedule that includes employment benefits such as pension, health insurance, retirement benefits, and the like. Such differences in pay reflect on the nature of adhoc work and outline the attachments that the workers have toward their job. It also puts into test the much-anticipated satisfaction and justice that workers expect from the remuneration scale.

Prompt delivery of payments to the adhoc staff and timely schedule of remunerations at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) determines their financial security and affect their engagement. Payment delays and non-adherence to the payment schedule aggravate financial balance shortages among staff members and render them unable to fulfill their financial obligations (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). These breakdowns create the need for the electoral staff to search for additional income-generating opportunities, which oftentimes take their focus away from the electoral engagement activities. Furthermore, non-delivery of prompt remuneration at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) directly affect engagement, as financial insecurity causes workers to compromise election activities, including result declaration (Onwunyi et al, 2019).

Challenges in Remuneration Processes

The remuneration challenges related to adhoc staff members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are based on payment delays and lack of remuneration transparency. Payment delays can cause adverse employment outcomes to the adhoc staff since they will be unable to provide for their needs and obligations without receiving their payment on time (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). Moreover, remuneration-related challenges also involve a lack of transparency in the INEC

and adhoc staff communication, which further worsens payment uncertainties (Dan-Azumi, 2022). Consequently, the abovementioned challenges can negatively affect employee trust and overall morale due to feelings of neglect and marginalization in the electoral process. Given all of the abovementioned issues, remuneration challenges pose a significant risk in terms of the electoral commission's ability to optimize workforce efficiency and electoral outcomes, as well as the integrity of the electoral process itself (Onwunyi et al., 2019).

Administrative bottlenecks further aggravate the payment issues of adhoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). One of these issues includes lack of a streamlined payment system within the electoral body. Adhoc staff members often complain about not receiving allowances on time, or the amount received differs from what they were promised by the commission (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). From an inadequate communication system between the commission's office (where adhoc staff members often visit for payment) and officers, errors or wrong assumptions are often made regarding when adhoc staff should be paid and how much is to be paid (Dan-Azumi, 2022). There, too, the unharnessed potential of a database is another factor contributing to delays or non-payment of allowances to adhoc staff (Onwunyi et al., 2019).

The perspectives of stakeholders on the remuneration issues faced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) shed light on the intricacies surrounding the adhoc staff. From the perspective of the adhoc staff, a key remuneration issue they faced was delays in payments according to the specified timeframes in the electoral guidelines. Due to this, adhoc staff faced financial uncertainties that ultimately led to distractions that affected their ability to discharge electoral duties (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). Furthermore, election observers also supported this allegation and insisted that delays in compensation to staff caused reduced morale and motivation, which can compromise effectiveness in delivering the electoral duties (Dan-Azumi, 2022). Moreover, some adhoc staff also indicated that the communication from the INEC did not provide clear information on its remuneration (Onwunyi et al., 2019). While improving remuneration could positively impact staff engagement, it can also contribute to improved electoral outcomes in Nigeria.

Work Engagement among INEC Adhoc Staff

The concept of work engagement entails a positive, fulfilling state where individuals feel energetic, dedicated and fully absorbed in their work. Engaged workers bring their whole selves- physically, cognitively, and emotionally to their roles leading to creativity and higher performance.

Personal characteristics as well as various organizational factors are likely to impact the engagement levels of adhoc employees working with INEC. Because their employment is largely temporary and remuneration procedures are inconsistent, there are fluctuations in engagement levels (Olonade et al., 2022). While engagement levels of adhoc employees are observably low, ineffective communications lead to the problem as well. For instance, adhoc employees may feel less important or unworthy of the commission due to the lack of communication levels (Dan-Azumi, 2022). Besides, the adhoc employees do not have career progress in the commission due to their temporary position. Lack of proper progress and growth opportunities lead to disengagement and

reduced motivation. Therefore, addressing the engagement levels of adhoc staff is crucial for the integrity and efficiency in Nigeria's electoral process.

Clearly, there are challenges surrounding the remuneration approach of adhoc staff of INEC, however, literature is sparse on the impact these challenges have on their work engagement. Considering the importance of work engagement of adhoc staff of INEC in enhancing electoral integrity and national development, it is academically imperative to ex-ray the nexus between their remuneration and work engagement.

Reinforcement Theory of Work Engagement

There are a number of theories that explain work engagement of workers. In the case of adhoc employees, Reinforcement Theory is considered the most relevant. The theory is propounded based on B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning. Skinner suggests that employees' behaviour (like work engagement) is shaped by its consequences, using positive reinforcement (rewards for desired actions like praise, bonuses), negative reinforcement (removing unpleasant things like criticism for good work), punishment (negative consequences for bad behaviour), and extinction (ignoring unwanted behaviours) to increase or decrease their future occurrence, aiming for consistent positive performance through well-timed, varied rewards.

Core principles of reinforcement theory involve focusing on behaviour & consequences as well as antecedents. The theory posits that what happens after a behaviour (the consequence) is the primary driver of whether that behaviour will be repeated. Antecedents are cues or situations (like goals, training, policies) that occur before behaviour, setting the stage but not driving daily action like consequences do.

Boosting work engagement of adhoc staff consistently is necessary as it will enhance electoral credibility. As emphasized by Skinner, INEC can use positive reinforcement (timely payment of allowances, celebrating successes, offering growth opportunities such as permanent employment) to make employees feel valued and encouraged thereby fostering deeper involvement. Similarly, reinforcement from INEC can go beyond money. While financial rewards motivate, non-monetary rewards (empowerment, appreciation, good conditions) are crucial for sustained work engagement.

Impact of Remuneration on Work Engagement

Empirical evidence have shown a direct relationship between remuneration practices and work engagement of workers. A disparity in remuneration practices due to instability and unreliability negatively impacts the motivation of adhoc staff as uncertainty pertaining to their remuneration results in poor engagement and focus towards their electoral duties (Onwunyi et al. 2019). Fair remuneration ensures greater concentration towards electoral responsibilities while ensuring quality results, which in turn positively drives work engagement (Dan-Azumi, 2022). Additionally, fair remuneration practices that encompass the responsibilities and workload of adhoc staff help in fostering a sense of fairness and regard which are instrumental in ensuring constant motivation and dedication (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). Therefore, it is evident that remuneration practices impact adhoc staff work engagement, and thus it is imperative to resolve these remuneration issues as they

directly impact the work engagement of adhoc staff which is essential for efficient electoral processes in Nigeria.

A remuneration system that ensures timely delivery of payment helps reduce adhoc staff's financial burden, while promoting confidence in the organization that would drive them to perform better. Staff who follow fair remuneration practices would feel appreciated and valued, and as a result, this would improve their overall motivation and performance (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). Overall, promotion of fair and timely remuneration would help advance the commitment and performance level of adhoc staff at INEC, which is important for ensuring efficient conduct of electoral processes that promote quality and reliability of electoral processes in Nigeria.

Implications for National Development

A holistic process of improving overall well-being, encompassing the economy, health and education, political stability, infrastructure and the like is termed national development. Particularizing national development, United Nations (2020) elucidated that national development is a holistic, multi-dimensional process of a nation's overall progress, encompassing economic growth, human resource development (health, education), social well-being, good governance, and sustainability, aligned with global goals like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to improve citizens' lives and create a just, prosperous society.

The effect of the remuneration and work engagement of adhoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Nigeria's national development is enormous. Poor choices of remuneration practices would result in disengagement and low motivation of staff; consequently, the effect of the foregoing would be pronounced in the conduct of election processes. If this is the case, the credibility of the electoral process would be at risk. The implications of this are damaging not only in terms of discrediting the electoral institution, which is regarded as a bastion of democratic governance in Nigeria, but also for the country, which is already at risk due to its fragile state of socio-political development (Abumbe & Owa, 2024; Onwunyi et al.,2019).

METHOD

Design

A descriptive case study design was employed to analyse remuneration practices of INEC in the 2019 and 2023 General Elections in Nigeria and how it relates to work engagement of adhoc staff of the commission. Recent studies investigating the effect of remuneration on worker behaviour are reviewed in the following section.

Case Studies

A detailed analysis of case studies reveals the correlation between remuneration policies and Nigeria's election results and nation-building efforts. One of the case studies establishes a direct relationship between delays in payments to INEC adhoc staff during the 2019 general elections, voter apathy, and related electoral logistics issues (Dan-Azumi, 2022). It demonstrates that

remuneration issues can negatively impact stakeholder productivity, thereby compromising electoral efficiency and result credibility. A subsequent review of the 2023 elections found that adherence to best practices in remuneration positively affected staff productivity and citizen trust in the process (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). More importantly, the research findings prove that remuneration policies are vital to addressing electoral system vulnerabilities and ensuring electoral law and mandate effectiveness in Nigeria, a necessity for democratic consolidation and socio-economic development (Bot, 2022).

Improved remuneration practices at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have demonstrated tangible benefits in enhancing electoral processes and outcomes. For instance, during the 2023 general elections, the timely and equitable compensation of adhoc staff was linked to more efficient polling operations and higher voter satisfaction (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). This improvement in remuneration not only bolstered staff morale but also contributed to smoother logistical arrangements, reducing delays and enhancing the overall electoral experience (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). Furthermore, the increased financial stability afforded by these practices allowed staff to focus on their duties with greater diligence, thereby improving the accuracy and reliability of vote counting and reporting (Dan-Azumi, 2022). Such examples underscore the critical role that fair remuneration plays in fostering a committed workforce, ultimately leading to more credible and acceptable electoral outcomes, which are essential for democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Broader Economic and Social Impacts of Remuneration Practices and Work Engagement

The engagement of well-motivated electoral staff at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) extends beyond electoral success, significantly influencing broader economic and social dimensions in Nigeria. Engaged staff contribute to more efficient electoral processes, which are fundamental to maintaining public confidence and political stability, essential elements for economic growth (Dan-Azumi, 2022). A credible electoral system fosters an environment that attracts foreign investment by ensuring a stable political landscape, which is pivotal for economic advancement (Abumbe & Owva, 2024). Furthermore, the social fabric benefits from the enhanced public trust in democratic institutions, reducing the likelihood of post-election conflicts and fostering social cohesion (Oluwadayisi et al, 2021). Thus, the ripple effects of well-engaged electoral staff not only enhance the immediate electoral outcomes but also bolster Nigeria's long-term economic prospects and societal harmony.

Enhanced work engagement among the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) staff can significantly bolster public trust and increase electoral participation. When electoral staff are motivated and committed, they are more likely to perform their duties with diligence and transparency, which is crucial for fostering confidence in the electoral process (Oluwadayisi et al, 2021). This trust is essential as it encourages citizens to actively participate in elections, knowing that their votes will be accurately counted and their voices heard. Moreover, engaged staff can effectively manage polling centers, thereby reducing administrative errors and ensuring a smoother voting experience for the electorate (Olonade et al., 2022). As public trust in electoral integrity grows, so does civic engagement, reinforcing democratic values and encouraging broader participation in Nigeria's democratic processes.

In the case of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the expected long-term benefits from effectual remuneration and work engagement practices to national stability and growth are enormous. Enhanced compensation practices and work engagement of adhoc staff would improve the quality of electoral systems in Nigeria, which plays a vital role in ensuring political stability and public trust (Dan-Azumi, 2022). Political stability attracts foreign investments and economic growth while it creates an enabling environment for democratic governance (Abumbe & Owa, 2024). Furthermore, well-engaged adhoc staff would promote a more transparent electoral system that instills accountability, thereby reducing electoral malpractices and enhancing democratic institutions (Oluwadayisi et al., eivillawjournal.com). Of course, the multiplier impacts of these enhanced remuneration practices would strengthen Nigeria's ability to grow economically and socially, while laying a solid ground for national prosperity in the long run.

The role of government and policy reforms in promoting sound remuneration practices in Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is germane. Effective policies can guide the remuneration process at INEC to strengthen the financial position of adhoc staff. Timely and adequate compensation can boost the adhoc staff engagement and motivation (Oluwadayisi et al., civillawjournal.com). Effective reform policies can also reduce the major setbacks associated with accountability and transparency at INEC to ease the effect of payment delay and lack of clear communication channels (Dan-Azumi, 2022). Adherence to pre-established policies and regulatory framework can enable the government to promote equitable and fair remuneration practices that are commensurate with the duties of the adhoc staff at the INEC. This development may ultimately improve operational efficiency at INEC and the integrity of the electoral process, both of which are critical to national stability and democratic consolidation (Olonade et al., 2022).

Recommendations

To enhance work engagement among adhoc staff at INEC and contribute to a more robust electoral system for national elections, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. **Timely and Transparent Payment Mechanisms:** INEC should establish a reliable and transparent payment system for adhoc staff, ensuring that payments are disbursed promptly, accurately, and efficiently. Leveraging digital banking platforms and mobile payment systems may streamline the process.
- ii. **Fair and Equitable Remuneration:** INEC should review the current allowance structure to ensure that compensation is commensurate with the responsibilities, time, and effort demanded by adhoc staff. This should consider the actual costs they incur, such as transportation and feeding.
- iii. **Clear Communication:** Communication channels need to be open and honest; INEC should clearly communicate the remuneration structure and payment timelines to adhoc staff before their deployment. Transparency helps to foster trust and reduce potential for dissatisfaction.
- iv. **Feedback Mechanisms:** INEC should establish feedback mechanisms to address inquiries and complaints from adhoc staff related to remuneration. This will ensure that any issues are resolved quickly and effectively.

- v. **Training on Ethical Conduct:** Alongside operational training, INEC should incorporate training on ethical conduct, highlighting the importance of fair and unbiased performance of duties, irrespective of compensation issues.
- vi. **Performance-Based Incentives:** Consideration should be given to introducing performance-based incentives for adhoc staff who demonstrate high levels of commitment, productivity, and integrity during election duties.

Conclusion

The discourse on the remuneration and work engagement of the adhoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) holds significant relevance not only to electoral integrity, but also to their evident ramifications for Nigeria's national progress and development. Firstly, strong, dependable, and equitable remuneration practices must be adopted by the commission in order to secure a strengthened adhoc staff engagement in the mission to drive credible elections in the country. The challenges noted in the remuneration practices revealed patterns of payment delays and non-transparency of payment structure. The analysis also showed that the two key challenges impacted the work engagement of staff. The combined impacts of delay in payment of entitlements and lack of transparency in the payment process are areas of concern. When duly addressed, there will be considerable promise for enhanced improvements in work engagement and, by extension, electoral integrity that promise long-term national growth and development across various sectors in Nigeria.

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