

The Influence of Motivation on Job Performance Among National Horticultural Research Institute Staff

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the role of motivation in job performance among staff of the National Horticultural Research Institute (NIHORT). The objectives of the study were to identify socio-economic characteristics of NIHORT staff, to assess factors that motivate NIHORT Staff, to ascertain how motivation influences job performance by staff, and ascertain limiting factors to effective motivational practices at NIHORT. A structured questionnaire was distributed through NIHORT's e-platform to staff, with 60 completed and analysable responses. The analysis of the data through SPSS showed that intrinsic motivational factors, such as opportunities for promotion (93.3%), clear and achievable goals (83.3%), and leadership growth (80%) are important factors in the stimulation of performance among staff members. Limiting factors affecting successful motivation strategies include inadequate resources (60%), poor communication (56.7%), and inadequate training opportunities for managers (60%). The study concludes that while motivation significantly enhances job performance, organizational constraints limit its full potential. The establishment of well-structured career development programmes, improved communication, and a stronger performance management system are recommended as the means of addressing the need to reinforce motivation and job performance in NIHORT and other institutions.

Keywords: Constraints, E-platform, Job performance, Leadership growth, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, staff motivation has emerged as a critical influencing factor in job performance both public and private sector organizations. The National Horticultural Research Institute, a prominent agricultural research institute in Nigeria, is no exception. As a research-intensive institution tasked with advancing horticultural innovations, the performance of its personnel directly impacts the development and dissemination of improved technologies to farmers and stakeholders. However, maintaining a motivated workforce in the context of public service constraints poses significant challenges. Motivation, in organizational behavior, refers to the set of energetic forces that originate both within and outside an individual to initiate work-related behavior and determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration (Pinder, 2014). It is the psychological process that arouses and directs goal-oriented behavior, which is essential for achieving organizational goals. When staff are motivated, they are more likely to exert effort, exhibit commitment, and enhance overall productivity (Deci & Ryan, 2023). In contrast, a lack of motivation may lead to absenteeism, low morale, high turnover, and reduced efficiency (Obiekwe & Udechukwu, 2022).

There are two broad types of motivation which are intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual, driven by interest, challenge, or personal satisfaction derived from performing a task.

Extrinsic motivation, however, is derived from external rewards such as pay, recognition, job security, and promotions (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The interplay of these motivational factors determine how well staff perform their roles in the workplace. At research institutions, where intellectual engagement, autonomy, and collaborative efforts are key to achieving scientific excellence, a balanced approach to motivation is imperative. Numerous studies have shown a strong correlation between motivation and staff performance. For instance, Alshammari *et*

al., (2022) in a cross-sectoral study concluded that motivated staff tend to demonstrate higher job satisfaction and increased performance levels. Similarly, Bello and Inuwa (2023) found that motivation positively affects performance outcomes in Nigerian research and educational institutions. However, research specific to horticultural institutes, particularly NIHORT, remains limited. This gap necessitates a closer examination of the motivational frameworks that influence staff behavior and productivity within the institute.

NIHORT operates under the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) and plays a vital role in developing sustainable technologies for horticultural crops. The achievement of this mandate is largely dependent on the competence and commitment of its workforce. However, anecdotal and preliminary evidence suggests that workplace staff motivation at may be undermined by factors such as limited career advancement opportunities, inadequate recognition, poor work conditions, and insufficient institutional support (Ajayi & Afolayan, 2021). These factors may negatively impact the quality of research output and extension services, threatening the long-term objectives of the institute. In addition, leadership and job design significantly influence staff motivation and performance. Transformational leadership, job enrichment, and participative decision-making have been shown to improve job satisfaction and performance in public institutions (Ali *et al.*, 2023). It is essential, therefore, to investigate how these elements operate within NIHORT and their combined effect on motivation and performance.

This study seeks to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the influence of motivation on job performance among staff at NIHORT. Specifically, the research aims to assess different factors that motivate NIHORT staffs, constraints limiting effective motivation practices at NIHORT, assessing the effect of Motivation on staff performance at NIHORT. The findings of this study will provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing motivation and optimizing job performance in NIHORT and similar research institutions.

Despite its strategic importance in Nigeria's agricultural transformation agenda, Research institutions/organization continues to grapple with issues related to staff motivation and job performance. Staff are entrusted with critical responsibilities, including scientific research, technology development, and capacity building. However, the realization of these goals is often hindered by a demotivated workforce, resulting from both institutional and systemic challenges. Available evidence points to declining morale, stagnation in career progression, inadequate training opportunities, and perceived inequities in reward systems as key concerns among staff (Ogunleye *et al.*, 2022). These issues reflect in Nigeria's public research sector, where motivational structures are often weak, and performance management is suboptimal (Ibrahim & Ogunyemi, 2021). Motivation plays a central role in determining whether staff engage productively with their roles or merely fulfill routine obligations. In a study conducted by Yusuf and Gambo (2023), public sector staff reported that motivational incentives, including recognition and professional development, were more important than monetary rewards in influencing their performance. At NIHORT, however, such motivational strategies appear to be inconsistently implemented, leading to underperformance, disinterest in innovation, and talent attrition.

Moreover, recent organizational assessments have identified a disconnect between management practices and staff expectations. For instance, staff have reported limited involvement in decision-making processes and poor communication with supervisors—both of which are known to weaken intrinsic motivation and reduce commitment to organizational goals (Umar & Bello, 2022). Furthermore, the lack of a structured performance appraisal system and inadequate feedback mechanisms contribute to the low motivational climate observed among staff. If left unaddressed, these motivational deficiencies may lead to further deterioration in research quality, reduced external funding, and poor knowledge transfer to stakeholders, including farmers and extension agents. This would significantly hamper the institute's capacity to fulfill its mandate and contribute to national agricultural development goals.

Objectives

- i. Identify the socioeconomic characteristics of NIHORT staff
- ii. Assess the factors that motivate NIHORT staff
- iii. Analyse the effect of motivation on performance among NIHORT staff
- iv. Examine the constraints limiting effective motivation practices among NIHORT staff

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out at NIHORT using staff of the organisation as respondents. A structured questionnaire was designed to capture different variables for the study, which included socio-economic attributes, motivation factors, motivation challenges and motivation on Job Performance. To ensure ease of access, the questionnaire was distributed via NIHORT's e-platform using Google Forms, allowing all staff members to conveniently complete it. The survey was preceded by a notice out to inform the staff to voluntarily agree to participate ensuring that informed consent was obtained before the data collection began.

A total of 60 completed questionnaires were received and were all analysable. The instrument employed a 5point Likert-type scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to the study's focus. The data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), used to determine the important trends, the relationship and the insight into the factors influencing motivation among the staff, as well as the challenges they face. The findings from this analysis were then used to draw conclusions and provide recommendations.

DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The data presented in Table 1 shows that 36.7% of respondents were within the 41–50 years age group, with a mean age of 40.8 ± 11.7 years. This suggests that most of the respondents were in their economically productive years. This finding aligns with Alasia and Maduka (2021), who reported that middle-aged professionals dominate Nigeria's health and research workforce due to their higher levels of training and work experience. The gender distribution showed that 56.7% of respondents were female, and 43.3% were male. A similar trend was reported by researchers in a study on teaching professionals, where female respondents constituted the majority (Nature, 2022), reflecting increasing female participation in skilled professions. Half of the respondents had Higher national Diploma or B.Sc. degree, while 43.3% held M.Sc. degrees. Regarding marital status, 63.3% of respondents were married. This is supported by findings from a healthcare study in Asaba, Nigeria, which reported the same percentage (63.3%) of married respondents, attributing marital status to career stability and family-oriented values among professionals (SciVision, n.d.).

The occupational profile showed that 80.0% of respondents were Research staff, with 20% categorized Non-researchers. This trend corresponds with the broader structure of Nigeria's academic and research system, which comprises a significant number of scientific professionals (Nature, 2021). In terms of income, 76.7% of respondents earned between ₦101,000 and ₦200,000 monthly. According to Techpoint Africa (2023), this range is above Nigeria's national average, where a significant percentage of workers earn less than ₦100,000, indicating a relatively well-paid professional demographic. Lastly, household size data revealed that 50% of respondents had 4–6 members, and 46.7% had 1–3 members. This pattern aligns with data from the Nigeria Living Standards Survey, which reports an average household size of 4.50 persons in urban areas (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020).

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents (n= 60)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
< 30	8	13.3	
30 – 40	18	30.0	40.8 ±11.7
41- 50	22	36.7	
>50	12	20.0	
Sex			

Male	26	43.3	
Female	34	56.7	
Highest level of Education			
HND/BSC	30	50.0	
MSC	26	43.3	
PhD	4	6.7	
Marital Status			
Single	20	33.3	
Married	38	63.3	
Divorced	2	3.3	
Job Category			
Scientist	48	80.0	
Non-Scientist	12	20.0	
Monthly Salary			
<100000	2	3.3	
101000 – 200000	26	76.7	
201000 – 300000	10	16.7	
301000 – 400000	2	3.3	
Household Size			
1-3	28	46.7	
4-6	30	50.0	
6-9	2	3.3	

Field Survey, 2025

Factors that Motivate NIHORT Staff

The results from Table 2 indicate that the most influential motivating factors among NIHORT staff include opportunities for promotion and career advancement (93.3%), clear and achievable goals and objectives (83.3%), opportunities for leadership and growth (80%), flexible work arrangements (80%), and ability to contribute to the organization's success (80%). Additional key drivers included engaging meaningful projects, along with positive work environment and supportive team structures (76.6%). These findings are corroborated by Omotosho (2021), who emphasized that opportunities for career growth and internal promotions significantly increase staff motivation, particularly in research and academic institutions. The strong agreement with flexible work arrangements and leadership opportunities aligns with findings from Josephine *et al.* (2021), who demonstrated that flexibility and growth prospects are core factors influencing engagement and job satisfaction in Nigerian corporate environments. Similarly, Baridula and Adanma (2021) observed that supportive work environment and challenging tasks play a pivotal role in staff retention, particularly in organizations seeking to foster innovation and commitment. Furthermore, 73.4% of respondents highlighted opportunities for professional development and training as essential motivators, supporting Omotosho's (2021) assertion that continuous learning boosts staff competence and job satisfaction. Creativity and innovation (70.0%) were also

noted as important, underscoring the submission of Josephine *et al.* (2021) that environments encouraging ideation foster long-term organizational loyalty.

Interestingly, traditional extrinsic motivators such as competitive salary and benefits (53.4%), autonomy and control over work (43.4%), and performance-based incentives (53.3%) received relatively lower levels of agreement. This suggests a shifting preference among professionals toward intrinsic and developmental motivators. The implication of these findings is that organizations like NIHORT must prioritize intrinsic motivation strategies, including leadership development, work-life balance, and meaningful involvement in decision-making, to maintain high levels of staff satisfaction, productivity, and retention.

Table 2: Distribution of factors that motivate NIHORT staff (n=60)

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Opportunity to learn new skills and develop expertise assess	28(46.7)	24 (40.0)	4 (6.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (6.7)
Opportunities for promotion and career advancement	24 40.0)	32(53.3)	0 (0.0)	2(3.3)	2 (3.3)
Competitive salary and benefits package	16 (26.7)	16 (26.7)	12 (20.0)	8 (13.3)	8 (13.3)
Challenging and meaningful projects	14 (23.3)	32 (53.3)	8 (13.3)	4 (6.7)	2 (3.3)
Positive work environment and a supportive team	14 (23.3)	32 (53.3)	8(13.3)	6(10.0)	0 (0.0)
Ability to contribute to the organization's success	20 33.3)	28 (46.7)	6 (10.0)	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)
Flexible work arrangements	10 (16.7)	38(63.3)	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)	6 (10.0)
Autonomy and control over work	10 (16.7)	16 (26.7)	18 (30.0)	10 (16.7)	6(10.0)
Opportunities for professional development and training	16 (26.7)	28 (46.7)	4 (6.7)	4 (6.7)	6 (13.3)
Participation in decision-making process	16(26.7)	26 (43.3)	10 (16.7)	6 (10.0)	2 (3.3)
Feedback and constructive criticism	12 (20.0)	24(40.0)	12 (20.0)	8 (13.3)	4 (6.7)
Work-life balance and work-related benefits	14 (23.3)	26 (43.3)	14 (23.3)	6 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
Opportunities for creativity and innovation	16 (26.7)	26 (43.3)	8 (13.3)	8 (13.3)	2 (3.3)
Appreciation and acknowledgement of achievements	12 (20.0)	26 (43.3)	10 (16.7)	6 (10.0)	6 (10.0)
Opportunities for collaboration and teamwork	18 (30.0)	24 (40.0)	12 (20.0)	4 (6.7)	2 (3.3)
Clear and achievable goals and objectives	18 (30.0)	32 (53.3)	2 (3.3)	6 (10.0)	2 (3.3)
Opportunities for leadership and growth	16 (26.7)	32 (53.3)	6 (10.0)	4 (6.7)	2 (3.3)
Competitive and performance-based incentives	6 (10.0)	26 (43.3)	14 (23.3)	8 (13.3)	6 (10.0)

Effect of motivation on performance among NIHORT staff

This section evaluates the impact of motivation on employee performance at NIHORT. The top effects of motivation on performance were: Motivation increases productivity and the quantity of work completed (90%). Feeling motivated at work has a positive impact on the quality of job performance (90%). Motivated employees are more likely to take initiative and go above and beyond their job responsibilities (90%). Motivation helps develop new skills and expertise, enhancing job performance (90%). Motivation helps stay focused and better manage time and resources (83.4%). Other notable effects include motivated staff demonstrating higher levels of creativity and innovation (73.3%), positive impact on job satisfaction (86.6%), contributing to the achievement of organizational goals (80%), better problem-solving and decision-making abilities (86.6%), and positive impact on work engagement and commitment (86.7%). Overall, data suggests that motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing staff performance at NIHORT in various aspects, including productivity, quality, initiative, skill development, focus, creativity, job satisfaction, goal achievement, problem-solving, and work engagement.

Table 3: Distribution on the effect of motivation on performance among NIHORT staff (n= 60)

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Feeling motivated at work has a positive impact on the quality of my job performance effect	18 (30.0)	36 (60.0)	4(6.7)	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)
Motivation increases my productivity and the quantity of work I can complete	30 (50.0)	24 (40.0)	4 (6.7)	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)
Motivated staff at NIHORT are more likely to take initiative and go above and beyond their job responsibilities	28 (46.7)	26 (43.3)	2 (3.3)	2 (3.3)	2 (3.3)
Motivation helps me stay focused and better manage my time and resources	28 (46.7)	22 (36.7)	4 (6.7)	4(6.7)	2 (3.3)
Motivated staff at NIHORT demonstrate higher levels of creativity and innovation in their work	26 (43.3)	18 (30.0)	10 (16.7)	6(10.0)	0 (0.0)
Motivation has a positive impact on my job satisfaction, which in turn improves my performance	20 (33.3)	32 (53.3)	4(6.7)	4 (6.7)	0 (0.0)
Motivation staff at NIHORT are more likely to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals	26 (43.3)	22 (36.7)	8 (13.3)	4 (6.7)	0 (0.0)
Motivation helps me develop new skills and expertise, which enhances my job performance	26 (43,3)	28 (46.7)	2 (3.3)	4(6.7)	0 (0.0)
Motivated staff at NIHORT demonstrate better problem-solving and decision-making abilities	26 (43.3)	26 (43.3)	4 (6.7)	4 (6.7)	0 (0.0)
Motivated has a positive impact on my work engagement and commitment to NIHORT	22 (36.7)	30 (50.0)	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)	2 (3.3)

Field Survey, 2025

Constraints limiting effective Motivation practices at NIHORT

The result on table 3 examine constraints that limit effective motivation practices at NIHORT. The top constraints identified were: insufficient resources (e.g., time, personnel) dedicated to staff engagement and motivation

initiatives, and lack of training and development opportunities for managers limits their ability to provide effective recognition and feedback (60.0%). These aligns with the work of Ali, Said, and Kamarudin (2021), who observed that inadequate organizational resources often result in low staff engagement and diminished morale in small and medium enterprises. The lack of formal processes to gather and address staff feedback on motivation-related issues (56.7%). Inadequate financial resources limit NIHORT's ability to offer competitive salaries and benefits (60.0%). Osibanjo *et al.*, (2018) emphasized that unsatisfactory compensation packages are a key driver of poor staff retention and low job satisfaction, especially in developing economies. Other notable constraints include poor communication and feedback mechanisms between staff and management impede the identification of motivational factors (56.7%), insufficient collaboration and coordination between different departments or units (50.0%), rigid organizational policies and structures (46.7%), and the lack of clear and measurable goals for staff motivation programs (36.7%).

Table 4: Distribution of the constraints limiting effective motivation practices among NIHORT staff (n= 60)

S/n	Variables	VS (%)	S (%)	NC (%)
1	Inadequate financial resources limit NIHORT's ability to offer competitive salaries and benefits	10 (16.7)	26 (43.3)	24 (40.0)
2	Rigid Organizational policies and structures hinder the implementation of flexible work arrangements	6 (10.0)	22 (36.7)	32 (53.3)
3	The lack of training and development opportunities for managers limits their ability to provide effective recognition and feedback	10(16.7)	26 (43.3)	24 (40.0)
4	Poor communication and feedback mechanisms between staff and management impede the identification of motivational factors	10 (16.7)	24 (40.0)	26 (43.3)
5	Insufficient resources (e.g., time, personnel) dedicated to staff engagement and motivation initiatives	14 (23.3)	22 (36.7)	24 (40.0)
6	The organizational culture does not value staff motivation and well-being	4 (6.7)	10 (16.7)	26 (76.7)
7	The lack of clear and measurable goals for staff motivation programs makes it difficult to evaluate their effectiveness	4 (6.7)	18 (30.0)	38 (63.3)
8	Resistance to change and reluctance to implement new motivation strategies among management or staff	4(6.7)	16 (26.7)	40 (66.7)
9	Insufficient collaboration and coordination between different departments or units to develop and implement holistic motivation practices	10 (16.7)	20 (33.3)	30 (50.0)
10	The lack of formal processes to gather and address staff feedback on motivation-related issues	4 (6.7)	30 (50.0)	26 (43.3)

Field Survey, 2025

VS- Very Severe; S- Severe; NC- Not a Constraint

CONCLUSION

The study provides critical insights into the influence of motivation on job performance at the National Horticultural Research Institute (NIHORT). Findings reveal a highly educated workforce, primarily composed of females with a mean age of 40.8 years, demonstrating a strong professional foundation essential for institutional productivity. Despite modest earnings, staff are significantly driven by intrinsic motivational factors

particularly opportunities for promotion and clarity in goal-setting highlighting the importance of internal drivers over financial incentives. However, the effectiveness of motivational strategies is constrained by structural limitations such as inadequate funding and poor communication, which undermine the institute's efforts to fully harness staff potential. Nonetheless, the positive association between motivation and key performance outcomes including increased productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment confirms that motivation is a vital determinant of staff performance and institutional success.

Therefore, it is imperative for management of NIHORT to prioritize sustainable motivational frameworks that emphasize intrinsic rewards, improve communication channels, and address resource limitations. By doing so, the institute can enhance staff engagement, support its research mandate, and drive long-term organizational performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Achieving a maximum staff commitment and motivation, the following are recommended;

1. There is a need to formulate structured career development schemes with defined promotion avenues and mentorship features to promote intrinsic motivation among the staff.
2. Address resource constraints in the form of competitive compensation and flexible working hours. This is imperative, as they operate in consonance with the desire of the labor pool for growth-based rewards and contribute towards diminishing economic constraints with resultant maximum commitment and productivity.
3. A need to prioritize improving communications and management skills by embracing standardized feedback practices such as surveys and institution to strengthen staff-management ties.
4. Instituting motivation programs with measurable goals, encouraging innovation through participation of cross-functional teams and innovation centers,
5. Revising rigid policies for greater flexibility will also make the labor force more robust, enhance research productivity, and contribute to Nigeria's agricultural development goals.

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