

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION IN ACHIEVING ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES: A STUDY OF WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary business practice, employee motivation relates to the increased potential to achieve the employee performance outcomes and organisational goals that most positively impact the business. High levels of employee motivation correlate with increases in the commitment and productivity of employees, as well as the effort that employees sustain at work. This motivates the business to become more competitive and to sustain its success over longer periods. This study is concerned with motivating employees to achieve business goals that are most positively related to the performance outcomes of employees. For this study, a quantitative cross-sectional research methodology was used to collect primary data related to the performance of employees in the private and public business sector by completing a formal survey. The survey yielded 220 usable responses that were subjected to the statistical analysis techniques offered by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, reliability testing, Pearson correlation index, and simple linear regression were used to analyse the data. The study confirms that high levels of motivation of employees improves the performance of employees in a business. Further, the study confirms that highly motivated employees are more supportive of a business achieving its goals. The study enhances existing literature related to the human resource management of employees in business. From a practice perspective, this study enhances workplace performance and goals of the business through a supportive, fair, and rewarding business leadership practice. This is enhanced through recognizing employees, providing workplace learning opportunities, and improving workplace management that is participative.

Keywords: Employee Motivation; Employee Performance; Organisational Goals; Human Resource Management; Workplace Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic objectives in tandem with lofty expectations regarding employee productivity and organizational effectiveness place immense pressure on today's organizations. Complexities associated with globalization and competition combined with rapid technological advancements and unpredictable employee behaviour have rendered the work environment more challenging. The effective and efficient management of human capital is an essential business strategy. Even though outlays on technology and infrastructure are important, employees are still the most important organizational asset because of their impact on the performance of the organization and the attainment of strategic objectives. Of the many factors that impact employee behaviour, motivation is recognized to be the most important. Motivation to work refers to the internal and external forces that influence employees'

willingness to perform work and help the organization to attain its objectives. Employees who are motivated to work show high levels of commitment and effort and are highly job involved and persistent (Latham, 2012) in the attainment of organizational objectives, compared to employees who are less motivated. For this reason, understanding the drivers of employee motivation is of great interest to both researchers and managers.

In the field of business research and management, employee motivation is a well-established area of study. The early motivational theories studied the needs of employees and the stimuli for work behaviour. Maslow (1943) studied the behaviour of humans and associated it with the satisfaction of the different levels of needs, beginning with the most basic needs and culminating in the need for self-actualization. Building on this perspective, a decade later, Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) presented two categories that included hygiene factors, which are the absence of dissatisfaction, and motivation factors, which are the presence factors of satisfaction and of better performance. These theories demonstrated the importance of a work environment that not only meets the employees' basic needs but also offers and fulfils needs of personal development, accomplishment, and appreciation.

Earlier theories developed the motivation at the workplace concept in terms of the cognitive processes and expectations of the employees. For example, Vroom (1964) described a motivational situation as one in which the employee assumes that the effort will result in a favourable performance evaluation, and that performance will be rewarded in an outcome valued by the employee. In addition, Self-Determination Theory holds that employees are intrinsically motivated to a greater depth when their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied (Deci and Ryan, 2000). In general, these theories support the concept that motivation at the workplace is a complex phenomenon that encompasses such factors as the work environment, leadership, work design, and the reward system. Motivation of employees is positively related to productivity at the workplace. Productivity at the workplace is the measure of the efficacy of an employee in the performance of his/her responsibilities, in the processes of the organization, and in the fulfilment of the goals of the organization. According to Campbell (1990), the performance of an employee is dependent on his/her motivation in addition to his/her knowledge and ability to perform the tasks. Similarly, motivated employees are productive, innovative and committed to the organization, which all positively impacts the organization, in addition to the quality of the services offered and a decrease in absenteeism (Pinder, 2014). The fulfilment of the goals of an organization is one of the primary measures of the operational effectiveness of an organization.

Organisational objectives give desired outcomes and expectation benchmarks for managers and employees, offering guidance for the completion of tasks. Employee contribution, good willing or otherwise, along with available resources and planning, determines the attainment of goals. Knowledge, innovation, and service are now the focus of competition among organisations. Employee motivation is the primary means for converting strategic goals to objectives and operational success. A great deal of research has focused on the performance of organisations and the part motivation of employees plays, however some gaps continue to exist. Many researchers address the satisfaction of employees, a particular reward system, or one of the motivational theories, while addressing the motivational contribution to the attainment of organisational goals the least. Additionally, a great deal of the motivation research has been done in given organisational contexts, which makes the examination of this motivation research from larger organisational systems and structures very important. A simplified empirical study can give more evidence of the motivational value of the employee as a manager in the improvement of performance in the workplace and in achieving the goals of the organisation. This study aims to address the lack of motivation research on the

performance of employees in the achievement of the goals of the organisation. Measurement of the value of motivation of the employee in the performance of the organisation is the goal of this study.

The results will add to the literature on organizational behaviour and human resource management and provide practical recommendations to managers that want to create motivated, productive, and high-performing workforces that provide long-term organizational success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The level of employee motivation has been recognized as a major factor determining the success of any organization as motivation has a significant influence on the attitude and behaviour of employees as well as their performance at work. In a fast-changing business world with growing competition, an organization cannot achieve its business strategies without highly motivated employees. Motivation can be described as the psychological behaviour that is aimed at or directed towards the attainment of a specific goal. This behaviour can be described in terms of its intensity, direction and how long the employee is motivated to exert this effort. Although there are multiple challenges that organizations face such as technological disruptions, changing expectations of the workforce and increased competition on a global scale, employee motivation is a key competitive advantage that positively impacts the organization's ability to innovate and improve business operations in a sustainable manner.

The evolution of the different perspectives of employee motivation is indicative of the changes in the business environment and competition. In 1961, McClelland proposed a theory of motivation that described three needs of an employee, namely the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power. Alderfer built on this theory in 1969 by developing the ERG model which categorized three different types of needs of an employee as existence needs, relatedness needs, and growth needs, and proposed that more than one need can be fulfilled at the same time. Hackman and Oldham argued in 1976 that a job that is designed to include variety of different skills, autonomy, and significance in enhancing the performance of the employee is likely to be an intrinsically motivating job. Modern theories of motivation draw a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and argue that employees who are intrinsically motivated are likely to be more committed to their work, more creative, and likely to be more motivated to perform at a high level for an extended period of time. Organizational behaviour research has consistently linked employee motivation with performance at the workplace.

Performance in the workplace involves several traits including the completion of work to defined standards, efficiency, and collaboration, along with the ability to adapt to change and an innovativeness that drives an organization toward greater success. Campbell (1990) described job performance as behaviours that help an organization reach its end. More positively, Grant (2008) argued that employees who see their work as having value and purpose achieve more and continue working with more intensity. Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010) noted that such employees also incorporate more physical and cognitive effort into their work, and as a result, attain both personal and professional success. From this, it can be inferred that employee motivation is a key driver of organizational success. The motivation to achieve work-related goals and the corresponding organizational impact have been supported by several interdependent theories. Goal-Setting Theory focuses on the attributes of goal directed work that, when witnessed, inspire employees to achieve more through perseverance (Locke & Latham, 1990). From a similar perspective, organizational support theory states

that employees view a caring workplace as an environment worthy of their commitment and improved performance (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Meyer and Allen (1991) also advanced that when employees are committed at an emotional level to an organization, they willingly go above and beyond their job requirements, which improves organizational performance. The Job Demands–Resources model also puts an emphasis on the availability of organizational resources such as leadership, workplace support, and employee development as key motivators of employee performance and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The motivation of employees is greatly affected by the practices and the leadership style of the organization.

Bass (1985) noted that transformational leaders can design an organizational vision that motivates followers, fosters creativity, and aids the development of employees. Judge and Piccolo (2004) conducted a meta-analysis that corroborated transformational leadership as a positive factor for both employee motivation and performance. Further, Armstrong and Taylor (2023) noted that the systems of rewards that address needs of the employees as a part of an organizational culture provide both financial and non-financial rewards. Non-financial rewards also include the provision of work that is fulfilling and the culture of the organization. Practices of performance management that provide feedback and the subsequent opportunities for development also serve to enhance motivation of workers and their performance (Aguinis, 2019).

Organizational goals can best be accomplished through the motivation of employees to focus their activities on the priorities set by the organization. The goals of the organization set the focus. With motivation, employees become progressively involved and focused on the goals of the organization. According to Drucker (1954), the coordinated efforts of employees serve to enhance the overall effectiveness of the organization. Likewise, Appelbaum et al. (2000) argued that productivity and the overall effectiveness of the organization are improved by the incorporation of management practices that are centred on the employee, such as participation, training, and performance-related rewards. Spreitzer (1995) advocated that motivation of employees is enhanced by psychological empowerment, which serves to improve the employees' perception of their contribution to the organization as both competent and autonomous. There is a wide assortment of literature suggesting a myriad of positive impacts caused by employee motivation on job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment. However, there are very few studies dedicated to assessing the impacts caused by employee motivation on the overall goals of an organization.

The current study investigates the motivation of employees and the performance of employees within an organization. The current study intends to supplement empirical research in organizational behaviour and human resource management and offers practical advice to managers in the organization to improve the motivation of employees and the overall effectiveness of the organization. The current study has following objectives:

- To examine the role of employee motivation in achieving organisational objectives.
- To assess the relationship between employee motivation and workplace performance.
- To evaluate the influence of employee motivation on the achievement of organisational objectives.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research methodology to analyse the impact of employee motivation on the attainment of organizational goals within the context of performance at the workplace. A quantitative methodology was deemed suitable because

the study intended to analyse statistically the measurable relationships among defined variables. The cross-sectional research methodology provided the opportunity to gather data from the research participants at a single instance to capture the perceptions of employees on motivation, performance at the workplace, and the accomplishment of organizational goals. The study aimed at employees in both the public and private sectors. Due to the pragmatic issues of obtaining a comprehensive sampling frame from the varied organizations, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. In this regard, only employees who were available and willing to participate in the survey were selected. After a preliminary assessment for completeness and consistency of the responses, 220 valid surveys were selected for analysis. The selected surveys represented employees from varied organizations.

The primary data for the study were collected using a survey instrument that was developed to measure the study variables. The survey instrument was comprised of two sections. The first section measured the demographic attributes of the respondents, that is, gender, age, education level, sector of employment, and work experience. The second section measured employee motivation, performance at the workplace, and the attainment of organizational goals. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) based on the degree of respondents' agreement to the respective statements.

Employee motivation was taken as the independent variable while the achievement of organisational objectives was taken as the dependent variable. Workplace performance was considered as a secondary variable in order to give additional perspective on the employees' assessment of the effectiveness of their work and the contribution of their work towards the achievement of the objectives of the organisation. Composite scores for each of the variables were calculated based on the average score for the items associated with the respective variables. The reliability of the measurement instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient in order to assess the internal consistency of the multi-item measurement variables. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 and above was taken as a sign of good reliability based on the widely accepted threshold in the social science field. Reliability analysis was performed prior to the application of inferential statistics in order to assess the readiness of the measurement instrument. The gathered data were evaluated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were applied to the study variables. Responses to survey items were summarized based on the calculated means and standard deviations. Reliability of the measurement scales was evaluated based on the calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship between the variables of employee motivation and workplace performance. The assessment of the influence of employee motivation on the achievement of organisational goals and the contribution of employee motivation toward the organisational goals was performed using simple linear regression analysis. All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 5% ($p < .05$).

The ethics of research were held during the entire research process. The survey used in this study was completely voluntary. Respondents were made aware of the academic reason for undertaking the study prior to filling out the survey. Confidentiality and anonymity were held in that there was no collection of personally identifiable information, and no survey answers were used outside of the research process.

ANALYSIS

Respondent Profile

A total of 220 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis. Respondents represented both public and private sector organisations with diverse demographic backgrounds.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	124	56.4
	Female	96	43.6
Age	21–30 years	70	31.8
	31–40 years	88	40.0
	41–50 years	42	19.1
	Above 50 years	20	9.1
Organisation	Public	92	41.8
	Private	128	58.2
Experience	Less than 5 years	60	27.3
	5–10 years	86	39.1
	Above 10 years	74	33.6

The sample consisted of employees from both public and private organisations. Male respondents constituted 56.4% of the sample, while female respondents accounted for 43.6%. Most respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age and had between five and ten years of work experience, indicating that the study primarily captured the perceptions of experienced employees.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employee Motivation	3.94	0.61
Workplace Performance	4.01	0.57
Achievement of Organisational Objectives	3.89	0.60

The mean scores illustrate that the employee perceptions in relation to the study variables are positive. The mean score for employee motivation was 3.94, indicating that the respondents assessed themselves as being somewhat work motivated. The mean score for workplace performance was 4.01 and the achievement of the organizational goals was also positively rated with a mean score of 3.89. The respondents exhibited reasonable consistency in perceptions as is evident from the small standard deviations.

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Motivation	8	0.881
Workplace Performance	6	0.846
Achievement of Organisational Objectives	7	0.857

Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.846 to 0.881, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. These results indicate satisfactory internal consistency of the measurement scales and support the reliability of the questionnaire.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3
1. Employee Motivation	1		
2. Workplace Performance	.708**	1	
3. Achievement of Organisational Objectives	.742**	.689**	1

Note. $p < .001$.

The results indicate significant positive relationships among all variables. Employee motivation was strongly correlated with workplace performance ($r = .708$, $p < .001$), suggesting that more highly motivated employees tended to report better workplace performance. Employee motivation also demonstrated a strong positive relationship with the achievement of organisational objectives ($r = .742$, $p < .001$), indicating that organisations with higher levels of employee motivation were perceived as more successful in achieving their objectives.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Simple linear regression analysis was performed to determine whether employee motivation significantly predicts the achievement of organisational objectives.

Model Summary

Table 5. Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
.742	.551	.549	0.401

The regression model explained 55.1% of the variance in the achievement of organisational objectives ($R^2 = .551$). This indicates that employee motivation accounts for a substantial proportion of the variation in organisational objective achievement.

ANOVA

Table 6. ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	42.15	1	42.15	267.83	< .001
Residual	34.30	218	0.157		
Total	76.45	219			

The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 267.83$, $p < .001$), indicating that employee motivation is a significant predictor of the achievement of organisational objectives.

REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Table 7. Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.176	0.191	—	6.16	< .001
Employee Motivation	0.689	0.042	.742	16.37	< .001

The effect of Employee motivation on organizational objectives attainment was positive and significant ($\beta = .742$, $t = 16.37$, $p < .001$). It was observed that as employee motivation increased, the level of organizational objectives attainment also increased. This was in line with the aim of the study of assessing the contribution of employee motivation toward the success of the organization. It emphasizes motivation as a vital asset in the organization that improves the outcomes of work.

DISCUSSION

This study analysed motivation as a contributor to workplace performance and its role in realizing the goals of an organization. The results show that motivation influences workplace performance, and that it is a key driver to the realization of organizational goals. Highly motivated employees perceive an advanced level of workplace performance and achievement of organizational goals. The results consolidate that motivated employees exert effort, and are committed to the success of the organization. The established relationship between motivation and workplace performance is aligned with the established theories of motivation and empirical research. According to the Goal-Setting Theory employees perform better if motivating goals are set (Locke & Latham, 1990). In the same vein, Self-Determination Theory suggests performance is likely to be better if psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are met (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The results of the present research support the theories and suggest motivated employees perform better in the workplace which is a contributor to the effectiveness of the organization.

In organizational settings, this study indicates that motivation is a key predictor of the attainment of organizational goals. The results show that beyond the improved individual performance, motivation is an important element of the attainment of the goals of the organization. Motivated employees are more likely to be goal committed, and to be persistent and to go beyond the expectations of their role, even when faced with obstacles. Such behaviours promote better alignment of activities within an organization, enhance overall effectiveness, and positively impact the attainment of organizational goals.

The results corroborate earlier findings. Grant (2008) mentioned that employees who think the task they are performing has a purpose are more inclined to perform better. Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010) found that the higher the motivation level, the more energy (both psychological and emotional) employees exert toward the attainment of better performance. In addition to this, Eisenberger et al. (1986) explained that employees who think there is support from the organization perform better and are more inclined to be committed to the organization. In general, the results of these studies support our findings by recognizing that motivation of employees is a vital resource at the organizational level and has positive implications for the performance of both the employee and the organization.

For managers, this study suggests that organizations should regard the motivation of employees as a strategic concern beyond an individual one. The strengthening of motivation can be attained by managers through the setting of clear work goals, rewarding employees, providing avenues for career progress, and participative and supportive management. It is likely that these practices will enhance the performance of employees and strengthen their

commitment to the organization's goals. This study offers additional evidence to the field of organizational behaviour and human resource management, and particularly to the area of employee motivation and the attainment of organizational goals. This study examined employee motivation within the context of workplace performance and its impact on organizational goal attainment. The results show a correlation between employee motivation and workplace performance that also contributes to goal completion of the organization. Highly motivated employees are likely to almost always demonstrate optimal behaviours within the workplace, contribute positively to the organization, and help achieve the organization's strategic goals.

The results also show that organizations need to align their practices to facilitate employee motivation. This can be achieved by adopting practices such as supportive leadership, ensuring employees' work is meaningful, establishing a fair rewards system, providing opportunities for career advancement, and ensuring effective workplace communication. With these practices in place, employees are more likely motivated to perform optimally, which can translate to enhanced organizational performance and goal achievement. This study also has implications for management and HR practices. Motivated employees are more likely to be productive and committed to the organization. Therefore, management should focus on employee-centred practices such as employee recognition, on-the-job training, feedback on performance, and participative management to improve the motivation of employees and ultimately impact the effectiveness of the organization.

Like other studies, this one has some limitations. One, due to a cross-sectional research design, the data reflect employee perceptions at one point and does not capture perceptions at other time periods. The use of convenience sampling also impacts the study's findings in that they cannot be generalized to all organizational settings. The study was also limited to self-reporting, which is subject to perception bias. To enhance the generalizability of findings, future studies can be sector-specific and utilize longitudinal research designs and probability sampling. This study illustrates the integral role of employee motivation in the elevation of performance at the workplace, and the fulfilment of the goals of the organization. In a competitive business climate, the heightened employee motivation offered by an organization enhances performance and increases the effectiveness of the organization and leads to the attainment of success that is sustainable over the long term.

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