

TOWARDS A DIAGNOSTIC APPROACH TO ACHIEVING HIGH PERFORMANCE MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUE FOR TRANSPORT SECTOR IN OWERRI, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study looked into how High performance motivational technique can be achieved using a diagnostic approach that incorporated the concerned individual employee in the determination of motivational items that fits him and which is aligned with his personality characteristics. The study also looked into the possibility of developing an evaluative and predictive model for analysing the motivation potential of a chosen or intended motivational items by organizations in the road transport sector. The study used survey design method that involved the collection of data from 300 samples drawn from the population of 900 supervisory and junior employee of ABC Transport Plc. This was done through a structured questionnaire containing items of motivation. It was discovered through the study that there are several motivational items open for use by Road Transport Companies in Imo State of Nigeria that can galvanize employees into higher performance. It was also discovered through the use of diagnostic approach, that most preferred motivational items by employees of road transport sector in Imo State of Nigeria are promotion, good salaries and incentives, gifts outside salary, better insurance benefit system, work-life-balance, and assurance of job security. The study further showed that a Model to evaluate and or predict the potentialities/effectiveness of a chosen or intended motivational items is feasible. A Motivation Potentials Model was propounded and recommended for use by organizations in the sector to ensure efficacy of motivational techniques, and to further forestall unnecessary waste of time and resources by deploying ineffective items. The key elements of the model were motivation potential (MP), Staff preference (SP) and Employee personality characteristics ((PC) . The model is shown as $\{MP = [(\sum SP/N) (\sum PC/N)]\}$ showing that the motivation potential of a given item or group of items is a multiplication of the staff preference level and its alignment with employee most valued personality characteristics.

Keywords: personality characteristics, motivation, employees, transport sector, model.

Introduction

The role of every manager and or organization is to increase the participation of its staff in the organization's affairs. If the assertion is right, then one of the key performance indicators for every management must be seen in the extent workers buy-in into the process of enabling the organization achieve its objective and set goal. This could be done through right staff motivation technique. Motivation itself is the process of stimulating your employees not just

to do their assigned work, but also to go extra mile through increased performance. The current motivational process employed by most organization in Nigeria suffers under four deficiencies / setbacks. They include:

- ❖ Individual differences are never factored in into the determination of what motivates a particular worker.
 - ❖ Motivational process and technique suffer from 'Group think syndrome' in that they are determined and applied across the board, assuming therefore, that every member of the group subscribe to common goal.
 - ❖ The motivational technique and accompanied practices are often routinized and applied overtime ignoring the likely changes in employee work environment, job and personality characteristics
 - ❖ Individual characteristics, bias and preferences are most often ignored.
- The impact of these short comings is a motivation process that yield no appreciative results.

Our immediate objectives in this study were to find out the motivation practices available for use, the ones mostly used by road transport companies in Imo State South East, Nigeria, and to, through the diagnostic means, ascertain the ones most perceived as effective motivator in terms of meeting personal characteristics and bias. The wider objective of the study is to formulate a Motivation Potential Model for use by the road transport companies for the evaluation, gauging and or predicting the potentiality and efficacy of motivational items in use or intended.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The word 'motive' is connected with 'drive'. In trying to define motivations, authors intention and understanding of what motivation is and is not came to the fore. Ahiauzu (1985) citing several other authors summarized this as follows;

The meaning of motivation has been described by many authors in different ways:

As the act of influencing and stimulating an individual to action: Akenson (1964), Adebola (1976), Ejiofor (1981); as a kind of driving force within the individual: Ifechukwu (1976), Cambell and Pritchard (1976); a process which governs the choice made by a person among various forms of voluntary actions: Vroom (1964).

For this study, the definition of choice is the one offered by Jones in 1955 that sees motivation as a process that culminates into a subjective reaction, meaning therefore, that it is possible to determine the time during a worker is motivated or not motivated and that there is a corresponding reaction from a worker to motivational activities which is subjective and underlies the behavior of a motivated worker. Jones's definition had it that motivation is the process of initialzing, energizing, directing, sustaining and stopping (if need be) a particular behaviour in an individual and the determination of what kind of subjective reaction is present while this is going on.

The classical and the early theories of motivation failed to some extent. These early theories really failed because of certain inherent assumptions or group think syndrome that underlines their postulations. The early theorist as cited by Ahiauzu (1985) to mention but a few include: James (1890), Mc Dougal (1908), Freud (1915), Maslow (1954) and Murray (1938). Their major failure arose from their Assumptions that

- All workers are alike, and as such want economic gains, good working environment and same aspiration towards self-actualization.
- The environment for work is the same.
- Employment situation are the same and do not vary, and thus, whatever motivational activities deployed will apply to all.
- There is one best way of motivating workers both as an individual and as a group, that whatever motivational technique deployed will work.

Nadler and Lawler (1983) showed these to be a sweeping statement in their entirety.

For this study, we are at ease with the cognitive theories of motivation, making us to concentrate on individualizing motivational activities and de-emphasizing group applied motivational practices. According to Ahiauzu (1985), the best tenet of the cognitive theories lies in the believe that human behaviour is determined majorly by beliefs, values, anticipation, expectation which individual have concerning current and future events. The model we advanced in this study comes from our appreciation of the tenets of the cognitive theory of motivation. Our assumptions are that the process of motivation is a complex one which could be seen and appreciated within a multi-variant frame of mind. This is in line with the views espoused by authors like Steers and Porters (1979) that;

- If motivation has to do with factors that initiates, energies, directs and sustains human behaviour, any theory of motivation must address three issues.
- These three issues have to do with the individual, the work itself, and the environment of work.
- In addressing these issues, considerations must be given to the individual characteristics, the behavioral implications or requirements of the job tasks and finally, the impacts of the larger organizational environment.

For this study, we chose to concentrate on the individual characteristics and other bias associated with the individual worker which shape his behaviors and subjective responses to motivational activities. Hofstede (1980) outlined these individual characteristics which influence and shape individual behaviors (which he christened 'mental programming' of the perception and evaluation of his environment) to include: His interest, attitudes, values, beliefs, Needs / desires Expectations, aspirations etc. In addition, religion, age, length of service, location etc. could also influence his subjective response to motivational activities

This understanding of the role personality characteristic and bias play in shaping subjective response was a big guide in this present study. We concentrated on the motivational activities and the associated individual perception of each as a motivator, the personality characteristics and other bias and the weight accorded each by individual employee in terms of the extent it influences his subjective responses to each motivational activity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Overtime, motivation activities are focused more on groups rather than individual, ignoring individual differences of interests, perception, needs, belief, religion, aspiration and expectation. These personality characteristics are often ignored in the choice and application of motivational activities leading to poor results against the intended.

Secondly, the familiar assumption that individual worker has the same goal of economic gains often turns out to be an overstatement. Some workers for instance, are known to prefer recognition than salaries.

Thirdly and most often, managers have been in the forefront of determining motivational activities without the participation of the concerned staff. For us, this is an imposition that may turn out to be inconsequential on the employee.

Fourthly, motivation system and activities in adoption has often been very routine, undynamic, unpredictable, and hard to evaluate or predict its motivation potentials. We assumed in this study that a system that is dynamic and responsive to changes to individual perceptions and personality characteristics should have been adopted and backed up inform of a model.

Finally, a lot of time and resources were wasted deploying status quo motivational items that have lost touch in time and changes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Our immediate objectives in this study are to find out the most widely used motivation items by road transport companies in Imo State South East, Nigeria and, through diagnostic means, ascertain the most motivational practices that are widely accepted as effective motivator by workers in this sector by way of preference and ability to satisfying personal characteristics and bias. The wider objective of the study is to formulate a Motivation Potential Model for use by the road transport companies for the evaluation of motivational items in use or intended for use.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is a survey design aimed at the employees of ABC Transport Plc. It is both exploratory and diagnostic in nature designed to find out the available motivational items that are in use and can be used by road transport sector in Imo State and, how worker's perception /preference and personality characteristics play a pivotal role in their acceptance of any or items as effective motivator. The findings will then lead us to the formulation of a model that could act as a guide to the choice and evaluation of the motivation potential of chosen motivational items before, during and after deployment and administration.

The population of the study is the 900 staff of ABC Transport Plc. From this, a sample of 300 was used .The Yamane method of obtaining sample size from a given population was used.

The Yamane method is
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

The main method of data collection was both primary and secondary. Primary data was collected through questionnaire administered on the population sample. The secondary data was collected from the HR department of ABC Transport Plc and from literature.

Primary data were collected through questionnaire administered on the junior and supervisory staff of the case organization numbering 300 drawn from the population of 900. They were instructed to fill the questionnaire and return same within 7 working days. It is in a likert scale format ranging from 1 to 10. They were asked to rank listed motivational items

according to preference level with 1 least preferred and 10 most preferred. The same goes for personality characteristics. They were again asked to rank listed personality characteristics according to how they value them or how important, each were to them with 1 least valued and 10 most valued or important.

The questionnaire was in three parts. Part one covered respondent's biography. Part two contains items of motivation or motivational activities. Part three contains items of personality characteristics and bias.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean and percentages

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 225 of them were returned. These constituted 90% of the questionnaire items distributed.

RESULTS:

Table 1 List of Motivational Items

1	Promotion	11	Good interpersonal relationship
2	Performance incentive	12	Paid holidays
3	Salaries and wages	13	Pension scheme
4	Job security	14	Free uniforms
5	Good insurance benefit	15	Transport all
6	Compliance to workman compensation Act	16	Recognition
7	Work-life-balance	17	Guarantee of employee voice
8	Good work environment	18	company rules, regulation, and strict supervision
9	Challenging work	19	Gifts outside salary
10	Punishment	20	Regular trainig

Source: Human Resources Dept. ABC Transport plc

Table 2 Employee Preference via Ranking

S/N	Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Total most preferre d	TOT AL
1.	Promotion	15	15	7	8	7	14	21	20	48	70	225
2.	Performance Incentives	20	15	10	12	10	9	10	15	51	85	225
3.	Good Salary and Wages	15	10	8	12	10	9	10	15	51	85	225
4.	Job Security	2	4	5	10	10	15	20	38	52	65	225
5.	Good Insurance Benefits	22	18	6	8	11	18	20	25	40	57	225

6.	Workman Compensation Scheme	11	11	13	27	27	20	33	34	43	39	225
7.	Good Retirement Benefit Scheme	14	12	12	24	24	34	34	33	18	20	225
8.	Work – Life – Balance	25	9	10	15	20	22	27	25	15	57	225
9.	Good Interpersonal Relationship	15	11	13	24	28	19	22	28	29	36	225
10.	Good Work Environment	12	7	8	5	45	50	51	12	13	22	225
11.	Challenging Work	45	50	35	10	15	23	18	7	9	13	225
12.	Punishment	96	49	26	25	10	8	6	2	2	7	225
13.	Paid Holidays	10	18	25	21	27	25	30	30	22	28	225
14.	Free Uniforms	42	39	15	10	8	5	8	20	28	50	225
15.	Payment Of Transport Allowances	10	20	15	12	20	19	25	15	18	71	225
16.	Employee Voice	20	22	18	22	27	29	38	22	11	16	225
17.	Recognition Of Achievement	22	19	18	19	21	20	14	24	32	39	225
18.	Regular Training	18	25	19	21	28	20	25	21	20	28	225
19.	Strict Supervision	5	11	08	20	31	43	43	27	22	11	225
20.	Gifts Outside Salary	0	2	0	3	2	4	5	8	75	125	225

Table 3Summary List of Most Preferred Motivational Items.(in descending order)

S/N	DESCRIPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE%
1.	Gifts outside salary	125	55.5 %
2.	Salaries and wages	85	37.8 %
3.	Transport allowances	71	31.5 %
4.	Promotion	70	31.0 %
5.	Job security	65	28.8 %
6.	Good insurance benefit	57	25.3 %
7.	Work – life – balance	57	25.3 %
8.	Performance incentive	50	22.7 %
9.	Free income	50	22.7 %
10.	Recognition of achievement	39	17.3 %

List of Personality Characteristics

1. Interest
2. Beliefs

3. Attitudes
4. Values
5. Expectation
6. Aspirations
7. Religion
8. Age
9. Age group
10. Sex
11. Length of service
12. Ethnicity

Source: Literature , HR Department ABC Transport plc

Each of these shapes behaviour and subjective response to motivational item.

FINDINGS

1. There are several numbers of motivational items open for use by the Road Transport Companies in Imo state
2. The most widely used motivational items by Road Transport Companies in Imo state were Promotion ,Performance incentives, Salaries and wages, Transport allowances, Provision of free uniforms .Punishment ,Regular training ,Recognition of achievement
3. The five most preferred/valued motivational items by employees of Road Transport Companies in Imo state include; Good salary and wages, Gifts outside salary and wages, Guarantee of job security, Promotion and Regular payment of transport allowances
4. The least preferred motivational material activity by Road Transport employees in Imo state is the use of punishment.

DISCUSSION

1. The availability of array of motivational activities means that there is no need to stick to one type of motivational techniques. Stereotyping motivational activities for years do not take care of changes in the environment and personality characteristics.
2. This study discovered the high value staff attached to material gifts outside salaries and wages. These gifts which may include monetary gifts from staff and customers portends danger. It may include bribes to carry out activities that negates the company interest or favour customer such as carriage of illegal loads and diversion of goods. Furthermore, ranking gifts more than even good salaries and wages means that salary is often seen as an entitlement for just being a worker in the organization and thus; carries not much motivational value. occasional gifts are seen as an addition not always expected. This finding is in line with the finding of Ahauzu (1985).
3. The high value attached to good salaries and wages is not unconnected with the poor economic situation and high inflation in Nigeria. The standard of living is nose diving with the fall in the real value of money. The purchasing power of naira has fallen with the high exchange rate to a dollar soaring high.
4. Guarantee of job security was seen in this study as possessing high motivational value. The employees are faced with dwindling job opportunity today. The employment market is saturated with people looking for job in all sectors of the economy. Industries are folding up and few industries are springing, up. Consequently, the guarantee of job security

portends a high motivational value to all workers, road transport industry not an exception.

5. Punishment as a motivational material activity is least preferred by employees of road transport companies. This result is expected. Road transport sub sector lacks proper organization and is filled up with some illiterate employees as drivers, mechanics and conductors. These cadre of people are prone to negative activities such as load diversion, over speeding, material theft, carriage of illegal loads, blatant extension of return time etc. They will prefer not to be punished for these sharp practices that negatively affect company profits.
6. Good insurance benefits and work – life – balance was also discovered to be highly valued as motivation material. The issue of insurance benefits is of very important to employees of road transport workers going by the nature of their work.; accidents, high blood pressure, and death. Thus, insurance cover such as life insurance, workman compensation scheme, health insurance etc. are highly regarded. As for high preference shown to work – life – balance, it is expected in that employees engaged in such works as drivers, attendants, mechanics and supervisors are engaged in activities that takes them out for a long period of time and thus need time to handle other life matters like family, health, education and community services.

CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

We have looked into what motivational activities are available for use by the road transport companies. We equally looked into what is currently in use and the impact of perception or value attached to each motivational activities play in the selection and acceptance. It is indeed discovered that the managers' solely choice and administration of motivational materials on the employees without involving the concerned staff sometimes may not be the preferred. or valued material of choice. Consequently, it is germane that the effective motivational activity will be the one selected with the active participation of the individual employees. It is high time group incentive plan where employees are lumped together should be de-emphasized. Individualized incentive plan is an option. With this, his preference and personality characteristics are factored in. this is in line with the tenet of the cognitive theory of motivation. That is the motive behind our motivation potential model.

MOTIVATION POTENTIAL MODEL

Model formulation

This model is anchored on the cognitive theory of motivation and expectancy – valency theory of Victor Vroom (1964). According to Ahauzu (1985) the main idea behind the cognitive theories lies in the believe that human behaviour is determined by his personality characteristics, while that of expectancy – valence theory is the believe that action leads to reward and the weight of such reward lies in satisfying interest and expectation. The key element in our model is individual preference and personality characteristics. These are the keys to motivation. For an individual to be motivated, the motivational activity has to be the one he prefers/valued and which he believes will result to his satisfying his interest and expectation. Thus;

P_m = Motivational item preference level (Ranked in a continuum of 1 –10 by the individual).

P_c = personality characteristic value level. (Ranked in a continuum of 1 –10 by the individual).

MP = The motivation potential of a given motivation item or items if applied on the individual. Put in another way the rate at which such item or items could motivate the affected individual to higher performance.

Our model

$$MP = \frac{(\sum P_m)}{N} \times \frac{(\sum P_c)}{N}$$

The motivational potential (MP) of a given motivational item is determined by the multiplication effect of mean (P_m) and mean (P_c)

Model demonstration

Assuming employee A is subjected to 5 motivational items in one promotion year and data from preference rating/ranking scale showed he ranked these items in terms of preference as follows;

Promotion	6/10
Salaries	7/10
Training	4/10
Good working environment	3/10
Paid holidays	10

Aggregate ratings 30

For personality characteristics scale, he rated the underlisted as follows:

Interest	5/10
Sex	7/10
Religion	5/10
Morality & values	10/10
Length of service	8/10

Aggregate rates 35/50

$$MP = \frac{(\sum P_m)}{N} \times \frac{(\sum P_c)}{N}$$

$$MP = \frac{30}{5} \times \frac{35}{5} = 6 \times 7 = 42$$

There are 42 % chances of these motivation activities spurring this individual but not to a very high performance. Management needs to consider another set of motivational items for him. Let's consider another employee whose data from the same scales showed as is contained in the table below

S/N	Motivational item rankings	Ranks	Personality characteristic rankings	Ranks
1.	Promotion	8/10	Interest	10/10
2.	Salaries	9/10	Sex	10/10
3.	Training	7/10	Religion	4/10
4.	Good work environment	8/10	Values	8/10
5.	Paid holidays	10/10	Length of service	8/10
	Total	42/50		40/50

$$MP = \frac{\sum P_m}{N} \times \frac{\sum P_c}{N} = \frac{42}{5} \times \frac{40}{5}$$

$$= 8.4 \times 8 = 67.2$$

Thus, the motivation potential of these items on this individual is high (67.2 %)

Let's further consider a third employee with the underlisted data:

S/N	Motivational activities	Rankings	Personality characteristics	Rankings
1.	Promotion	10/10	Interest	10/10
2.	Salaries	10/10	Sex	10/10
3.	Regular Training	10/10	Religion	10/10
4.	Good working environment	10/10	Values	10/10
5.	Paid holidays	10/10	Length of service	10/10
		50/50		50/50

$$MP = \frac{\sum x}{N} \times \frac{\sum y}{N} = \frac{50}{5} \times \frac{50}{5}$$

$$= 10 \times 10 = 100$$

This very individual motivation will jump to high heaven and his performance correspondingly will skyrocket to the space. Motivation potential (MP) of these is extremely high and these motivational items should be the best combination for this him since these combination appeared to meet his preference and valued personality characteristics. It is good to mention that although theses motivational items appear best for this staff, it may not be the best for another staff due to the so called 'individual difference'.

Model assumption

1. There is a pre-existing company-wide employee motivational items preference rating (MPR) Scale/chart
2. There is a pre-existing company-wide employee personality characteristics impact assessment (PIA) Scale/chart..

These two charts can be pre-prepared through diagnostic approach by the HR department and or consultants, kept and reviewed from time to time to take care of changes in work environment and personal characteristics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First; The current practice of lumping employees in groups for motivational activities should be de-emphasized.

Secondly, Management should have a re-think on how motivational material is selected and administered. Individual contribution or participation should be factored in to take care of his preference and personal characteristics that may influence his subjective response.

Thirdly, the high value attached to gift outside salary should be looked into and positively explored through carefully planned, organized and informal way. Something like special salary accorded exceptionally hardworking employees only known to the manager, the chief accountant and the concerned individual.

Fourthly, the motivation potential model propounded and recommended should be used to increase effectiveness and efficiency of motivational efforts while reducing wastage of resources on activities that may lead to minimal results in terms of spurring employees into higher performance.

Fifthly, selection process for determining motivation activities should be through diagnostic means involving the manager, HR department and the individual concerned to avoid it looking like an imposition.

Finally, to circumvent the problem of the cumbersomeness of this diagnostic approach, preparation of MPR and PIA charts should be done, kept and reviewed every two years to take care of changes in the environment, the job and personality characteristics.

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