

Motivation as a Tool for Enhancing Productivity in the Organised Private Sector of the Nigerian Economy: A Case Study of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Nigeria

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Abstract

Motivation in terms of organizational behaviour, administrative behaviour, and industrial psychology is the elixir for turning on the worker to work harder and get satisfied while doing his work. But its improper use on workers especially in the service sector as the hospitality industry has reduced the workers morale, job satisfaction and occupational prestige; and has reduced the worker himself to a laughing stock in the Nigerian society. To reverse this trend, and correct the anomalies that result from the improper application of the theories of motivation in the hospitality industry, this paper reviewed the theories of motivation and is of the opinion that an integrated approach that lays emphasis on the work to be done, the worker and the organizational goals would create a satisfied workforce within the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Motivation; operant conditioning; reinforced behaviour; organisational goals.

Introduction

Human beings are the most important resources in an organization. Without them, it is impossible to achieve the goals or objectives of the organization. It is essential to consider the ways of getting them to do their work willingly and enthusiastically, and be satisfied with their jobs (job satisfaction). Before a worker gets satisfied with his job, his problems, needs and aspirations have to be identified by the management so that possible solutions could be given. Man's problems arise due to the fact that he has lots of responsibilities not only to himself but also to his fellows and the society as he interacts with his environment and others in the society. These needs, responsibilities and interaction with his environment urge him to act or respond in a particular manner towards the satisfaction of these needs and maintenance of the social system.

The concept of motivation explains why man acts in a particular manner and at certain periods in time. This paper, therefore, examines the why and how of human action, and how employees in the hospitality industry could be motivated to work towards the achievement of organizational and personal goals and objectives.

Statement of the Problem

The hospitality industry is one of the rapidly growing sectors of the Nigerian economy. A good number of workers in this sector are not satisfied with their jobs because they are not motivated while on the job by their employers. They are exploited, "used" and "dumped" by their employers when they are no longer able to care for themselves. This unwholesome behaviour by investors and managers in this sector is primarily due to two reasons: to keep up profit, and lack of knowledge of how to motivate their workers while on the job. To correct these anomalies this paper, therefore, examines the following problems: what are the different theories of motivation open to the managers in the hospitality industry? Why should they apply these theories in the hospitality industry? And how would they apply

these theories so that both the workers and the organizations can realise their objectives at the same time.

Theories of Motivation and their Application

Several theories have been developed by social scientists, and all these theories tend to rationalise human motives. As social beings, we are disposed to select social esteemed reasons for our actions and present them to others and also to ourselves, as grounds for our actions. The essence of these is to improve our social and economic conditions. Thus, the study of motivation attempts to answer the question: "why" of human behaviour. The perception of a particular need creates tension or a motivation force in man, and this tension leads man to act in a particular manner in order to achieve or satisfy that particular need. This perception-action continuum could be linked to Skinner's (1969) terminology of "stimulus- response", that is, action and reaction. A particular stimulus (action) gives rise to a response (reaction).

Motivation, therefore, is the drive to reduce tension caused by unsatisfied needs or the willingness to make efforts to achieve a goal or a reward. Just as human beings have needs and aspirations that must be satisfied through motivated actions, so also are social systems as business units and industrial establishments as the hotel and catering industry. The hotel and catering industry has several motives the most important of which are to provide safe and adequately satisfying services to its clients and or customers; a sound rewarding system for workers; safe and healthy working environment for its staffs; enough profit to keep the business alive irrespective of the ups and downs in the national economic cycles; and above all, enough dividends (profits) for the investors in the industry. These motives (aims and objectives) can only be achieved if the workers in the hospitality industry are adequately motivated to work towards that end because a motivated worker is a satisfied worker.

Scholars in the behavioural sciences and management sciences have variously defined this concept of motivation. Edwin Flippo (1980) described it as the skill of aligning employees' and organizational interests so that behaviour results in the achievement of employees' wants simultaneously with attainment of organizational goals. From the definition above, it follows that a motivated worker is one who sees his or her work as helping him or her to achieve his or her important goals in life. In a work situation, motivation has been defined by Steers and Porter (1970) as "the various conditions responsible for the variations in the intensity, quality and direction of an on-going behaviour. It includes how behaviour gets started, energised, sustained, directed or stopped. It is also the process of governing choices made by persons among alternative forms of voluntary activity. This definition by Steers and Porter seems very much to be in line with Skinner's theory on behaviour modification (Skinner, 1969); Maslow's hierarchy of needs; (Maslow, 1943); and McGregor's theories X and Y (McGregor, 1960) all of which go to explain the concept of motivation and its applications.

B.F. Skinner (1969) in his theory about human behaviour seeks explanation of behaviour not from within the individual, but from without. The stimulus to behaviour Skinner contends, can be observed and measured. One only needs to establish behavioral objectives and to engineer appropriate responses through a conditioning process (operant conditioning). According to Skinner, humans are malleable mechanisms. They are without mystery and merit little concern for proposed felt needs of dignity and autonomy. He says "operant conditioning shapes behaviour as sculptor shapes a lump of clay"

The basic engineering process involves rewarding desired behaviour and ignoring undesired behaviour or actions. Over a period of time, the rewarded behaviour ("reinforced

behaviour”) will be repeated while the undesired and unrewarded action or behaviour will disappear. But he contends that the punishment of undesired behaviour should be avoided as this contributes to feelings of restraint and actions of rebellion. It is important, that, the reinforcement of the desired behaviour in a positive direction be done soon after the behaviour is affected so that the employee would link the reward with the behaviour immediately. For example: if a waiter finds a handbag left behind by a customer after service, and the bag contains a large sum of money, and the waiter deposits the bag with the management for safe keeping until the owner is identified; the management could reward the waiter with a promotion to encourage honesty among its staff.

To activate behaviour modification of the employees in the positive direction, the managers should do the followings:

- a. Identify the desired performance in specific terms. In the example given above, it is for honestly reporting and lodging customer’s lost items found in the bar or restaurant with the management without any fraction of the item taken away by the waiter.
- b. Identify the reward that would interest the employee concerned. Giving him an instant cash bonus may not be appropriate. It might be identical with the employee making away with a fraction of the financial content of the bag. A commendation letter immediately followed by a promotion in rank would be most appropriate in this instance.
- c. Make the reward a direct consonance of the behaviour. In the commendation letter, he is commended for his or her honesty for lodging the missing items intact with the management; and his or her promotion based on exemplary behaviour. The promotion runs through his or her career with the company.

The reward system should also depend on the reaction of the employee. In some, behaviour modification rests upon two fundamental concepts which are:

1. That people act in ways they find most personally rewarding
2. That by controlling rewards, peoples’ behaviour can be modified in ways that are conducive to organizational effectiveness.

According to Maslow (1943), human needs tend to follow a hierarchical pattern from the most basic needs of food and shelter to the highest level needs of self actualization. The nature of the needs enables us to understand why people act as they do. Maslow categorized human needs into five, viz:

1. Psychological needs, e.g. shelter, food, sleep, sex and money
2. Safety needs, e.g. security, order, job security, security at place of work, union membership, etc.
3. Social needs, e.g. acceptance by work group and family, affection, interaction with others, sense of belonging.
4. Egoistic needs, e.g. self-respect, prestige, status, title, recognition, promotion.
5. Self-fulfillment, e.g. achievement and growth.

Form Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, if a person has survival needs such as food and roof over his head, his entire energy is directed towards how to eke out an existence – food and shelter. It is only when his basic needs (physiological needs) which determine his survival are met that one can think of other needs. Thus each need grows in urgency as the other most basic needs are to a reasonable extent satisfied. A hungry man may not be interested in status and prestige and will do any type of work to eat and get his hunger satisfied.

Maslow’s theory postulates two frameworks or premises for analysis of human behaviour in any social setting. These are:

1. Man's needs are insatiable, but a satisfied need can never be a motivator of human behaviour. Only needs not yet satisfied can influence behaviour.
2. Man's needs are in order of priority or scale of preference and are being met or satisfied in their order of importance.

But the experience with some business organizations shows that managers tend to ignore this basic truth that man's basic needs and aspirations are mostly achieved by means of extrinsic rewards that are manipulated by others – the management; and that needs associated with self-actualization as status, prestige, and recognition is achieved by intrinsic rewards.

In establishments where the management has recognized the hierarchical nature of human needs, the management is sensitive to the changing needs of the subordinate groups and individuals in order to provide the best atmosphere for increased productivity and satisfaction of the workers' needs. Douglas MacGregor (1960) in his postulation of theories X and Y tried to explain human behaviour through two extremely opposing attitudinal pairs – theories X and Y; and both theories work on three basic assumptions:

- a. Behaviour is caused
- b. Behaviour is motivated
- c. Behaviour is goal directed

Macgregor's theory X visualises the worker as inherently lazy, passive and unambitious, hence its appeal to most managers of our establishments who take pride in pushing their subordinates about and around. The assumptions of the theory X are:

1. The average human being has an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it if he can.
2. Because man dislikes work, most people must be coerced (forced), controlled, directed, and motivated to work. The motivation is by fear of punishment or threat of punishment. An example is the threat of dismissal (unemployment). The threat will make workers put in their best towards the achievement of organizational goals – (a carrot and stick approach).
3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition and wants security above all things.

These negative assumptions underlie the mechanization of people in the production process (people behave like machines) with the workers under strict supervision by the supervisors and managers. The management only provides conditions necessary for production to take place. Carrot and stick handy, without caring so much about the conditions of service and the workers' health, and social conditions. The theory therefore provides owners of businesses the opportunities to employ workers, use them until they are useless and dismiss them the moment they are no longer useful. Our hotels are no exception. Theory Y, on the other hand, takes into consideration certain facts about life and recognizes the human element or gives a human touch to the business units and their operations. The theory assumes that:

- a. To work is to play. Every work if meaningful should be a source of joy and happiness to the worker. It should be satisfying to make the worker voluntarily perform his task. There is no inherent dislike for work. A man develops an attitude towards work based on his experience with the work. You will enjoy doing the work of your choice.
- b. Man will exercise self control and self direction in the service or accomplishment of objectives to which he is committed. External threats and punishments do not

necessarily motivate people to work hard towards the achievement of organisational goals.

- c. A worker's commitment to the objectives of the establishment is a function of the reward associated with his achievement, the most significant of the rewards being the satisfaction of the ego and self-development needs. So people select goals if they see some kind of reward be it material or mental (psychic).
- d. The average human being under proper conditions does not shy away from responsibilities, but also seeks for responsibility.
- e. A lot of people have the capacity to be creative and imaginative and capable of solving organizational problems. Management, therefore, cannot monopolize creativity and initiatives.
- f. Under conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the worker are only partially utilized, man has unlimited potentials.

But it has to be borne in mind that theory Y can only work well where there is a high level of literacy and where people have reasonably satisfied their basic needs, as well as social needs. It works better in the developed rather than in the developing societies.

Reasons for Motivation in the Hospitality Industry

There is the need to motivate workers in the hospitality industry for the following reasons:

1. It creates good human relations between staff and management.
2. It enhances job satisfaction.
3. It makes workers display enthusiasm and loyalty to the management.
4. It influences the productivity and efficiency of the workers.
5. It increases esteem (ego) and cooperation among workers in the establishment.
6. It reduces tension and conflicts between management and staff and helps to solve disciplinary problems.
7. It helps the industry to grow by reducing union-management conflicts that hamper productivity.
8. It encourages the involvement and commitment of staff to the attainment of not only the organizational goals but also staff goals and needs.

In Nigeria where the per-capita income is very low, with hyper-inflation, low standard of living as people cannot afford two square meals a day, poverty, over-population, the high degree of illiteracy, disorganized and unorganized labour, as well as other economic and social vices especially insecurity; theory X is most ideal, therefore, we are not surprised to see our hotel managers treat employees as slaves.

Under the conditions stated above - where workers can hardly feed well, pay their rents and transport themselves to and from work, about 70% of human creativity is on how to get over to the next day; how to fill the stomach and solve the problem of physical survival. The satisfaction of egoistic needs is a dream. In Nigeria, today, financial incentive is a motivator hence industrial unrest and agitations for wage increase predominate the workers' demands. It is clear that no Nigerian worker has ever asked for less working hours in a week unlike his or her European counterparts who ask for fewer working hours. Banks operate on Saturdays and Sundays, so also do our hotels. In France, men are asking for paternity leave, but in Nigeria women will soon start asking their employers to allow them work during the maternity leaves to get extra pay. Money means everything to us.

Application of Motivation in the Hotel Industry

The various theories of motivation and their applications have been exhaustively discussed in this paper, but there is the need for the managers of the hotels to adopt an integrated

approach that lays emphasis on the job, the worker, and the organization. This method emphasizes the fit between three variables:

1. The task to be done
2. The organization and its objectives
3. The people in the organization and their objectives

This integrated approach according to Sherleker and Raut (1979) suggests that the management should develop a proper organization which depends on the nature of work to be done and on the caliber of workers to execute the work. It implies that the management tries as much as possible to create or design the organization in such a way that both the needs of the employees and those of the organization are harmonized and blended for maximum motivation, productivity and profitability. People will not only be happy doing the jobs they are employed to do, but they will be attaining their hearts desires while doing the job. And the organization will remain buoyant and profitable because it is people-oriented.

In our hotels, it has been noticed that the staffs, especially the junior staffs are not properly motivated in their work places. The managements emphasize more on productivity adopting mostly the tenets of theory X postulated by MacGregor. To motivate the workers in the hospitality industry, it is necessary that the managers in the industry should do the following:

1. Provision of staff buses and transport facilities:

After the hectic days work, those of them on night duties have always fallen prey to bandits. They are robbed, molested and in extreme cases maimed or killed while waiting for buses or taxis to convey them home. This is particularly true of hotel employees in Lagos State, Abuja and Ibadan. But if the management of the hotels provides buses for house-to-house dropping of night workers under tight security, this issue will not be a problem.

2. Provision of recreational facilities:

Hotel staffs are like the proverbial hunting dogs that kill the game in a hunting expedition only to become enemies at home during the preparation of the meals by the hunter. Caterers have never been seen enjoying any recreational facilities either in their work places or elsewhere due to the ethics of their jobs. Thus we have never had a sportsman or woman in this country who are caterers or hoteliers, or employees in the hospitality industry. But they will host sportsmen and women in recreational facilities in their places of work at subsidised rates. The management should allow them to take part in sports and enjoy the recreational facilities available at their places of work at specific periods of the week and take part in sports, and even form football teams to enable them contribute to the social development of the country.

3. Staff development programmes

Most hotels would want to employ already trained staff personnel to avoid spending monies on their staffs on further trainings, and would employ untrained employees who do not have the potentials of being trained in institutions of higher learning or catering institutes. This is done either due to the quest for profits or the fear of losing such staff after training. Staff development programmes should be adopted for better results.

4. The need for better pay packs (wages and salaries)

The staffs also need increased pay packets. Money in Nigeria is a motivator and would make the workers put in their best for the attainment of organizational goals. Their pay packs should take the inflationary trends in the country into consideration.

5. The need for good housing facilities for the workers

The hotels should develop housing schemes for their workers by providing them adequate accommodation within a housing estate. This would facilitate the easy transportation of the workers to and from work by their employers and help the workers out of their housing problems.

6. Longer maternity periods

Longer maternity periods should be given to their female staffs to enable them attain better health status before resuming work. But the length of the maternity leave should be limited to a minimum of three months and a maximum of six months to avoid un-productivity.

7. Introduction of long service award

As some other establishments do, the hotel industry should introduce long service awards to their staffs who have served them for at least ten years. This will reduce the rate of staff turn-over, absenteeism, poor morale, and job dissatisfaction.

8. Staff welfare services

Staff should be given better welfare services as:

- a. Free reception halls for weddings when they are wedding
- b. Subsidized lodging and accommodation for staff families when they are on holidays
- c. Staff cooperative shops funded by both the staffs and the management.

9. Workers' representation in the management

Workers' representatives should be given a say in making management and operational decisions affecting the workers and their work in our hotels. In most of our hotels, they are not even allowed to unionise.

10. Profit sharing.

The hotels should adopt profit sharing as in banks. This is a device in which certain percentage of the establishment's annual profits is shared among the workers at the end of each year.

11. Equity holding

Hotels that are quoted in the stock exchange should allocate certain percentage of their shares to their staffs each time they want to offer shares for sale to the members of the public. This will help to bring congruence in the organizational and employees' goals.

12. Improved communication

All employees should be adequately informed of the organization's decisions, plans, and policies. When given the right information, the workers can then direct their energies towards the realization of the company's objectives. They need to know

their responsibilities and limits of their authorities. They also need to know what is going on in the establishment as they affect the organization and the individuals. There should be an avenue for open communication of information, ideas and grievances.

13. Adequate compensation plan

The establishment should map out a comprehensive compensation plan. The compensation plan must include incentives and bonus and profit sharing bonus. The compensation plan should be communicated to them to arouse their interest on the job, and should be well administered.

14. Healthy working environment

The employees should be given healthy working environment for their mental and physical health. Reminders and notices should be displayed at strategic places to remind them of safety precautions.

15. Job enrichment

Finally, the management could make the jobs more interesting to workers through job rotation and job enrichment, praise for the work well done and freedom of initiatives.

If the above points or ways of motivating staffs are employed, the ultimate objectives of the hospitality industry which are increased standard, productivity and profitability will be achieved.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper has examined the various theories of motivation and their application in management especially in the hospitality industry and agrees with the motivation theorists that behaviour is caused, motivated, and goal directed. And that an organization runs into crises when the organizational goals are not in harmony with those of the employees. This has been the major cause of business failures in the hospitality industry in the country today. It has also enumerated reasons for the motivation of workers in the industry and methods of doing this and is of the view that what Nigerian workers in the industry need are not satisfaction of egoistic wants but the satisfaction of their physiological needs due to the nature of the nation's economy. The paper also pointed out that it is possible for the workers in the industry to have their self-actualization needs or egoistic needs satisfied while at the same time attaining the organizational goals if the managers in the sector can adopt an integrated approach to the motivation of their workers. And this integrated approach takes into consideration the nature of task in the industry, the nature and needs of the people who perform these tasks, and the aims and objectives of the organization (hotels)

It is only when the organization attains its aims and objectives at the expense of those of the workers that it runs into crises because the workers would try one way or the other to attain their own personal aims and objectives at the expense of the organization. The organisation can always avoid this by adopting the recommendations made in this paper especially the involvement of staffs in agenda setting; improving communication systems and compensation plans for the workers; provision of safe working environment and job enrichment.

The management of our hotels and other firms in the hospitality industry should develop proper organizations which will depend on the nature of work to be done, and on the particular type of workers to be involved in the work. If the management of the hotels

could develop appropriate organizations that satisfy both the needs of the job (task fit) and the needs of the workers, then the worker is adequately motivated for higher productivity and attainment of organizational goals.

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