Unraveling the Motivation-Productivity-Satisfaction Nexus in the Nigeria Public Sector

LODIKERO Olusola and AKEREDOLU Adeparubi
Department of Accountancy Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo
Emali – Olusola.lodikero@rugipo.edu.ng
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Abstract

Motivation is a crucial diver of employee performance and job satisfaction, yet the Nigeria public sector faces chronic challenges' in motivating its workforce, leading to low productivity and dissatisfaction. This study aims to explore the relationship between motivation and workers' productivity and satisfaction in the Nigerian public sector. This study adopted a qualitative, systematic review methodology. Careful selection of studies and evidence were performed, which enhanced the quality of the findings. The findings revealed that the most significant motivation factors that impact productivity and satisfaction were recognition, job security, promotion, and growth opportunities. Conversely, the lack of motivation factors such as poor salaries, inadequate training, low morale, and limited communication channels led to reduced productivity and low job satisfaction. The study recommends that public sector should provide adequate financial resources and support for the implementation of motivation strategies, including training programs, empowerment initiatives, career development opportunities, and regular performance feedback. By implementing these recommendations, the Nigerian public sector can achieve higher productivity levels and improve the satisfaction levels of its workers.

Introduction

Motivation theory is a branch of psychology that focuses on understanding and explaining the factors that influence an individual's behavior, particularly in a work environment. It aims to provide insights into how individuals can be motivated to perform tasks, achieve goals, and contribute to the success of an organization. It is a key driver of employee productivity and satisfaction in the workplace. The public sector, comprising governmental organizations and agencies, faces unique challenges in motivating its workforce due to bureaucratic structures, hierarchical management, and often limited resources (Adeyemi & Olugbade, 2019). However, understanding and applying motivation theories and the various types motivation can improve employee commitment and ultimately lead to a more productive and satisfied workforce. In the Nigerian public sector, applying motivation theories can be particularly relevant to improving employee productivity and satisfaction. Studies have shown that factors such as low remuneration, poor working conditions, and lack of career development opportunities can lead to job dissatisfaction and reduced productivity (Akinnusi, 2016; Adisa & Popoola, 2015). By

understanding and addressing these factors, public sector organizations can improve employee motivation, ultimately resulting in a more productive and satisfied workforce.

Concept of Motivation, Productivity and Job Satisfaction

Motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction are closely related concepts that have a significant impact on employees' performance and well-being. According to a study conducted by Ardekani and Karimzadegan (2015), motivated employees tend to be more productive which, in turn, can increase job satisfaction. The study also showed that employees who are satisfied with their job tend to be more motivated to do well and are more productive. Similarly, a study by Gagné and Deci (2005) found that motivation is positively related to productivity. According to the authors, when employees are motivated to do their job, they are more likely to perform tasks with greater effort and dedication, leading to increased productivity. Furthermore, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that there is a reciprocal relationship between job satisfaction and motivation. Their study showed that job satisfaction is a key driver of motivation, as satisfied employees are more likely to be motivated to perform their tasks well and more likely to stay with their current employer.

Types of Motivation

Intrinsic motivation

This refers to the internal drive that compels an individual to engage in an activity simply because they find it interesting, enjoyable, or fulfilling (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Research has shown that intrinsic motivation is associated with increased creativity, higher job performance, and overall job satisfaction (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). This is because intrinsically motivated individuals tend to be more engaged in their work, willingly take on challenges, and derive pleasure from their performance rather than just the outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation can be fostered by providing employees with opportunities for autonomy, mastery, and purpose in their work (Pink, 2009). This means encouraging employees to take ownership of their work, develop their skills and expertise, and connect their work to a larger mission or goal. By doing so, employers can tap into employees' intrinsic motivation and create a work environment that promotes well-being and job satisfaction.

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is the type of motivation that is driven by external factors, such as rewards, recognition, and social pressure. It is the willingness to engage in an activity for the sake of external rewards or pressures, rather than personal interest or enjoyment. Deci et al. (1999). Research has shown that extrinsic motivation can have both positive and negative effects on behavior and performance. While extrinsic rewards can increase motivation and performance in the short-term, they can also undermine intrinsic motivation and lead to decreased performance in the long-term. As stated by Deci et al. (1999), "extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation, especially when the rewards are tangible, expected, and contingent on specific behaviors".

Instrumental Motivation

Instrumental motivation is a type of extrinsic motivation that is driven by a desire to achieve a specific goal or outcome, rather than a personal interest or enjoyment in the activity itself (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2008). It is characterized by a focus on the utility or functionality of the behavior, rather than the behavior itself (Pintrich, 2004). Individuals with instrumental motivation are driven by external factors, such as grades, rewards, or recognition, and are more likely to engage in surface-level learning strategies, such as memorization and repetition, rather than deep-level learning strategies, such as critical thinking and problem-solving (Biggs & Tang, 2007). As stated by Pintrich (2004), "instrumental motivation is focused on the outcomes of learning, rather than the process of learning itself".

Social Motivation

Social motivation refers to the drive to engage in behavior due to social pressures, norms, and expectations (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). It is the willingness to conform to social norms and meet the expectations of others, even if it means sacrificing personal interests or desires (Asch, 1951). As stated by Cialdini and Goldstein (2004), "social motivation is a powerful force that can lead individuals to conform, comply, and identify with groups".

Motivation Theories

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a motivation theory that explains human needs in a hierarchical order, starting from basic physiological to self-actualization needs. The theory suggests that satisfying lower level needs is a prerequisite for higher-level needs. The theory has a significant impact on workers' productivity and satisfaction in the workplace. (Maslow, 1943). At the bottom of the hierarchy, workers need to meet their physiological needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. When employers provide basic needs such as comfortable work environment, adequate breaks, and rest periods, workers' energy and focus are heightened, leading to increased productivity. Once their physiological needs are met, workers will seek to satisfy their safety needs, which involve job security, protective equipment, and health care. When workers feel safe, they become more productive as they can focus on their tasks without fear of harm or job loss. Workers also have social needs, which require interaction with peers, supervisors, and other stakeholders. Organisations that encourage teamwork, respect, and provide opportunities for socialization, motivate workers leading to better performance and job satisfaction. The next level is esteem needs, which involve recognition for accomplishments and competence. When workers feel valued and respected, they are more motivated to do their work, leading to higher job satisfaction and productivity. Finally, the highest level of the hierarchy is self-actualization needs. It involves fulfilling one's potential, being creative, and innovative. Employers who give their workers control over their tasks and sufficient resources foster creativity. When workers feel that their work has a higher purpose, they are more productive and experience job satisfaction. Satisfying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can positively impact workers' motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction. (Maslow, 1943)

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The theory suggests that both hygiene factors and motivators play a crucial role in influencing employee motivation and job satisfaction. Employers should not only focus on meeting the basic needs of employees but should also invest in providing opportunities for personal and professional growth to foster a motivated workforce. According to Herzberg et al. (1959), the presence of hygiene factors alone cannot motivate employees to perform at their best. However, the absence or deficiency of hygiene factors can result in dissatisfaction and even demotivation. This means that employers need to ensure that basic salary, safe working conditions, and job security are met in order to avoid unnecessary and avoidable dissatisfaction among employees. On the other hand, motivators, as described by Herzberg et al. (1959) can directly impact employee motivation and job satisfaction. For instance, providing opportunities for growth and development, challenging work, and recognition can lead to greater job satisfaction and improved performance among employees.

McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory

McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory proposes that individuals have three primary motivations that drive their behavior in the workplace: achievement, affiliation, and power (McClelland, 1961; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). According to this theory, an individual's motivation is shaped by their personal experiences and social learning, rather than being innate (McClelland & Burnham, 1976). Achievement is the drive for excellence and the need to accomplish challenging goals, Affiliation is the need for interpersonal relationships and belongingness, while Power is the need for influence and control over others. Individuals with a high need for power enjoy taking charge, having a say in decision-making, and being recognized for their contributions (McClelland, 1961). Studies have found support for the Acquired Needs Theory in the workplace. For example, a meta-analysis by Gupta and Shaw (2014) found that the need for achievement was positively correlated with job performance, while the need for affiliation was positively correlated with job satisfaction. Another study by Collins et al. (2017) found that employees with a high need for power were more likely to engage in political behavior in the workplace. In conclusion, McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory suggests that individuals are motivated by their personal experiences and learning, and these motivations can influence their behavior in the workplace. The theory has practical implications for managers as they can use this understanding of employee motivations to design work that caters to their unique needs, resulting in greater job satisfaction and performance.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a motivational theory that emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation in driving behavior. SDT posits that individuals have three basic psychological needs that must be met to promote intrinsic motivation: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy refers to the need for individuals to feel in control of their behavior and decisions. Competence pertains to the need for individuals to feel effective and capable in their actions. Finally, relatedness concerns the need for individuals to feel connected to others and valued by the social groups they belong to. According to SDT, when these three needs are met, individuals are more likely to engage in behavior for the inherent enjoyment of the

activity, rather than for external rewards or pressures. Several studies have provided support for the importance of SDT in various domains, including education, sports, and health. For example, a study by Kusurkar et al. (2013) found that medical students who perceived high levels of autonomy support from their teachers reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation and academic achievement. In a sports context, Ng et al. (2013) found that swimmers who perceived high levels of autonomy and competence support from their coaches reported greater enjoyment and motivation in their sport.

Goal Setting Theory
Goal-Setting Motivational Theories suggest that setting specific and challenging goals result in higher performance, motivation, and better outcomes. Two well-known theories in this category are Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory (1990) and Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964). Locke and Latham (1990) proposed that clear and specific goals lead to increased motivation, effort, and persistence. They also suggested that goals must be challenging enough to stimulate individuals, and feedback on progress is essential to maintain motivation. Their theory emphasizes the importance of the connection between individual goals and organizational goals, which results in a shared vision throughout the organization. Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) suggests that individuals become motivated to work when they believe that putting forth effort will lead to high performance, and high performance will lead to desired outcomes or rewards. This theory argues that motivation is contingent on expectancy (if I try harder, will I perform better?), instrumentality (if I perform better, will I receive rewards?), and valence (do I value the rewards I might receive?). Vroom's theory highlights the importance of setting achievable goals to increase expectancy, providing timely feedback to increase instrumentality, and understanding individual needs to increase valence.

Motivational Theories and Public Sector Performance
Studies have been conducted on motivational theories and public sector performance. Hafiza, Shahzad, & Jamsheed (2013) conducted a study on the application of Herzberg's theory in the public sector in Pakistan, used a survey to collect data from 269 employees representing different departments. The participants were asked questions about their job satisfaction, motivation, and the importance of various job factors, the descriptive statistical techniques were used to analyze the data collected. The study found that salary, working conditions, and job security were the main hygiene factors that affected job satisfaction, while work recognition, achievement, and growth were the key motivators that influenced job satisfaction. Ojo & Akinbode (2012) conducted a survey on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and job satisfaction in the Nigerian public sector. The survey involved 396 employees, and data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire, the inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the data collected and test the hypothesis. The study found that basic physiological and safety needs were the most critical needs for employees in the public sector, and that there was a positive relationship between the satisfaction of these lower-order needs and overall job satisfaction. In a study conducted by Ogbonna, Anugwom, & Ufoma (2019) on Expectancy Theory in the Nigerian public sector using a structured questionnaire-based survey of 300 participants from federal and state government organizations. The questionnaire measured participants' perceptions of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence,

as well as their motivation levels, inferential statistics technique were also used to analyze the collected data and test their hypotheses. The study found that employee motivation was influenced by the perceived connection between individual effort and performance, and the perceived relationship between performance and rewards. The study also found that employees were more motivated when there was a clear and transparent performance appraisal system, and when rewards were linked to performance,

These findings suggest that a combination of different motivational theories can be useful in motivating public sector workers in Nigeria, depending on the specific circumstances and needs of the workforce.

Summary and Conclusion

Motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction are three interrelated concepts in the workplace that have a significant impact on organizational success. Motivation is the driving force behind an employee's willingness to perform tasks and achieve goals in the workplace (Schunk, 2012). A motivated employee is likely to be more engaged, dedicated, and committed to their work, leading to better performance and productivity (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). Productivity is a measure of the efficiency and effectiveness of an employee's output or contribution to the organization. Productivity is positively influenced by motivation, as motivated employees tend to put more effort into their work, leading to higher quality output and better performance (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). Job satisfaction refers to an employee's overall contentment with their job and work environment. Job satisfaction is believed to be positively correlated with motivation and productivity (Judge & Bono, 2001). In other words, employees who are satisfied with their job are more likely to be motivated to perform well and achieve their goals, resulting in higher productivity.

Numerous studies have confirmed the association of motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction in the workplace. For instance, a meta-analysis by Harter et al. (2002) found that engaged employees, who are highly motivated and satisfied with their work, have higher productivity rates and are more likely to stay loyal to their organization. Moreover, a study by Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, and Combs (2006) found that employees who are intrinsically motivated, meaning they are driven by personal satisfaction rather than external rewards, tend to report higher job satisfaction and better performance.

In conclusion, motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction are critical factors in the workplace that are closely related. A highly motivated and satisfied employee is likely to be more productive and produce better-quality work, resulting in organizational success.

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