



## An Empirical Synthesis of Employees' Perceived Relationship between Motivation and Job Performance in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study attempts an empirical synthesis of employees' perceived relationship between motivation and job performance in Nigeria. It employed a survey research method in collecting data from Abia State Civil Service in Nigeria. A total of two hundred and fourteen (214) of the civil servants were sampled. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool was used to determine employees' perceived relationship between motivation and job performance in Nigeria. The result reveals that employee motivation has a weak positive and a significant relationship with job performance; intrinsic motivation has a moderate significant positive relationship with job performance; while extrinsic motivation has a weak significant positive relationship with job performance. The conclusion reached is that motivation of employees play a critical role in job performance and that indeed, the motivation of employees should not be overlooked because the long-term survival of any organization depends largely on the motivation of their employees be it intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. It is therefore recommended that efforts should be made by managers, leaders and administrators of Abia State Civil Service to learn about what their employees want from their jobs, or what is important to them should be given to them.*

**Keywords:** *Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Job Performance*

### **Introduction**

Organizations are set up to achieve some set goals. In order to achieve

these goals and objectives, the human factor is of utmost importance. Thus, the human factor

through the leadership or management mobilizes and utilizes all other factors such as performance appraisals, employee motivation, employee satisfaction, compensation, training and development, job security, organizational structure and others, to bring about desired performance of the organization. But the area of this study is focused on employee motivation as a factor that can enhance job performance. This is because no organization can hope to achieve high level of performance without a well-motivated workforce. It is generally believed that when employees are adequately motivated, they tend to work better. In contrast, when they are inadequately motivated, their performance tends to be impaired (Ejere, 2010).

This explains why scholars have spent considerable time and resources in research, in an attempt to discover the secrets or techniques of motivating employees for optimum performance. However, lack of motivation among employees in an organization is recipe for the failure in the accomplishment of desired goals and objectives. In order to avert these failures experienced by most organizations, employee motivation is an absolute necessity and the manager's realization of the type of motivation that will enhance the employees to perform their jobs optimally will lead to the achievement of a high level of advancement of the organization. Therefore, the total organizational performance depends on efficient

and effective performance of individual employees of the organization. It is important to note though, that different employees in different organizations are motivated differently with varied type of motivation (which could be intrinsic or extrinsic) by leaders, managers or administrators who inspire them to act in different ways towards job performance in the organization.

Motivation is simply that set of processes that arouse, direct and maintain human behaviour towards some goals (Greenberg and Baron, 2003); while job performance shows individual behaviours that contribute to achieve organizational objectives. A number of studies that have examined the relationship between employee motivation and job performance indicate that there is a relationship that exists between the two (Nelson and Quick, 2003; Ololube, 2006; Abejirinde, 2009; Baibata, 2010; and Sharma and Chaudhary, 2012). The most obvious incentive for increasing employee performance is often thought to be based on salary and promotions, classified as extrinsic motivation and has yielded contrary result as demonstrated by myriad of studies. On the other hand, in today's demanding workplace there is a shift from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation. This comes in form of employees engaging in activities based on the satisfaction they will derive, a sense of achievement, the work itself and not necessarily the rewards, which could be external or

financial in nature or fear of being sanctioned (Cole 1996; Drucker, 2002; and Olusola, 2011).

Even though the subject of employee motivation has been extensively researched, these studies have mainly been conducted in industries and not civil services in Nigeria, which have attracted less attention in this regard. Therefore, the research problem has necessitated the following question: what is employees' perceived relationship between motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and job performance in Abia State Civil Service in Nigeria? This is the gap the current study intends to fill and to propose measures for job motivation and satisfaction towards optimum individual and organizational performance.

## **Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### ***The Concept of Employee Motivation***

Employee motivation is one of the most important concepts in the fields of organizational behaviour and human resource management. It serves as the key to organisational effectiveness and a predictor of performance (Lather and Jain, 2005). The term "motivation" is derived from the Latin term *movere*, which means "to move" (Baron, Henley, McGibbon and McCarthy, 2002) and the concept of motivation is multifaceted as there is no one best definition.

According to Islam and Ismail (2008), motivation is what moves a person from boredom to interest. It works as a steering or wheel of a vehicle that directs one's activities. In his view, Halepota (2005:16) defines motivation as "a person's active participation and commitment to achieve the prescribed results." He further opines that the concept of motivation is abstract because different strategies produce different results at different times and there is no single strategy that can produce guaranteed favourable results all the time". Put differently, what motivates an individual is complex, and the biggest mistake that can be made is underestimating and speculating what really motivates an employee. Therefore, it is critical to understand what really motivates employees. Moreover, individuals at different organizational levels, with different earning power, may have different motivational values. Hence, what motivates individuals at one level of the organization may not motivate those at another. These values can be differentiated by income level and other demographic factors when analyzing attitudes for motivational purposes (Islam and Ismail, 2008).

Adjunct to the above is the idea of Greenberg and Baron (2003) cited in Nyameh, Douglas, Teru and Titus (2013:94) opined that "motivation could be divided into three main parts. The first part looks at arousal that deals with the drive, or energy behind individual action- that is,

people tend to be guided by their interest in making a good impression on others, doing interesting work and being successful in what they do. The second part refers to the choice people make and the direction their behaviour takes. The last part deals with maintaining behaviour and clearly defining how long people have to persist at attempting to meet their goals”.

Although the term “motivation” can be used in different ways, it refers to any sort of general drive or inclination to do something (Baumeister and Vohs, 2007). Motivation is categorized as either “extrinsic” (outside) or “intrinsic” (inside) (Mitchell and Daniels, 2003; Sansone and Harackiewicz, 2000). Extrinsic motivation refers to the influence on motivation level of external factors; examples of extrinsic motivation are salary, praise and status. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that comes from inside the person. Intrinsic motivation reflects the internal desire of a person to satisfy inner needs, and this desire arises from emotions. Examples of intrinsic motivation include challenging tasks, pride in making differences or professional growth that may result from performing a particular activity. Intrinsic motivation is usually considered to be the reason why people do certain things without any external rewards (Huddy, 1992).

This study builds its foundation on Herzberg’s two-factor theory of

motivation (1966), which is concerned with two underlined parallel sets of needs namely, man’s need as an animal to avoid pain, and as human the need for psychological growth. In his theory, Herzberg lists a number of factors that satisfy or dissatisfy employees in working environment; namely hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) and motivators (satisfiers). Under the hygiene factors, which in this study is seen as extrinsic motivators, are company policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions, while the motivators which in this study is seen as intrinsic motivators include factors such as achievement, recognition, the attraction of the work itself, responsibility and advancement.

According to Herzberg (1966), the presence of the motivator in an organization will cause satisfaction and their absence will not cause dissatisfaction but will lead to an absence of positive satisfaction. While the presence of the hygiene factors will not motivate people in an organization, yet they must be present, or dissatisfaction will arise. Though this theory has not gone unchallenged, some critics have found that the hygiene factors have the potential of yielding a sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Bobbitt and Behling, 1972). While for Myers (1964) what motivates people is largely a matter of personality. Notwithstanding these

criticisms, Herzberg's contribution to human motivation is significant.

### ***The Meaning of Job Performance***

The issue of job performance has been a great concern to many organizations, especially in Nigeria, which has compelled researchers to dig more and more on this subject-matter. According to Motowidlo (2003), job performance is the total expected value of the organization of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual carries out over a standard period of time. While for Rashidpoor (2000), job performance is that set of behaviour which a person shows in relation to his job or, in other words, amount of efficiency gained due to the person's job type.

One thing is pertinent about the definitions above, namely, the fact that performance is a property of behaviour; it is an aggregated property of multiple, discrete behaviours that occur over a period of time. The second idea is that the property of behaviour to which performance refers is its expected value to the organization. Thus, the performance construct of this definition is a variable that distinguishes between set of behaviours carried out by the same individual at different times. The distinction is based on how much the sets of behaviours (in the aggregate) are likely to contribute to or detract from organizational effectiveness. In a word, variance in performance is variance in the expected organizational value of behaviour

(Motowidlo; Brownlee and Schmit, 1997).

Job performance is divided into two categories: task performance and dispositional performance. Task performance is defined as tasks and responsibilities of each person and related directly to all things that must be done by that person such as monitoring absent or present employee. The other performance is dispositional, which helps organizational and social network to survive (Motowidlo, 2003).

### ***The Relationship between Employee Motivation and Job Performance: A Review***

There is a general perception that motivation of employees has a relationship with job performance and the notion that employees who are highly motivated are much more likely to be high performers is widespread in management literature. Lawler (1994) and Buchanan and Huczynski (1997) submit that motivation is the single most important determinant of individual job performance. According to Nelson and Quick (2003), a job high in motivation and hygiene factors lead to high performance and few complaints among employees, which makes motivation to be a fundamental instrument for regulating work behaviour of employees. No wonder, Olawoyin (2000) concludes that the optimization of work behaviour can best be achieved by motivating the workers.

Empirical studies by Abejirinde (2009) investigate the relationship between motivation and work performance within private and public enterprises in Nigeria and found that promotion (as a motivator) and employees' performance are positively correlated. It was also revealed that job growth (as a motivator) has significant relationship with employees' performance. Another study by Baibaita (2010) reveals that motivation exerts positive impact on the employees' performance in the Nigerian banking industry. Corroborating earlier findings, Sharma and Chaudhary (2012) who investigated the impact of employee motivation on performance in private organization, with the aim of identifying the factors that encourage positive motivational behaviour among employees, discovered that employee motivation has a direct impact on productivity and growth. They further posit that a highly motivated employee invests his/her best of hard work in carrying out each and every aspect of his/her duties and responsibilities. Sharma and Chaudhary (2012) contend that improved job performance of the employees will add value to the organization itself and to the employees' productivity, while also submitting that organizations can live and grow by taking care of their employees. That is, only organizations that pay high attention to the job performance of their employees can live and grow quickly and securely.

Olusola (2011), in his study, on the other hand, reveals specifically that intrinsic motivation significantly predicted job performance of industrial workers. His study conforms to Cole, (1995) and Drucker (2002) who claim that financial rewards and incentives are not sufficient positive motivators. To Cole and Drucker, intrinsic motivation such as natural or personal drives, desires, impulse and so on, which emanate internally, has a role to play in job performance of workers. He concludes that intrinsic motivation, among others (job satisfaction and self-efficacy) is very essential for optimal productivity of industrial workers. Such other acts such as acknowledgement of competence and commitment would also boost workers' morale.

According to Ololube (2006) motivation to work- whether intrinsic or extrinsic- is very essential in the lives of workers because they form the fundamental reason for working in life. In fact, studies have supported the importance of intrinsic motivation over extrinsic motivation. For example, citing Maslow's need hierarchy (1954), Herzberg's two factors (1966), McClelland's achievement motivation (1961) and Alderfer's Existence Relatedness and Growth (1972), Ololube avers that financial rewards and incentives are important but they are not sufficient positive motivation.

Based on the above reviews; the following null hypotheses are

developed to investigate the relationships between the study variables:

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. Self developed questionnaire was used in data collection. The study population consisted of all current staff of Abia State Civil Service in Nigeria and the study adopted the multi-stage sampling technique to select random samples of 350 respondents. A total of 350 copies of a questionnaire were distributed, while 214 filled copies

were retrieved. The questionnaire contained twenty (20) items, excluding the personal data of the respondents. Four items measured job performance, four items were used to measure intrinsic motivation and four items measured extrinsic motivation. All items excluding personal data of the respondents were rated on four likert scale. Their responses ranged from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD). The validity of the instrument was enhanced through expert opinion. Experts in Public Administration with specific specialization and interest in Human Resource Management scrutinized the questionnaire for construct and content validity. The reliability of the instruments was tested using test re-test reliability analysis method. The result yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76. The descriptive statistics was used in analyzing personal data of the respondents, while Pearson Product Moment correlation statistical techniques were used to test the research hypotheses.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Characteristics**

Male	102	47.7
Female	112	52.3
<b>Age (years)</b>		
< 30	50	23.4
30 - 49	142	66.4
50 and above	22	10.3
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	210	98.1
Muslim	2	0.9
Traditional	2	0.9
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Primary Education	6	2.8
Secondary Education	24	11.2
Tertiary Education	184	86
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	48	22.4
Married	164	76.6
Widow	2	0.9
<b>Job Status</b>		
Junior Staff	28	13.1
Senior Staff	174	81.3
Management Staff	12	5.6
<b>Length of Service</b>		
< 10 years	76	35.5
10 years and Above	138	64.5

**Source:** Field Survey, 2013

## Results

### *Description of samples*

Analyses of socio-demographics of the respondents are presented in **Table-1** below. One hundred and two (47.7%) respondents were male while 112 (52.3%) were female. The distribution of the respondents' age are as follows; 50 (23.4%) were less

than 30 years, 142 (66.4%) were between 30 – 49 years and 22 (10.3%) were age 50 and above. Also, two hundred and ten (98.1%) of the respondents were Christians, 2 (0.9%) were Muslim while 2 (0.9%) were of Traditional Religion. Six respondents representing 2.8% of the total respondents had primary



education, 24 (11.2%) had secondary education and 184 (86%) had tertiary education. Forty eight (22.4%) of the research participants were single, 164 (76.6%) were married and 2 (0.9%) were widows. In terms of job status, 28 (13.1%) respondents were junior staff, 174 (81.3%) were senior staff, and 12 (5.6%) were management staff. Seventy six (35.5%) of the respondents had less than 10 years experience while 138 (64.4%) had 10 years and above length of service.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Research Hypothesis 1**

**H01:** There is no significant positive relationship between

motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

The Result of Hypothesis 1 as displayed in **Table 2** below reveals a significant relationship between motivation and employees’ job performance. The calculated r value of 0.14 was greater than its corresponding critical value of 0.139 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis one is rejected. This implies that motivation has a significant positive relationship with employees’ job performance. This result indicates that motivation has the ability to improve employees’ job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Analysis of the Relationship between Motivation and Job Performance in Abia State Civil Service.**

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r calculated
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Motivation (X)	2768	38536	40098	0.137
Job performance (Y)		3086	45150	

**N = 214, df = 212, Significant at 0.05, r critical = 0.139**

**Research Hypothesis 2**

**H02:** There is no significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

Hypothesis 2 was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation and the results are as shown in **Table 3** below. The calculated r (0.572)

was greater than r critical (0.139). Therefore, the null hypothesis two was rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance. This result indicates that intrinsic motivation can improve employees’ job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Analysis of the Relationship between Intrinsic Motivation and Job Performance in Abia State Civil Service.**

Variable	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r calculated
Intrinsic motivation (X)	3838	69334	55672	0.572
Job performance (Y)	3086	45150		

**N = 214, df = 212, Significant at 0.05, r critical = 0.139**

**Research Hypothesis 3**

**H03:** There is no significant positive relationship between extrinsic motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil service.

Result of Pearson Product Moment correlation as presented in **Table 4** below revealed a significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and employees’ job

performance. The calculated r (0.212) was greater than r critical (0.139). Hence, the null hypothesis three was rejected and it is then concluded that extrinsic motivation relates significantly with employees’ job performance. This result means that extrinsic motivation can enhance employees’ job performance in Abia State Civil Service.

**Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Analysis of the Relationship between Extrinsic Motivation and Job Performance in Abia State Civil Service.**

Variable	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r calculated
Extrinsic motivation (X)	5078	121898	73430	0.212
Job performance (Y)	3086	45150		

**N = 214, df = 212, Significant at 0.05, r critical = 0.139**

**Discussion of Findings**

The paper contributes to understanding employees’ perceived relationship between motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service. The results of the study offer empirical support to the existence of a positive and statistically significant relationship

between motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service in Nigeria.

According to Attar and Swers (2010), values of Pearson’s correlation lying in the range of (0.1-0.29) suggest small correlation, values in the range of (0.3-0.49) suggest moderate correlation while

values in the range of (0.5-1) suggest large correlation between variables.

Firstly, the study discovers that employee motivation has a small significant positive relationship with job performance. More specifically, intrinsic motivation has a large positive relationship with job performance, while extrinsic motivation has a small significant positive relationship with job performance. The result supports previous studies that revealed that employee motivation has a significant positive relationship with job performance (Lawler, 1994; Buchanan and Huczynski, 1997; Olawoyin, 2000; Nelson and Quick, 2003).

Secondly, the result shows that intrinsic motivation has a large significant positive relationship with job performance. This result is consistent with the previous studies that opined that financial rewards and incentives (extrinsic motivation) are not sufficient positive motivators that can enhance job performance (Cole, 1995; Mercer, 1998; Drucker, 2002; and Olusola, 2011).

Thirdly, the relationship between extrinsic motivation and job performance revealed that extrinsic motivation has a small significant positive relationship with job performance. This study's results confirm the prior research findings that motivation to work, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, is very essential in the lives of workers because they

form the fundamental reason for working in life (Ololube, 2006).

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This paper has attempted to examine employees' perceived relationship between motivation and job performance in Abia State Civil Service in Nigeria. The results have shown that motivation has a small positive relationship with job performance. Specifically however, intrinsic motivation has a large positive relationship with job performance and extrinsic motivation had a small positive relationship with job performance. However, intrinsic motivation has been found to be more embraced by the employees to engender optimal job performance in Abia State Civil Service in Nigeria.

Hence, to conclude, motivation of employees plays a critical role in job performance and should not be overlooked because the long-term survival of any organization depends largely on the motivation of their employees, be it intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (financial or non-financial). Specifically, extrinsic motivation should not be regarded as purely a basic factor that can enhance job performance because a factor that can lead to motivation may also have the potential to demotivate employees. That is, non-cash rewards (intrinsic motivation) can also be used to enhance high level of performance of employees.

However, it has to be stated here that motivation of employees has dual

benefits. To the employees, it increases their satisfaction with their job and workplaces and also allows them to perform their task without any coercion but with excitement to the accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives. For the organization however, it ensures the suitability of the performance and the longevity of the organization. More specifically, intrinsically motivated employees are valuable assets to an organization and for improved job performance to be realized by the organization, the employees have to be appropriately motivated. Put differently, if employees are satisfied about the motivation strategies applied by their organization, the chances that employees are likely to arouse, energize, direct, and sustain behaviour towards job performance becomes inevitable, which will ultimately lead to optimal organizational performance. Hence, based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are therefore recommended that:

- Although motivation of employees has been identified as a critical factor that can enhance job performance and the things that motivate employees to perform their best are different and distinct as have been identified by this study and previous studies; efforts should be made by managers, leaders and administrators of organizations to learn about what their employees want from

their jobs or what is more important to them should be given.

- For organization to achieve their stated goals and objectives, managers, administrators and leaders of those organizations must put in place policies that encourage intrinsic motivation, but should note that when extrinsic motivation is not present in an organization, it leads to de-motivation as opined by Herzberg two-factor theory. Therefore, managers, administrators and leaders should not consider only intrinsic motivation factors, but must take into account the impact of extrinsic motivation
- It should also be noted that there are numerous ways in which performance of an organization can be increased (e.g. leadership, training, performance appraisal and so on), so managers, administrators and leaders should not focus on motivation of employees alone but should consider other factors.
- Managers, administrators and leaders should be careful when assessing employee's job performance. Since in most organizations, the assessment are majorly done by supervisory ratings which tend to be subjective. An objective way of assessing employee job performance should be designed.

- Further studies should be replicated by using a much larger sample selected more broadly from similar organizations or other sectors, which can further elucidate on the relationships the job indices, offering greater insight, concerning causality, incorporating more parameters in more comprehensive models, and also designing an objective way to assess employee job performance.

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