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## **EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the effect of employee motivation on organizational performance amidst covid-19 pandemic. The study adopted a survey research design, and adopted non-teaching members of staff of 7 faculties of the Enugu State University of Science and Technology. A structured questionnaire served as instrument of primary data collection. The linear regression statistic was used to test the formulated for the study. The study found that employee well-being has significant effect on organizational performance and that employee compensation has a significant effect on organizational performance. The study concludes that employee motivation in the form of promoting employee wellbeing and employee compensation results in organizational productivity, and recommends that employers that desire improved performance should develop and maintain compensation packages that recognize employees' effort.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The overall performance of the organization is a major concern of every manager and in achieving this, they perform various functions, including planning, organizing, controlling, directing, and staffing. These functions are not carried out in isolation rather they are performed in relation to available resources (human, money, machine, materials, information, and time). Among these resources, only the human has emotions, wants and needs. To attain great height in the organization, managers must apply great caution when dealing with human. To achieve desired business results, managers identify critical goals and success factors required to ensure

that the information, tools, processes and resources are in place to facilitate and support achievement of business objectives.

The world is currently facing a health challenge in the form of covid-19 which has impacted the global economy. Covid-19 also known as corona virus disease 2019 was first discovered in Wuhan, Hubei, China in December 2019. It is a respiratory disease caused by a single-strand, positive-sense ribonucleic acid (RNA) virus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus (Masters, 2019 cited in Ndem and Ekong, 2021). As a result of the spread of the Covid-19, it was declared a pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Different measures such as social distancing, hand washing with alcohol-based sanitizers, compulsory use of face masks in public places, self-isolation, lock down of cities, among others, have been put in place as a way of controlling the spread of the pandemic.

In the business climate that followed the Covid-19, continuous operation and survival of organizations relied on the expertise and commitment of employees (Udofia et al., 2020). Also, there is an inherent nature in human that desires self-improvement in all ramifications. This accounts for the reason individuals who give their time, energy and skill to the growth of their organizations, naturally expect something in return. What the organization gives in return goes a long way to determine the level of commitment that will be given by the employees. For optimal organizational performance, managers must identify how to motivate employees to exhibit high level of commitment.

Motivation is a force that activates dormant energies and sets in motion, the action of people. It is a function that kindles a burning passion for action among workers. Employee motivation is all about how engaged an employee feels in tandem to the organization's goals and how empowered they feels. It is the enthusiasm, energy level, commitment and the amount of creativity that an employee brings to the organization on a daily basis. When individual employees get committed with a high level of task execution, organization performance improves. Organizational performance is the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (objectives). The ultimate goal of every organization is to increase their performance. Hence, one of the most important functions of organization management is to create willingness amongst the employees to perform to the best of their abilities.

Motivation plays is essential to employees' lives, whether it is about improving their individual performance or that of the organization. Motivation is the most essential part of the work life of employees. It inspires individuals for putting in efforts towards the attainment of organizational goals. Motivation is required in every sphere of organizational life, as it helps in building zeal and interest among employees to pursue organizational goals, and increases employees' efficiency (Rina, 2020).

This study focuses on examining the impact of employee motivation amidst covid-19 pandemic on organizational performance. The study specifically opts to determine the effect of employee well-being and employee compensation on organizational performance. The study is guided by the following null hypotheses:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Employee well-being has no significant effect on organizational performance.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Employee compensation has no significant effect on organizational performance.

### CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

Motivation is the psychological force that activate and directs individuals' behavior. It also determines individuals' level of, and persistence of efforts (Jones & George, 2008). It can be thought of as the willingness to expend energy to achieve a goal or a reward. Motivation at work has been defined as the sum of the processes that influence the arousal, direction, and maintenance of behaviors relevant to work settings (Moran, 2013). Dale (1980) defined motivation as a willingness to expend energy to achieve a goal or reward. Motivation is the act of stimulating one or oneself to get a desired course of action, to push the right button to get desired results (Michael, 2017). Prachi (2020) perceives motivation as the process of stimulating people to actions to accomplish the goals. Thus, motivation consists of three interacting and interdependent elements: needs, drives and goals. Needs are basic requirement for effective functioning, whose presence is often revealed whenever there is a physiological or psychological imbalance. These are action-oriented energies with a thrust towards goals that alleviate needs. They are the very heart of motivational process. Goals are anything which will alleviate a need and reduce a drive (Rina, 2017).

Motivation is induces employees to enact desired behaviours. Management can select different method of inspiring workers based on their understanding of workers' needs (Rina, 2020). Generally, employee motivation is classified into intrinsic, extrinsic, positive and negative motivation. *Intrinsic motivation* represents internal drives that stimulate individuals to act or behave in certain ways. The reward of intrinsic motivation comes from the inside. Anything at all that makes an employee feel satisfied within them is fueled by intrinsic motivation. *Extrinsic motivation* stands external factors that drive behaviour or guides action. Extrinsic motivation comes from outside sources. This type of motivation comes to play when employees performs their duty well and gets fairly rewarded or fail to perform their duties and get punished. *Positive motivation* is a reward-based motivation method. This type of motivation is used when an employee performs an activity to gain a reward. The expectation of reward is the driving force. Positive motivation may be monetary or nonmonetary (Merospark, 2021). *Negative motivation* is a punishment-based motivation method. Negative motivation on the other hand is implemented through punishment for poor performance or undesired behaviour. Under this technique employees are motivated by depriving them of monetary benefits like bonuses, reduction of pay, etc. Disciplinary action like demotion, transfer to remote areas, minimization of responsibility, threat of dismissal, pay cut, demotion also pass as negative motivation. Managers often use this technique with a view to prevent employees from undesirable behavior (Merospark, 2021).

### CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Organizational performance describes the extent to which the outcomes of a business' operations compare favourably to stated corporate goals or to the performance of competing firms (Ateke & Kalu, 2016). It is a measure of a company's capacity to achieve set goals by optimizing scarce resources (Daft, 1991, cited in Ateke and Didia, 2017). Organizational performance involves analyzing a company's performance against its objectives and goals. In other words, organizational performance comprises real results or outputs compared with intended outputs. Organizations perform various activities to accomplish their objectives. It is these repeatable activities that are quantified to determine the level of performance and for management to make informed decisions on where, if needed, within the processes to initiate actions to improve performance (Jenatabadi, 2015). According to Richard et al. (2009), organizational performance

encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: Financial performance, market performance, shareholder value performance.

Financial performance involves Profits, return on assets, return on investment are variables for measuring the financial health of the firm. It involves measuring a company's operations and policies in monetary terms. Market performance measures how well a company or product performs in the marketplace. It describes sales growth, market share, and other variables used to measure the organizations market performance. Shareholder value performance on the other hand, measures total shareholder return, economic value added, used as yardsticks for determining shareholder value performance. It looks at how much a company enriches its shareholders; and is viewed by many as the ultimate measure of organizational performance (Market Business News [MBN], 2020).

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS**

This study is hinged on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Abraham Maslow viewed motivation as being based on a hierarchy of needs, of which a person cannot move to the next level of needs without satisfying the previous level. Maslow's hierarchy starts at the lowest level of needs, basic physiological needs (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence, 2007). Basic physiological needs include air, water, and food. Employers who pay at least a minimal living wage will meet these basic employee needs (Silberstein, 2011). The next level of needs is referred to as safety and security needs (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence, 2007). This level includes needs such as having a place to live and knowing one is safe. Employers can meet these needs by ensuring employees are safe from physical, verbal and/or emotional hazards and have a sense of job security (Silberstein, 2011). The third level of needs is social affiliation and belonging (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence, 2007). This is the need to be social, the need to be love, and be loved. Implementing employee participation programmes can help fulfill the need to belong (Silberstein, 2011). Rewards such as acknowledging employees' contributions can satisfy these social and love needs (Silberstein, 2011). The fourth level on the hierarchy is esteem needs (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence, 2007). This level is described as feeling good about one's self and knowing that one's life is meaningful, valuable, and has a purpose. Employers use job design technique to create jobs that are important to, and cherished by employees (Silberstein, 2011). These first four needs, Maslow called deficient needs (D-Needs). The last level Maslow described is called self-actualization (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence, 2007). Maslow called this the B-Need (being). This level refers to people reaching their potential states of well-being. An employer who ensures that an employee is in the right job and has all other needs met will help the employee realize this highest need (Silberstein, 2011). Maslow later expanded self-actualization into cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence needs (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016).

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted survey research design. This design helps the researchers to collect, record and interpret data for effective decision making. It provides opportunities for scalability and offers a straightforward analysis and visualization of data. The target population of the study comprises non-teaching staff of 7 faculties in Enugu State University of Science and Technology. These are the faculties of Social Science, Education, Management Sciences, Law, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Environmental Sciences, and Applied Natural Sciences. Primary data

for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was designed in the 5-point Likert scale as shown in Table 1 below, and was validated with content face validity.

Table 1: The study used Likert scale measure as shown below:

Measures	SA	A	U	D	SD
Points	5	4	3	2	1
Range	4.5-5.4	3.5-4.4	2.5-3.4	1.5-2.4	0.5-1.4

Where: SA- Strongly Agree

A- Agree

U- Undecided

D- Disagree

SD- Strongly Disagree

The questionnaire was administered on a total of 240 non-teaching staff that were seen at the time of questionnaire distribution, these served as test units. Two hundred and twenty-eight (228) copies were filled appropriately and returned and used in the final analyses of the study. Linear regression was used to test the hypotheses of the study, relying on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution Analysis

S/N	Questionnaire	Number	Percentage
1	Questionnaire Administered	240	100
2	Questionnaire Returned	233	97.1
3	Questionnaire Unreturned	7	2.9
4	Questionnaire Rejected	5	2.1
5	Questionnaire Used for Analysis	228	95

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 1 shows that the total number of questionnaire administered were 240 showing. 233 copies of questionnaire representing 97.1% were filled and returned. 7 copies of questionnaire representing 2.9% were not returned; 5 copies representing 2.1% of the questionnaires were not properly filled, thus were rejected. The 228 copies of questionnaires representing 95% that were correctly filled and returned were used for analysis.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	105	46.1
Female	123	53.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age (Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
25-35	48	21.1
36-46	69	30.3
47-57	84	36.8
58 & Above	27	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Single	75	32.9
Married	125	54.8
Divorced	28	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Work Experience(Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
0-5	43	18.8
6-10	51	22.4
11-15	48	21.1
16-20	45	19.7
21 & Above	41	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
FSLC	14	6.1
SSCE/NECO	25	11.0
OND	34	14.9
HND	46	20.2
B.Sc/B.Tech/B.Ed	56	24.6
Master	48	21.1
Ph.D	5	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

Table 2 showed that 105 respondents representing 46.1% are males while 123 respondents representing 53.9% are females. The Table indicates that 48 respondents representing 21.1% are within the age of 25-35 years; 69 respondents representing 30.3% are within the age of 36-46 years; 84 respondents representing 36.8% fall within the age of 47-57 years while the remaining 27 respondents representing 11.8% are within the age bracket 58 and above years. The Table also shows that 75 respondents representing 32.9% are single; 125 respondents representing 54.8% are married while 28 respondents representing 12.3% are divorced. It was also shown that 43 persons being 18.8% have 0-5 years of work experience; 51 respondents representing 22.4% have 6-10 years of experience at work; 48 persons being 21.1% of the sample have 11-15 years of experience; 45 persons representing 19.7% have 16-20 work experience while the remaining 41 persons forming 18.0% have 21 years and above work experience. Table 2 further shows that 14 respondents representing 6.1% possessed FSLC; 25 persons being 11.0% had SSCE/NECO; 34 respondents representing 14.9% were OND holders; 46 respondents being 20.2% had HND;

56 respondents representing 24.6% were BSc/BTech/Bed., 48 respondents representing 21.1% had Masters while 5 respondents representing 2.2% were PhD holders.

**Table 3: Questionnaire Construct**

S/N	Question Items	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total	Mean	Remark
1	Increase in Employees' salary increases performance	137 (60.1)	73 (32)	18 (7.9)	-	-	1031	4.5	Strongly Agree
2	Provision of non-monetary incentives like staff bus increase worker performance	113 (58.3)	81 (35.5)	32 (14)	2 (0.9)	-	989	4.3	Agree
3	Access to institution loan increase worker performance	114 (50)	58 (25.4)	35 (15.4)	15 (6.6)	6 (2.6)	943	4.1	Agree
4	Performance based Promotion policy improves employees' performance	125 (54.8)	90 (39.5)	4 (1.8)	5 (2.2)	3 (1.3)	1010	4.4	Agree
5	An objective appraisal system leads to improvement of employees' performance	167 (73.2)	44 (19.3)	-	10 (4.4)	7 (3.1)	1038	4.6	Strongly Agree
6	Compensation of employees for achievement of target leads to improvement in employees' performance	150 (65.8)	73 (32)	5 (2.2)	-	-	1057	4.6	Strongly Agree
7	Provision of training opportunities increases employees' performance	147 (64.5)	81 (35.5)	-	-	-	1140	5.0	Strongly Agree
8	Occasional workshops and seminars improves employees' performance	124 (54.4)	75 (32.9)	3 (1.1)	16 (7)	10 (4.9)	971	4.3	Agree
9	Technical skills development program leads to improvement in employees' performance	117 (51.3)	94 (41.2)	7 (3.1)	7 (3.1)	3 (1.3)	999	4.4	Agree

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

### Test of Hypotheses One

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Employee well-being has no significant effect on organizational performance

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.885 <sup>a</sup>	.783	.782	3.68007

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee wellbeing

**Source:** Output of data analysis (2022).

**ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	11033.177	1	11033.177	814.682	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Regression	3060.701	226	13.543		
Residual	14093.877	227			
Total					

a Dependent Variable: Organizational performance

b Predictors: (Constant), Employee wellbeing

Source: Output of data analysis (2022).

**Coefficients**

Model	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1 (constant)	2.686	.592		4.534	.000
Employee wellbeing	2.376	.083	.885	28.543	.000

a Dependent Variable: Organizational performance

Source: Output of data analysis (2022).

The regression sum of square (11033.177) is greater than the residual sum of squares (2060.701), which indicates that less of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. The correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.885$ ) indicates that there is positive relationship between employee wellbeing and organizational performance. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 78.3\%$ ) shows that variation in organizational performance is explained by variation in employee wellbeing. With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low, with a value of 3.68007. The coefficient of 0.885 indicates a positive significant connection between employee wellbeing and organizational performance, which is statically significant (with  $t = 28.543$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Employee wellbeing has significant effect on organizational performance.

**Test of Hypotheses Two**

$H_{01}$ : Employee compensation has no significant effect on organizational performance

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.839 <sup>a</sup>	.704	.702	4.29818

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee wellbeing

Source: Output of data analysis (2022).

**ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	9918.874	1	9918.874	536.889	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	4175.203	226	18.474		
Total	14093.877	227			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee compensation

Source: Output of data analysis (2022).

**Coefficient**

Model	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (constant)				7.834	
Employee compensation	4.859	.638		23.17	.000
	2.015	.087	.839	1	.000

a Dependent Variable: Organizational performance

Source: Output of data analysis (2022).

The regression sum of square (9918.674) is greater than the residual sum of squares (4175.203), which indicates that less of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. The correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.839$ ) indicates a positive relationship between employee compensation and organizational performance. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = .704$ ) shows that 70.4% of variation in organizational performance is explained by variation in employee compensation. With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low, with a value of 4.29818. The coefficient of 0.839 indicates a positive significant between employee compensation and organizational performance. The relationship is statically significant at ( $t = 23.171$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact of employee motivation on organizational performance was the subject of this study. Extant literature provides that employee motivation impacts organizational success. Motivation is a broad notion that encompasses a variety of impulses, desires, needs, and wishes. Managers motivate employees by creating an environment that encourages them to contribute. Performance is essentially a result of skill, perception of the work at hand, and effort. In turn, achievement of performance is linked to incentives and satisfaction. Special motivation approaches, on the other hand, include the use of money and other awards, boosting involvement, and improving the quality of each employee's working life. It is critical to excite employees on a regular basis in order to keep them in the organization. A positive work environment and adequate training are essential. Employees should be rewarded regularly to encourage them to contribute their best to the organization's growth and development. These advantages can be in the shape of money, a promotion, or even words of praise, all of which can drive employees to work with zeal.

Based on the findings, this study concludes that employers should examine their policies and administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, job security, and employee performance life to ensure that they are designed to motivate employees, and that by doing so, the organization's performance will improve. Based on the findings and the conclusion reached, the study recommends that employers that desire improved performance should develop and maintain compensation packages that recognize employees' effort. When employees are aware that their individual efforts count, they tend to do more in attainment of organizational goal. The study also recommends that organizations should promote employees' wellbeing by periodically sending them on trainings, seminars, conference and workshops; and providing health related a policy which aims at improving the health conditions of employees.

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