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Determinates of Employee Motivation in Various Organizations in Lusaka, Zambia

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The goal of the study was to investigate the determinants of employee motivation in organizations in Lusaka District, Zambia. The study sought to solicit views from workers in various organizations across the city to better inform future research.

**Methodology:** The research design was a non-experimental cross section design utilization a quantitative approach. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics through IMB Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24.

**Findings:** Majority of the respondents (62%) cited having a good salary as a motivational factor. Others mentioned other factors such as good staff development (48%) and being respected, supported and listened to (32%) as their motivational factors. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (58%) did state they were motivated in the workplace and reported satisfaction with their work lives. Most said that their opinions were respected (78%), they were responsibilities outside their specializations (66%), and had enough time to socialize with friends and families (66%). Respondents also had high knowledge (66%) and positive attitudes (84%) on employee motivation.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Utilization the Clayton Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth Model of 1969, the research investigated the determinates of motivation among the workforce in a localized geographic area in Lusaka district. Workplaces should reenforce physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs among their employees for increased performance and outputs. The researcher recommends provision of a good salary based on work output, safe conducive environments in the workplaces and good path career development for workers. Organizations should be in the forefront in ensuring a conducive work environment that makes it possible for workers to enjoy their work. As long as workers are compensated for their work outputs fairly, they would be highly motivated which will improve job performance.

**Keywords:** Employee, Motivation, Human Resource, Organizational Behavior

JEL Codes: D7

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## **Determinates of Employee Motivation in** Various Organizations in Lusaka, Zambia

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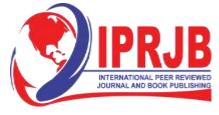
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### INTRODUCTION

Effective utilization of human resource by any organization is one of the attainable goals that effectively ensure improved productivity and success in today's competitive markets (Mwaba and Dar, 2025). Human resource management is an aspect of organizational management that had previously been ignored. It is now understood that having an organization with a motivated workforce is key to organizational success and prosperity (Emmanuel, 2020). Motivation in the workplace is therefore of utmost importance.

Lorincova et al, (2019) further stated that having the right structures of employee motivational factors in place as part of an organization's management, leads to business efficiency met by employees at all levels causing success and sustainability for the organization.

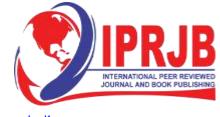
Motivation as a concept can be defined as a "psychological process were the unsatisfied needs produces drives that focus on goals" (Ezenwakwelu, 2017); or a term understood to be "an essential part that initiates, directs and sustains a person's behavior over time". Motivation therefore is an expression of specific factors that influence behavior portrayed by an individual. For example, a worker may decide to perform better in their workplace because they get praise and recognition from their employers. The praise and recognition become motivational factors which pushes them to work harder. Consequently, many things have the ability to motivate an employee to work hard. Some of these motivational factors includes money, recognition from the employer and rewards in various forms as motivators for hard work (Ganta, 2014; Mupashi, 2021).

Motivation in all its forms has been studied extensively in recent years by various authors who almost all agree that there are two essential types of motivation: innate and acquired motivation (Napolitano and Skewes, 2018; Fishbach and Woolley, 2022); and many theoretical models have been developed to explain this phenomenon. The self-determination theory (SDT) is one such model which states that an individual can experience different types of motivation throughout their work lives. The theory focused on intrinsic and identified motivation which causes positive organizational and individual growth that influence employees' work performance (Mangenelli, Thibault-Landry and Carpentier, 2018).

Despite widespread knowledge on the importance of motivation in the workplace, many managers still find it a challenge to identify factors which can best be used to motivate their employees towards better work performance. This can be so because, different things motivate different individuals even when employees are placed in similar environments. Furthermore, what may motivate someone at present many not be a motivational factor in the future. That is why it is vital to conduct continuous research in various organizations at different intervals to identify factors that motivate employees in the workplaces.

In Lusaka, many studies have been conducted on the effect of employee motivation on various aspects of employee work life and there have been comparison performed between intrinsic and extrinsic factors which influence employee motivation in the various sectors; ranging from banks to the aviation industry. As Lusaka is the capital city of Zambia, it is made up of high performing employees in mostly stressful job environments. Understanding what motivates such individuals in the performance of their duties is essential in improving work outputs beneficial for all organizations.

This study therefore came at an opportune time to add to the body of knowledge on the determinants of employee motivation in Lusaka district, Zambia.



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### **Statement of the Problem**

Ideally all employees are supposed to be highly motivated to perform their work especially in organizations that deliberately put measures in place to address employee motivation in the workplace. This organizational behavior encourages high productivity which guarantees organizational growth in the long run. But in most cases a look at various organizations, highlights employees who are unmotivated and motivation of workers is not the focus of managers in these institutions. The lack of motivation is evidences by increased employee turnover and dissatisfaction with the company, employers and even with their fellow employees causing dissatisfied employees with reduced and substandard work outputs. All these negative consequences will cause losses for the organization both financially and in expert human resource which would need to have a rehiring process again which is costly.

Furthermore, most of the literature on the determinants of employee motivation in various organizations is based on studies conducted outside the country. What motivates individuals outside Zambia may not be applicable in this country where the culture and environment differ. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to conduct this study in Lusaka district, Zambia.

# **Research Objectives**

# **General Objective**

• To identify the determinants of Employee Motivation in organizations in Lusaka District, Zambia.

# **Specific Objectives**

- To assess knowledge levels of employees on employee motivation in the workplace in Lusaka District, Zambia.
- To determine attitude of employees towards importance of employee motivation in Lusaka District, Zambia.
- To ascertain other factors influencing Employee Motivation in Lusaka District, Zambia

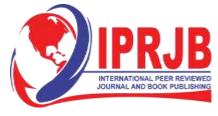
### LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Theoretical Framework**

# Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Theory of Motivation (ERG)

The Clayton Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory of motivation (Alderfer, 1969), is a modified version of Maslow's Need Theory where Alderfer condensed six levels of Maslow's human needs into three levels. Alderfer proposed that human needs can be grouped under three categories namely: Existence (Physiological and Safety needs), Relatedness (social needs) and Growth (Esteem and Self-actualization needs).

The ERG theory recognizes that needs do not have to be ranked in any particular order and more than one need can be in play at any given time; with an equal requirement for them to be met at that time. Furthermore, the theory advises that managers need to understand an individual's multiple needs that may be prevailing at the same time so that they know how to motivate them better. This concept differs from Maslow's Hierarchy of needs which specifies levels of needs experienced by individuals and specifies that lower-level needs have to be satisfied first before the next need can be met. Furthermore, with the ERG theory, if a person is frustrated in meeting some needs at one level, it is possible for them to regress to another need not related to their work. For example, if an employee is unsatisfied with their work, they



may regress to relatedness need and spend most of their time socializing with their friends instead of working.

The ERG theory is therefore less rigid than other motivational theories such as the two-factor theory which looks at hygiene and motivational factors. Even though the two-factor theory does look closely at factors which cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction in workers which the ERG theory does not, it is not as flexible as the ERG theory.

The flexibility of the ERG theory led the researcher to choose it to act as a guide throughout the process of the research. From identification of the variables, formulation of the research questions and up to analysis of data.



Figure 1: ERG Theory of Motivation

Source: Business Jargons, 2023.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Independent Variables (IV)

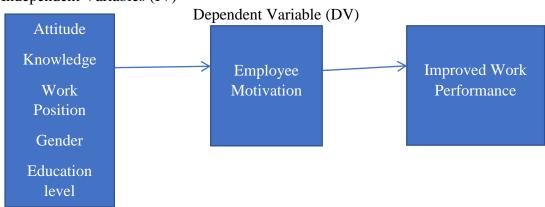
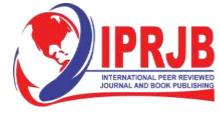


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted from Manzoor, Wei and Asif, 2021.

Figure 2 independent variables (IV) from literature which are expected to influence the dependent variable (DV) and ultimately improve work performance. Motivational factors such as attitude and knowledge once instituted affect employee motivation which then lead to improved work performance.



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# **Empirical Review**

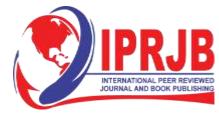
Bai (2024) stated that when organizations invest in good human capital its future is positive as employees end up highly committed and productive. As a result of shortage of staff in various institution, especially for healthcare workers, has led to managers being given the mandate to be in the forefront to retain a sufficient number of workers through motivation (Kim et al, 2021), though sometimes they do not always do so. Adequate staff retention causes increased satisfaction and higher productivity overall even if this is not a common occurrence in most cases. In Kim et al's study findings showed that that majority of participants showed satisfaction with their jobs.

Employee motivation was found to have a direct influence on job satisfaction for employees (Abdul, Arif and Zainudin, 2019,) and their work performances (Sitopu, Sitinjak and Marpaung, 2021; Olabisi, Yacob and Obinna, 2021; Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020; Pawirosumarto and Sarjana, 2016). Furthermore, Alrawahi et al, (2020) conducted a study on the application of the Herzberg's two factor theory of motivation to job satisfaction among clinical laboratories in Omani hospitals and discovered that addressing the two factors in the work place, does ultimately improve motivation and job satisfaction among the employees.

Another theory that has been examined in relation to employee motivation is the selfdetermination model. Notable authors who looked at this aspect include Alam et al and Ashraf et al in 2021, where they performed a need-based study examining the theory among teachers. They discovered that professional and environmental variables influence teacher's motivational levels (Ibid). The factors included autonomy, relatedness and competence which positively influenced the motivational levels of teachers in India. There is therefore a high need to allow individual workers choose their preferred motivational factors especially if they are identified in a particular organization (Hitka et al, 2019). To this effect, Hitka et al, (2019) discovered that there were differences in the level of employee motivation among workers particularly dependent on the age. The authors recommended and implemented intercultural incentive plans that enabled employees to choose their own motivational factors. The authors felt that it is important for employers to consider cultural and age deviation when predicting motivational predilection for employees (Ibid). Werdhiastutie, Suhariadi and Partiwi, (2019) reenforced this statement when they advocated for motivational factors to be given to employees based on their individual needs and desires. They concluded that such actions produce greater individual performance improvement among workers.

Therefore, employees can be motivated via different motivational factors generally grouped into intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Token and Imakulata, 2019). Intrinsic motivational factors are generated by the individual based on what they find enjoyable and satisfying. For instance, in a study by Dhanpat et al, (2021) and (Naong, 2022), training and professional development were identified as motivational factors for professional nurses. For professional employees, development and training in their various fields can be used as an intrinsic motivational factor making employee empowerment a vital means of employee motivation among workers (Hanaysha and Hussain, 2018). On the other hand, when motivational factors are just based on one aspect, such as, financial rewards, employees are most likely to be dissatisfied and unmotivated (Muhammad and Memon, 2012) as these motivational factors are based on external rewards which eventually become unsustainable.

Furthermore, Kalogiannidid, (2021) in their study on the impact of employee motivation on employee performance discovered a number of motivational factors that also impact



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performance such as rewards and recognition, management styles, workplace environment, and employee characteristics. In Zambia, Kunda, Chembe and Mukupa, (2017) established that lack of appropriate resources for use at work may improve the attitude of employees towards a particular goal.

It is for this reason that the researcher chose individual characteristics such as attitude, knowledge level, educational level, gender and position at work to be the focus for this research study.

### **Conclusion**

Organizations should encourage employee motivational measures that are tailored towards maintenance of individual worker. Literature has discovered that different things may motivate workers differently. It is therefore up to the employers to identify specific motivational factors that can be instituted for individual employees, increasing chances of employee retention and improved job performance overall.

# Research Gap

The overall drawback of the literature as a whole is a lack of identification of specific factors which motivate individuals in the workplace in Zambia as there is little research in Zambia on what motivates healthcare workers to improve job performance and satisfaction. All the authors tested and suggested different motivational factors for different individuals. For example, Alrawahi et al, (2020) focused on measuring the two-factor theory as a motivator which left out other motivational factors.

Additionally, most authors discuss motivators in a general sense when it is clear that not everything motivates the same individuals the same way. It is for this reason that the researcher wished to find out a specific direction to follow not in literature by conducting a preliminary enquiry which will lead to comprehensive research on motivation in the workplace in Zambia by quickly identifying factors through this study.

### **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A non-experimental cross-sectional research design was following a positivistic approach, using quantitative methods. A targeted sampling method, no probability sampling method was used to identify respondents for the study. The researcher targeted health care workers in 3 WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Facebook social platforms working within Lusaka district. The sites were conveniently sampled. A total of 50 participants were purposively sampled in this mini study to get a snapshot view of what motivates them in the workplace.



# **RESULTS**

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics (n = 50)** 

Variable	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage (%)
Age		
25 - 34 years	11	22
35 - 39 years	11	22
40 - 49 years	18	36
Above 50 years	10	20
Gender		
Female	35	70
Male	15	30
Marital Status		
Single	39	78
Married	11	22
Religion		
Christian	49	98
Non-Religious	1	2

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents had the following characteristics of note. They were aged between 40 and 49 years old (36%), female (70%), single (78%) and of the Christian religion (98%).



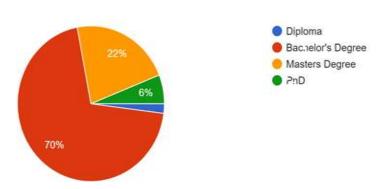


Figure 3: Education Level (n = 50)

Figure 3 shows that majority 70% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education.

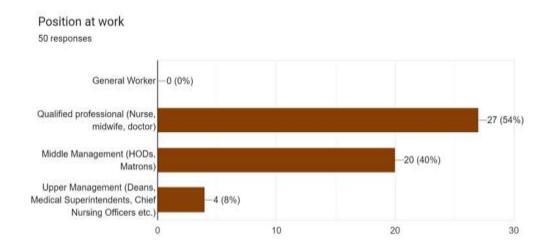


Figure 4: Position at Work (n = 50)

Figure 4 shows that majority of the respondents (54%) held the position of a qualified professional, while the minority of the respondents (8%) held upper-level management positions.

**Table 2: Employee Motivation (n=50)** 

Question	Yes	No
Does your employer motivate you	29 (58%)	21 (42%)
Employer asks what will improve my work satisfaction	11 (22%)	39 (78%)
My opinion is respected	39 (78%)	11 (22%)
Given responsibility outside my work specifications	33 (66%)	17 (34%)
Enough time to socialize with friends and family	33 (66%)	17 (34%)
Use of social media by friends at work	32 (64%)	18 (36%)

From Table 2 above, it shows that most of the respondents (58%) were motivated in the workplace and were satisfied with their work life. Although majority of them (64%) did report that their workmates did use social media platforms during their working hours.

**Table 3: Sources of Employee Motivation for workers (n = 50)** 

Source of employee motivation stated	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage (%)	
Good Salary	31	62	
Staff advancement	24	48	
Job security	2	4	
Good working environment	7	14	
Workshops/awards/incentives	13	26	
To be respected, supported and listened to	16	32	

Table 3 above shows that the majority of respondents (62%) cited good salary as a motivational factor, while (48%) cited good staff development and (32%) wanted to be respected, supported and listened to in the workplace for them to be motivated.

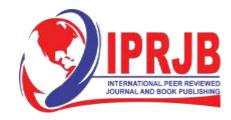


Table 4: Attitude and Knowledge levels of employees on Employee Motivation (n = 50)

Variable	Positive	Negative	Totals
Attitude	42 (84%)	8 (16%)	50 (100%)
	High	Low	
Knowledge	33 (66%)	17 (34%)	50 (100%)

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents (84%) had positive attitude towards employee motivation in the workplace, while (16%) displayed a negative attitude. Sixty six percent (66%) had high knowledge on motivation in the workplace.

### **DISCUSSION**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

The demographic factors showed that the majority of the participants were aged between 40 and 49 years old (36%), female (70%), single (78%) and of the Christian religion (98%). The reason for this type of finding in the demographic characteristics could be attributed to the fact that the social platforms used to collect data were for those platforms for senior staff in the various hospitals and university communities which the researcher is affiliated to. Furthermore, the findings were in agreement with the findings of the study by Mupashi, (2021) and Siamunzwe, (2013) in their respective studies on employee motivation in Zambia.

Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents had a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education and were female, which differed from findings of other studies such as for Mupashi conducted in 2021 and by Masaiti and Naluyele, (2014) where most of the respondents had a college education and were predominantly male. The difference could be attributed to the difference in the targeted organizations across the sampled studies; because some fields are predominantly male dominated while others such as nursing are more female dominated.

### **Employee Motivation**

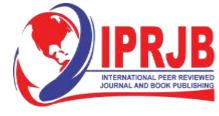
In this study the researcher found that most of the respondents (58%) were motivated in the workplace and were satisfied with their work life. Additionally, the majority of respondents (62%) cited good salary as a motivational factor, while (48%) cited good staff development and (32%) wanted to be respected, supported and listened to in the workplace for them to be motivated. This finding mirrored the findings of Darmawan (2021), in his study. On the other hand, on the contrary to these findings Chirambo (2023) and Chunga, (2024) in their study found that training was one of the incentives for motivation for them.

This contrary finding could be because the study participants for their study was teachers who may value learning more than other incentives.

# **Attitude of the Respondents to Employee Motivation**

As the benefits of employee motivation are tailored towards the general wellbeing of the employees in the workplace, the findings found were not very surprising. In this study the researcher found that majority of the respondents (84%) had positive attitude towards employee motivation in the workplace, while (16%) displayed a negative attitude.

This was in agreement with a finding from various studies that show that there is a direct link between job satisfaction and job performance (Gazi et al, 2024; Katabi et al, 2022), which is in turn connected to the attitude of the employee during the performance of that work. The findings in this study therefore give an encouraging picture towards employee worker performance in the long run.



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# **Knowledge on Employee Motivation**

The finding in this study showed that the majority of the respondents (66%) had high knowledge level towards employee motivation in the workplace, while (34%) had low. knowledge level on employee motivation in the workplace. This supports findings from Zafar et al, (2014) which found that knowledge transfer has a direct influence on employee motivation. So, based on this finding it can be inferred that the participants in this study had high motivation because they had high knowledge transfer on employee motivation.

# **Implications to Research and Practice**

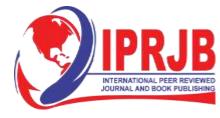
There is need for research to replicated at a larger scale using probability sampling methods so that findings can be generalizable to the whole country and to the Zambian workforce. As findings from this study give a direction on the areas to focus on, it may inform hypothesis development and generalization for later studies. In practice, employers can focus on the factors identified that motivate their staff to ensure increased work performance and output. Furthermore, staff development initiatives and robust incentive structures can be used to enhance employee motivation using different factors.

### **Conclusion**

Employers have a responsibility to be sensitive to employee needs providing good salary, staff development and giving incentives fairly for work well done. One these needs are met, there will be improved staff retention, job satisfaction and increased worker productivity.

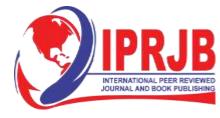
## **Future Research**

Should focus on specific identified motivators and conduct an in-depth look at the level of motivation. The in-depth look should focus on workers with the identified motivational factors such as good salary and respect at work, compared to those without to find out the level of motivation in them. This will clearly identify and prove the factors which motivate individuals in the workplace. Furthermore, longitudinal, sector-specific and policy level studies could be done to identify employee motivators for the Zambian workforce. The future research could be quantitative research utilizing probability sampling methods with advanced statistical tests or it can be qualitative research to get in-depth insights on employee motivation.



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