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# Effect of Delayed Salary Payment on Employee Productivity: An Empirical Study of Staff Employed in 2024 at the University of Abuja

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## ABSTRACT
One of the most basic responsibilities that an employer has towards its employees is to pay their salary on time. This study examined the effects of salary payment delays on staff newly employed by the University of Abuja (UniAbuja) in 2024. The study population comprised approximately 1,000 newly employed staff across faculties and administrative units. Using stratified random sampling proportional to faculty size, 500 staff were sampled, of whom 336 (67.2%) completed the questionnaire. A mixed-methods design was adopted, using an online, 20-item structured questionnaire comprising five objective-aligned constructs and an interview with a senior institutional officer overseeing newly employed staff. The study was guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression, while interview data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that 81.0% of respondents had experienced salary delays more than once, while 64.1% reported cumulative delays exceeding six months since 2024. However, 81.0% indicated that individual delays lasted less than two weeks, suggesting frequent but generally short-duration delays. Salary delay severity was significantly associated with attendance ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$), task completion ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$), and institutional commitment ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.001$). Engagement in secondary income-generating activities was also strongly associated with delay severity. Loss of motivation was reported by 81.0% of respondents, consistent with Herzberg's proposition that inadequate financial conditions undermine employee motivation. The study recommends establishing a predictable monthly salary payment schedule, supported by institutional monitoring and a formal grievance mechanism for salary-related complaints.

**Keywords:** Delayed salary, employee productivity, job satisfaction, motivation, University of Abuja.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The employment relationship involves an exchange in which employees contribute their time, skills, and professional commitment in return for regular salaries and other benefits. Delayed salary payments can undermine financial security, psychological well-being, motivation, productivity, and institutional loyalty. Employees may also seek alternative income-generating activities to meet financial obligations, diverting attention from official duties.

In Nigeria's public university system, salary delays are associated with funding constraints and administrative inefficiencies. Newly recruited employees are particularly vulnerable because they often lack the financial reserves and support networks of longer-serving colleagues. The University of Abuja, established in 1988, recruited a substantial number of staff in 2024. Examining salary delays among this cohort is important for effective human resource management and for addressing the limited empirical evidence concerning newly employed staff in Nigerian federal universities. The relationship between remuneration and employee performance is explained by established motivational theories. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory identifies salary as a hygiene factor whose inadequacy or irregularity causes dissatisfaction, while Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs emphasises the importance of meeting basic physiological and security needs. Ihensekhien and Arimie (2023) highlighted the complementary relevance of these theories to employee well-being and performance.

Empirical studies support this relationship. Adea, Wanyama, Karlo, Gum, and Miyar De'Nyok (2024) reported a negative correlation ($r = -0.54$) between salary delay frequency and employee performance in selected South Sudanese ministries. They observed that delays could encourage secondary employment and psychological disengagement. Similarly, Sunoma, Ali, and Adamu (2021) found that irregular salary payments were associated with poor work engagement, absenteeism, and intentions to leave among non-academic staff in tertiary institutions in Borno State, Nigeria. Research on compensation and employee performance in Nigerian private universities provides further context.

Despite these findings, the effects of salary delays on newly recruited staff in Nigerian federal universities remain insufficiently explored. This study therefore examines how salary payment delays affect staff recruited by the University of Abuja in 2024,

focusing on attendance, task completion, motivation, and institutional commitment. Its findings are expected to inform improved salary administration and human resource management practices.

## 3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The University of Abuja recruited academic, administrative, and technical staff in 2024, amid concerns about salary payment delays. However, no systematic institutional study had established the frequency, duration, and productivity implications of these delays. This evidence gap limits effective salary reforms and informed human resource management. Newly recruited staff may be particularly vulnerable due to limited financial reserves and institutional support networks. This study examines the frequency and duration of salary delays and their perceived effects on attendance, task completion, motivation, and institutional commitment, guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The findings aim to inform evidence-based institutional interventions.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the effect of delayed salary payments on the productivity of staff employed in 2024 at the University of Abuja. Specifically, the study seeks:

1. To determine the frequency and duration of salary payment delays experienced by staff employed at UniAbuja in 2024.
2. To examine the relationship between delayed salary payments and the motivation levels of newly employed staff at UniAbuja.
3. To assess the effect of salary payment delays on the attendance, task completion rates, and institutional commitment of newly employed UniAbuja staff.
4. To identify the coping strategies adopted by newly employed UniAbuja staff in response to salary payment delays and their implications for work productivity.
5. To propose evidence-based recommendations for addressing salary payment delays and mitigating their productivity effects at the University of Abuja.

## 5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the frequency and duration of salary payment delays as experienced by staff employed at the University of Abuja in 2024?
2. What is the relationship between delayed salary payments and the motivation levels of newly employed staff at UniAbuja?
3. How do salary payment delays affect the attendance, task completion rates, and institutional commitment of newly employed staff at UniAbuja?
4. What coping strategies do newly employed UniAbuja staff adopt when salary payments are delayed, and how do these strategies affect their work productivity?
5. What practical measures can the University of Abuja take to ensure timely salary payments and protect the productivity of its newly employed staff?

## 6. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

$H_{01}$: There is no significant relationship between delayed salary payments and the motivation levels of staff employed at UniAbuja in 2024.

$H_{02}$: Delayed salary payments do not significantly affect the attendance and task completion rates of newly employed staff at UniAbuja.

$H_{03}$: Delayed salary payments do not significantly influence the institutional commitment of newly employed staff at UniAbuja.

## 7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant on several levels. For the University of Abuja, it provides the first systematic empirical documentation of the productivity effects of salary payment delays on the 2024 cohort of newly employed staff. This evidence can inform the

university's human resource management strategy, guide negotiation with federal funding bodies for more reliable budget releases, and support the design of staff welfare interventions targeted at newly recruited employees. For the broader Nigerian public university sector, the study contributes empirical evidence to an area where the literature while growing remains sparse relative to the scale and frequency of the problem. By situating its findings within established motivational frameworks, the study also advances the theoretical understanding of how salary-related factors interact with the specific occupational context of newly recruited university staff. For policymakers, the study's findings can inform the design of government salary payment regulations for federal universities, and may support advocacy for more disciplined release schedules of salary budgets from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. For researchers, the study's mixed-methods design provides a model for investigating compensation-related human resource challenges in complex institutional settings.

## 8. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 8.1 Theoretical Framework: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) underpin this study. Herzberg distinguished hygiene factors, including salary, organisational policies, supervision, working conditions, and job security, whose inadequacy causes dissatisfaction, from motivators, such as achievement, recognition, meaningful work, and advancement, which foster satisfaction and sustained motivation (Ihensekhien & Arimie, 2023). Salary delays may therefore generate dissatisfaction and undermine employees' ability to maintain effective professional performance.

Maslow arranged human needs into five levels: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualisation. Salary supports physiological needs, such as food and shelter, and safety needs, particularly financial security. Delayed payments threaten these foundations, potentially reducing employees' capacity to concentrate on professional responsibilities and pursue higher-level motivations (Ihensekhien & Arimie, 2023).

Both theories are relevant to this study because they explain how salary delays may affect motivation and productivity. Acha-Anyi and Masaraure (2021), examining employee performance in sub-Saharan Africa, highlighted the importance of financial

security to productive work engagement. These perspectives provide a basis for investigating salary delays among newly employed University of Abuja staff, whose financial vulnerability may make timely payment particularly important for motivation, attendance, task completion, and institutional commitment.

### 8.2 Salary Payment and Employee Productivity

Salary payment and employee productivity have been examined across different contexts. Adea, Wanyama, Karlo, Gum, and Miyar De'Nyok (2024) found a negative correlation ($r = -0.54$) between salary delays and employee performance in South Sudanese ministries, linking delays to reduced productivity, motivation, and job satisfaction. Ramli, Febriani, and Reza (2023) similarly associated unmet salary-related needs with diminished job satisfaction, motivation, and output, consistent with Herzberg's hygiene factor model. In Nigerian private universities, Olusola and Chukwuemeka (2023) reported a significant positive relationship between financial compensation and productivity ($p = 0.037$), suggesting that timely, competitive salaries enhance commitment and institutional performance. Conversely, irregular payments may undermine these outcomes. Sunoma, Ali, and Adamu (2021) found that irregular emolument payments among tertiary institution staff in Borno State were associated with poor work engagement, absenteeism, and intentions to leave. These findings highlight the relevance of examining salary delays among newly recruited academic, administrative, and technical staff at the University of Abuja.

### 8.3 Delayed Salary Payments and Employee Motivation

Motivation mediates the relationship between salary delays and employee productivity. Hanaysha and Majid (2018) identified financial motivation, including timely salary payment, as an important driver of staff motivation and organisational commitment in higher education. Similarly, Ahmed, Daudu, and Mohammed (2021) found that regular salaries, timely promotion, and financial incentives positively influenced professional library staff performance in Gombe State, Nigeria. Asaari, Desa, and Subramaniam (2019) also identified salary as a significant predictor of employee motivation. Collectively, these findings suggest that irregular salary payments undermine motivation, work performance, and institutional loyalty, supporting Herzberg's proposition that inadequate hygiene factors generate employee dissatisfaction.

### 8.4 Financial Stress, Absenteeism, and Coping Strategies

Motivation mediates the relationship between salary delays and productivity. Hanaysha and Majid (2018) identified timely salary payment as a key driver of motivation and commitment in higher education. Ahmed, Daudu, and Mohammed (2021) found that regular salaries and financial incentives improved library staff performance in Gombe State, Nigeria. Similarly, Asaari, Desa, and Subramaniam (2019) identified salary as a significant predictor of motivation. These findings support Herzberg's proposition that inadequate hygiene factors generate dissatisfaction and undermine employee performance and institutional loyalty.

### 8.5 Organisational Commitment and Institutional Loyalty

Motivation links salary delays to employee productivity. Hanaysha and Majid (2018) identified timely salary payment as a key driver of motivation and commitment in higher education. Ahmed, Daudu, and Mohammed (2021) found that regular salaries and financial incentives improved library staff performance in Gombe State, Nigeria. Asaari, Desa, and Subramaniam (2019) similarly identified salary as a significant motivational factor. These findings support Herzberg's theory that inadequate hygiene factors cause dissatisfaction, undermining employee performance and institutional loyalty.

## 9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 9.1 Research Design

The research method used in this study is a mixed method research, in which quantitative survey data is used and qualitative interview data is used. The quantitative aspect enables the relationship between salary payment delays and productivity to be quantified and the qualitative one is more subtle, as it can accommodate the lived experiences and institutional perspective that can only be conveyed by the wider non-Likert Scale responses. In complex institutional settings where there is a need for measurement and understanding, mixed-methods designs are often recommended to conduct organisational research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

### 9.2 Population and Sampling

This population sample is all the 1000 employees of the University of Abuja for the 2024 academic year. The population is comprised of eight Faculties and Units at the University, namely the Arts, Social Sciences, Sciences, Education, Agriculture, Engineering, Management Sciences, and Administration/Central Units, and is quite diverse in terms of staff category (academic and non-academic), Faculty affiliation, gender, and academic qualification making stratified sampling necessary for representativeness.

Based on Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations, $n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$, $N = 1{,}000$ and $e = 0.05$ at the 95% confidence level, the statistical minimum sample size is found to be about 286 respondents. Given the fact that surveys that aim to obtain accurate estimates of sensitive remuneration issues in public institutions in Nigeria tend to have below average response rates, the researchers chose to use an oversampling strategy of 500 respondents (that is 50% of the population) to ensure accuracy of estimates in case of potential non-response bias. A method of Stratified Random Sampling was used to ensure that the staffs of each of the faculties and of the administrative and technical services were proportionate, and simple random sampling was used in each stratum to determine the individual respondents. Table 1 shows the population of the respondents and the number that were assigned to each faculty/unit and the number of respondents that returned.

**Table 1: Population and Sample Distribution by Faculty/Unit**

| Faculty / Unit | Population (N) | Sample Size (n) | Responses Returned | Response Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | 48 | 24 | 16 | 66.7 |
| Social Sciences | 214 | 107 | 72 | 67.3 |
| Sciences | 142 | 71 | 48 | 67.6 |
| Education | 166 | 83 | 56 | 67.5 |
| Agriculture | 72 | 36 | 24 | 66.7 |
| Engineering | 96 | 48 | 32 | 66.7 |
| Management Sciences | 96 | 48 | 32 | 66.7 |
| Administration / Central Units | 166 | 83 | 56 | 67.5 |
| Total | 1000 | 500 | 336 | 67.2 |

Of the 500 questionnaires administered, 336 valid responses were completed and returned, representing a general response rate of 67.2%, which is considered adequate for descriptive and inferential analysis in organisational survey research. An additional key informant, a senior officer with direct supervisory oversight of newly employed staff, was selected purposively for the in-depth interview component.

### 9.3 Research Instrument

Two instruments were used for data collection. The first was a structured 20-item online questionnaire, hosted on Google Forms and distributed to the 500 sampled staff via institutional email and WhatsApp groups. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A captured demographic information; Section B measured the frequency and duration of salary payment delays; and Section C measured productivity outcomes including motivation, attendance, task completion, institutional commitment, and coping behaviours. Items in Sections B and C used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The second instrument was a structured interview guide comprising five open-ended questions, administered to the five purposively selected key informants. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in the respondents' offices and lasted approximately 10–20 minutes each. All interviews were conducted with informed consent, audio-recorded with permission, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis.

### 9.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity of the questionnaire was established through expert review: the draft instrument was reviewed by three academic staff in the Department of Public Administration and Human Resource Management at the University of Abuja, whose comments led to the revision of four items for clarity and specificity. Face validity was confirmed through a pilot test administered to 20 staff who were not included in the main study sample. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated for the scale items, yielding an alpha of 0.81, which exceeds the conventionally accepted threshold of 0.70 and confirms the internal consistency of the instrument.

### 9.5 Data Analysis

Data collected by the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and coded. Descriptive statistical analysis of demographic characteristics and

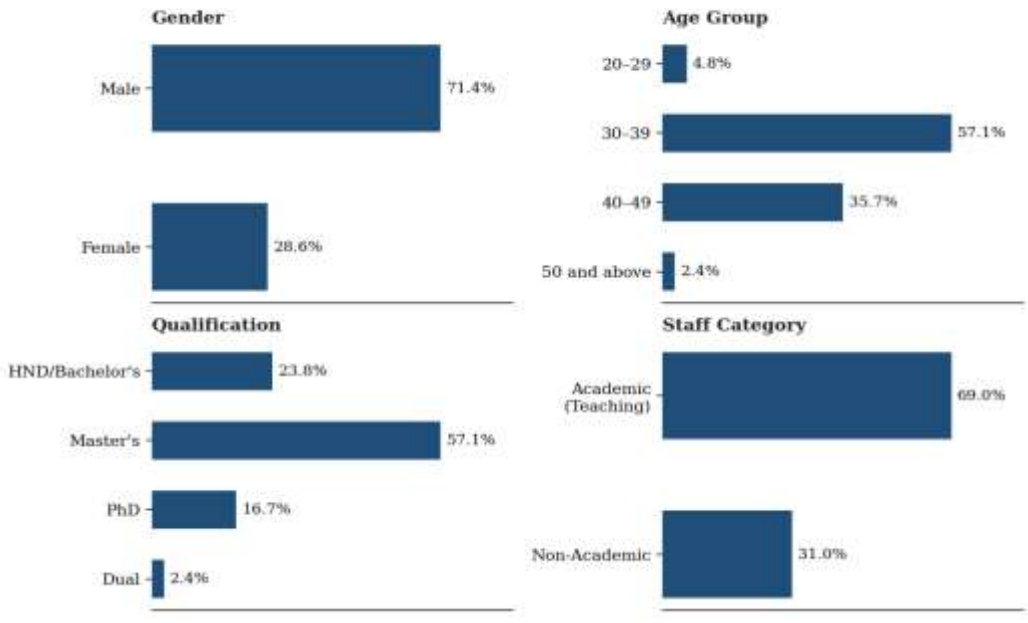
descriptive results on salary delay frequency, and productivity outcomes were presented by using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages and means and standard deviations. The strength and direction of relationship between salary delay severity and each of the productivity dimensions were tested using Pearson correlation while the predictive effect of salary delay on employee productivity was tested using simple linear regression analysis. A significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ was used for testing hypotheses.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data obtained through the interviews following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). It was read multiple times to become familiar with the transcript, codes were inducted, themes were reviewed and refined before presenting with excerpts of the interview that supported the themes.

## 10. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the study conducted on 336 questionnaires received, as well as the interview with the senior officers are presented here. A simple linear regression was run between the delay-severity index (mean of the four Objective 1 items) and each productivity construct; a correlation was calculated between each delay-severity construct item; the items used on the Likert Scale were scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree); a score was computed for each of the four productive constructs as the mean of the constituent items on the construct scale.

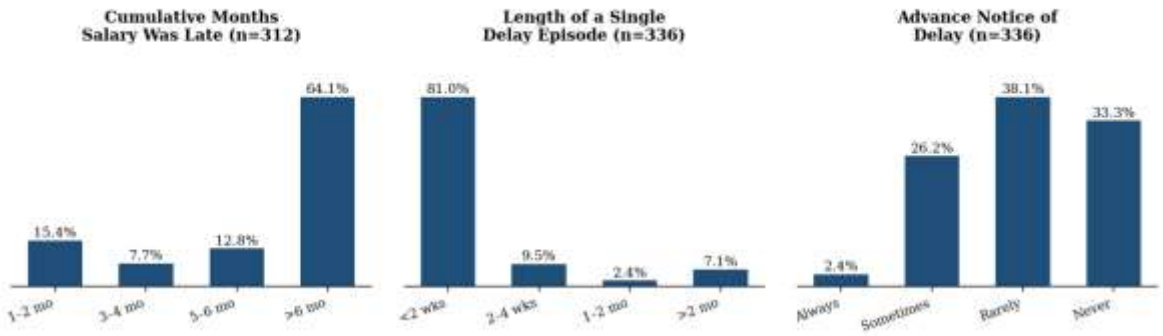
**Figure 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 336)**



The 336 respondents are described in terms of their demographic features in Figure 1. The age distribution pattern was mainly male (71.4%) with the majority in the age group of 30-39 years (57.1%) which is indicative of a fairly young age distribution pattern as expected from a newly recruited staff group. The majority (57.1%) held a Masters degree with just over two thirds (69.0%) of the respondents being academic (teaching) staff and less than one third (31.0%) non-academic (support) staff.

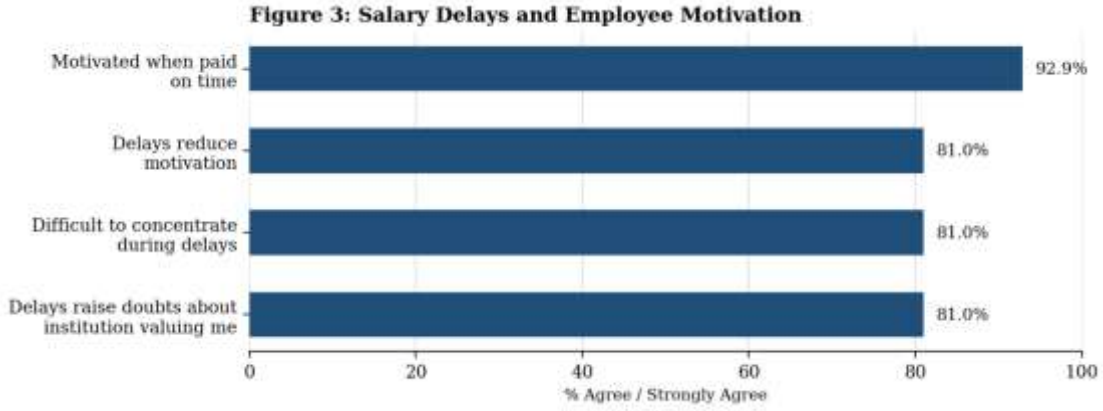
### 10.1 Frequency and Duration of Salary Payment Delays

**Figure 2: Frequency, Duration, and Notice of Salary Payment Delays**




The results of respondents' experiences of salary delay are summarized in figure 2. 81.0% of respondents said that they had been paid late several times since 2024, while 64.1% said they had been paid late for longer than six months, combined. Of particular note was the 81.0% who said that their average episode of delay was less than two weeks. These two findings together indicate that at UniAbuja, one or two late payments is not the norm, but many late payments that accumulate over the course of the year that led to significant cumulative lateness, which in turn increases financial risk as staff are not able to know when the next payment will be due. This is reflected in 71.4% staff who indicated that they were not warned ahead of time about the possibility of a delay. The findings are also in line with Adea, Wanyama, Karlo, Gum and Miyar De'Nyok (2024) who noted that salary delay is systemic in public sector institutions and not an exception and Sunoma, Ali and Adamu (2021) who concluded that irregular payment schedules is a chronic behaviour of the Nigerian public university salary system and not a temporary aberration in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

## 10.2 Salary Payment Delays and Employee Motivation




Items relating to motivation are presented in Figure 3. Lack of motivation was common with the majority of respondents (81.0%) indicating that their motivation was affected by delay, 81.0% answering that they struggle to focus during a delay, and 81.0% stating they were not sure if there was a value in their contribution to the institution.

The small, but statistically significant Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.18 ($p = 0.001$; Table 2) between the delay-severity index and the motivation-loss composite did not support the rejection of $H_{01}$. It seems best interpreted against the backcloth of a ceiling effect: the high level (4.20 out of 5) of motivation loss observed for the vast majority of respondents across the whole delay, regardless of the duration of their delay, meant that there was little room left in which to further increase with the severity of the delay. On a substantive level, this pattern implies that the motivational impact of a salary delay is categorical, that is, it only kicks in when it happens and not as a function of the delay time. This is in parallel with Herzberg's Two Factor Theory which predicts that salary as a hygiene factor brings dissatisfaction if it has been disrupted in a manner largely threshold-like rather than a smooth dose-response relationship, as explicitly discussed by Ihensekhien and Arimie (2023) in a Nigerian organisational context.

### 10.3 Effect on Attendance, Task Completion, and Institutional Commitment

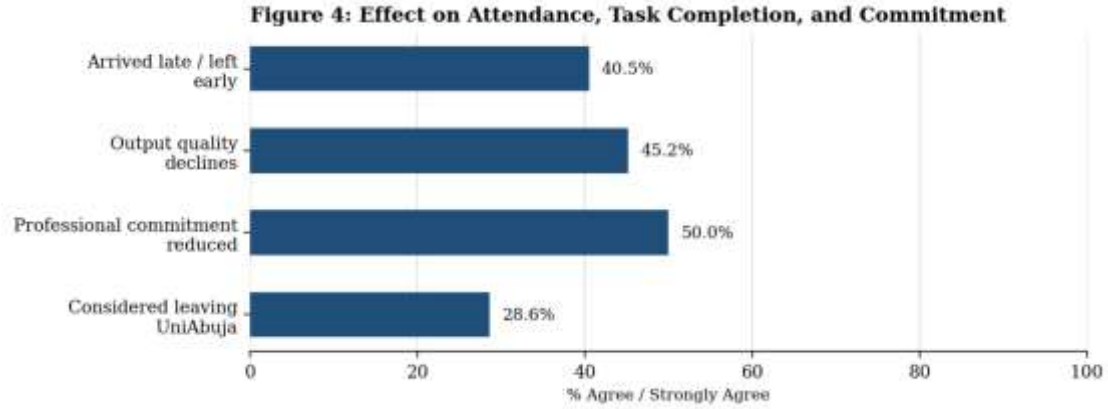



Figure 4 presents the Objective 3 items. Two-fifths of respondents (40.5%) agreed that delays had led them to arrive late or leave early, and 45.2% agreed that their output quality declined during delay periods. On institutional commitment, half of all respondents (50.0%) agreed that their professional commitment to UniAbuja had reduced, and 28.6% had considered leaving the institution altogether because of persistent salary irregularities.

**Table 2: Correlation and Regression Summary – Delay-Severity Index and Productivity Composites (n = 336)**

| Productivity Dimension | Mean (SD) | r | $R^2$ | β (slope) | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivation loss composite | 4.20 (0.95) | -0.18 | 0.031 | -0.14 | 0.001* | Reject $H_{01}$ |
| Attendance & task completion composite | 3.08 (1.35) | 0.51 | 0.258 | 0.59 | 0.000* | Reject $H_{02}$ |
| Institutional commitment composite | 2.83 (1.36) | 0.46 | 0.212 | 0.54 | 0.000* | Reject $H_{03}$ |
| Coping-strategy composite | 3.21 (1.15) | 0.77 | 0.595 | 0.76 | 0.000* | n/a |

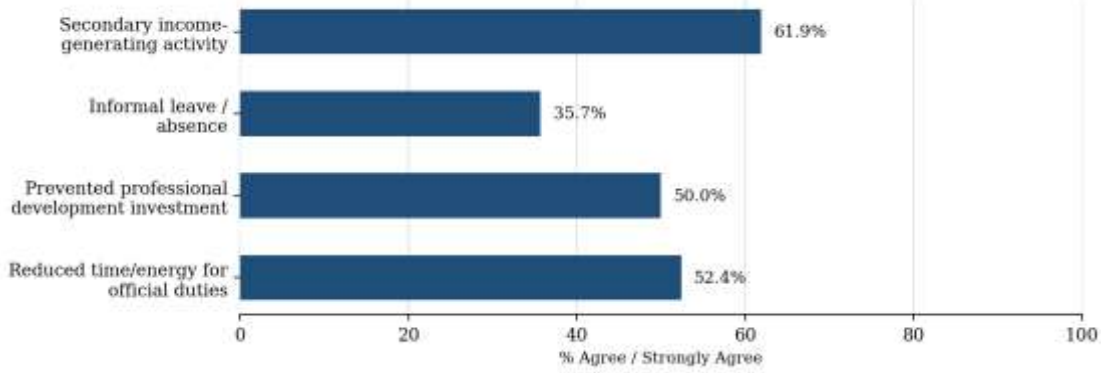
As shown in Table 2, the delay-severity index was significantly and positively correlated with the attendance and task-completion composite ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$), with regression analysis indicating that delay severity explained 25.8% of the variance in this composite ($R^2 = 0.258$). $H_{02}$ is therefore rejected. The delay-severity index was also significantly correlated with the institutional commitment composite ($r = 0.46$, p

< 0.001, $R^2$ = 0.212), leading to the rejection of $H_{03}$. Unlike the motivation-loss composite, these two behavioural and attitudinal outcomes scaled steadily with the severity of delay experienced, indicating a more conventional dose-response relationship: the longer and more frequent the delay, the greater the erosion in attendance, task completion, and commitment.

### 10.4 Coping Strategies and Their Productivity Implications

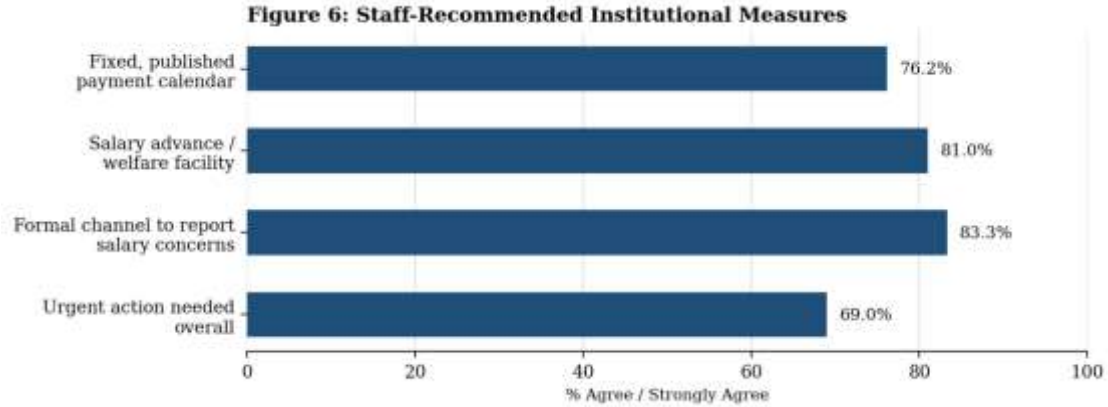
Figure 5 presents the coping-strategy items. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (61.9%) had taken up secondary income-generating activities such as trading, private tutoring, or consultancy, half (50.0%) reported that delays had prevented them from investing in their own professional development, and 52.4% agreed that the coping strategies they had adopted had directly reduced the time and energy available for their official duties.

**Figure 5: Coping Strategies Adopted in Response to Delays**




The correlation between the delay-severity index and the coping-strategy composite was the strongest of all relationships examined (r = 0.77, p < 0.001, $R^2$ = 0.595; Table 2), indicating that delay severity explains just under 60% of the variance in how heavily staff rely on coping behaviours. This is the clearest dose-response relationship in the dataset and reinforces the pattern documented by Adea, Wanyama, Karlo, Gum, and Miyar De'Nyok (2024) in the South Sudan public service context: the longer and more frequent the delay, the more staff time and cognitive capacity is diverted into survival activities that compete directly with official duties.

### 10.5 Staff Recommendations for Institutional Action




The responses to Objective 5 items ("What institutional measures do you believe should be taken?") are shown in Figure 6. Strong and consistent support was seen for concrete institutional reform: 76.2% agreed that a published, enforced payment calendar should be in place; 81.0% agreed that a payment advance or welfare facility should be made available to staff; and 83.3% (the highest rate of agreement of any item in the questionnaire) agreed that a formal avenue for reporting and tracking salary concerns should exist.

### 10.6 Qualitative Findings from the Key Informant Interview

The interview with a purposively sampled senior institutional officer confirmed and complemented the quantitative results in five themes related to the study's goals. Upon being asked about frequency and duration of delay, the officer informed us that salary delays for all newly employed staff were very common in 2024 for most of our newly employed staff, ranging from 2 months up to 6 months, and in some cases, even longer, before they were able to be paid once full payroll integration was in place. Some of the affected workers had left their posts in other agencies or transferred to Abuja in anticipation of getting salaries on time but were compelled to report for duty without any salaries, the officer said. The latter, however, explained that “the enthusiasm of the new employees faded over time” because they were not getting paid for months and their frustration, anxiety and disappointment, as some employees openly began to ask questions about their employment with the university, had a negative impact. This is consistent with the questionnaire findings which indicated that even after a long time the majority of the respondents felt less motivated.

In terms of attendance and production, the officer reported that the school was good at the start but was starting to become late as some members of staff were not able to afford transport and the school was also reducing the output as there were “financial worries occupying the mind of staff making it difficult to concentrate on teaching, research and administrative tasks.” The officer noted that staff had families to turn to, took out loans from other staff and from cooperative societies, took up small businesses, came online or worked as private teachers in some instances and sold their own possessions to pay for their coping. As for the coping strategy composite, the interviewee reported that such behaviors frequently resulted in “physical exhaustion or mental distraction,” and some staff members asked to be excused during their work shift to take care of financial matters as reflected in the strong statistical relationship between the coping strategy composite and delay severity.

In terms of institutional measures, the interview respondent recommended that the university expedite the process of staff documentation and payroll processing immediately after the recruitment process, set clear accountability timelines, increase coordination among the various units within the university that are involved in payroll processing, provide temporary financial assistance/salary advances if this cannot be avoided, and enhance transparent communication with the employees regarding the reasons for the delay, which aligns closely with the institutional measures most frequently endorsed by respondents (as shown in Figure 6).

## 11. CONCLUSION

This study analysed responses from 336 of 500 sampled staff, drawn from approximately 1,000 employees recruited by the University of Abuja in 2024, supplemented by a key informant interview, to examine the effects of salary delays on employee productivity. Findings revealed that salary delays were recurrent, with 81.0% of respondents experiencing multiple delays and 64.1% reporting cumulative delays spanning more than six months. However, individual delays were generally short rather than prolonged.

The findings supported the conclusion that salary delays adversely affect productivity-related outcomes. Delay severity was significantly associated with attendance ($r = 0.51$), task completion ($r = 0.46$), and institutional commitment ($r = 0.77$). Secondary income-generating activities also emerged as an important coping strategy that potentially interfered with official responsibilities. Although 81.0% of respondents

reported reduced motivation, the relationship did not demonstrate a clear progressive decline as delay severity increased, suggesting a possible threshold effect consistent with aspects of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Furthermore, 28.6% considered leaving the institution because of salary irregularities. These findings highlight the potential costs of staff disengagement, turnover, and reduced professional development. The University should therefore strengthen salary administration, establish predictable payment schedules, and introduce effective monitoring mechanisms to protect employee productivity, institutional commitment, and long-term human capital development.

## 12. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the results of the study:

1. The University of Abuja should establish and publicise a fixed monthly salary payment calendar to reduce uncertainty and its psychological effects. This recommendation is supported by 76.2% of respondents.
2. An efficiency audit of the Bursary, Human Resources, and Accounts Departments should identify and eliminate avoidable internal salary-processing delays, particularly those within the University's control.
3. iii. The University should establish a dedicated staff welfare helpline and formal communication mechanism for reporting salary delays and providing payment updates, as supported by 83.3% of respondents.
4. The University should engage the Federal Ministry of Education and the National Universities Commission to promote timely disbursement of salary funds.
5. Short-term, interest-free salary advances should be considered for newly employed staff experiencing payment delays. This proposal received 81.0% support and could reduce reliance on high-interest informal borrowing.
6. Salary delay reduction should be treated as a productivity intervention, given the strong relationship between delay severity and secondary income-generating activities ($R^2 = 0.595$).
7. Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs to examine the effects of salary delays on career development, employee retention, and institutional human capital over two to three years.

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