

# An Assessment of the Impact of Motivation and Job Satisfaction on Employee Productivity in an Organization

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## Abstract

The paper examines job satisfaction and work motivation on employee productivity in an organization. The paper identifies the most ranked factors among the ten motivational factors that determine the performance of employee in an organization. The analysis from the theoretical findings showed that Job satisfaction “was the most ranked factor that serves as a motivating factor for employee best performance in his duties. However a study from previous researches used in this paper showed that different results could be obtained from different groups of already working employees. This study therefore can be seen as an introduction to a more detailed study to be carried by future researchers on the field of employee’s motivation in an organization.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Employee, Productivity, Performance and Organization

## Introduction

Agency theory is used to analyze this conflict in interest between the principal (shareholders of organizations) and their agents (leaders of these organizations). Whereby the “Agents” in keeping with the interest of the shareholders and organisational goals turn to use financial motivational aspects like bonuses, higher payrolls, pensions, sick allowances, risk payments, perks to reward and retained their employees and enhance their performance. There is a strong lobby propounding the view that human resources and their management are the source of competitive advantage for the business, rather than, say, access to capital or use of technology. It is therefore logical to suggest that, attention needs to be paid to the nature of this resource and its management as this will impact on human resource behaviour and performance and consequently the performance of the organisation. Indeed Boxall and Steeneveld (1999) argue that there is no need to prove the relationship between firm critical influence on performance and labour management as it is self evident that the quality of human resource management is a critical influence on the performance of the firm. Concern for strategic integration, commitment flexibility and quality, has called for attention for employees motivation and retention. Given this perception, the principal in an organization feels unable to predict an agent’s behaviour in any given situation and so brings into play various measures to do with incentives in other to tie employee’s needs to those of their organisation. Thus getting employee’s identification with respect to the organisation, and thus increasing their commitment level. As an approach to mediate the employment contract, elements of human resource strategy (especially those to do with rewards and retention) can offer a way of ensuring an efficient transaction process that enables both parties to get committed towards the fulfilment of each other needs. The fundamental problem, dealt with is what drives or induces people to exploit their potential resources in the way they do in organisations? The issue of motivation and performance are they positively related? By focusing on the financial aspect of motivation problem like bonus system, allowances perks, salaries, etc. By paying attention to the financial aspect of motivation, I intend to probe in to the role this aspect has on enhancing employee’s performance.

When looking at factors that affect job satisfaction, I find that Agency theory might be helpful as it explains the extent to which organizations need to think of their human resource responsible in producing the output needed by organizations to meet shareholders value. Agency theory is concerned with issues related to the ownership of the firm when that ownership is separated from the day-to-day running of the organization. It assumes that in all but owner- managed organizations the owner or owners (known in agency theory as the “principal”) of an organization must vest authority to an “agent”-corporate management- to act on their behalf. Harrison R and Kessels J. (2004, Pp 25-26). The principal recognizes the risk, here and act on the assumption that any agent will look to serve its own as well as the principal interests as it fulfils it contract with that principal. However, this is not the situation in real life situation. As all agents are perceived to be opportunistic (Williamson, 1985; Seth and Thomas, 1994). These approaches to examining the problems of human exchange derived from the field of finance and economics but they are often applied to the study of shareholders Risk Management (SHRM) (Harrel-Cook and Ferris, 1997). I believe, financial motivation has become the most concern in today’s organisation, and tying to Mallow’s basic needs, non-financial aspect only comes in when financial motivation has failed. Gibson, Ivancevick, Donnelly, (2004, Pp 214) a space is then set for non-financial measures. Though in some situation, it is being operated side by side. But as a research paper the financial aspects of motivation used by the agents of organisation in enhancing their employee’s performance and the extent to which non-financial aspects of motivation turn to enhance employee’s performance. To evaluate the methods of performance motivation in organisation in organising some motivational factors like satisfies and dissatisfies will be used to evaluate how employees motivation is enhanced other than financial

aspects of motivation. As a research paper, the research seeks to answer what role motivation plays in enhancing performance in an organisation. In trying to find an answer(s) to the research question and on the basis of the above background discussion and research question, the main purposes developed for this paper is to assess the factors that motivate employees to perform best at work.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Young (2000, p1) suggest that motivation can be defined in a variety of ways, depending on who you ask. Ask someone on the street, you may get a response like “it’s what drives us” or “it’s what make us do the things we do.” Therefore motivation is the force within an individual that account for the level, direction, and persistence of effort expended at work.” Halepota (2005, p16) defines motivation as “a person’s active participation and commitment to achieve the prescribed results.”Halepota further presents 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 times.”

According to Antomioni (1999, p29), “the amount of effort people are willing to put in their work depends on the degree to which they feel their motivational needs will be satisfied. On the other hand, individuals become de-motivated if they feel something in the organization prevents them from attaining good outcomes.

According to Greenberg and Baron (2000 p190) this definition could be divided into three main parts. The first part looks at arousal that deals with the drive, or energy behind individual (s) action. People turn 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 referring to the choice people make and the direction their behaviour takes. The last part deals with maintaining behaviour clearly defining how long people have to persist at attempting to meet their goals. Kreitner (1995), Buford, Bedeian &Linder (1995), Higgins (1994) all cited in Linder (1998,p3) defined motivation as “the psychological process that gives behaviour purpose and direction, a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific unmet needs, an unsatisfied need, and the will to achieve, respectively.

It can be observed from the above definitions that, motivation in general, is more or less basically concern with factors or events that moves, leads, and drives certain human action or inaction over a given period of time given the prevailing conditions. Furthermore the definitions suggest that there need to be an” invisible force” to push people to do something in return. It could also be deduced from the definition that having a motivated work force or creating an environment in which high levels of motivation are maintained remains a challenge for today’s management. . This challenge may emanate from the simple fact that motivation is not a fixed trait –as it could change with changes in personal, psychological, financial or social factors. For this paper, the definition of motivation by Greenberg & Baron (2003) is adopted, as it is more realistic and simple as it considers the individual and his performance. Greenberg &Baron defines motivation as:“*The set of processes that arouse, direct, and maintain human behaviour towards attaining some goal*”. (Greenberg &Baron, 2003, p190)

Bassett-Jones &Lloyd (2005, p931) presents that two views of human nature underlay early research into employee motivation. The first view focuses on Taylorism, which viewed people as basically lazy and work –shy”, and thus held that these set of employees can only be motivated by external stimulation. The second view was based on Hawthorn findings, which held the view that employees are motivated to work well for “its own sake” as well as for the social and monetary benefits this type of motivation according to this school was internally motivated.

### **Motivational Theories**

Even though much research been conducted on the field of financial motivation and many researchers and writers have proposed theories on the concept of financial motivation, and its roles in enhancing employee’s performance in every organisation some of these models have been widely used and accepted by today’s organisations leaders. In this the discussion on some of the motivational theories will include Alders (ERG theory), Maslow (Need theory),Vrooms (Expectancy theory), Adams (Social equity theory), Taylor (productivity theory),Herzberg (Two factor theory), Mac Gregory (theory X and Y), Geogopalaus (path goal theory) and skinner (Reward theory). To better understand this discussion a summary of the theories is presented and an indebt discussion on Maslow and ERG theories on which is base the base of the paper.

Alder asserts in his Existence relatedness and growth theory commonly known as the ERG theory that there are three basic human needs: Existence, relatedness and growth, which must be meet by an employee to enable him, increase performance. Maslow (1943) suggests that human needs can be classified into five categories and that these categories can be arranged in a hierarchy of importance. These include physiological, security, belongings, esteem and self-actualization needs. According to him a person is motivated first and foremost to satisfy physiological needs. As long as the employees remain unsatisfied, they turn to be motivated

only to fulfill them. When physiological needs are satisfied they cease to act as primary motivational factors and the individual moves “up” the hierarchy and seek to satisfy security needs. This process continues until finally self actualization needs are satisfied. According to Maslow the rationale is quite simple because employees who are too hungry or too ill to work will hardly be able to make much a contribution to productivity hence difficulties in meeting organisational goals.

Vroom (1964) proposes that people are motivated by how much they want something and how likely they think they are to get it he suggest that motivation leads to efforts and the efforts combined with employees ability together with environment factors which interplay’s resulting to performance. This performance at times leads to various outcomes, each of which has an associated value called Valence.

Adams (1965) on his part suggests that people are motivated to seek social equity in the rewards they receive for high performance. According to him the outcome from job includes; pay, recognition, promotion, social relationship and intrinsic reward .to get these rewards various inputs needs to be employed by the employees to the job as time, experience, efforts, education and loyalty. He suggests that, people tend to view their outcomes and inputs as a ratio and then compare these ratios with others and turn to become motivated if this ratio is high.

Taylor (1911) observed the soldering by employees, which is a situation whereby workers work less than full capacity. He argued that soldering occurs due to the fact employee’s fear that performing high will lead to increasing productivity, which might cause them to lose their jobs. This slow paces of work where promoted by faulty systems however this situation is not what prevails with contemporary employees who organisations evaluate them through their performance.

Herzberg suggested that there are factors in a job, which causes satisfaction. These he called intrinsic factors (motivators) and other factor he refers to as dissatisfies (hygiene factors).

According to him if the motivational factors are met, the employee becomes motivated and hence performs higher.

Mac Gregory suggested that there exist two sets of employees (lazy and ambitious employees) with lazy employees representing theory X, hard and ambitious workers representing Y. According to him the lazy employee should be motivated to increase performance in an organization. Geogopalaus path Goal theory of motivation states that, if a worker sees high productivity as a path leading to the attainment of one or more of his personal goals, he will turn to be a high producer. But if he sees low productivity as the path leading to the attainment of his goal he will turn to be a low producer and hence needs to be motivated.

This discussion on the above motivational theories explains the fact that the concept of employee’s motivation has been a critical factor addressed by previous authors as what determines the core competence of every organization in achieving a competitive position.

Skinner who propounded that any behavior that is rewarded tends to be repeated supported this view.

The term motivation has been used in numerous and often contradictory ways. Presently there appears to be some agreements that the crucial thread that distinguishes employee’s motivated behaviors from other behavior is that it is goal directed behavior, Bindra (2000 P223) argues that the core of motivating individuals lays in the goal-directed aspect of behavior.

Jones suggested “motivation is concern with how behavior gets started, is energized, is sustained, is directed, is stopped and what kind of subjective re-action is present in the organization while this is going on. The Jones statement can be converted into a diagram which shows the employee motivational process as it influences performance. When the employee is satisfied with his financial motivation he redefines his desires and needs and the process is initiated again.

These groups of researchers were over the years divided into what was later labeled the content and process theories of motivation. According to steers, mowday &Shapiro (2004, p382) the process generated during this period, makes this period referred to as “the golden age of work motivation theories”. “*Never before and, some would argue, never since has so much progress been made in explicating the etiology of work motivation*” (steers et al., 2004, pp380-383)

Bassett-Jones & Lloyd (2005,p 932) suggests that the “content theorists led by Herzberg, assumed a more complex interaction between both internal and external factors, and explored the circumstances in which individuals respond to different internal and external stimuli. On the other hand, process theory, where victor Vroom was the first exponent considers how factors internal to the person result in different behaviors.

From the focus point of these two groups, one could observe that the process theories attempt or try to understand the thinking processes an individual might go through in determining how to behave in a workplace. The primary focus was on how and why questions of motivation, how certain behavior starts, developed and sustained over time.

It is true that human behaviour in general is dynamic and could affect the individual’s personal altitude as well as factors surrounding that individual. These exogenous factors eminent from the environment in which the individual operates generate stimuli to employees.

It is my belief that employees in general are goal seeking and look for challenges and expect positive re-enforcement at all times. Hence it could only be of benefit if organisations could provide these rewards and factors. Though I have discussed earlier in this thesis that employees are financially motivated, motivation could be seen as a moving target, as what motivates differs among different people. And may even change for the same person over a given period of time, developments within the modern organisation has probably made motivating employees ever more difficult due to the nature of every individual, behavior increasing the complexity of what can really motivate employees.

According to Bassette-jones & Lloyd (2005,p.932) “expectancy, equity, goal setting and reinforcement theory have resulted in the development of a simple model of motivational alignment. The model suggests that once needs of employees are identified and organizational objectives and also satisfy employee needs .If poorly aligned, and then low motivation will be the outcome”.

According to (Wiley, 1997,p264) “modern approaches to motivation may be organised into three related clusters: (1) personality-based views (2) cognitive choice or decision approaches and (3) goal or self-regulation perspective; where personality-based views emphasise the influence of enduring personal characteristics as they affect goal choice and striving.

Workplace behaviour is posited to be determined by persons current need state in certain universal need category. Cognitive choice approaches to work motivation emphasise two determinant of choice and action; expectations, and subjective valuation of the consequences associated with each alternative. These expectancy value theories are intended to predict an individual choice or decision. Goal framework to work motivation emphasise the factors that influence goal striving which focuses on the relationship between goals and work behaviour.

The assumption is that an employees conscious intentions (goals) are primary determines of task-related motivation since goals direct their thoughts and action”.

It is worth noting that an in-depth review of all the different theories mentioned above, is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the personality-based perspective of work motivation within which Maslow need theory of motivation and Alders ERG theory falls will provide the main support and serve as a foundation for the research reported in this thesis. Specifically, as organisational scholars have paid a great deal of attention to the idea that people are motivated to use their jobs as mechanisms for satisfying their needs. This thesis intend to use Maslows hierarchy of need theory of motivation as a foundation to identify the factors that motivate today’s employees, and in the process determine a ranking order of factors that motivates these employees, the original Maslow theory will be looked at more detail hereof.

### **History and Explanation of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need Theory**

The “motivation to work” published by Maslow probably provided the field of organizational behavior and management with a new way of looking at employees job altitudes or behaviors in understanding how humans are motivated. Probably the best-known conceptualization of human needs in organisations has been proposed by this theory. Abraham Maslow was a clinical psychologist who introduced his theory based on personal judgment, which was generally known as the need hierarchy theory. According to him if people grew in an environment in which their needs are not met, they will be unlikely to function as healthy individuals or well-adjusted individuals. This idea was later applied to organisations to emphasize the idea that unless employees get their needs met on the job, they will not function as effectively as possible.

Specifically Maslow theorised that people have five types of needs and that these are activated in a hierarchical manner. This means that these needs are aroused in a specific order from lowest to highest, such that the lowest-order need must be fulfilled before the next order need is triggered and the process continues. If you look at this in a motivational point of view Maslow’s theory says that a need can never be fully met, but a need that is almost fulfilled does not longer motivate. According to Maslow you need to know where a person is on the hierarchical pyramid in order to motivate him/her. Then you need to focus on meeting that person’s needs at that level (Robbins 2001)

According to Greenberg and Baron (2003,p192) the five needs identified by Maslow corresponds with the three needs of Alderfers ERG theory. Whereas Maslow theory specifies that the needs be activated in order from lowest to highest Alder’s theory specifies that the needs can be activated in any order. His approach is much simpler than Maslows. Alder specifies that there exist three main needs as opposed to five postulated by Maslow. This human basic needs include existence, relatedness and growth. These needs according to Alder need not necessarily activated in any specific order and may be activated at any time.

According to him Existence needs corresponds to Maslows physiological needs and safety needs. Relatedness needs corresponds to Maslows social needs and growth needs corresponds to esteem and self-actualisation needs by Maslow. Below is a summary of these needs that in this thesis are divided into Deficiency needs (psychological, safety, social needs) and Growth needs (esteem, self-actualisation needs).



### **Factors Explanation**

- Physiological needs are the need at the bottom of the triangle and include the lowest order need and most basic. This includes the need to satisfy the fundamental biological drives such as food, air, water and shelter. According to Maslow organisations must provide employees with a salary that enable them to afford adequate living conditions. The rationale here is that any hungry employee will hardly be able to make much of any contribution to his organisation.

- Safety needs this occupies the second level of needs. Safety needs are activated after physiological needs are met. They refer to the need for a secure working environment free from any threats or harms. Organisations can provide these need by providing employees with safety working equipment e.g. hardhats, health insurance plans, fire protection etc.

The rationale is that employees working in an environment free of harm do their jobs without fear of harm.

- Social needs: This represents the third level of needs. They are activated after safety needs are met. Social needs refer to the need to be affiliated that is (the needed to be loved and accepted by other people). To meet these needs organisations encourage employee's participation in social events such as picnics, organisations bowling etc

- Esteem needs this represents the fourth level of needs. It includes the need for self-respect and approval of others. Organisations introduce awards banquets to recognize distinguished achievements.

- Self-actualisation: This occupies the last level at the top of the triangle. This refers to the need to become all that one is capable of being to develop ones fullest potential. The rationale here holds to the point that self-actualised employees represent valuable assets to the organisation human resource. Most research on the application of need theory found that although lower-level managers are able to satisfy only their deficiency needs on the jobs, managers at the top level of organisations are able to satisfy both their deficiency and growth needs (Greenberg & Baron 2003 p.194) this view was supported by Shipley & Kiely (1988, p.18) Shiply & Kiely (1988, p.18) argue that as " need satisfaction is an attitude, and that it is perfectly possible for a worker to be satisfied with his/her need, but not be motivated the reverse of which holds equally true. Hence, need satisfaction and motivation are not synonymous and both need fulfillment and un- fulfillment can have negative as well as positive influence on motivation

### **Organizational /managerial Applications of Maslow's Need theory**

The greatest value of Maslows need theory lies in the practical implications it has for every management of organisations (Greenberg & Baron 2003 p.195). The rationale behind the theory lies on the fact that it's able to suggest to managers how they can make their employees or subordinates become self-actualised. This is because self-actualised employees are likely to work at their maximum creative potentials. Therefore it is important to make employees meet this stage by helping meet their need organisations can take the following strategies to attain this stage

1. Recognize employee's accomplishments: Recognising employee's accomplishments is an important way to make them satisfy their esteem needs. This could take the form of awards, plagues etc. According to (Greenberg & Baron 2003, p197) research carried out in GTE Data services in Temple Terrace, Florida shows that awards are given to employees who develop ways of improving customer's satisfaction or business performance. But it should be noted that according to Greenberg & Baron awards are effective at enhancing esteem only when they are clearly linked to desired behaviors. Awards that are too general fail to meet this specification.
2. Provide financial security: Financial security is an important type of safety need. So organisations to motivate their employees need to make them financially secured by involving them in profit sharing of the organisation. In a research carried out with AT&T and Wang showed that 50% of their employees received financial outplacement services to assist laid-off employees in securing new jobs. Provide opportunities to socialise: Socialisation is one of the factors that keep employees feel the spirit of working as a team. When employees work as a team they tend to increase their performance. Research conducted on IBM shows that it holds a "family day" picnic each spring near its Armonk, New York headquarters.
3. Promote a healthy work force: Companies can help in keeping their Employees physiological needs by providing incentives to keep them healthy both in health and mentally. In a research carried out at the Hershey Foods Corporation and Southern California Edison Company showed that Employees are provided with insurance rebates with health lifestyles while extra premiums were given to those with risk habits like smoking.

### **Conclusion**

The primary objective of this paper was to assess the" role of work motivation on employee's performance in an

organization". By using Maslow need theory of motivation as a foundation or basis, the original need factors, which have over the years been modified by other researchers. Financial motivation we may all agree remains one of the problems and major concerns facing organizations before, today and even in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, organisations and those who work in them have over the years changed in what motivates them as employees. Available and numerous studies carried out shows that since the 1950s employee's motivation have been the focal point of much management of organisations. Given the difficult nature of identifying how and what really motivates these employees it is paramount that these organisations find all means and ways possible to understand the motivational factors and to sustain them overtime for their general survival. Such an understanding is the cause of low level of labour turnover, high productivity, and high profitability. In order for them to gain an understanding of what really motivates their employees an employee survey such as this one may be used to gain insight to employees job motivation preferences. The most obvious and major findings emerging from this paper is the clear indication of Job Satisfaction as a top motivator among today's future employees.

### Recommendations for further research

Additional research should be carried out to gain a continuous view, insight and knowledge of what motivates employees to perform best on their job. Employee motivation evens after some 50 years of research continue to be one of the problems and challenges facing organisations today. Furthermore factors such as technological advances, globalisation, retrenchments etc leave employees with an uncertain future this is because most organizations today do not guarantee life employment's for their employees as it was the case before.

Therefore there is the need for researchers to continue carrying out employee surveys so as to determine what motivates employees to go extra miles and thus put in 110% in their work.

The outcomes of such surveys will help organisations be at par with changes in employee's preferences. The outcome of this research shows that Growth rather than Deficient factors are valued more by today's employees. Therefore it would be interesting if further research with a much larger sample size could be undertaken to confirm either fully or partly the findings of this study. Further research could also consider other factors such as location of the organisation, other demographic factors and regional tendencies (for e.g. developed and developing countries)

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