

Motivational Factors: Implications for Job Performance among Workers of a Public Tertiary Institution in Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: University workers are saddled with the responsibility of training intellectuals, a function pivotal for building leaders of tomorrow, and shaping society. This study sought to investigate what truly motivates workers in a tertiary institution.

Methods: A cross-sectional, analytic design was adopted to investigate motivational factors among 200 workers in a tertiary institution selected with a stratified sampling technique. A self-administered, semi-structured questionnaire was applied to collect data and analysed with SPSS version 22.

Results: More than half (51.2%) of lecturers and three-fifth (64.1%) of those with a PhD were among the highly motivated workers. Overall motivation ($r=0.629$) was more strongly correlated with job performance than intrinsic motivational factors ($r=0.594$); ($p=0.01$). Extrinsic reward had a weak negative relationship with job performance, whereas job satisfaction was weakly but, positively correlated with work output; ($p=0.01$). Duration of job positively predicted overall motivation, intrinsic motivational factors and job performance but, job satisfaction; education was a positive predictor of job satisfaction and performance. Overall motivation had the strongest influence on job performance, followed by intrinsic factors which predicted job performance far better than job satisfaction however; extrinsic factor had a weak and negative association with job performance.

Conclusion: Workers' level of motivation was moderate; lecturers with a PhD were the most motivated. Highly motivated workers had improved job performance; however, extrinsic reward was low and had a negative impact on performance. The university can develop and incorporate training/motivational programmes into departmental work plans to enhance professional development.

Keywords: Intellectuals; Leaders of tomorrow; Highly motivated; University staff

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Introduction

From the early twentieth century workers have been known to be motivated not only by financial reward but, their behaviour at work is also influenced by how they perceive they were being treated or observed. This presupposes that a relationship between workers' attitudes (motivation) and job performance can be established in many occupational settings [1].

Human resources have become the most important asset of any organization in the 21st century [2]. University staff, in particular,

account indirectly for a significant part of the development of the society because, they are saddled with the responsibility of training intellectuals which in turn shape society. Workers in higher institutions have a major role to play in achieving the objectives of their organization. This is pivotal for building leaders of tomorrow since the most valuable asset of any institution is a well-motivated and stable workforce which is proficient, committed and creative [3].

Furthermore, healthful workers and healthy work environment are indispensable to any organization and country [4] however,

the adverse working conditions some workers experience daily is a far cry from ideal, and impinges significantly on their quality of life [5]. In view of the fact that the health of an individual is not limited to the presence or absence of a physical ailment, it could be said that workers in institutions may not have optimal social and mental wellbeing due to the level of dissatisfaction they experience at work [6,7].

Maslow’s theory of motivation based on the hierarchy of needs ranging from the desire to survive to self-fulfilment exemplifies that workers would be driven to keep doing what is necessary to satisfy their various needs, [8] however, a need ceases to be a motivator once it is satisfied [9]. Also, Herzberg in his two-factor theory identified work conditions (rather than work itself) as hygiene factors and intrinsic factors – recognition, achievement, advancement, responsibility etc. as motivators however, the presence or absence of these factors does not ensure job satisfaction [9,10].

Extrinsic rewards are usually monetary (salary, bonus etc.), while intrinsic rewards include non-financial benefits such as recognition, security, title, promotion, appreciation, praise, involvement in decision making, flexible working hours, comfortable work environment, feedback, work design, social rights etc. [11]. It is has been noted that workers who are committed to learning are more satisfied with their jobs and ultimately have better performance [12]. This is an essential element for attainment of organizational goals, because a distinction between how each factor, extrinsic and intrinsic, motivates workers is critical to forestall an attrition in workers’ competence to perform their responsibilities effectively [13].

University staffs, are more often than not, specialised individuals with wealth of experience and expertise in the academia; this makes them invaluable to national development. The awareness that the continued existence of the university is of utmost

importance for human capital development may give workers some sense of fulfilment. It is however, uncertain if it would be sustainable, given that the social and economic needs of the workforce are not fully met as is clearly reflected in the rationale for the frequent industrial actions [6,14].

It is based on this premise that this study investigated what truly motivates workers in University of Benin with a view to providing evidence that that would enable managers responsible for preparing reward and motivation schemes to know what is important to their workforce. It would also provide understanding into the level of motivation and performance amongst workers in the University of Benin. This may help generate the drive to set up effective motivational programmes for workers to achieve efficiency and develop a good organizational culture as have been recommended in previous studies [15,16].

Theoretical Framework

The figure below depicts that Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards act independently and simultaneously to increase workers’ motivation for better job performance (Figure 1).

Materials and Methods

Study location, design, and population

A cross-sectional, analytic design was adopted to investigate motivation of workers in the faculty of social sciences, University of Benin, Ugbowo campus, Benin City. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to select workers from the various departments; workers who have been employed for less than six months were excluded.

Data collection and analysis

A self-administered, semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data on socio-demographic factors, motivation and

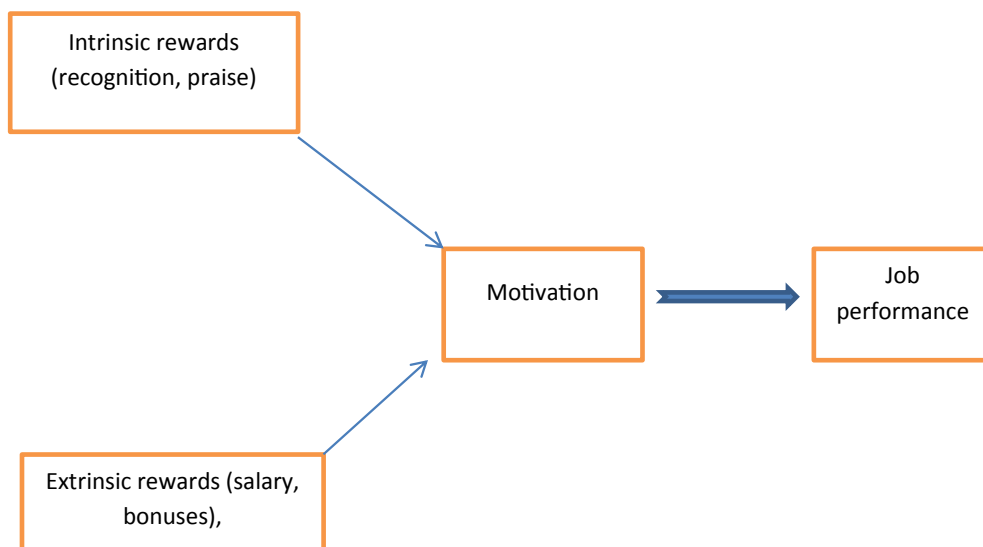


Figure 1 Illustration of the conceptual framework underpinning this study.

performance. Collected data was sorted, and entered into the spread sheet of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 22 for analysis. Scores from the various sections of the questionnaire were computed to determine the level of motivation, job satisfaction or performance. Categorical and numerical data was expressed in percentages and means (with standard deviations) respectively and where applicable; tests of association or difference in mean scores were performed with chi-square and/or analysis of variance. The level of significance was set at alpha level <0.05. Linear relationship between motivation and performance was tested with Pearson's correlation coefficient. Motivation total score was categorized based on the following: 25th, 50th and 75th percentiles were 6, 9 and 12. Highly motivated (above 50th percentile), moderately motivated (25th -50th percentile) and low/no motivation (below 25th).

Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the research and ethical review board of the University of Benin. Informed consent was sought from participants before being given questionnaires to fill. Utmost confidentiality was ensured as no information that personally identified participants appeared in the questionnaire. Their participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to decline consent if they decided not to be a part of the study. Each participant had privacy while filling in their responses in the questionnaire.

Results

One-third 66 (33.7%) of all the respondents were aged 31-40 years and the mean age was 40.04 years. Workers with bachelor's degree were just over one-third (34.3%) of all respondents, while more than a quarter (27.0%) had a PhD (Table 1).

A greater proportion of the respondents in the political science (60%) department and a little less than half (47.2%) of those in social works were highly motivated, whereas about one-third of those in economics and statistics (31.0%) were very poorly motivated. A greater proportion (64.1%) of the respondents with a PhD and majority (76.9%) of those with SSCE were highly motivated. More than half (51.2%) of lecturers were highly motivated. However, only the association between educational qualification and level of motivation was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) (Table 2).

Mean motivation scores were highest for workers in political science and public administration, those with PhD and the non-academic group of workers namely - security officers, cleaners, library attendants. Motivation scores were significantly different among workers with various educational qualifications ($p = 0.002$) (Table 3).

Mean scores of intrinsic reward and Job Performance were significantly among the various departments ($p = 0.004$; 0.027). Mean scores of extrinsic reward and Job satisfaction were significantly different between the various occupation ($p = 0.042$; < 0.001). Motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, job satisfaction and performance differed significantly; however only the mean scores of extrinsic reward was not significantly different between the levels of education ($p = 0.082$) (Table 4).

Overall motivation ($r = 0.629$) more strongly correlated with job performance than intrinsic motivational factors ($r = 0.594$); ($p = 0.01$). Extrinsic reward had a weak negative relationship with job performance whereas job satisfaction was weakly correlated though positively with work output; ($p = 0.01$) (Table 5).

Duration of job positively predicted overall motivation, intrinsic motivational factors and job performance but job satisfaction; education was a positive predictor of job satisfaction and

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics.

Variables	Categories	Frequency (%)
Age group	20-30	39 (19.9)
	31-40	66 (33.7)
	41-50	50 (25.3)
	51-60	18 (9.2)
	>60	23 (11.7)
	mean \pm SD	40.04 \pm 12.27
Sex	Male	103 (52.6)
	Female	93 (47.4)
Education	SSCE	13 (6.6)
	BSc	67 (34.3)
	MSc	63 (32.1)
	PhD	53 (27.0)
Occupation	Lecturer	96 (49.0)
	Assistant Lecturer	15 (7.6)
	Graduate assistant	34 (17.3)
	Secretary	19 (9.7)
	Others	32 (16.4)

Others: security officer, cleaner, library attendant.

Table 2 Workers' level of motivation.

Variables	Categories	Level of Motivation		
		Frequency (%)		
		Low	Moderate	High
Department	Sociology and anthropology	14 (16.7)	33 (39.3)	37 (44.0)
	Economics and statistics	9 (31.0)	10 (34.5)	10 (34.5)
	Geography Regional	5 (22.7)	9 (40.9)	8 (36.4)
	Political Science & public Administration	2 (8.0)	8 (32.0)	15 (60.0)
	Social Works	6 (16.7)	13 (36.1)	17 (47.2)
			$\chi^2 = 7.243$	df = 8
Education	SSCE	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	10 (76.9)
	BSc	13 (19.4)	35 (52.2)	19 (28.4)
	MSc	16 (25.4)	23 (36.5)	24 (38.1)
	PhD	5 (9.4)	14 (26.4)	34 (64.1)
		$\chi^2 = 25.075$	df = 6	p < 0.001
Occupation	Lecturer	13 (13.5)	33 (45.3)	50 (51.2)
	Assistant Lecturer	5 (33.3)	4 (26.7)	6 (40.0)
	Graduate assistant	6 (17.6)	17 (50.0)	11 (32.4)
	Secretary	7 (36.8)	7 (36.8)	5 (26.4)
	Others	5 (15.6)	12 (37.5)	15 (46.9)
		$\chi^2 = 5.248$	df = 2	p = 0.108

Others: Security officer, Cleaner, Library attendant; *Likelihood ratio chi-square

performance however, age was a negative ($B = -0.228$) predictor of job performance (Table 6).

With linear regression all motivational factors but one retained significant positive influence on job performance. Overall motivation had the strongest influence followed by intrinsic factors which predicted job performance far better than job

Table 3 Mean motivation scores by department, occupation and education.

Variables	Categories	Mean Motivation Scores		
		Mean \pm SD	F (ANOVA) test	P value
Department	Sociology and anthropology	8.07 \pm 4.20	1.046	0.385
	Economics and statistics	7.65 \pm 7.16		
	Geography Regional	7.54 \pm 2.85		
	Political Science & public administration	9.48 \pm 3.08		
	Social Works	8.97 \pm 3.18		
	Overall	8.29 \pm 4.37		
Education	SSCE	9.76 \pm 4.34	5.21	0.002
	BSc	7.24 \pm 3.90		
	MSc	7.68 \pm 4.69		
	PhD	10.00 \pm 4.06		
	Overall	8.29 \pm 4.37		
Occupation	Lecturer	8.86 \pm 4.47	1.505	0.179
	Assistant Lecturer	7.12 \pm 4.48		
	Graduate assistant	8.42 \pm 4.67		
	Secretary	6.52 \pm 4.20		
	Others	9.08 \pm 3.30		
	Overall	8.29 \pm 4.37		

Others: Security officer, Cleaner, Library attendant

Table 4 Test of difference in motivation by department, occupation and education.

Variables	Categories	Mean Motivation Scores		
		Mean \pm SD	F (ANOVA) test	P value
Department	Motivation	9.00 \pm 4.38	1.046	0.385
	Intrinsic reward	4.86 \pm 4.36	4.041	0.004
	Extrinsic reward	-3.06 \pm 5.01	0.422	0.793
	Job Satisfaction	2.84 \pm 4.37	2.27	0.063
	Job Performance	10.23 \pm 6.75	2.8	0.027
Occupation	Motivation	9.00 \pm 4.38	1.505	0.179
	Intrinsic reward	4.86 \pm 4.36	1.755	0.111
	Extrinsic reward	-3.06 \pm 5.01	2.227	0.042
	Job Satisfaction	2.84 \pm 4.37	7.781	<0.001
	Job Performance	10.23 \pm 6.75	0.891	0.502
Education	Motivation	9.00 \pm 4.38	5.201	0.002
	Intrinsic reward	4.86 \pm 4.36	3.867	0.01
	Extrinsic reward	-3.06 \pm 5.01	2.265	0.082
	Job Satisfaction	2.84 \pm 4.37	17.287	<0.001
	Job Performance	10.23 \pm 6.75	6.124	0.001

satisfaction however, extrinsic factor had a weak negative association with job performance ($B = -0.187$) (Table 7).

Discussion

The mean age and modal age group were similar, and represent middle-aged workers as expected of a productive working class known to be economically independent in most populations. The commonest academic qualification possessed by the workers was a first degree though over a quarter had a doctoral degree. This outcome is not odd, especially in an academic setting where about half of the workers in this study were lecturers.

Overall, workers' level of motivation was moderate. And, since a doctoral degree is the highest academic qualification in our environment this study showed that lecturers with a doctorate degree were the most motivated among all workers, probably due to a high level of self-fulfilment from their academic achievement. The above finding is supported by Maslow's theory of need that self-actualization is the greatest motivating factor in view of the fact that employers are likely to seek, attract and retain highly motivated employees [9].

This claim is not implausible considering that a previous study conducted by Tsai, et al also noted a link between commitment to professional development, job satisfaction and better performance among workers [12].

In this study three-fifth and about half of workers in political science and social works department respectively were highly motivated, even though a significant connection between level of motivation and department could not be established. This observation is likely due to the fact that the distribution of workers with various qualifications and specific job types was comparable across all the departments in the faculty of social sciences, workers in political science and social works having the highest motivation scores, notwithstanding.

Mean scores of intrinsic reward and job performance were significantly different among the various departments. The reason for dissimilarities in intrinsic reward and job performance among the various departments is not immediately apparent but it is possible that some departments had unique ways of inducing their workers towards improved productivity. Mean scores of extrinsic reward and job satisfaction varied significantly between the various occupations, probably because of differential scales of paying workers' stipend inasmuch as both junior and senior staffs were included in this study. The varied level of job satisfaction could be that some workers may have perceived their working conditions to be worse than others. Similarly, workers who faced poor working conditions in a previous study conducted in Brazil have been known to be dissatisfied with jobs [17].

Table 5 Relationship of job performance with elements of motivation.

Variables	Pearson's correlation coefficient	P-value
Motivation	0.629	0.01
Intrinsic reward	0.594	0.01
Extrinsic reward	-0.302	0.01
Job Satisfaction	0.286	0.01

Table 6 Linear regression model estimating predictors of motivational factors and job performance.

Variable	Predictors	(B)	t	95% Confidence Interval for B		P value
				Lower limit	Upper limit	
Motivation	Duration of Job	0.337	3.518	0.084	0.299	0.001
Intrinsic	Duration of Job	0.277	2.854	0.049	0.27	0.005
Job satisfaction	Education	0.372	4.407	0.98	2.568	<0.001
Job performance	Age	-0.228	-2.197	-0.238	-0.013	0.029
	Duration of Job	0.245	2.543	0.048	0.38	0.012
	Education	0.253	2.786	0.54	3.163	0.006

B = Standardized Coefficient

Table 7 Linear regression model estimating motivational factors influence on job performance.

Predictors	B	t	95% Confidence Interval for B		P value
			Lower limit	Upper limit	
Motivation	0.405	6.353	0.429	0.815	<0.001
Intrinsic	0.274	4.158	0.222	0.623	<0.001
Extrinsic	-0.187	-3.468	-0.397	-0.109	0.001
Job satisfaction	0.161	2.896	0.079	0.416	0.004

B = Standardized Coefficient

Motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, job satisfaction and performance differed significantly across level of education. This could be for imaginable reasons, ranging from differences in pay, opportunities for self-development to self-actualisation, an assertion that has been bolstered by the self-determination theory which explains how extrinsic rewards eventually become drives for non-tangible rewards such as recognition [18]. Length of time spent on the current job seemed to have positively predicted both intrinsic motivational factors and overall motivation thus, workers who had spent the most time were the most motivated. Similarly, a previous study demonstrated the importance of years of experience in determining how satisfied with their jobs workers in the public sector were [19]. In addition, education was observed to have positively predicted both job satisfaction and performance, a finding which gives credence to that fact university staff especially, teaching staff are motivated by core academic and disciplinary interests [20]. Conversely, age negatively predicted job performance, meaning that older workers among those who are motivated to perform their jobs well would be less productive.

This study has also demonstrated a strong positive relationship between workers' motivation and their job performance; better motivated workers had better job performance. The observation of significant positive relationship between intrinsic rewards and job performance could be attributed to the fact that workers perceived their environment as one that was welcoming, accommodating and in which their personal career goals could be achieved. Similarly, Lee and Whitford have suggested that satisfaction derived from efforts put into work can be a greater motivation than financial gain [21].

Whereas in this study workers' getting extrinsic rewards such as financial bonuses, pay raise and timely payment of stipend had a negative relationship with their job performance Reio and Callahan opined that both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards would bring about higher productivity [22]. Also, the above finding is

corroborated by the result of a similar study conducted among workers in a health institution where lack of extrinsic rewards significantly impinged on workers' satisfaction and performance at work [23]. Conversely, in an inefficient reward system intrinsic factors could demotivate some workers while spurring others to increased performance and attainment of organizational goals [24].

What is noteworthy is that the association between extrinsic factor and job performance among workers in this study was weak and therefore, a negative connection between the two variables could not be firmly established. This observation suggests that what really motivates people as has been described by Herzberg's two-factor theory may be different than financial earnings and rewards. The above claim is substantiated by a previous study in which workers were more concerned about meeting people than getting a pay raise. [10]. However, the result of this study concerning the weak negative correlation of extrinsic factors and job performance could be that workers perceived payment of salaries to be low, [25] irregular and/or delayed – a factor that could significantly have reduced their work output.

Job satisfaction was weakly correlated with job performance; although this relatedness is positive it is possible some workers were uncertain about how fulfilling or unsatisfying their current jobs or positions was. The result from a previous study in a tertiary institution in Singapore where most lecturers were unsure about their job satisfaction gives acceptance to the reason posited above with respect to the weak association of job satisfaction detected in this study [26]. In contrast, another study conducted by Wright and Cropanzano to examine determinants of job performance revealed that job satisfaction did not predict how well workers performed their jobs; rather workers with better psychological well-being had better performance [27]. Nevertheless, this weak association of job satisfaction with performance could have untoward effect on the discharge of their duties as expected of them, and on the long run, on students' education [28].

Conclusion

Workers in the faculty of social sciences are on the average middle-aged, a large number of them with a first degree, though more than half of them had additional educational qualifications, and lecturing was the commonest type of job. Workers' level of motivation was moderate; and highest among those with a doctoral

degree. Educational level had a significant positive relationship with level of motivation. Motivation was strongly correlated with job performance; better motivated workers had improved job performance; however, extrinsic reward was low and had a negative impact on performance. The university can develop training and motivational programmes that would be incorporated into departmental work plans to enhance professional development.

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