

Chapter 15

Employee Motivation in Theory and Practice: A Study of Sokoto Furniture Factory

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Introduction

The job of any head in the workplace is to get things done through employees. To do this, the head should be able to motivate employees. One of the basic assumptions of managerial practice is that workers can be motivated to high productivity by satisfying their needs. Due to this managers are keen to find reliable links between individual motivation and effective performance, and to create the conditions under which organisational and personal goals may be harmonized (Anikpo, 1984) but that is easier said than done, because in spite of the enormous efforts by employers to motivate their employees the subject matter of motivation is more often than not poorly practiced. This may be largely connected to the failure on the part of employers in understanding the human nature of their employees. Human nature can be very simple, yet very complex too, and behaviour is not random or purposeless. The use of a particular kind of motivational device in the control of human behaviour seems to many to be incompatible with the ethical idea of personal freedom and

fraught with potential for immoral misuse in the hands of those who seek to manipulate others for ends that are politically, economically and socially conformist (Herbert L. Petri; 1991). The key feature of motivation is that, it determines the extent to which an individual desires to place his or her knowledge and skills at the disposal of others and more than that to shrug off the obstacles and difficulties in so doing. The study of motivation therefore, is the study of the factors that account for the direction, vigor and persistence of action (Kuram, 1983).

Researches and observations show that, well motivated employees are more productive and creative and the reverse also holds true (Cole, 2002). This explains the saying that, you can take a horse to water, but you can't force it to drink, it will drink only when it is thirsty. So with people, they will do what they want to do or otherwise motivated to do either by themselves or through external stimulus. Demotivated workers may likely resort to absenteeism, losing interest in their job, performing below capacity, labour turn-over and develop negative attitude toward the work or most of the time engage in serious industrial action such as strikes.

Although various researchers have carried out studies on motivation, not much has been done to demonstrate the relationship between theoretical and practical aspect of motivation. It is in view of this, that this study aimed at examining the various theories explaining motivation in the workplace, identifying some of the methods and procedures employed by management in motivating employees and those factors accounting for a motivated workforce, assessing the necessity of motivation in respect of employee performance and finally suggesting ways of motivating employees for increased productivity. Motivation theory and practice are two difficult subjects touching on several disciplines, thus, this paper provides a preliminary study on the above mentioned variables.

Motivation Defined

Motivation has been defined as a process in which people choose between alternative forms of behaviour in order to achieve organisational goals (Cole, 2002). It has also been defined as a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific unmet needs (Lidner, 1998). Similarly, Berelson and Stainer (1964) conceptualised motivation as an inner state that energizes, activates or moves and directs or channels behaviour towards goals. For this paper, motivation is conceptually defined as the forces (both inner and external) that drives individual to accomplish personal and organisational goals.

Theoretical Perspectives

Motivation has been studied in a variety of ways. For instance, it has been analyzed at the physiological level to demonstrate the importance of certain brain structures in the control of basic motives such as hunger, thirst, sex, aggression and fear. Psychological analysis of motivation attempt to understand why people act in particular ways and seek to draw general conclusions from individual cases. Narrowly we have the scientific management and human relation theories of motivation which attempt to explain motivation in relation to employee performance in an organisation. For the purpose of this study the following theories were found most appropriate in explaining the problem of motivation in the workplace and enhancing our understanding of motivation, Expectancy theory, McGregor's theory X and Y, Herzberg two factor theory, Reinforcement theory and Maslow's needs theory.

Expectancy theory has proved useful in the explanation of social behaviours, achievement motivation and work motivation. According to Vroom (1964) the proponent of this theory, behaviour is a function of the expectancies one has and the value of the goal toward which one is working. This

approach therefore, predicts that, when more than one behaviours is possible the behaviour chosen will be the one with the largest combination of expected success and values. Vroom's theory is based on the belief that employee effort will lead to performance and performance will lead to rewards. Rewards may have different level of outcome and may be either positive or negative (Best, 2003). Therefore, the more positive the rewards the more likely the employee will be highly motivated.

Theory X and Y

Propounded by Douglas McGregor, theory X assumed that, people are inherently lazy, they hate work to an extent that they avoid it, they have no ambition, have no initiative and avoid taking any responsibility. To get them to do any work they must be coerced, rewarded, intimidated and at times punished. Theory Y is in sharp contrast to theory X. McGregor (1960) believed that, people naturally want to learn and that work is their natural activity to the extent that they develop self-discipline and self-development. People are committed to organisational objectives and they see their reward not so much in cash payment as a condition to do difficult and challenging work. Workers, therefore, have the ability to use their imagination, ingenuity and creativity towards the solution of organisational problems. McGregor concludes that the job of the management is to dovetail the human wish for self-development into the organisational needs for maximum productive efficiency, as such the basic objectives of both are therefore met and with imagination and sincerity for the enormous potential to be tapped (Best *et al* 2003). Thus, McGregor was able to make the management identify two different ways to view their employees in the workplace.

Two Factor Theory

Fredrick Herzberg (1968) categorised motivational factors into two and called them extrinsic job conditions or hygiene factors and intrinsic job conditions or motivating factors. The hygiene factors or extrinsic job conditions include job security, salary, working conditions, status, company policies, technical supervision, inter-personal relations among peers, supervising subordinates and fringe benefits. These are conditions that, even if present, do not necessarily motivate employee and when not present result in dissatisfaction among employees. Randy & Teresa (1995) reaffirmed that, that's why they are called dissatisfiers, because they are concerned with the job context and not motivation.

On the other hand, intrinsic job conditions are those that help increase productivity, job satisfaction and happiness e.g. achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, personal growth and development. They are motivating factors which can result in good job performance and even when not present do not result in job dissatisfaction and they are called satisfiers (Randy and Teresa *et al*, 1995). Unlike other motivational theorists that tried to explain how individual behaviour affect his productivity, Herzberg concentrated on how work itself influences individual's behaviour towards his job (i.e. good or bad feelings about one's job-content and context).

Reinforcement Theory

Skinner stressed that, if in a given work situation an individual acts in a way desired by organisations, then the reward should match the behaviour. Skinner explained how management motivates workers to perform a desired behaviour through the use of stimuli and consequences or rewards. Managers should therefore positively reinforce employee behaviours that lead to positive outcome and

should negatively reinforce employee behaviour that lead to negative outcome (Lindner, 1998). Finally, Skinner demonstrates the relationship between employee stimulus, the response or actual employee behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour.

Needs Hierarchy Theory

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory explains that human behaviour in the work environment is at least partially motivated by the desire to satisfy a need. He argued that, man's needs are constantly changing; the needs are arranged in hierarchy in such a way that the lower needs get satisfied before there is motivation for higher needs. The satisfaction of lower needs is the basis for wanting to satisfy higher level needs. What motivates a man then are his constantly unsatisfied and changing needs. The needs are arranged in hierarchical order starting from the lowest and ending with the highest level need.

- (i) Physiological needs are the primary (basic) needs of individuals which include the need for food, drink, shelter, clothing and relief from or avoidance of pain. In the workplace such needs are represented by concern for salary and basic working conditions (such as heat, air conditioning and eating facilities) (Kuram, 1983).
- (ii) Safety needs involve physical and emotional security reflecting in the need for freedom from threats, protection against danger and accident as well as secured environment. Jike (2005) affirmed that individual at this level will show concern for those issues such as safe working conditions, fringe benefits and other retirement needs in the workplace.

- (iii) Love/social needs are fulfilled through companionship and affection among work group and friendship. They include the need for affiliation, friendship and satisfying interactions with other people. Lacking these needs may result in feeling of helplessness and inferiority which in turn affect job interest.
- (iv) Self-Esteem: These include the needs for self-respect, self-confidence, power, prestige, status, responsibilities and esteem by others. Here an individual wants his contribution to be recognized and appreciated by others. Jike *et al*, (2005) suggested that, management should therefore reward employees based on their performances towards achieving organisational goals.
- (v) Self actualization: Is the need to reach all the level of personal advancement and development. To be self-actualized is to grow and achieve or become what an individual wants to become. But, Maslow argued that only few individuals reach this stage no matter how motivated people are.

Maslow's theory categorised individual's needs in order of importance with satisfaction of lower needs leading to advancement to the higher level needs. An individual employee will first look for the satisfaction of basic needs (as food, clothing and shelter) before aiming at satisfying the need for job security and other needs. This theory therefore, exposes employers to the understanding of employees' needs which can at the same time influence their behaviour.

Methods

Study Setting

Sokoto Furniture Factory is located in the northern part of Sokoto metropolis. It was established on 2nd February, 1973 and officially commissioned on 2nd of February, 1974 by the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, with a total number of 32 staff (comprising both senior administrative staff and manual employees). The factory was under the control of old Sokoto state government, but with the creation of Kebbi and Zamfara States out of Sokoto State - the company came to be shared among the 3 states with some private individual investments. The company has a mission of manufacturing high quality and affordable furniture for schools, offices, hospitals and homes with a motive of making profit. Presently, the factory is composed of 4 departments namely, Administrative, Accounts, Sales and workshop departments headed by a manager each with 7,4,3 and 34 employees under each department respectively, with the exclusion of 3 apprentices, making a total of 48 workers. The overall head is the Managing Director.

Sample size

All the total number of the employees in the Sokoto furniture factory were targetted as the study sample where the use of an interview and survey methods made the study both quantitative and qualitative.

Sources of Data

The data collected for this study were mainly from the primary sources. In other words, the data were responses from questionnaires and interview from the field.

Instrument

Methods of data collection used in this study were questionnaire and in-depth-interview. A total number of 43 questionnaires were administered to respondents through the human resource officer in the factory. Employees were asked to answer questions on the ways through which they are being motivated, where interpretations were made to some of the respondents who do not understand the language in the questionnaire. Also an-in-depth interview was conducted among the 5 top managers of the organisation in order to know the methods or techniques they use in motivating their workers/employees.

Method of data analysis

The data collected were analysed using simple descriptive statistical analysis such as frequency and percentages and tables were used in presenting the information gathered from the survey. Qualitative data was subjected to the use of verbatim quotations presented in italics.

Table 15.1: Socio Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Age	15 – 24	04 (8.8%)
	25 – 34	19 (42.2%)
	35 – 44	12 (26.7%)
	45 – 54	07 (15.6%)
	55 – above	03 (6.7%)
Marital Status	Married -	23 (51.1%)
	Single -	12 (26.7%)
	Divorce -	06 (13.3%)
	Separated-	04 (8.9%)

Religion	Islam -	42 (93.3%)
	Christianity -	03 (6.7%)
Ethnic group	Hausa -	40 (88.9%)
	Others -	05 (11.1%)
Education	Qur'anic -	07 (15.6%)
	Primary -	12 (26.7%)
	Secondary -	18 (40.0%)
	Tertiary -	06(13.3%)
	Adult Education-	02 (4.4%)
Monthly Income	N7,000-N11000 -	03 (6.6%)
	N11,500-N15,000 -	07(15.6%)
	N15,500-N19,000 -	14(31.1%)
	N19,500-N23,000 -	09 (20.0%)
	N23,500-N27,000 -	07 (15.6%)
	N27,000 and above -	05 (11.1%)
	Total	- <u>45 (100%)</u>

Findings

The interview conducted among the top management officials in the organisation revealed that the company's management mostly use incentive systems in motivating their employees. Regular increase in worker's salary appears to be the first method management use in motivating employees. Interview revealed this finding. For instance, the management said: *there has never been complaints from the workers with regards to the payment of salary because we often increase the salary and pay them as at when due.* Data shows that there is regular payment of fringe benefits to employees as affirmed by one of the managers that: *we give the workers all the benefits they deserve.* This according to management complement the absence of some recreational facilities in the organisation. Interview revealed that, the management of the factory is providing its employees with job security with

relative permanence. Respondents disclosed that: *the management gives assurance to every individual employee of working with him in the organisation as long as he stays and hardly sacks employee except on some serious disciplinary grounds.* There is also a provision of paid vacation which the management said is only for the heads of departments. Moreover, because of the fact that more than seventy percent of the employees in the factory are manual workers under the workshop department, supervision is mostly performed by the workshop manager periodically. According to him, *its through supervision the management determines each individual's output and assess his qualification for promotion.* Unlike administrative staff whose promotion, according to management, is based on their educational qualifications, working experience, initiatives and to some extent the number of years spent in the organisation, the promotion of the manual workers is not only based on the number of years spent in the factory but also the level of his personal output.

Table 15.2: Employees Responses on Factors that Motivate Them

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Recognition and responsibilities	10	25.0%
Work itself	09	22.5%
Promotion and advancement	10	25.0%
Affection and companionship	08	20.0%
Salary increase	03	7.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2009)

Various factors were highlighted by employees through which they can be motivated to put in more efforts for

increased productivity. Large percentage of the respondents mentioned participation in company's planning and decision as well as human relation training. Table 15.3 shows that employees (25.0%) need their contribution or input to the organisational success to be recognized. Data revealed that, the need for a better and conducive work environment by making the work simulating represents a significant percentage of the responses with 22.5%. 10 employees (25.0%) affirmed that, they need to be promoted from time to time for them to be advancing in their careers. 08 respondents (20.0%) also disclosed that giving sense of belonging, showing affection and companionship contribute greatly to job satisfaction in the work environment. Very few (03) respondents (7.5%) claimed to be motivated by regular increase in salary, wages and allowances.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of the relationship between theoretical and practical aspects of motivation. Studies have shown that, for effective employee motivation in the workplace, managers need to understand what motivates employees within the context of the roles they perform. This becomes necessary because what motivates employees changes constantly. In this study incentive systems appear to be major means which management uses to motivate employees, most of these procedures are what Herzberg (1968) described as extrinsic job conditions or hygiene factors and also what Maslow (1938) categorised under physiological needs.

Researches affirmed that these factors do not necessarily motivate employees. Bennett (1981) stressed that what determines the success of an organisation does not only include finance, necessary tools, materials and equipments but, the nature of human resources and the system of work relationship existing in the organisation. This view correlates

with Layman's idea that; as employees income increases, money becomes less of a motivator. Also as employees get older, interesting work becomes more of a motivator (Layman, 1997). Put simply, income may motivate a particular set of workers and at the same time may not necessarily motivate certain category of employees. This suggests that management needs to consider other factors such as recognition, need for belonging, good working condition, achievement and the likes in motivating employees. Because good working environment and responsibility provide not only financial but also emotional security and self esteem while achievement is recognised as an important source of human motivation (Berelson and Stainer *et al*, 1964)

Conclusion and Recommendations

To make things happen the ability to motivate yourself and others is a crucial skill. At work, home and everywhere people use motivation to get results. Motivated employees are needed in our rapidly changing workplace, because they are more productive and thus help organisation to survive. Employers may have some intelligence, knowledge-based study and time management skills, but if they don't know how and what motivates employees, they won't go far. As Broody (1983) observes, of all the functions a manager performs, motivating employee is arguably the most complex. This is due, in part, to the fact that what motivates employees changes constantly. In other words, the set goals and objectives of the overall organisation may not be achieved.

For effective motivation practice in the workplace this study recommends that, employers should first think of the personal state of the employees, that is understanding what they need within the context of the roles they perform. Workers should be given opportunity for initiation and face new and difficult challenges in order to make them happy

and enthusiastic thereby progressing towards organisational goals. Wesley (1975) suggests that to have an eager and productive workforce, management should never use threat, but make their employees aware of the negative consequences of not achieving organisational goals. While there should be recognition for hardworking there should also be constructive criticisms, because, some people don't often realize what they're doing wrong.

Management ought to set certain clear achievable short and longtime goals with specific instructions to guide the work process and set a time frame to make the employees focus on the work. Be kind to them and recognize their individual as well as collective achievement. Employers should also be creative, bringing new ideas thereby making the work environment more optimistic and challenging. Most people naturally want to improve by making extra effort once they know how to do it, employers should therefore make the work stimulating. As Boltes (1975) observes, a stimulating environment create enthusiasm and the opportunity for 'big picture' thinking. There should be some recreational facilities to let the employees have fun, because work is more enjoyable when it does not feel like work at all. Finally, management should keep the communication channels open to enable them know the progress and otherwise, because being aware of the potential problems help employers to fix them before a serious dispute arises.

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