
MOTIVATING FACTORS DURING A HIGH COST OF LIVING - A STUDY OF CASUAL EMPLOYEES OF SELECTED NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The continuous increase in the cost of living in Nigeria impacts employees of every organisation. This situation worsened after the government ended the oil subsidy regime – resulting in the rising cost of transportation and general prices of goods and services. The casual employees are the most vulnerable group because of their low incomes. Thus, the inflation most have reduces their capability of paying bills and may affect their productivity at work. This research sampled casual workers from the tertiary institution in Taraba state and their responses were to be collected regarding their most motivating factor in current dispensation. One one-sample chi-square analyses were used and the results showed variation in the preference of the motivating factor during this high cost of living dispensation. The results showed that monetary incentive is the most considered factor.

Keywords: *Motivation, casual employees, motivating factor, cost of living*

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, Nigeria's rising cost of living has tripled, affecting the living conditions of low-income employees. From February 2016, Nigeria's inflation rate doubled (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), fuelled by food inflation. Rising costs of living exacerbated by the cost of transportation after the oil subsidy removal, impact employees' cost of living. The situation worsened after the oil subsidy regime was terminated, the energy cost increases followed by persistent increases in general prices and falling standards of living of millions of Nigerians including the employees, especially the low-income earners. Every month concern about the cost-of-living crisis is worsening because the earnings of employees hardly pay the bills and inflation seems to continue unabated, peaking at 33.69% in April 2024 (Oyadeyi, et al., 2024). The overall reduction in the purchasing power of

households has general economic and managerial implications: businesses being closed, poverty indices rising, and production capabilities in Nigeria on the decline (Oyadeyi, et al., 2024). It is argued that the rising cost of living impacts tertiary institutions, which are a subset of public organisations in Nigeria (Ogunode & Aregbesola, 2023).

Lack of motivation impacts productivity (Ilesanmi & Famolu, 2016). In addition, several symptoms may indicate low morale: higher cases of absenteeism, declining productivity and increased cases of defective products, a higher number of accidents or a higher level of waste materials. It is likewise noted that motivated employee commands more loyalty to the employer. The appearance of the job as a whole has, in fact, a bearing on the willingness and quality of an employee's performance. According to Rothberg (2005), employees who are not encouraged to maximise their potential during the hiring process may struggle to achieve required performance levels. To be motivated, an employee must think that his or her needs are being addressed. Thus, employee satisfaction is a critical component of the motivational process. A satisfied individual would undoubtedly contribute positively to the realisation of organisational goals and objectives, whereas a disgruntled employee might not only participate but also act in such a way that the realisation of such goals and objectives is utterly destroyed. According to Anka (1988), employee satisfaction is crucial for organisational success. Management research evolves around different motivational factors or techniques that are effective in optimising employees' performance. However, the management challenge is how to identify, deploy and utilise suitable motivational tools for individual and group behaviours in an organisation. Therefore, the success or failure of motivation rests not on the motivational tools themselves but on the managerial ability to deploy the appropriate tool (Dornyei, 2000). Therefore, this study examines the factors that motivate low-income employees of tertiary institutions in Nigeria during the rising cost of living.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation studies have tried to answer "why" employees' behaviour is directed towards a certain goal and how that can be manipulated to satisfy the organisation's goal. Hersey and Dornyei (2000) noted that motives can be defined as needs, wants, drives, or impulses within the individual that are directed towards goals which may be conscious or subconscious. Motives are needs, which force people to move towards goals or objectives set. Experts define motivation differently. Heyel, (1982 p.597) quoted in

Chintaloo & Mahadeo (2013) stated that "Motivation refers to the degree of readiness of an organism to pursue some designated goal and implies the determination of the nature and locus of the forces inducing the degree of readiness." Also, it is defined as "the willingness to exert high levels of effort to reach organizational goals as conditioned by that effort's ability to satisfy some individual need." (Robbins and Coulter, 1999 p.26 quoted in Chintaloo & Mahadeo (2013)). In a dynamic, complex and unfavourable business environment, managers' tasks in organizations involve creating enabling environments where the feelings and trust of employees are empowered towards meeting organizational goals (Aworemi et al., 2011). According to Smith and Rupp (2003), the role of individual motivation performance, resistance to change, organizational strategy and structure are empirical roles of motivation in the organization. Similarly, Luthans & Stajkovic (1999) stated that advancing employees' interests through recognition, monetary incentives, promotion and organizational behaviour modification generated a debate in human resource management.

A major part strides in management resource studies was the Hawthorne Studies conducted by Elton Mayo from 1924 to 1932 in a Philadelphia textile mill (Zoller & Muldoon, 2019). The research showed that employees are not motivated mainly by money and employee behaviour is linked to their attitudes (Zoller & Muldoon, 2019). Research findings from a survey of related work on motivation suggest that extrinsic rewards are ranked as lesser motivators than intrinsic rewards (Fang et al., 2013). The reason behind that is not farfetched. Employees in the developed economies most motivational studies were done, the necessities such as food, clothing, shelter etc, are in supply and therefore do not constitute the interest of the majority of the staff in business organisations. Therefore, the interest is stressed to intrinsic factors such as interesting work, achievement, recognition, challenge and self-actualization as against extrinsic factors such as pay, work incentives, and promotion. The same cannot be applied to employees of organisations in public sectors in a developing economy, like Nigeria. The Hawthorne Studies initiated the human relations approach to management in which the motivation of employees and their interests or needs became the foundation of human resource management (Armstrong & Taylor, 2006).

Theories of Motivation

Motivation theories are grouped into two sets: process theories and content theories (Igusi, 2009). Content theories describe the motivation techniques

that energize people's behaviour. The most famous content theories are Maslow's need hierarchy, McClelland's three-factor theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory and this study will focus on the content theory in supporting this research.

Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory

In the 1940s, Maslow's need hierarchy theory was developed by Abraham Maslow. This theoretical model was applied in different human pursuits from managerial to marketing products and psychology. Needs are satisfied starting from the lower levels (1, 2) and moving up the pyramid to the higher needs (3- 5). Maslow argued that these needs are to be satisfied in a first up to second, second up to third way. When a need is satisfied, it is no longer a motivator. The needs that are not yet satisfied become the driving force. In addition, studies have shown that the needs hierarchy differs from one culture to another (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. A hierarchy organises dozens of diverse needs into five main groups. Physiological necessities (such as food, air, water, and shelter) rank at the bottom of the hierarchy. The next priority is safety, which includes the requirement for a secure and stable environment plus the absence of discomfort, threat, or disease. Belongingness encompasses the desire for love, affection, and engagement with others. Esteem involves self-esteem via personal achievement and societal esteem through acknowledgement and respect from others. At the summit of the hierarchy is self-actualization, which expresses the desire for self-fulfilment - a sense that one's potential has been realised. In addition to these five, Maslow describes the desire to know and the need for aesthetic beauty. According to the requirements hierarchy theory, humans are motivated by multiple needs and with the lowest unfulfilled need serving as the strongest. In essence, human resources or employees of the organisation are the most central part so the need to influence them and persuade them towards task fulfilment becomes necessary, if not inevitable. Every public or private organisation is goal-oriented, and all efforts are geared towards successfully attaining those goals and objectives. Therefore, for any organization to record any degree of meaningful success in the pursuit of its goals, it must have the ability to create values (motivation) enough to compensate for the burden imposed upon employees. Such value or motivators can come in the form of good training, facilities or incentives such as fringe benefits, promotions, status symbols etc, to satisfy the needs of the employees for enhanced performance (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).

According to Ajibola (1976), motivation involves both motivating individuals to do organisational objectives and motivating themselves to fulfil personal needs. Ajibola emphasises that motivating people helps them reach both organisational and personal goals. Organisations rely heavily on their workers for success. It is noteworthy to know that money is not the only motivator. There are other incentives, which can also serve as motivators (Armstrong & Taylor, 2006; Fang et al., 2013). In view of this, looking at it from Nigerian perspective, money cannot serve as the only motivator in a workplace. There are many factors that the above authorities mentioned which include, good working relation, praises, security, encouragement, opportunity for growth and development etc. Once Nigerian organizations apply these factors, employees will feel motivated and that will trigger them to do more in the workplace in order to achieve the organizational goals. A Nigerian employee, like any other human resources is a common person with unlimited needs. Money alone cannot cater for all its needs. The absence of all these factors was the genesis of employee redundant attitude to work in Nigeria. If money was the only incentive of motivation, it could have solved the past and present strikes that are happening mostly in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It is noteworthy to know that money is not the only motivator. There are other incentives, which can also serve as motivators (Armstrong & Taylor, 2006; Fang et al., 2013). In view of this, looking at it from Nigerian perspective, money cannot serve as the only motivator in a workplace. There are many factors that the above authorities mentioned which include, good working relation, praises, security, encouragement, opportunity for growth and development etc. Once Nigerian organizations apply these factors, employees will feel motivated and that will trigger them to do more in the workplace in order to achieve the organizational goals. A Nigerian employee, like any other human resources, is a common person with unlimited needs. Money alone cannot cater for all its needs. The absence of all these factors was the genesis of employee redundant attitude to work in Nigeria. If money was the only incentive of motivation, it could have solved the past and present strikes that are happening mostly in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Some Motivating Factors Used In Organisations

It is noteworthy to know that money is not the only motivator. There are other incentives, which can also serve as motivators (Armstrong & Taylor, 2006; Fang et al., 2013). Given this, looking at it from a Nigerian perspective, money cannot serve as the only motivator in a workplace.



Fig. 1 Possible motivators in an organization

There are many factors that the above authorities mentioned which include, good working relations, praise, security, opportunity for growth and development etc. Once Nigerian organizations utilise these factors, employees will feel motivated and that will trigger them to do more in the workplace in order to achieve the organizational goals.

Job Security

According to Armstrong & Taylor (2006), if employees sense they will be rewarded for good work and that their employment is secure, their performance will naturally improve. Similarly, Zhang and Wu (2004) found that job stability gives employees confidence in their future careers and encourages them to work hard to fulfil the organization's goals. Consequently, it can be said that job satisfaction is the most powerful motivator since it removes the employee's mental stress and allows him to give his all to the organisation, resulting in profit maximisation.

Recognition

Candi et al. (2013) found that experience staging leads to increased recognition of innovation opportunities, while Mahazril et al. (2012) found that recognition, rewards, and communication can motivate employees to perform well at work. Recognition can improve productivity and performance, whether it is a first-time performance or a repeat action and reinforces employee behaviour.

Working conditions

In (2012), Jung and Kim said that a good work environment and good work circumstances might boost employee job satisfaction and an employee

organizational commitment. Thus, the employees would try to provide their best which can boost the employee work performance. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2013) found that age had a moderating effect on the correlations between psychosocial work circumstances and health. Now, the necessity and requirement for working conditions is to describe or define the physical environment by distinguishing its aspects or dimensions. Employees who work in inadequate conditions will perform poorly. Their tasks are emotionally and physically demanding, so they require good working conditions.

Promotion

Nadiri & Tanova (2010) opine that promotion schemes influence organisational justice and work satisfaction. Similarly, Nadiri & Tanova (2010) emphasise that promotions are good for most employees, primarily because they work harder to compensate for their incompetence. As a result, promotions at regular intervals are motivated by optimism and are typically offered to meet the psychological needs of employees in the organisation.

Monetary Incentives

Nadiri & Tanova (2010) found that views of promotion schemes influence organisational justice and work satisfaction. Similarly, Sheth et al. (2000) emphasised that promotions are good for most employees, primarily because they work harder to compensate for their incompetence. As a result, promotions at regular intervals are motivated by optimism and are typically offered to meet the psychological needs of employees in the organisation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey method in its research design. The population of this study comprises the randomly selected casual employees of 6 tertiary institutions in Taraba state of Nigeria.: College of Agriculture, Science & Technology, Jalingo; College of Education, Zing; Federal Polytechnic, Bali; Federal University, Wukari; Taraba State Polytechnic, Suntai; Taraba State University, Jalingo. The sample size is 106 randomly selected casual staff of the population of an unequal number of respondents from each tertiary institution. The questionnaire required the respondents to indicate the most motivational factors that drive them during of rising cost of living. An initiated pilot was carried out with three samples to test the effectiveness of the mearing instrument before the

questionnaires were administered in written form considering that most of the respondents are not IT-inclined. The motivating factors in the study are (a) job security, (b) recognition (c) monetary incentives (d) good working conditions, and (e) promotions.

Both the graphical presentation of the responses and the tabulation representation of the one-sample chi-square analyses were presented in the results section.

RESULTS

The observed and expected frequency of the motivating factors from the responses are given in the bar charts in Figure 2 below.

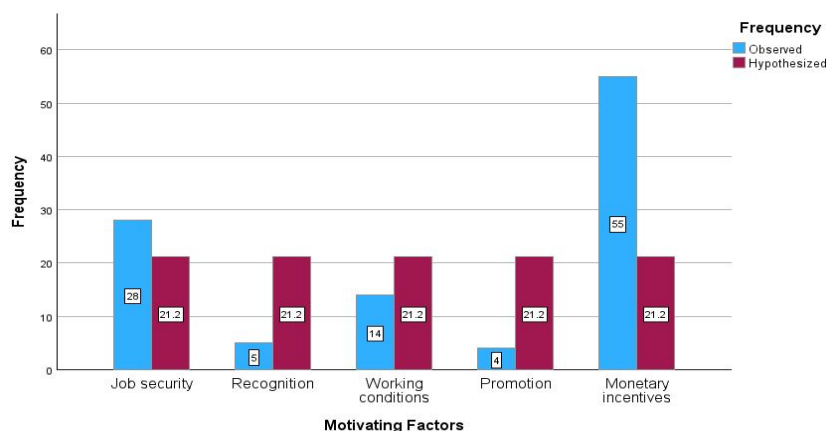


Figure 2: Observed and expected motivating factors from the responses

One-Sample Chi-Square Test Summary

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Total N | 106 |
| Test Statistic | 84.849 ^a |
| Degree Of Freedom | 4 |
| Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test) | <.001 |

a. There are 0 cells (0%) with expected values less than 5. The minimum expected value is 21.200.

| | Null Hypothesis | Sig. ^{a,b} | Decision |
|---|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The categories of Casual_Employees occur with equal probabilities. | .015 | Reject the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The categories of Tertiary Institutions occur with equal probabilities. | .001 | Reject the null hypothesis. |

| | | | |
|---|--|-------|-----------------------------|
| 3 | The categories of Education occur with equal probabilities. | <.001 | Reject the null hypothesis. |
| 4 | The categories of Motivating Factors occur with equal probabilities. | <.001 | Reject the null hypothesis. |

Decision: The p-value showed that motivating factors vary. Figure 2 shows that monetary incentive is the major motivating factor among the five motivating tools.

CONCLUSION

In agreement with Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory, this study found that monetary incentive is the major motivation tool for driving the productivity of casual workers. The implication is that the management needs to consider meeting these needs to drive the desired change in organizations otherwise productivity will not be optimised.

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