

Effect of Employee Compensation on Organisational Performance of Agricultural Firms in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Poorly designed employee compensation can weaken organisational performance, particularly in labour-intensive agriculture. This study therefore examined the effect of employee compensation, measured by overtime pay and healthcare support, on the organisational performance (productivity and efficiency) of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted. The population comprised 2,800 workers in nine agricultural firms selected through stratified sampling, and the Taro Yamane formula gave a sample of 350. Data from 333 usable questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics, Spearman rank correlation and multiple regression. The findings show that overtime pay and healthcare support each have a positive and significant effect on organisational performance ($p < .01$). Consequently, strengthening both compensation components offers a practical and affordable way to improve outcomes in firms where labour is seasonal and turnover is high. The study recommends that agricultural firms in Cross River State adopt structured overtime pay policies and healthcare support services, especially during peak planting and harvesting seasons.

Keywords: Employee Compensation; Overtime Pay; Healthcare Support; Organisational Performance; Agricultural Firms

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INTRODUCTION

It is often known that the most important resource for an organisation's competitiveness is its human capital. A key HRM strategy for improving organisational performance is compensation, which is described as the overall salary, wages, and monetary benefits employees get in return for their services (Floriańczyk et al., 2025). Scholars and practitioners throughout the world are increasingly focusing on strategic compensation, which matches individual needs, rights, and aspirations with organisational goals (Waithira, 2018; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Effective compensation plans are crucial for drawing in, keeping, and inspiring a talented staff in the agricultural industry, which has a high labour intensity. According to Noe et al. (2022), compensation is therefore a strategic investment in organisational effectiveness rather than just a cost.

In spite of this, low performance and rising staff turnover are still problems for agricultural companies in Cross River State, Nigeria. According to the World Bank (2024), inadequate welfare and retention problems contribute to Nigeria's agriculture sector's continued low labour productivity. Employee perceptions that their benefits are either withheld or insufficient, undermining equality and justice, are a key source of industrial conflict (Ababneh, 2021). Many businesses still view labour as a risk rather than an asset, putting more emphasis on purchasing equipment and supplies while ignoring overtime compensation and medical assistance. Due to this mismatch, businesses are unable to reach output goals and have low morale. According to existing research, overtime pay affects organisational performance by controlling incentives within a predetermined framework of objectives and skills (Biriowu & Ofurum, 2020). Compensation packages have a significant impact on employees' willingness to stay, and managers must create a system that takes individual requirements and organisational objectives into account to guarantee motivation (Christianto, 2021). But the majority of this material concentrates on industry and finance.

However, studies examining the effects of certain compensation components, such as overtime compensation and healthcare support, on productivity and efficiency in Cross River State agricultural enterprises are few. Managers' capacity to create sector-specific policies is hampered by this mismatch. This study's primary goal is to assess how employee compensation affects the organisational performance of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study specifically aims to: (1) assess the effect of overtime pay on the productivity of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria; (2) assess the effect of overtime pay on the efficiency of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria; (3) investigate the impact of healthcare support on the productivity of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria; and (4) investigate the effect of healthcare support on the efficiency of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.

This research has implications for theory, practice, and policy. Theoretically, by offering data from the agriculture sector in a developing nation, it expands our understanding of compensation management. Practically speaking, the results will direct managers and HR professionals in agricultural companies on how to use healthcare support and overtime pay to increase productivity and efficiency (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). The research will offer suggestions for raising labour welfare standards in agriculture to Cross River State officials. This study adds to academic literature and sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria by filling a contextual gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Employee Compensation

The methodical process of giving workers both monetary and non-monetary value in return for their labour is known as employee compensation (Adhitama & Riyanto, 2020). It accomplishes a number of organisational goals, such as hiring competent workers, improving job performance, and raising job satisfaction (Ahakwa et al., 2021). In order to promote organisational survival and progress, management designs compensation systems that are in line with company demands, objectives, and available resources (Ahakwa et al., 2021). According to Ahakwa et al. (2021), compensation is specifically utilised to recruit and retain competent people, maintain contentment, reward peak performance, achieve internal and external equity, lower attrition, and foster organisational loyalty. Overtime pay, healthcare support, bonuses, commissions, shares, profit sharing, and gain sharing are examples of compensation. Ferine et al. (2023) also point out that compensation entails assessing employee performance and allocating rewards appropriately. Some academics stress that compensation is based on a clear philosophy that represents the organisation's ideals (Hemasih et al., 2022).

However, HRM necessitates investing in human capital with the expectation of an acceptable return from a resource-based viewpoint, which is why it is necessary to pay workers differently based on their contributions (Hemasih et al., 2022). According to Hussain et al. (2019), this suggests a pay system in which employees who do better than average are rewarded more. Compensation is important because it gives employees money to meet their requirements and is often the biggest expense for businesses (Hussain et al., 2019). According to Maisoni et al. (2019), compensation is either a reward for a work well done or an entitlement for being an employee of the company. Compensation effects are, however, context-dependent. For example, Hendriks et al. (2023) found, across 336 listed firms in 26 countries, that employee engagement was generally unaffected by CEO compensation, with negative effects emerging only under specific conditions.

Overtime Pay

Cash compensation for work completed outside of typical business hours, such as on holidays, rest days, and non-working days, is referred to as overtime pay (Manzoor et al., 2021). It is an important motivator and a sign of the employer's financial commitment (Jeha et al., 2022). Overtime pay enables managers to effectively handle increased workloads without requiring raising worker levels, especially in labour-intensive industries like agriculture (Jeha et al., 2022). Overtime allows employers in agricultural businesses to react swiftly to brief fluctuations in workload, such as planting and harvesting seasons, while only compensating for the time required (Manzoor et al., 2021).

Additionally, it increases loyalty by giving workers extra money without forcing them to look for work elsewhere (Jeha et al., 2022). Furthermore, as many workers appreciate the chance to earn additional money, offering overtime compensation can strengthen an organisation's standing in the local labour market (Manzoor et al., 2021). Employee commitment, productivity, and efficiency have been found to be significantly impacted by inadequate incentive packages, particularly insufficient overtime compensation (Manzoor et al., 2021). In order to foster proactive attitudes and appropriate work behaviour, which inevitably boost organisational productivity and efficiency, sufficient overtime pay is required (Jeni et al., 2020). Overtime is, however, beneficial only within limits. Evidence from the South African non-agricultural sector shows that weekly hours beyond 45 reduce labour productivity, and

that the optimal schedule is 30 to 40 hours a week with overtime not exceeding five hours (Chipeta et al., 2024).

Healthcare Support

The term "healthcare support" describes the medical assistance and advantages that a business offers to its employees, including health insurance, clinic access, sick leave, and wellness initiatives (Mwaruta, 2022). It is intended to assist workers in preserving their health, lowering medical expenses, and enhancing productivity. Work in agriculture frequently exposes people to health hazards such as heat stress, malaria, and accidents associated with farming (Ngwa et al., 2019). Employees recover from illness and injury more rapidly when companies offer basic healthcare support, such as first aid, subsidised therapy, or collaborations with nearby clinics. This immediately increases productivity by lowering absenteeism and guaranteeing labour availability during crucial times like planting and harvesting (Ngwa et al., 2019). Healthcare support affects employee morale and retention in addition to physical health. Workers are more devoted and loyal to companies that care about their welfare in addition to pay (Rahmayani et al., 2021). This feeling of security lowers employee turnover and the related expenses of hiring and onboarding new employees. Teams with stability and experience can operate on farms more effectively and consistently.

Additionally, healthy workers are more resilient, focused, and detail-oriented, which increases productivity per worker and lowers attrition in activities demanding physical strength and accuracy (Wiyanto et al., 2023). Lastly, because early treatment of minor health disorders prevents them from growing into significant diseases that might result in protracted absences, healthcare support helps businesses successfully control expenses (Robianto & Masdupi, 2020). Evidence from Ghana supports this view, as employees with employer-provided health insurance were less likely to report sickness absence and lost fewer working days (Abdul Rahaman et al., 2022). Thus, healthcare support serves as both a realistic method for maintaining performance and a welfare measure for agricultural enterprises.

Concept of Organisational Performance

The capacity of a business to successfully and efficiently accomplish its strategic goals and objectives is referred to as organisational performance (Adhitama & Riyanto, 2020). It is a multifaceted idea that includes both concrete results like income and profit as well as intangible factors like worker capacity and process effectiveness (Agung et al., 2019). Financial metrics such as return on investment, earnings per share, profits before taxes, sales, and profit have historically been used to gauge success (Agung et al., 2019). However, owners of agricultural businesses sometimes only consider cash inflows when evaluating success, paying less attention to the business's operational performance (Astuti & Suhendri, 2019). This limited focus may also affect private companies in Nigeria. The creation and use of human resource management policies are also related to organisational performance (Astuti & Suhendri, 2019). It is anticipated that future increases in productivity and efficiency will result from investments made in the skills, knowledge, and ability of employees. As a result, productivity and efficiency are used to conceptualise organisational performance in this study as important measures of how efficiently agricultural firms use their human resources to accomplish goals.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory serves as the fundamental basis for this investigation. According to the hypothesis, a cognitive process comprising expectation, instrumentality, and valence mediates the impact of compensation on organisational performance. In this study, compensation is the valued outcome (Valence) that motivates employees to perform as long as they feel that their efforts will produce quantifiable outcomes (Expectancy) and that the company will openly fulfil its financial reward commitments (Instrumentality). Because it describes the motivating mechanism that connects compensation to organisational success in agricultural enterprises, this theory is pertinent to our study. In this study, overtime pay and healthcare support are the compensation components expected to raise productivity and efficiency.

Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical evidence generally links compensation to productivity, but the strength of the link depends on how pay is structured. Using Economic Accounts for Agriculture data for EU Member States from 2010 to 2022, Floriańczyk et al. (2025) reported that labour productivity growth was associated with rising labour compensation and falling labour input. However, in several countries compensation grew faster than productivity, which suggests that pay increases improve performance only when they are tied to measurable productivity gains. Evidence from other sectors points the same way. Beqiri and Aziri (2022) found that financial incentives were the most important determinant of performance among 129 Kosovo bank employees, while benefit packages and career development opportunities were also significantly related to performance. Similarly, Manzoor et al. (2021) found that intrinsic rewards improved employee performance in Pakistani small and medium enterprises, with employee motivation acting as a mediator.

Studies from agriculture-related and developing-economy settings add important qualifications. Waithira (2018), studying Farm Concern International in Kenya, found that most of the 152 employees surveyed were dissatisfied with their financial compensation and unsure whether it affected their performance, whereas non-monetary incentives and promotion opportunities were well received and improved performance. This implies that the perceived fairness of the reward system matters as much as its size. Working time is a further consideration for overtime-based pay: Chipeta et al. (2024) showed that long weekly hours eventually reduce labour productivity in South Africa, so overtime pay is likely to help only when hours stay within reasonable limits. On the health side, Abdul Rahaman et al. (2022) found in Ghana that employer-provided health insurance reduced the likelihood of sickness absence and the number of working days lost, which supports a productivity role for healthcare support. Finally, compensation effects are not universal, as Hendriks et al. (2023) found that employee engagement was largely unaffected by CEO pay except under specific conditions.

Taken together, these studies suggest three gaps. First, among the studies reviewed, most evidence on compensation comes from banking, manufacturing or economy-wide data rather than from agricultural firms, where labour is seasonal and physically demanding. Second, few studies isolate specific compensation components, such as overtime pay and healthcare support, instead of treating rewards as a single bundle. Third, productivity and efficiency are seldom examined together as separate performance outcomes. This study addresses these gaps by testing the effects of overtime pay and healthcare support on the productivity and efficiency of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

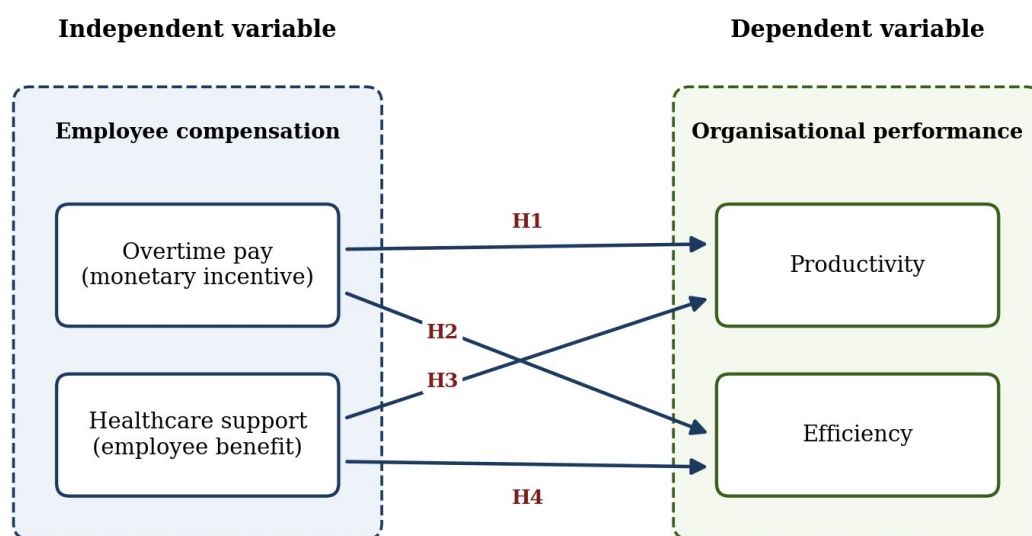
Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Employee compensation is the independent variable and comprises two components: overtime pay (a monetary incentive for work done beyond normal hours) and healthcare support (a non-monetary benefit that protects workers' health). Organisational performance is the dependent variable and is measured by productivity (output achieved per worker) and efficiency (how well resources are used to achieve that output). Drawing on Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory, compensation is expected to raise performance because workers who value a reward, and believe it depends on their effort, are motivated to work harder and more reliably. The four study objectives therefore translate into the following hypotheses:

H1: Overtime pay has a significant positive effect on the productivity of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.

H2: Overtime pay has a significant positive effect on the efficiency of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.

H3: Healthcare support has a significant positive effect on the productivity of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.

H4: Healthcare support has a significant positive effect on the efficiency of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.



Underpinned by Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory

Figure 1: Conceptual framework on the effect of employee compensation on organisational performance of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Note: Author-generated figure, based on Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory (2026).

METHODS

A cross-sectional survey design was used in the investigation. This design was chosen so that the researcher could ask respondents for the information they needed on the units of analysis. The investigation was conducted in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study's population

consisted of 2,800 workers in agricultural firms in the State. The list of firms was generated from the register of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), the body established under the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990 (as amended), which keeps the register of companies in Nigeria (Corporate Affairs Commission, n.d.). Nine firms from the southern, central and northern senatorial districts of Cross River State were selected using stratified sampling. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967): $n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$, where n is the sample size, N is the population size (2,800) and e is the margin of error (0.05, at a 95% confidence level). Substituting these values gives $n = 2,800 / [1 + 2,800(0.05)^2] = 2,800 / 8 = 350$.

A standardised questionnaire called the Employee Compensation Questionnaire (ECQ) was used to collect data from primary sources. The instrument is divided into two sections: A and B. Section A comprised six (6) questions about demographic characteristics, while Section B included twenty (20) questions about independent and dependent variables. These questions included five-point Likert scale items for measuring the constructs, with the following response options: strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), neutral (N), disagreed (D), and strongly disagreed (SD). To assure accuracy, the researcher hired six (6) research assistants to help administer the questionnaire by hand. Reports, textbooks, published journals, the internet, and other sources were used to gather information. To check for correctness, the researcher employed construct validity and content or face validity. Two experts from the University of Calabar's Management Department and one expert from Tests and Measurements verified the instrument.

Fourteen employees from a few chosen agricultural companies in Cross River State, Nigeria, who belong to the general population but were not included in the main study, were given the instrument to test its reliability. The reliability coefficients for overtime pay, healthcare support and organisational performance were 0.784, 0.711 and 0.750 respectively, which are high enough to support the instrument's dependability. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyse the data. Descriptive tools included frequency tables, percentages and means, while inferential tools included Spearman rank correlation and multiple regression. Analysis was carried out with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 (IBM Corp., 2011). This version was chosen because it provides every procedure the study required (descriptive statistics, Spearman rank correlation and multiple regression with collinearity diagnostics), and these procedures are computed in the same way in later releases, so the results can be replicated in newer versions (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2020). In total, 350 copies of the questionnaire were distributed; 340 were recovered, 7 were incorrectly completed and excluded, and 333 copies (95.1% of those distributed) were used for the analysis.

RESULTS

According to the demographic data, 135 respondents (40.5%) were female and 198 respondents (59.5%) were male. 11.7% of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 25, while 13.2%, 24.0%, 15.0%, 12.6%, 12.9%, and 10.5% of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 30, 31 to 35, 36 to 40, 41 to 45, 46 to 50, and 51 and above, respectively. The distribution of respondents' educational levels shows that 53.1% of respondents had a B.Sc. or HND, while 14.1%, 20.4%, and 12.3% of respondents had an NCE or OND, an M.Sc. or MBA, or a PhD, respectively.

Men predominate in agricultural companies, and the workplace atmosphere is defined by masculine ideas, according to the study's sex role findings, which were influenced by the

demographic profile. The study's age implications indicate that a greater number of prime age workers—those between the ages of 30 and 40—are now employed. This suggests that prime age workers' productivity in agricultural firms is expected to be higher than that of younger and older workers.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the research variables

	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Overtime pay	333	12.00	21.00	15.24	4.51	0.50	0.12	-1.38	0.23
Healthcare support	333	12.00	27.00	14.23	5.55	1.86	0.12	2.47	0.23
Productivity	333	5.00	17.00	8.29	3.35	1.78	0.12	3.93	0.23
Efficiency	333	5.00	13.00	7.99	2.89	1.61	0.12	3.82	0.23
Performance	333	12.00	31.00	13.28	4.11	1.75	0.12	4.53	0.23

Note: n = 333. Source: Field Survey Data Analysed With SPSS Version 20.0 (2026).

The descriptive statistics for the research variables are displayed in Table 1. Overtime pay had a mean score of 15.24, while healthcare support received a mean score of 14.23. This indicates that the two employee compensation factors were rated about equally, with healthcare support rated slightly lower than overtime pay. The respondents' scores on overtime pay were more consistent than those on healthcare support, as seen by the standard deviations of 4.51 and 5.55 for overtime pay and healthcare support, respectively. The mean scores for productivity and efficiency were 8.29 and 7.99, respectively, with standard deviations of 3.35 and 2.89. This suggests that respondents rated productivity as a performance measure higher than efficiency, even though their efficiency scores were more consistent. The non-parametric correlation (Spearman correlation) was used to determine the link between the research variables as shown in Table 2 since the skewness obtained for all variables was more than 0, indicating that the research variables are skewed to the right.

Table 2: Non Parametric Correlation Between Research Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Overtime pay	1				
2. Healthcare support	.954**	1			
3. Productivity	.789**	.710**	1		
4. Efficiency	.755**	.667**	.890**	1	
5. Performance	.908**	.937**	.985**	.948**	1

Note: *Significant at 5% ($p < .05$); **significant at 1% ($p < .01$). Source: Field survey data analysed with SPSS version 20.0 (2026).

According to Table 2's results, overtime pay significantly positively correlates with productivity ($r = .789$, $p < .01$), efficiency ($r = .755$, $p < .01$), and performance ($r = .908$, $p < .01$). This suggests that overtime pay is more likely to increase productivity and efficiency, which in turn increases performance. A similar outcome was found for healthcare support, which

shows a strong positive correlation with performance ($r = .937$, $p < .01$), efficiency ($r = .667$, $p < .01$), and productivity ($r = .710$, $p < .01$).

Table 3: Multiple regression showing employee compensation and performance of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	t-value	B	t-value	B	t-value
Constant	1.491	2.473	3.564	7.020	1.716	3.405
Productivity	-.178	-.794	.138	.673	-.009	-.049
Efficiency	-.051	-.625	-.046	-.611	-.043	-.629
Performance	.158	.804	.173	.966	.150	.919
Overtime pay	.871	30.703**	-	-	.639	9.332**
Healthcare support	-	-	.677	34.763**	.396	13.671**
Summary Statistic						
R ²	0.677		0.748		0.726	
F-value	236.616		303.250**		308.706**	
p-value	0.000**		0.0000		0.000**	

Note: *Significant at 5% ($p < 0.05$); **significant at 1% ($p < 0.01$); VIF = Variance Inflation Factor. Sex, age and education are the control variables. Source: Field survey data analysed with SPSS version 20.0 (2026).

Table 3 summarises the three regression models for employee compensation (healthcare support and overtime pay) as a strategy for agricultural firms organisational success. Model 1 investigates the effects of overtime compensation as a strategy for agricultural firms' organisational performance; Model 2 investigates the effects of healthcare support as a strategy for agricultural firms' performance; and Model 3 investigates the effects of both overtime pay and healthcare support as strategies for agricultural firms' organisational performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. The performance metrics (productivity, efficiency, and performance) serve as the regression's control variables. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for each regression model were less than 5.0, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity. The three regression models were found to be significant ($p < .05$). After adjusting for these demographic factors, overtime pay accounted for 67.7% and healthcare support for 72.6% of the variation in the performance of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria, with adjusted R² values of .677, .748, and 0.738 for models 1, 2, and 3, respectively. After controlling for demographic factors, the results indicate that overtime pay ($\beta = .871$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $p < .01$, model 1 and $\beta = .639$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $p < .01$ for model 3) significantly improves the performance of agricultural businesses in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings also show that healthcare support has a substantial influence on the organisational performance of agricultural enterprises in Cross River State, Nigeria ($\beta = .677$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $p < .01$ for model 2 and $\beta = .396$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $p < .01$ for model 3). The outcome also shows that, when each factor is entered alone, healthcare support explains more of the variation in performance ($R^2 = .748$) than overtime pay ($R^2 = .677$). When both are entered together (Model 3), however, overtime pay has the larger coefficient ($\beta = .639$ compared with $\beta = .396$).

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results show that overtime pay and healthcare support each have a positive and significant effect on the organisational performance of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria, measured by productivity and efficiency. This finding is consistent with Jeha et al. (2022), who argue that overtime pay acts as an incentive because it represents a financial commitment by the employer, and with Manzoor et al. (2021) and Beqiri and Aziri (2022), who found that rewards and financial incentives improve employee performance in other sectors. It also supports Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964): workers who value overtime earnings and believe that extra effort will be rewarded are more likely to raise their output during peak planting and harvesting periods.

The healthcare support result aligns with Ngwa et al. (2019), who note that basic healthcare support helps workers recover faster from illness and injury, which lowers absenteeism and keeps labour available at critical times. It also agrees with Abdul Rahaman et al. (2022), who found that employer-provided health insurance reduced sickness absence and working days lost in Ghana. In agriculture, where workers face heat stress, malaria and farm-related accidents, such support protects the labour on which output depends.

Two points qualify these results. First, Waithira (2018) found that Kenyan agricultural employees were dissatisfied with financial compensation and valued non-monetary incentives and promotion, which suggests that overtime pay alone may not sustain performance if workers see the reward system as unfair. Second, Chipeta et al. (2024) found that long working hours eventually reduce productivity, so the positive effect of overtime pay observed here is likely to hold only when overtime stays within reasonable limits. Floriańczyk et al. (2025) similarly caution that pay improves performance only when it is linked to productivity gains.

Regarding relative influence, healthcare support explained slightly more of the variation in performance than overtime pay when each was tested alone, but overtime pay carried the larger coefficient when both were entered together (Table 3). Managers should therefore treat the two components as complementary rather than competing.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge in three ways. First, it provides evidence from the agricultural sector of a developing economy, where compensation research has focused mainly on banking, manufacturing and public-sector organisations. Second, it separates employee compensation into two specific components, overtime pay and healthcare support, and shows that each is positively and significantly related to organisational performance, which moves beyond treating compensation as a single bundle. Third, it applies Expectancy Theory to seasonal, labour-intensive agricultural firms and offers managers and policymakers sector-specific evidence for designing compensation policies.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of employee compensation, measured by overtime pay and healthcare support, on the organisational performance of agricultural firms in Cross River State, Nigeria. The results show that both components have positive and significant effects on performance, measured by productivity and efficiency. The study therefore concludes that agricultural firms that provide fair overtime pay and adequate healthcare support are likely to

achieve higher output per worker and more efficient use of resources. Strengthening these two components offers a workable and affordable strategy for improving outcomes where labour is seasonal and turnover is high.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The study has limitations that point to directions for future research. First, the cross-sectional design captures relationships at a single point in time and cannot establish causality, so longitudinal or panel designs would show how performance responds to changes in compensation. Second, the data were self-reported through a questionnaire and may reflect respondent bias, so future studies could combine survey data with firm records on output, costs and staff turnover. Third, the study covered nine firms in one state, which limits generalisation, and replication in other states and agricultural sub-sectors would help. Fourth, only two compensation components were examined, so future research could add salary, bonuses and other benefits, and could test moderating factors such as seasonality and perceived pay fairness. Finally, the objectives address productivity and efficiency separately, whereas the regression models used overall performance as the outcome. Future work should estimate separate models for each outcome and should examine the overlap between overtime pay and healthcare support, which were strongly correlated (Table 2).

Recommendations

1. To encourage workers to boost output during the busiest planting and harvesting seasons, agricultural firms in Cross River State should establish organised overtime pay policies with transparent rates and prompt payment.
2. To guarantee that additional working hours result in increased worker productivity and less operational waste, agricultural firms should put in place effective overtime scheduling and monitoring systems.
3. To improve employee health, lower absenteeism, and increase productivity, management should offer full healthcare support services, such as health insurance and routine checkups.
4. To maintain staff productivity and overall organisational performance, agricultural firms should incorporate workplace wellness initiatives and on-site medical facilities to guarantee prompt treatment of work-related ailments.

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