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MOTIVATION STRATEGY AND ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN YENAGOA BAYELSA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the relationship between motivation strategies and organisational growth of telecommunication firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated the relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity, as well as compensation and reward systems and employee engagement. The study was necessitated by concerns over inadequate employee motivation, declining productivity, and disengagement in the telecommunications sector. Anchored on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the study adopted a quantitative approach using a descriptive survey research design. A census method was employed, covering 122 employees of MTN, Glo, and Airtel, of whom 101 provided valid responses, representing an 82.79% response rate. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed significant positive relationships between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity ($r = 0.514$, $p < 0.001$), and between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement ($r = 0.600$, $p < 0.001$). The study concluded that effective motivational strategies are positively associated with organisational growth indicators. It recommended strengthening employee autonomy, promoting inclusive workplace practices, and implementing fair, transparent, performance-based reward systems.

Keywords: Motivation Strategies, Organisational Growth, Employee Productivity, Employee Engagement.

Introduction

Telecommunication firms across the globe constitute a crucial component of modern economic infrastructure, contributing significantly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the achievement of digital inclusion. Their roles in the digital economies of the twenty-first century cannot be overemphasized, particularly as businesses, governments, and individuals increasingly depend on telecommunications services for communication, information

exchange, and economic activities. This underscores the need to create an enabling organisational environment that supports sustainable growth and competitiveness among telecommunication firms in Nigeria. In this regard, Ogungbesan et al. (2023) opined that organisational growth is an important goal for firms seeking to remain competitive and survive in dynamic business environments.

Organisational growth is a multidimensional concept that encompasses financial, operational, market, and internal capacity indicators. According to Okwor et al. (2022), organisational growth can be assessed through revenue growth, profitability, network expansion, subscriber base, brand equity, competitive positioning, innovation rate, and talent retention. These indicators are particularly relevant to the telecommunications industry, where firms must continuously improve their services, expand their market presence, and develop their internal capabilities to maintain competitive advantage. However, the Nigerian telecommunications sector continues to experience productivity challenges, which have been associated partly with inadequate employee motivation (Akinwale et al., 2023).

The competitive nature of the telecommunications industry makes employee motivation an important managerial consideration. Telecommunications companies are expected to consistently innovate, improve service delivery, and respond to changing customer expectations. Consequently, effective performance management and employee motivation practices are essential for organisational sustainability and long-term success (Tamunosiki-Amadi & Bomanaziba, 2024). Akpotu and Tamunosiki-Amadi (2019) observed that low employee motivation and inadequate skill development can hinder optimal performance and the long-term sustainability of organisations.

Motivation refers to the psychological processes that influence the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of voluntary behaviour. It plays a critical role in enhancing employee performance and fostering organisational development (Akinsola et al., 2023). Motivation strategies, therefore, involve the deliberate application of managerial practices, incentives, and favourable working conditions to direct employees' efforts towards achieving organisational objectives. In contemporary organisation s, the effectiveness of these strategies is increasingly associated with the extent to which employees experience autonomy and empowerment in their assigned responsibilities (Corral, 2024).

Motivated employees are more likely to demonstrate commitment, exhibit lower absenteeism, and adapt more effectively to organisational changes, thereby creating an environment that supports innovation and organisational development (Akinwale et al., 2023). Furthermore, effective motivational strategies contribute to the retention of skilled employees and help minimize dissatisfaction arising from inadequate promotion opportunities, insufficient rewards, and lack of recognition (Ufuophu-Biri & Ayewumi, 2022).

Motivation is also essential for reducing employee turnover and underperformance because it encourages individuals to pursue and accomplish organisational objectives through effective coordination and cooperation. This facilitates the optimal utilization of organisational human resources (Siddiqui & Rida, 2019). Employees generally expect their organisation s to reciprocate the time, knowledge, and effort invested in their jobs through appropriate compensation, recognition, and opportunities for advancement. Where these

expectations are not adequately addressed, employees may become disengaged, resulting in increased absenteeism, staff turnover, and the loss of skilled and experienced personnel (Akinwale et al., 2023).

Against this background, the present study examines the relationship between motivation strategies and organisational growth of telecommunication firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, with particular emphasis on autonomy and empowerment, compensation and reward systems, employee productivity, and employee engagement.

Statement of the Problem

The telecommunications sector remains a critical driver of the Nigerian economy, contributing 14.40% to the nation's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the fourth quarter of 2024 and ranking as the third-largest contributor after crop production and trade, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, Q4 2024 GDP Report). Available sectoral analysis indicates that the industry's contribution increased from 9.46% in 2018 to 14.78% in 2024. Furthermore, projections by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) indicate the potential for further growth through expanded broadband penetration and digital economy policies. This anticipated expansion is expected to promote employment generation and digital inclusion in line with the National Broadband Plan 2020-2025.

Despite the sector's growth prospects, the achievement of sustainable organisational growth remains constrained by several internal organisational challenges. These include inadequate compensation and reward systems, limited employee autonomy and empowerment, and other workplace conditions that may contribute to employee turnover and declining productivity. Such challenges can undermine employee engagement, reduce operational efficiency, and weaken the capacity of telecommunications firms to achieve their organisational objectives.

Employee productivity and engagement are important indicators of organisational effectiveness because they reflect the extent to which employees contribute to organisational activities and objectives. A workforce that lacks adequate motivation is more likely to experience disengagement, absenteeism, increased turnover, and the persistent loss of skilled and experienced professionals (Akinwale et al., 2023). Although telecommunications firms continue to operate in an increasingly competitive business environment, the extent to which their motivational practices support employee productivity and engagement remain an important management concern. In particular, inadequate employee autonomy may restrict individual initiative and participation in organisational decision-making, while poorly administered compensation and reward systems may weaken employee commitment and willingness to contribute to organisational objectives.

It is against this background that this study investigates the relationship between motivation strategies and organisational growth of telecommunication firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, focusing specifically on autonomy and empowerment in relation to employee productivity and compensation and reward systems in relation to employee engagement.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between motivation strategies and organisational growth of telecommunication firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study examines the relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity in telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis. It also investigates the relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement in the selected telecommunication firms.

The study is guided by two research questions and corresponding null hypotheses. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity in telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis. It also seeks to investigate the relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement in telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis.

In line with these research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity in telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis. Also, there is no significant relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement in telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis.

Review of Related Literature

Organisational Growth

Organisational growth is a multifaceted concept that signifies the expansion of an organisation 's capacity, resources, market presence, and overall performance over time (Mark, 2021). Tan et al. (2024) suggest that organisational growth can be measured through indicators such as revenue, market share, employee headcount, and geographical expansion. It is often facilitated by strategic initiatives, including innovation, market penetration, diversification, mergers and acquisitions, and improvements in operational efficiency.

Obu and Ukpere (2022) observed that organisational growth can be broadly categorized into internal and external growth. Internal growth involves improvements in organisational production capacity, processes, and operational capabilities, while external growth relates to activities such as entering new markets and acquiring another organisation s. Similarly, Kenneth and Maria (2024) maintained that organisational growth is central to strategic management and can be examined both as a means of achieving profitability and as an organisational objective in itself.

In the telecommunications industry, organisational growth is particularly important because firms operate in a competitive environment characterized by technological advancement, changing customer expectations, and increasing demand for improved communication services. Consequently, employee productivity and engagement constitute important internal factors that can support the achievement of broader organisational growth objectives.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to the degree to which employees are emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally committed to their work roles and organisational objectives (Kahn, 1990). Schaufeli et al. (2002) identified three fundamental dimensions of employee engagement: vigour, dedication, and absorption. Vigour relates to employees' energy and mental resilience at work, dedication reflects their sense of significance and enthusiasm towards their jobs,

while absorption describes the extent to which employees are fully concentrated and immersed in their work activities.

Employee engagement has become an important determinant of organisational performance because engaged employees tend to demonstrate higher productivity, stronger organisational commitment, reduced absenteeism, improved customer service, and lower turnover intentions. Saks (2022) argued that organisation s with highly engaged employees is more likely to outperform competitors because their workforce demonstrates greater innovation, collaboration, and willingness to contribute discretionary effort towards achieving strategic objectives.

Bhavesh and Aman (2016) identified four categories of employees in relation to engagement. These include highly engaged employees, who are totally engaged; moderately engaged employees, who are nearly engaged; passive employees, who exhibit characteristics of both engagement and disengagement; and actively disengaged employees, who are totally disengaged. This classification highlights the importance of managerial practices that promote positive employee attitudes and commitment within organisations.

Employee Productivity

Employee productivity refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees utilize their knowledge, skills, competencies, and available organisational resources to accomplish assigned tasks and contribute to organisational objectives (Robbins & Judge, 2022). It reflects the extent to which employees can achieve expected organisational targets through effective job performance and efficient resource utilization.

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2023), employee productivity represents the extent to which employees consistently achieve organisational targets through efficient job performance, innovation, effective utilization of organisational resources, and commitment to continuous improvement. In telecommunications firms, employee productivity is particularly important because the quality-of-service delivery, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and organisational competitiveness depend significantly on employees' ability to perform their assigned responsibilities effectively.

Autonomy and Empowerment

Autonomy is associated with concepts such as independence, freedom, self-governance, self-control, and self-sufficiency (Pully et al., 2013). It represents the degree of discretion and freedom employees possess in determining how to perform their assigned responsibilities. Employee autonomy allows individuals to exercise professional judgement, make work-related decisions, and determine appropriate approaches to accomplishing organisational tasks. Davies and Leschinger (2011) highlighted that empowerment increases an individual's capacity to make choices and transform those choices into desired outcomes. In the workplace, empowerment involves providing employees with the authority, resources, information, and opportunities required to participate meaningfully in organisational activities.

Worker autonomy serves as an important job design element because it grants individuals discretion over their tasks, schedules, and procedural execution. When employees are

empowered to make decisions and contribute ideas, they may develop a stronger sense of responsibility and ownership of organisational activities. Such practices can encourage initiative, creativity, and improved job performance.

Compensation and Reward Systems

Compensation represents an important human resource management function concerned with the different forms of rewards employees receive in exchange for performing organisational tasks. Omotayo (2014) described compensation as the human resource management function that deals with every type of reward individuals receive for their work, with the desired outcome of attracting employees, ensuring satisfaction, and motivating them to perform effectively. Similarly, Syahrir et al. (2021) emphasized that employees receive compensation in exchange for the work or services they provide to their organisations. Ansar et al. (2019) described compensation as a systematic remuneration arrangement for employees and managers, particularly in the form of money, products, or services received in exchange for their contributions. Compensation may be classified into direct and indirect forms. Direct compensation includes monetary payments such as salaries, wages, and bonuses, while indirect compensation consists of additional benefits and other non-wage rewards provided by the organisation.

Reward systems constitute an important aspect of organisational management because they provide incentives for quality workmanship, improved performance, and employee commitment. An appropriately administered reward system can encourage employees to demonstrate greater dedication to their responsibilities and contribute meaningfully to organisational objectives. Conversely, the absence of an effective reward system may result in low employee morale, poor performance, and increased staff turnover. Lawal and Ojokuku (2022) described reward systems as the processes and practices through which employees are rewarded in accordance with their contributions, skills, competencies, and market worth. Therefore, organisation s needs to establish fair, transparent, and performance-oriented compensation and reward systems that recognize employees' contributions and encourage sustained organisational commitment.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, developed in 1959. The theory is also referred to as the Motivator-Hygiene Theory. It explains employee motivation by categorizing workplace factors into two broad groups: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors include organisational policies, supervision, remuneration, job security, and working conditions. These factors are essential for preventing employee dissatisfaction, although their presence alone may not necessarily generate higher levels of motivation. Ibidunni et al. (2016) and Ihnsekien and Joel (2023) discussed the importance of these workplace conditions in understanding employee satisfaction and motivation.

Motivators, on the other hand, are intrinsic factors associated with the nature and content of work. They include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, challenging assignments, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Herzberg's argument suggests that the presence of these factors can promote job satisfaction and encourage

employees to perform more effectively. Boluwaj et al. (2024) and Rabiu et al. (2024) highlighted the relevance of motivational factors in creating favourable workplace experiences and improving employee productivity.

The theory further suggests that managers should address external workplace conditions that may generate employee dissatisfaction while simultaneously providing opportunities for achievement, recognition, responsibility, and professional development. Abdulazeez (2020) and Ihensekien and Joel (2023) emphasized the importance of combining appropriate workplace conditions with intrinsic motivational practices to enhance employee motivation.

The relevance of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to the present study lies in its explanation of how organisational motivational practices can influence employee behaviour and organisational growth. Telecommunication firms operate in a competitive and rapidly changing environment where employee productivity, innovation, customer service, and technical competence are important to organisational success.

In this context, adequate remuneration, job security, favourable working conditions, and supportive supervision can reduce employee dissatisfaction. Similarly, recognition, promotion, responsibility, achievement, and opportunities for career development can stimulate employees to contribute more effectively to organisational objectives. Autonomy and empowerment provide employees with opportunities to exercise responsibility and demonstrate achievement, while compensation and reward systems address important workplace expectations associated with employee satisfaction. The theory therefore provides an appropriate foundation for examining the relationship between motivation strategies and organisational growth in telecommunication firms.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach and employed a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 122 employees working in MTN, Glo, and Airtel offices in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State. Specifically, MTN had 35 employees, Glo had 45 employees, while Airtel had 42 employees, bringing the total population to 122 employees. The population information was obtained from the Human Resource Departments of the respective telecommunication firms (2026).

Considering the manageable size of the population, the study adopted a census approach in which all 122 employees were included in the study. Consequently, the entire population constituted the study sample, and no additional sampling technique was required. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to obtain relevant information from respondents concerning the study variables. The questionnaire was structured into relevant sections addressing autonomy and empowerment, compensation and reward systems, employee productivity, and employee engagement. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale comprising Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Undecided, assigned numerical values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively.

The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and examine their responses to the research questions. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to test the

formulated hypotheses and determine the nature and strength of the relationships between the study variables. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis where the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 and fail to reject it where the p-value was greater than 0.05.

Results And Discussion

Questionnaire Administration and Response Rate

A total of 122 questionnaires were administered to employees of the selected telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis. Out of this number, 101 questionnaires were successfully retrieved, representing a response rate of 82.79%, while 21 questionnaires, representing 17.21%, were not returned. All 101 returned questionnaires were adequately completed and considered valid for analysis. Therefore, the study achieved a valid response rate of 82.79%.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic distribution of respondents revealed that 61 respondents, representing 60.4%, were male, while 40 respondents, representing 39.6%, were female. This indicates that male respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion of the study participants. Regarding organisational levels, 55 respondents, representing 54.5%, occupied operational positions, while 46 respondents, representing 45.5%, occupied managerial positions. This distribution indicates that the study obtained responses from employees at both operational and managerial levels.

In terms of organisational affiliation, 39 respondents, representing 38.6%, were employees of Airtel, 32 respondents, representing 31.7%, were from MTN, while 30 respondents, representing 29.7%, were from Globacom (Glo). These figures indicate that all three telecommunication firms were adequately represented in the study.

Descriptive Analysis of Autonomy and Empowerment

The descriptive analysis of autonomy and empowerment revealed a composite mean score of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.95. Specifically, the statement that employees were given sufficient authority to make decisions relating to their work recorded a mean score of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 1.32. The freedom to determine how assigned tasks were accomplished recorded a mean score of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 1.21. Similarly, the availability of opportunities for employees to develop new skills recorded a mean score of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.17, while the opportunity to contribute ideas towards improving organisational performance recorded a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.09.

The overall mean score of 3.92 suggests that respondents generally expressed positive perceptions regarding autonomy and empowerment within their respective organisation s. This indicates that employees experienced some degree of decision-making authority, task flexibility, skill development opportunities, and participation in organisational improvement activities.

Descriptive Analysis of Compensation and Reward Systems

The descriptive analysis of compensation and reward systems produced a composite mean score of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 0.97. The statement that employees' salaries were commensurate with their responsibilities recorded a mean score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 1.13. Similarly, the recognition and rewarding of outstanding performance recorded a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 1.15. The perception that promotion decisions were based on merit recorded a mean score of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 1.11, while the extent to which compensation packages encouraged employees to remain with their organisation s recorded a mean score of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 1.28.

The overall mean score of 3.91 indicates that respondents generally expressed favourable perceptions regarding compensation and reward practices in their organisation s. This suggests that salary arrangements, performance recognition, merit-based promotion, and employee benefits constitute important considerations in the motivational practices of the selected telecommunication firms.

Test of Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis examined the relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity in telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis. The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity. The Pearson correlation analysis, based on 101 valid observations, produced a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.514$, with a p-value of less than 0.001. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity.

Since the p-value is less than the stipulated significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result therefore indicates that autonomy and empowerment have a statistically significant positive relationship with employee productivity in the selected telecommunication firms.

Test of Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement in telecommunication firms in Yenagoa Metropolis. The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement.

The Pearson correlation analysis, based on 101 valid observations, produced a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.600$, with a p-value of less than 0.001. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement. Since the p-value is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result therefore establishes a statistically significant positive relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement in the selected telecommunication firms.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding established a moderate positive relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity ($r = 0.514$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that employees who experience greater decision-making authority, task flexibility, opportunities for skill development, and participation in organisational activities tend to report higher levels of productivity. The finding underscores the importance of creating an organisational environment in which employees are encouraged to exercise initiative and take responsibility for their assigned duties.

The finding is consistent with the broader argument of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which recognizes responsibility, achievement, and opportunities for growth as important motivational factors. Providing employees with autonomy and empowerment can strengthen their sense of responsibility and encourage greater commitment to organisational objectives. The literature review also discusses autonomy as a job resource (Oluwale et al., 2024), fair compensation as a motivational practice (Zafar & Sudiardhita, 2022), and psychological safety as a basis for open communication and organisational learning (Dekker & Edmondson, 2022). These perspectives provide conceptual support for understanding the importance of favourable workplace conditions in employee performance.

The second finding revealed a moderate positive relationship between compensation and reward systems and employee engagement ($r = 0.600$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that favourable compensation arrangements, recognition of outstanding performance, merit-based promotion, and attractive employee benefits are positively associated with employee engagement in the selected telecommunication firms. The finding reinforces the importance of fair and transparent reward practices in promoting positive employee attitudes towards work and the organisation. Employees who perceive their contributions as adequately recognized and rewarded may demonstrate greater commitment and willingness to participate in organisational activities. This finding is also consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, particularly its recognition of remuneration and other workplace conditions as hygiene factors that help prevent dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, the literature reviewed in this study highlights the relevance of autonomy as a job resource (Oluwale et al., 2024), fair compensation as a motivational practice (Zafar & Sudiardhita, 2022), and psychological safety as an important foundation for open communication and workplace learning (Dekker & Edmondson, 2022). Taken together, the findings suggest that effective motivation strategies are important considerations in promoting employee productivity and engagement. The results further indicate that telecommunication firms seeking sustainable organisational growth should pay attention to both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence employees' workplace experiences.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between motivation strategies and organisational growth of telecommunication firms in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated the relationship between autonomy and empowerment and employee productivity, as well as compensation and reward systems and employee engagement. The findings revealed that autonomy and empowerment have a significant positive relationship

with employee productivity, while compensation and reward systems have a significant positive relationship with employee engagement. These findings demonstrate the importance of employee motivation in strengthening workplace commitment, improving individual performance, and supporting organisational objectives.

The study therefore concludes that effective motivational strategies constitute important organisational practices that can support organisational growth in the telecommunications industry. Telecommunication firms should consequently pay greater attention to employee empowerment, decision-making participation, fair compensation, performance recognition, and opportunities for professional development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that management of telecommunication firms should periodically review their compensation and reward systems to ensure that employees perceive them as fair, transparent, and appropriately linked to their responsibilities and performance. Recognition should not be restricted to financial rewards; non-monetary recognition, career opportunities, and performance acknowledgement should also be incorporated into organisational reward practices. Furthermore, management should create an organisational climate in which employees can freely express ideas, raise concerns, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of humiliation or unfair retaliation. Supervisors and team leaders should receive appropriate training in respectful communication, constructive feedback, and inclusive leadership practices. Such initiatives can strengthen employee autonomy and empowerment, encourage participation, and contribute to improved employee productivity.

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