

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH MOTIVATION: A STUDY OF SELECTED CIVIL SERVANTS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of motivation on staff performance in Rivers state civil service. Two hypotheses were formulated and analysed using Z test of mean. The population for the study consisted of 10 ministries sampled out of 22 ministries in the civil service. Questionnaire was formulated based on Likert scale of strongly agreed (SA) agreed (A) undecided (UD) strongly disagreed (SD) and disagreed (D). To complement the data gotten from the questionnaire, oral interview and observational techniques as well as library methods were used as sources of data collection. 1000 copies of the questionnaire were administered across the respondents. Above all, 816 copies were properly filled and returned. It was discovered in the study that the civil servant will perform better when the satisfaction he derives from doing so outweighs the discomfort and sacrifice involved. Hence, the study concludes with the recommendation that government should try to nurture motivational factors in order to promote conditions that enable the performance of staff in the civil service.

Keywords: Improvement, performance, motivation, civil servants, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Introduction

The need for staff to be highly productive in their jobs has been a preoccupation of scholars and policy makers in recent times. So many theoretical positions have been raised as to how staff can be motivated in order for them to perform desirably. However, staff performances especially in the public sector in Nigeria over the years have been generally poor. Experience has shown that this has become a source of concern for government and parastatals. Ukwuije (1998) cited in Legfal (2004) observes that staff performances in recent years had degenerated and generated a lot of concern to many interested individuals. The problem seems to be a continuous one instead of abating. In this light, Kuti (1976) notes that public service work has been seen as no man's own and therefore nobody seem to care about it, due to poor staff motivation. Eken (2002), therefore views motivation as the inner force which energizes behavior as well as maintain and direct the workforce towards organizational goals.

This implies that an individual is pushed or propelled to behave in a particular way because of what the person intends to achieve. The conditions staff work under often make their function less effective. Papilla (1985) suggests that it is important to note that it is difficult for an

organization to achieve her objectives without adequately motivating the employees. It is therefore obvious that the job should be made more lucrative to attract more qualified, experienced and dedicated staff. Ukwuye (1998) argues that in Nigeria workforce are not treated humanely. Salaries are not paid as at when due even though it is not commensurate with the work, leave bonus are not paid, no better welfare package etc. This makes staff to develop some lackadaisical attitude to work which affects their performances. It has been alleged, therefore, that lack of staff motivation is one of the major factors that has adversely affected Nigerian workforce, leading to poor performances.

Staff performance in recent years at various levels has degenerated to the extent that it has equally attracted a lot of concerns from academic and policy angles. This could be as a result of lack of motivation which could also lead to lack of staff commitment and dedication. It is because of the situation staff find themselves that they engage in other anti-organizational activities to the regrets of the employers. This is so because employees need to take care of themselves and their families financially. It is a known fact that civil servants especially in Nigeria are crippled by lack of good

pay, financial insecurity, lack of prestige in the job, horrible working conditions and little or no career advancement.

The problem of staff motivation has attracted a lot of empirical research in recent times (see for instance, Adelabu's, 2005; Tella, 2007; Oredien&Awodun, 2013; Akpan&Umobong, 2013; Obot, Essien&Akpan 2014), with very insightful results especially in the educational system in Nigeria. For instance, Adelabu's (2005) work on teachers' motivation and incentives in Nigeria clearly captured the problem of poor remuneration as a critical reason for low motivation among teachers especially in secondary schools. Similarly, Tella's (2007) study indicted poor infrastructure and funding as major causes of low motivation among teachers. However, he went a bit further than Adelabu in his analysis of the impact of these factors on workers in the education sector. Like Tella (2007), Oredien and Awodun (2013) found that motivation is an important index for performance among teachers in senior secondary schools across Nigeria. In the same vein, Akpan and Umobong (2013) focusing on achievement, motivation and academic engagement came to the conclusion that motivation has a significant relationship with achievement in schools.

While all the studies mentioned above have in one way or the other extended our knowledge on the subject matter of motivation, very few of them were able to measure the impact of motivation on staff performance especially in the civil service. This highlights a critical gap in the knowledge of staff motivation and performance in Nigeria. Following this gap, the purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between motivation and staff performance in the Rivers State civil service. Hence, the questions that were answered in this study are: What is the reason for poor staff motivation? Why has it persisted and intensified in recent times? And what are the likely remedies? These questions spurred the conduct of this study.

Objectives of the study

- i. Examine the relationship between staff motivation and performances in the work organization (civil service).
- ii. Determine the relationship between workers promotion on the job and staff performance.
- iii. Examine the relationship between non-economic factors such as job security as well as good working condition and staff performance.

Hypothesis

This study was built on the following hypothesis

- i. There is no significant relationship between staff motivation and performances in the work organization (civil service).
- ii. There is no significant relationship between workers promotion on the job and staff performance.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between non-economic factors such as job security and good working condition and staff performance.

Literature Review

The Concept of Motivation

The word motivation is derived from mover, the Latin word meaning "to move". According, it was also termed mover, a Latin word meaning to stir up, to agitate, to excite or to move, Herzberg (1959); according to Bernstein of al (2004) motivation refers to the influences that govern the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior .Psychologists generally view motivation as the process to energies, maintain and direct behavior towards a goal. These process regulate behavior by initiating it when the goal is needed or appropriated and terminating it when the goal is reached. Boozing, bower, Crocker and hall (1991). Papilla and old (1958) cited in Ekeh (2002) view motivation as the inner force which pushed an individual to behave in a particular way, at a particular time.

Onweghu (1979) and Chauhan (1985) cited in Ekeh (2002) is of the view that motivation energies and sustains behavior. They also notes that it not only pushes or forces one to behave in a particular way, that it also ensures that the motivated behavior is sustained until desired goal is achieved.

Ekeh (2002) argues that motivation directs and regulates behavior, and that every behavior oriented, purposeful and consistent. To musazi (1982) motivation is termed as the inner drive which prompts people to act in a certain way which involves some psychological factors which start and maintain activity towards the achievement of personal goal. Hoy and Miskel (1982) term motivation as the complex of forces, drive, needs, tension states or other internal psychological mechanisms that start and maintain activity towards the attainment of personal goals. Judging from the views of these researchers, it implies that for us to accept the staff to be committed, dedicated, and effective, thereby enhancing staff performances, the member's staff must be motivated. Hence, the need to motivate the workforce.

Okodudu (2004) suggests that accounts of strike actions, work to rule and a fragrant show of staffs attitude to work points to the fact that all is not well with the work conditions of workers in Nigeria. Gesinde (1978) and Lowe (1991) notes that undesirable staffs attitudes are the results of lack of motivation in the area of conditions of service, low salaries especially when compared with other staffs, work load of long working time. They add that in a situation where staffs do not have enough autonomy in the work place or where their relationship with employers is far from cordial and motivating staff attitudes to work may in turn have influence negative on the performances of the staff. In the same vein, Idogho (2002) cited in Okodudu (2004) observes that when staffs are not adequately taken care of especially with regards to regular and prompt payment of their salaries and other entitlement, their attitude to work automatically changes. This lack of commitment no doubt could affect their performance. Okolo (1999) cited in Okata (2000) notes that it was a known fact that work facilities in the country have deteriorated staff salaries are inadequate, working conditions are poor and this has adversely affected the quality of performances in the work organizations.

According to Okata (2000) staffs feel motivated when companion is commensurate to expectations

from the organization and that since the staff is an indispensable determinant in the successful implementation of job order, he/she has to be motivated. She added that staff is not adequately motivated because his/her needs are not met, that they cannot afford good meals, shelter and other things. She concluded that the result of this situation is inefficiency and low performance.

Okwubunka (1994) suggests that there are staff traders who first of all dash to early morning market to purchase their articles of trade and later on report to work place. He adds that some show their faces in the workplaces and disappear. He concluded by observing that staff suffer a very serious disability, that staff salaries are very irregular and that some workers go without salaries for months, that some work for up to 10 years without promotion. William (2002) observes that good working requires most of all a thoughtful, caring staff committed to the work. Good working environment, according to him is not just a matter of specific techniques styles, plans or actions but primarily a matter of love. He added that a successful staff is the staff who touched your heart, the staff who understood you, or whose passion for something was infectious and energizing. In this vein, Nwideduh (2002) observes that most work organizations are not poorly staffed but lack basic equipment and infrastructure which create unnecessary hostilities and tension among the staff as they struggle over poor exiting infrastructure he added that Uyanga (2004) observes that provision of equipment and facilities to work which is a strong motivator for positive productivity.

Theoretical Framework

Having examined some of the dominant views in the literature about our subject of this research, the theoretical framework which best situates this study is the Maslow's approach. Maslow's hierarchy of needs justifies that wants and insatiable because once a want is met, it leads to another want. Maslow believes that a satisfied need is no longer a motivator certain conceptions of employment such as pay satisfy physiologies needs. Safety needs are met by safe work conditions and job security; social needs are satisfied by interaction

and communication with fellow workers. And of course, work that is fulfilling can satisfy self-esteem and self-actualization needs. Indeed, Maslow's idea enables us to understand that everyone has basic needs that must be satisfied, and one way to satisfy these needs is through work. This theory is accepted as it discusses the subject matter of the discussion.

Method

This study shall adopt the survey research design, which according to Fakunle (2011: 63) is research strategy that uses question based or statistical tools to collect information about how people think and act (Babbie, 2003 and Bandele, 2004). The research covers the Rivers State Civil Services located at the Rivers State secretariat complex. The population of this study consists of all the Civil Servants working in Rivers State. In choosing our sample, we first of all identified our target population (Rivers State Civil Service). Hence, out of 22 ministries in the Civil Service 10 were sampled through random sampling

techniques in order to give the entire population an equal opportunity to be selected into the sample. This ensured that all the ministries and departments making up the Civil Service are adequately presented in the sample. 100 respondents from each ministry were randomly sampled, bringing it to 1000 respondents. The instruments used in the study were questionnaire, interview and observational methods. The questionnaire was based on a Liker scale structure of strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A) undecided (UD) strongly disagreed (D). Hence, 1000 were distributed on the whole 816 were properly filled and returned. The test retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. It was administered two times, giving two weeks interval. The data from questionnaire were correlated using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.89. This proved that the instrument was reliable. The data collected were analyzed with percentages for the preliminary bio-data, while Z Test was used to analyze the hypothesis.

Results

Personal Information of the Respondents

Table 1: Age Distribution

<i>Age</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
18-22	143	18
23-27	122	15
28-32	277	34
33 above	274	33
Total	816	100

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

The table above shows that 18% of the respondents are of 18-22 age brackets, 15% are of 23-27 years, 34% are of 28-32 years while 33% are of 33 and above.

Table 2: Sex Distribution

<i>Sex</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	625	77
Female	191	23
Total	816	100

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

The table above shows that 76% respondents of the respondents are male, while 23% are female. There are more men in the sample, partly because

of the shy nature of women. Many of them are junior staffs and therefore preferred such matters to be handled by the senior staffs.

Table 3: Marital Distribution of Respondents

<i>Marital status</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Single</i>	348	43
<i>Married</i>	368	45
<i>Widow(er)</i>	100	12
<i>Total</i>	816	100

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

Table above shows that 43% of respondents are single, 45% are married while 12% of the respondents are widow(er).

Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Primary (ed)</i>	101	12
<i>Post primary (ed)</i>	380	47
<i>Tertiary (ed)</i>	335	41
Total	816	100

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

The table above shows that 12% are primary education holders, 47% attended post primary education while 41% attended tertiary education. We made sure that those who actually filled our questionnaire had some levels of education. There were some educated people who were not actually certificated in our sample. This included people who read from standard one to standard four in those days but did not obtain the

standard six certificate and are therefore security guards, messengers and artisans in the state Civil Service.

Having presented the personal data of our respondents, we have to move forward to analyzing our hypotheses based on what transpired in the field.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I

There is no significant relationship between staff motivation and performance in the work organization (Civil Service).

Table 5 Motivation and Performance

<i>Items</i>	<i>SA 5</i>	<i>A 4</i>	<i>UD 3</i>	<i>SD 2</i>	<i>D 1</i>	<i>Total RESPONSES</i>
<i>Item5</i>	334	205	175	92	10	816
<i>Item6</i>	248	396	66	56	50	816
<i>Item7</i>	600	100	34	70	12	816
<i>Item8</i>	252	334	100	90	40	816
<i>Frequency</i>	1434	1035	365	308	112	3264
\sum ranks frequency	X 7170	4140	1095	616	112	13133

$$\frac{\sum \text{Ranks} \times \text{Frequency}}{\text{Total Responses (n)}} = \frac{13133}{3264} = 4.023$$

$$= 4$$

Decision: Accept the hypothesis, if the computed value is greater than the table value. Otherwise reject it. Based on the above analyses, we reject the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between staff motivation and performances in the Civil Service. This implies that there is a significant

relationship between staff motivation and performance in the civil service.

Hypothesis II

There is no significant relationship between workers promotion on the job and staff performance.

Table 6 .Promotion and Staff Performance

ITEMS	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	SD 2	D 1	TOAL RESPONSES
<i>Item13</i>	248	396	66	56	50	816
<i>Item14</i>	258	297	50	100	104	816
<i>Item15</i>	600	100	34	70	12	816
<i>Item16</i>	263	281	170	51	51	816
<i>Frequency</i>	1369	1074	320	277	217	3264
$\sum \text{rank} \times \text{Frequency}$	6845	4296	960	554	217	12872

$$\frac{\sum \text{Ranks} \times \text{Frequency}}{\text{Total Responses (n)}} = \frac{12872}{3264} = 3.09$$

$$= 3$$

Decision: Accept the hypothesis, if the computed value is greater than the table value. Otherwise, reject it. Based on the above analyses, we reject the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between workers promotion on the job and staff performance. This implies that there is a significant

relationship between promotion on the job and staff performance.

Hypothesis III

There are no significant relationship between on economic factors such as job security and good working condition and staff performance.

Table 7. Non-Economic Factors and Staff Performance

Items	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	SD 2	D 1	Total Responses
<i>Item17</i>	400	216	100	50	50	816
<i>Item18</i>	400	200	66	100	50	816
<i>Item19</i>	300	316	100	60	40	816
<i>Item20</i>	400	216	100	50	50	816
<i>Frequency</i>	1500	948	365	260	190	3264
$\sum \text{ranks} \times \text{Frequency}$	7500	3792	1095	520	190	13097

$\frac{\sum \text{Ranks} \times \text{Frequency}}{\text{Total Responses (n)}}$

= $\frac{13097}{3264} = 4.01$

= 4

Decision: Accept the hypothesis, if the computed value is greater than the critical (table) value. Otherwise reject it. Based on the above analyses we reject the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between other non-economic factors such as job security and good working condition and staff performance. This therefore implies that there is a significant relationship between other non-economic factors and good working condition and staff performance between staff motivation and performances in the Rivers State Civil Service.

Conclusion

This study reveals that Civil Service in Rivers State and indeed Nigeria has undergone tremendous changes. Some of these changes were essential for its growth and to make it adjust to the changing economic and socio-political evolution of the country. However, the service in more recent years seems to have undergone a trauma. The major traumatic experience is linked with the mass retrenchment of offices without such a condition, offices could not give their best and the government would appear not to be getting the expected return or output from the service due to poor motivation. The government would now need to take urgent step to look into the problem of motivation and staff performances if the service is to achieve its objectives.

Recommendations

In order to stem the tide of inefficiency and low productivity in the Rivers State Civil Service currently, a number of recommendations are made here. After all, Anikpo (1995) is of the conviction that every human being no matter how handicapped has a contribution to make in the overall development of mankind. Based on this, we therefore recommend the following:

- i. Managers must get personally involved and take active part in managing motivational processes at work.

- ii. Managers should be sensitive to variations in employee's needs abilities and traits and not apply a blanket treatment to all.
- iii. Government must seek to provide employees with jobs that offer greatest challenge, diversity and opportunities for personal need satisfaction.
- iv. Government should ensure that the climate within the work group is conducive for greater accomplishment. Personality clashes, distrust and unnecessary wrangling must be removed for effective running of the service.
- v. Government should monitor job attitudes of their employees on a continuing basis as a deliberate policy and practice and to use such information as a motivational barometer to identify potential trouble or problem spots.
- vi. Employees should be involved in the processes aimed at attaining organizational effectiveness because without their cooperation and support a great deal of managerial energy may be wasted.

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