



Qualitative analysis of motivation on employee efficiency and productivity: insight from a selected FMCG organisation in South Africa



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ABSTRACT

Organisations are experiencing significant transformations that necessitate modern strategies to maintain pace. Motivation has emerged as an essential element of the workplace for organisational success. Motivated employees are often more effective and productive in achieving corporate goals and objectives; nonetheless, this concept continues to pose a challenge for contemporary businesses. The research investigated the impact of motivation on staff efficiency and production inside a specific Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) company in South Africa. Data were gathered through interviews utilising a non-probability quota sampling method from a sample of 11 people in a qualitative study. Thematic analysis was conducted on the data, facilitating the identification of patterns and the development of themes. The findings indicate that (i) the motivational strategies predominantly employed by the FMCG organisation pertain to the workplace environment, remuneration, well-being, and professional development; (ii) elements such as training and development, sense of belonging, equity and fairness, and career advancement significantly impact the efficiency and productivity of the study participants, with training and development being the most essential. Despite the beneficial effects of motivation, apprehensions arose regarding diverse training requirements and team management. The report advocates for a requirements assessment to identify and address skill deficiencies, prioritise good team management, cultivate a culture of continuous learning, and improve employee engagement through a sense of belonging, equity, justice, and career advancement. These proposals synchronise motivational tactics with organisational objectives, hence enhancing staff productivity and competitive edge. This study provides valuable insights into improving staff efficiency and productivity through motivation in the dynamic FMCG sector in South Africa, with extensive implications for managerial practices and employee engagement.

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Introduction

The global landscape is undergoing tremendous transformation, resulting in a corporate climate that is increasingly unpredictable, complex, and fraught with uncertainty. This has precipitated swift transformations in the workplace environment. To address these issues and attain goals, businesses are consistently formulating techniques to guarantee employees operate at their maximum ability. A prevalent strategy employed today is motivation. Literature indicates that motivation presents a significant challenge for modern companies (Forson et al., 2021; Reizer et al., 2019) and has become increasingly crucial in the post-pandemic age. The State of the Global Workforce Report (Gallup, 2024) indicated that 63% of the workforce surveyed across 142 nations worldwide is impacted by a deficiency in motivation. Vo et al. (2022) identified motivation as a crucial accelerator for organisational performance in the contemporary period. Organisations rely on employee performance to enhance efficiency and productivity. Research indicates that a highly engaged workforce enhances employee performance, among other advantages (Vo et al., 2022; Forson et al., 2021). Employees without motivation exhibit subpar performance despite receiving training (Mamun & Khan, 2020). Essentially, an organization's advancement is indicative of the motivation levels of its employees, rendering the concept of motivation a crucial component in the contemporary corporate landscape.

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The recent NielsenIQ (NIQ) South Africa State of the Retail Nation report indicates that Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) trade increased by 3% year-over-year to R303 billion in the first quarter of 2024 (NIQ, 2024) and reached R631 billion in annual sales in the third quarter of 2023. Notwithstanding the nation's difficult macroeconomic circumstances, the FMCG industry accounts for 34% of the country's GDP (Consumer Goods Council South Africa, 2023). Conversely, the Gallup research indicated that 36% of the South African workforce experiences extreme stress, while 71% demonstrate a degree of disengagement from their professional responsibilities (Gallup, 2024; News24, 2024). This research encompasses the FMCG workforce, which is a problem because to the sector's significance to the national economy. Consequently, employee motivation is prioritised on South Africa's national agenda.

In Africa, Govender, Sukdeo, and Ramdass (2022) and Manowah, Ogunsola, Dlamini, Potwana, and Akindeji (2024) identified a strong association between employee engagement and motivation, as well as sustainable and productive organisations. Consequently, organisational managers that implement strategic employee engagement observe increased employee productivity (Govender et al. 2022).

Although interesting insights have been obtained, previous motivation studies have predominantly concentrated on diverse industries rather than the FMCG industry, which significantly impacts South Africa's GDP and employment generation (Govender & Bussin, 2020; Sibonde & Dassah, 2021). Nonetheless, there exists a scarcity of empirical research specifically pertaining to the South African FMCG sector, especially studies utilising qualitative approaches to elucidate the intricate experiences and perceptions of employees. This study significantly contributes to the literature by offering a comprehensive qualitative investigation of motivation inside a specific FMCG organisation in South Africa, hence enhancing understanding of employees' perceptions. Against this backdrop, the article addresses the following objectives:

- i. To identify the common motivational techniques employed by the selected FMCG
- ii. To explore how the motivational techniques employed by the selected FMCG influence employees' efficiency and productivity.

The subsequent section introduces a conceptual framework grounded in self-determination theory (SDT). Subsequently, the research examines relevant literature on motivation, employee engagement, efficiency, and productivity. This is a comprehensive elucidation of the methodology employed in the study, along with the final reflections.

Literature Review

Motivation

The word 'motivation' comes from the Latin word "motivus" which means "a moving cause" and alludes to the mechanisms that activate psychological motivation (Cofer & Petri, 2024). Motivation is an integral component of human experience (Morris et al., 2022) and is widely researched in the fields of Psychology and Human Resources Management. The concept relates to the inner forces acting within a person that stimulates behaviour. Accordingly, Shkoler and Kimura (2020) assert motivation as the psychological force that generates complex processes of goal-directed thoughts and behaviors. According to Robbins and Judge (2019), motivation explains the perseverance, strength, and direction of people who are trying to accomplish their goals. In this context, employee motivation refers to the level of energy, commitment, and creativity that employees bring to their jobs (Ramyasri T & Chand Ch, 2020). It describes how employees invest in their work, levels of engagement as well as feelings of empowerment to reach their potential. Behavior can be triggered by factors inside and outside of an individual which ultimately determines the direction and intensity of the person's actions. In essence, employee motivation is derived from various factors which may be personal, or within and outside of the organisational environment. Hence, motivation is grouped into two primary categories, namely intrinsic and extrinsic.

Long time standing general definition views intrinsic motivation, as being motivated by inherent satisfaction, interest, and enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It denotes behavior driven by internal fulfillment to produce more. Intrinsic motivation (IMOT) as highlighted by Iqbal et al. (2022) is a job undertaken by employees based on inherent satisfaction (Zeng et al., 2022). From an organisational perspective, factors driving intrinsic motivation in employees may include recognition, feedback, mentorship, autonomy, career growth, flexible working hours, etc. Lack of these may lead to poor employee productivity.

Conversely, extrinsic motivation involves complimenting an employee's behavior as a tool, based on meeting an external goal (Rita et al., 2018). Extrinsic motivation (EMOT) is a term used to describe an incentive related to performing a task to achieve some separable result rather than engaging in an activity purely for its value (Iqbal et al., 2022; Zeng et al., 2022). Hence, EMOT are viewed as various forms of financial incentives and other fringe benefits that an organisation offers its employees to improve their performance (Jeni et al., 2020). In essence, EMOT is inherently instrumental and performed to attain a distinct objective and examples are wages, salaries, bonuses, and promotions. A combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influences employees' motives and attitudes toward accomplishing a goal. Motivated employees are therefore enthused, focused, and proud of their accomplishments as asserted by (Eroğlu & Kiray, 2020).

Employee motivation, efficiency, and productivity: the nexus

The concept of motivation and productivity is vital for organisations in today's rapidly evolving business environment. This is because an organisation's success is always dependent on the productivity and efficiency of its workforce which is driven by the levels of motivation. Scholars mainly use 'performance' in place of efficiency, however, this study sought 'efficiency' because it relates to competency in performance. Employee motivation, productivity, and efficiency, in tandem, are interconnected concepts, which play a crucial role in determining the overall performance and success of every organisation (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Employee productivity (EP), while not novel in management discourse, has evolved to encompass multiple dimensions (Samadzad & Hashemi, 2021; Almaamari & Alaswad, 2021). The concept is thus viewed as the driving engine for organisational success. Scholars alluded to employee productivity encompassing the contribution of the management and employees as well as a measure of input and output (Rahman et al., 2023). Various factors are documented in literature influencing employee productivity which includes among others motivation. The idea behind this is that motivation is considered an antecedent of individual self-actualization and achievement for organisations. It presupposes that the motivation of employees plays a pivotal role in amplifying their productivity and performance (Manzoor et al., 2021). A person's level of motivation determines the extent of commitment toward achieving organisational goals and objectives. Affainine and Qutieshat (2023) lend credence to this idea stressing that employees who feel inspired by their jobs are more likely to go above and beyond, bolster the competitive edge, and improve the organisation's bottom line (Novitasari et al., 2020). Vanessa et al. (2019) share a similar view that motivated employees are more likely to be productive and efficient because they are engaged and willing to put in the effort required to meet or exceed organisation expectations. In this way increasing the levels of employee productivity provides various benefits to both the organisation and its employees (Rahman et al., 2023).

Studies have shown a strong link between motivation as an enabler for employee efficiency and productivity. A review of scholarly works shows the often use of the word 'performance' in place of efficiency and ideology that both relate to competency. According to Tovmasyan & Minasyan, (2020), the organisation's motivation policy affects employees' efficiency and plays an essential role in productivity. Similar studies in this domain have shown a strong correlation between employee motivation and employee productivity (Kuswati, 2020; Rozi & Sunarsi 2020; Hanaysha & Majid, 2018). Given Yunitasari et al. (2021), with the appropriate motivation, employee's performance can significantly influence productivity. This is concurred in Singh and Chaudhary (2022) review of scholarly research revealing that 77 out of 114 research papers show that several factors affect employee productivity which is intrinsically and extrinsically motivated.

Theoretical framework

The works of early philosophers in the fields of human behavior resulted in various motivational theories which include Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Theory of Needs, Vroom's Theory of Expectancy, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y and Alderfer's ERG Theory etc. These theories demonstrate how motivation influences human behavior either for personal or for wider work or professional reasons. The theories provide an understanding of factors that influence employees' behavior to achieve satisfaction in a workplace environment. This is important in every aspect of life, and most relevant for organisations in managing their employees and the business in general. Though these theories are relevant in the domain of 'motivation', this article adopts a Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Self-Determination Theory is a comprehensive metatheory of human motivation and personality development that posits individuals naturally tend towards self-organisation and growth, actively integrating new experiences and connecting with others to foster self-understanding. It provides a broader framework for understanding the factors that facilitate or undermine intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Accordingly, SDT assumes that the most self-determined type of motivation is intrinsic, which is characterized by behaviour related to inherent satisfaction such as recognition and sense of purpose while extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation, which represents reasons for behaviors and is an essential part of an individual's identity (Manninen et al., 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Fundamental to SDT are three needs namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness which are necessary for optimal human functioning. The word autonomy refers to the experience of being self-directed and having the freedom to make choices that align with one's values and interests (Thomas et al., 2019). Autonomous motivation refers to employees engaging in interesting activities, or pursuance directly by the employees' needs, and values of personally meaningful activities (Ryan et al., 2020). Arguably, Ryan and Deci (2020), noted that autonomous motivation facilitates employees' energy, vitality, satisfaction, and well-being which drives efficiency and productivity. Concurred by other studies is the positive effect of autonomy on employees' motivation (Gagne et al., 2023; Bandhu et al., 2024). Similarly, competence concerns the need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills which provide a sense that one can succeed and grow. The idea is that a well-structured environment fosters a stronger employee commitment to their work and opportunities for growth. In essence, competence development leads to sustained motivation, efficiency, and improved productivity (McAnnally & Hagger, 2024). Finally, relatedness is about forming meaningful relationships and feeling a sense of belonging and attachment to others which are considered key drivers of motivation for employees. Thus, SDT proposes that the degree to which any of the three psychological needs is thwarted within an organisational setting affects motivation. Hence the development of the conceptual framework in Figure 1.

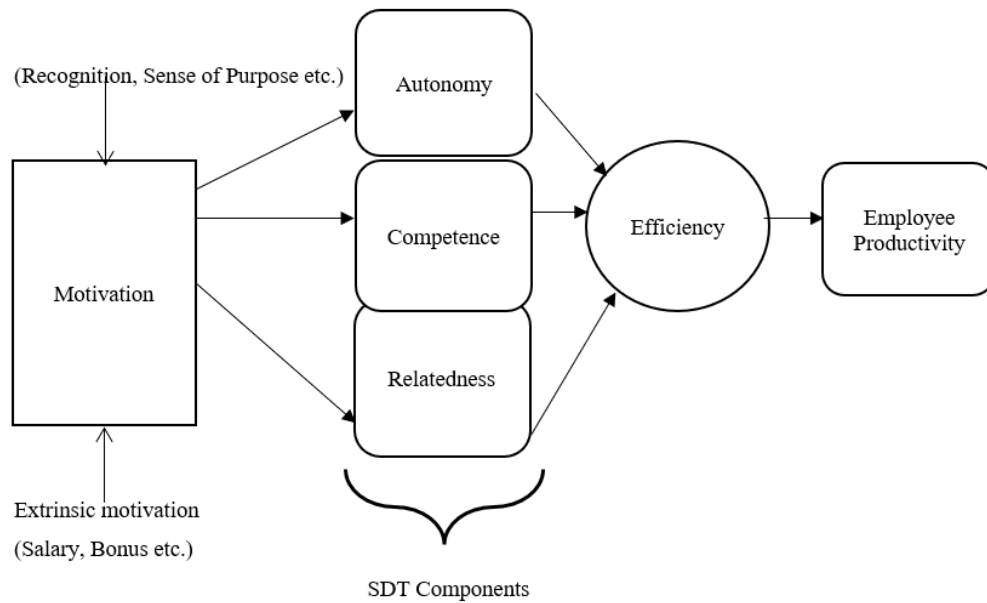


Figure 1: The SDT conceptualized. *Source:* Authors' conception

A review of the literature shows that employees can be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Considering Figure 1, intrinsic motivators include factors such as recognition, personal growth, and a sense of purpose, etc. Similarly, extrinsic motivators are factors including bonuses, rewards, wages, salaries, etc. Based on these factors, the employees' levels of motivation are expressed along the ACR (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) components of SDT. Autonomy allows employees to be in control of their behaviors and goals by fostering mastery and creativity, which are key elements in driving efficiency and productivity in an organisation. Training and development are a crucial factor that aligns with autonomy and competence, and it enables employees to feel more skilled and efficient. When employees undergo training, they feel more competent, which enhances their intrinsic motivation thereby leading to greater efficiency, because they become confident in their abilities, and productivity, to perform tasks. By so doing, employees can show competence. It is without a doubt that employees who feel competent are more likely to be efficient, which translates into increased productivity. Hence, such employees often display a sense of belonging and connection (i.e. relatedness) with the workplace environment. A supportive workplace environment that fosters belonging directly satisfies the need for relatedness, which makes employees feel connected and committed. In addition, this can boost employee productivity, as they are more likely to collaborate and stay engaged. For example, an employee may say that the flexible hours offered by the employer allow the employee to manage time effectively, reflecting autonomy or an employee feels like a part of the family in the organisation, indicating relatedness. This reveals that workplace, compensation, and general employee well-being can be identified as common motivational techniques that can be linked to autonomy. Organisations that offer employee well-being programs enhance the overall need satisfaction of the employees. In this context, the ACR components of the SDT model demonstrate how intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation drive employees towards becoming more efficient and productive in an organisational setting.

In essence, the SDT theory relies on the premise that human beings inherently desire to develop and grow towards their full potential (Ryan & Deci 2022). Because SDT emphasizes the fulfillment of relationships and environments, it posits that social contexts (such as workplace environments), tend to either facilitate or limit employees towards one's self-determination and invariably the employees' efficiency and productivity. Within this context, applying SDT in an organisation can benefit employee motivation by satisfying employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness and thereby driving efficiency and productivity. Hence, organisations that create thriving environments that support the SDT components are more likely to have motivated employees who perform their tasks efficiently and productively over the long term.

Research and Methodology

This study is oriented towards an interpretive paradigm and an inductive approach which are often associated with qualitative studies. The study employed exploratory research design and qualitative data collected through a non-probability quota sampling technique from a sample size of eleven participants (n=11). Sample size in a qualitative study is not about numbers but rather the appropriateness of the sample composition and size (Vasileiou et al., 2018), the richness, and the saturation point of data (Hennik et al., 2017). It is worth noting that while the small sample size provides detailed insights, it may not represent the entire selected organisation or sector, as it focuses on one organisation and the findings may not extend to other FMCGs in the global context, due to their unique organisational cultural differences. The study site is a selected FMCG organisation in South Africa and the choice stemmed from its contributory role to the nation and society in general as explained in the introductory section of this article. The researchers conducted a face-to-face semi-structured interview using open-ended questions. The open-ended questions allow for an in-depth understanding

of individuals' thoughts/opinions, experiences, and feelings toward motivation. Interview was conducted with all the participants and each session lasted a maximum of 30 minutes. This length of time allowed the participants to provide deeper thoughts on each of the questions asked. These interviews were conducted in a quiet boardroom at the convenience of the participants inside their workplace environment. These measures were to limit interferences and reduce errors and bias in research to the barest minimum (Saunders et al., 2023). By upholding all the ethical measures, the participants allowed for the interview to be recorded, and the researchers also jotted down information notes as a backup to the audio recording. At the end of each session, the researchers replayed the audio and read out the notes jotted to ensure the content reflected the participants' views.

The qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Saunders et al. (2023), highlight thematic analysis as a method of reviewing data, making notes, and sorting it into categories, which helped in identifying themes, discovering patterns, and developing themes. The researchers followed the six (6) steps in thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which are familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. These steps were achieved through the following: (i) the researchers familiarized themselves with the data through transcribing the audio, reading through the text, and taking initial notes. (ii) For generating initial codes, the researchers highlighted sections of the participants' responses and organized the data into meaningful categories. (iii) Searching for themes was done by organising codes to identify recurring patterns. (iv) The researchers reviewed themes by revising the data excerpts to ensure there were identifiable differences between the themes that emerged. (v) At this point, the researchers defined each theme by writing a detailed description that encapsulated what the theme represented and how it relates to the research questions. Finally, the researchers addressed each theme in the results and findings section to produce the report.

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, several measures were adopted. The study's trustworthiness was measured in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. In ensuring credibility, the researchers engaged in practices such as triangulation. Stahl and King (2020) define triangulating as a means of using several sources of information from the field to repeatedly establish identifiable patterns. Multiple data (primary and secondary) sources were used to ensure triangulation in the study and provide a comprehensive grasp. In-depth interviews were used to gather primary data, capturing the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Secondary data sources, such as documents, reports, or pertinent literature, were employed to support the primary data in order to supplement and validate these findings. The final measure that was employed to ensure credibility was member checking. Stahl and King (2020) posits that member checking is done by involving participants in verifying researchers' interpretations after the findings and it improves the accuracy, credibility, and transferability of the study findings (De Loyola et al., 2022; Candela, 2019). The researchers achieved this by presenting the findings to the study participants. Transferability was achieved by ensuring appropriate sampling fit for the study, the interview was carried out in a conducive environment to minimize any form of distraction, use multiple sources of data to validate the research findings, and recommendations based on the findings were provided to address problems that motivated the research. This allows readers to evaluate how applicable the findings could be to other similar situations. Also, dependability was ensured by the researcher, through rigorous documentation of the research process, data collection techniques, and interpretation during the study (Ahmed, 2024). Participants were also debriefed about key findings to verify the accuracy and relevance of researchers' interpretations in other to achieve confirmability (Saunders et al., 2023).

Lastly, the researchers achieved reflexivity through the dimensions of personal, interpersonal, methodological, and contextual (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). In ensuring personal reflexivity, the researchers reflected on and clarified expectations, and assumptions and were cautious of the context, participants, and data collected. The researchers continuously reflect on how their background, assumptions, and interactions may influence the study. In ensuring interpersonal reflexivity, the researchers recognized and appreciated the participants' knowledge and perspectives and were mindful of the impact on the entire research process. In the data analysis and reporting stages, reflexivity is crucial in maintaining transparency and objectivity. The researchers employed thematic analysis and documented each step in detail. In addition, data was interpreted systematically and grounded in participants' actual responses. In reporting the findings, the researchers used direct quotes from participants to accurately represent their views, avoiding any imposition of their perspectives. This process helped reduce bias in the analysis. The researchers thoughtfully selected the appropriate paradigm and ensured all the methodological choices were aligned within the context of the study. The study's research objectives and the findings are embedded within the social context and provide implications for managers in decision-making.

The importance of ethics in research is crucial because it ensures the integrity, credibility, and social responsibility of the research process (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). The study adhered to all the ethical requirements by first requesting permission to conduct the study from both the Institution's Ethics Committee and the research study site. All participants filled in and offered a consent letter which enabled them to participate voluntarily or withdraw at any stage of the research process. In addition, the researchers ensured the anonymity of the participants in reporting the findings.

Findings and Discussions

The overall aim of the study was to examine the effect of motivation on employee efficiency and productivity in a selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) organisation in South Africa. The demographics of the 11 participants are presented in Table 1 along the parameters of age, gender, qualification, and management level.

Table 1: Participant demographics

Demographic Items	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-30yrs	2	18%
	31-40yrs	5	46%
	41-50yrs	4	36%
	>50yrs		
Gender	Male	4	36%
	Female	7	64%
Qualification	Matric	9	82%
	National Diploma	1	09%
	Bachelor’s Degree	1	09%
Management level	First line managers	2	18%
	Team leaders	5	46%
	Supervisors	4	36%

The demographic profile of the participants indicates that the majority were between the ages of 31-40 years (46%), participants were mostly female (64%), the predominant qualification is Matric (final year of high school-82%), with management levels well represented (46%, 36% and 18%). This breakdown reflects a predominance of participants in middle to lower management roles.

Motivation and its techniques

The study's first research objective was set out to identify the motivational techniques employed by the organisation. The question is ‘what do you understand by the word motivation and what are some ways your organization motivates employees?’ The question engaged the participants to elaborate on their views on the concept of motivation and what their organisation does to motivate them. Data that emerged is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Views on motivation and motivational techniques

Research Inquiry	Illustrative statements	Keywords/phrase	Theme
Views on Motivation	---something that drives me to do more’ (P1)	Drives, pushes, encourages, reason for an action, helps, directs, inspires	Force
	---it pushes someone to work (P3).		
	‘Motivation encourages employees to do their task’ (P4)		
	‘It is why we do something’(P7)		
	‘Help someone to work’(P6)		
	‘It directs a certain behaviour’ (9)		
	‘It is what makes employees to work’ (P10)		
‘Motivation inspire employees to do more’ (P11)			
Motivational Techniques	"----the organisation provides promotion, stock benefits, medical aid, increase in salary, bursaries for kids’, jackets, boots, hair nets, and cleaning tools. The organisation also cleans our jackets and boots hygienically (P3)	Resource availability	Workplace environment
	"----- the organisation gives bursary to our kids; I feel is awesome.” (P2).	Financial support	Compensation
	"----- we are provided with good-padded chairs for good posture and comfort” (P5)	Ergonomics	Well-being
	---- food safety training courses and PPE to enable us to perform better in our department (P7). "We are been provided with computer skills, technology, and updated software to help us perform more efficiently." (P9)	Training and Development	Learning and Growth
		Resource availability	

"Long time ago we did use manual trolleys but currently we are being provided with automated trolleys for easy carriage and safety." (P1)	Workplace environment
	Resource availability
"We are being provided with jackets, gloves, hair nets, boots, and butchery automated equipment." (P10).	Workplace environment

Data emerging from Table 2 shows that the participants fully understood what motivation means given the keywords/phrases (column 3) used in explaining the concept. The theme that emerged indicates that motivation is viewed as a 'force' that triggers behavior. A review of other scholarly works on the definition of the concept alluded to the same theme. For example, Shkoler and Kimura (2020) in defining motivation relate it to a psychological 'force' that generates complex processes of goal-directed thoughts and behaviors. For Robbins and Judge (2019), motivation directs people to accomplish their goals. In agreement, Bandu et al. (2024) asserts that motivation acts as the 'driving force' that propels an individual to take proactive steps and reach their goals. The participants' understanding of the concept of motivation shows that the research questions were not ambiguous, thus they were able to indicate the motivational techniques currently employed by their organisations. These techniques (row 2; column 1), range from various organisational resources, ergonomics, and financial support, to training and development, etc. The themes that emerged are 'workplace environment', 'compensation', 'well-being', and 'learning and growth'. These findings concur with other similar studies in the literature. Al-A`ali (2024) noted that the foundational motivational factors often used in FMCGs in Bahrain are salaries and career development. A study by Chen (2022) on employees' motivation mechanism in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Industry using Procter and Gamble as a case study found that the organisation uses policies relating to salary, and training, and development in motivating their employees. In another study by Ukpe and Obio (2024), the authors demonstrated how the FMCG organisation they researched uses rewards (incentives, bonuses) to motivate employees which significantly affect the organisation's brand loyalty.

However, caution should be applied when using monetary incentives as a motivational tool due to ethical concerns. Agbenyegah (2019) argues that when emphasis is laid on monetary rewards, it drives personal gains and expectation creep, fosters unhealthy competition, undermines team collaboration, and creates a short-term focus. Though monetary incentives can boost short-term performance, they may not address intrinsic motivation, regarding the SDT theory, which the study aligns with through its competence (T&D) and relatedness (sense of belonging). While promoting monetary rewards in an organisation produces temporary motivation and compliance, it can be seen as a short-sighted value that instigates an employee's motivation, reducing intrinsic motivation and overall job satisfaction (Govender & Parumasur, 2020). This is supported by Lui, W and Lui's (2022) study, which revealed that there is a relationship between different variables of motivation technique and that some variables have more impact on other variables. The authors further argue that other variables, such as transformational leadership, have significant impact on employee performance, and employees are satisfied if they are provided with more career development opportunities rather than extrinsic rewards (Qin, Ji, Su, & Nawaz, 2021). Hence, organisations should not rely solely on monetary rewards but create a balance by providing policies that focus on employee empowerment, and personal development, such as sustainability initiatives, and flexible work environments to foster long-term commitment.

Motivational techniques and employees' efficiency and productivity

The second research objective was to explore how the motivational techniques employed by the selected FMCG influence employees' efficiency and productivity. The questions set out to answer the research objectives are 'How do you remain motivated at work?' 'What motivates you to excel in carrying out your tasks?' 'What role do motivational techniques provided by the organisation play in carrying out your tasks?' The questions require the participants to share their views on what motivates them at work, in carrying out their daily activities, and the extent the motivational techniques used by the organisation encourage them to deliver tasks and achieve goals and objectives.

Data revealed that organisational resources, financial support, well-being, and training and development (See Table 1) keep the participants motivated at work and in carrying out their individual tasks.

The participants also alluded to these techniques influencing their work culture, encouraging them to show more commitment and improve their performance. Some of the illustrative quotes are:

P1: "Our organisation enhances efficiency and productivity through training and development. We are trained about everything in customer service. So far, I am very happy with what they have offered." "They make me go the extra mile in my job and also makes me feel like a very important part of the team."

P3: "The organisation enhances my productivity through training and development. Currently, we are trained on health & safety and first aid courses to assist customers when needed."

P4: "In my view, the organisation enhances my productivity through treating employees fairly and equitably." "We are provided with air-conditioned offices and Wi-Fi which enhances our job."

P5: "-----the organisation enhances my efficiency and productivity through training on customer satisfaction. In that way, we are trained in how to deliver quality service to our customers."

P7: "The organisation enhances my productivity and efficiency through training on stock management in my department."

P10: "Personally, I see this as a place to grow, and I wish to deliver a better shopping experience to our customers."

P11: "The things the organisation provides for us make me work hard and be less absent from work."

The themes that emerged from the data are 'training and development', 'sense of belonging', 'equity and fairness', and 'career growth'. These findings concur with similar studies in literature. In this study, training and development were consistently highlighted by the participants. This shows that training programs can lead to enhanced efficiency and productivity as employees feel empowered and more competent. It is also beneficial that T&D policies employed by an organisation leverage technology, such as AI-driven training platforms during upskilling. This is particularly relevant in FMCG, where rapid skill updates are needed for new market trends. This is consistent with the assertion made by Singh and Chaudhary (2022) that training is a key determinant of employee productivity. Kakade and Karira's (2023) study about the FMCG sector in Thane City, found that training and development provide employees with essential job skills and serve as a motivational tool that encourages employees to stay engaged and perform better. In another study, Jain et al. (2019) found that training and development significantly contribute towards performance enhancement of the employees of the FMCG organisation researched. For these scholars, T&D enhanced performance across all aspects and task levels in the researched organisation. Hence, it can be deduced from this finding that training and development provide employees with essential job skills and serve as a motivational tool, encouraging employees to stay engaged and perform better.

Another theme that emerged from the data is a sense of belonging (P1) which is a fundamental human need. According to Filstad et al. (2019:128), belonging refers to a 'process of becoming part of something larger; as experiencing physical and symbolic boundaries at work; and as performing, engaging, and participating in a workplace'. The cultivation of belonging is a dynamic process, contingent upon regular interactions that signal the extent to which one is part of/valued by, or different/excluded from, social groups or workplaces (Dalessandro & Lovell, 2024). In the workplace, belonging means that employees feel accepted, can air their voices and ideas, and are valued. This is evidenced in the data (P1) who asserted feelings of happiness of being a member of the team. Dewi et al. (2020), found in their study that a sense of belonging significantly affects employees' performance. Though the latter was conducted in a manufacturing organisation, the findings are no different from the context of this study and others. Employees who feel valued and motivated are more likely to take the initiative and go beyond what is expected of them. In Weir (2024) article in the American Psychological Association, the author noted that finding community at work enhances employee well-being and organisation productivity. Such a positive attitude creates a productive atmosphere in an organisation where employees flourish. The study's emphasis on well-being aligns with growing trends in FMCG, where demanding schedules contribute to employee burnout. To promote work-life balance, organizational policies could incorporate flexible work arrangements for employees, allowing them to adjust their work hours, location, or schedule to better fit their personal needs, often including options such as flextime, compressed workweeks, telecommuting, job sharing, and part-time work.

The next themes that emerge from the data are equity and fairness as noted by (P4). The concept posits that employees strive for principles of fairness in the workplace environment. The level of reward an individual receives compared to the contribution made affects one's motivation. In other words, employees perceive fairness with their input (i.e. effort, skills) and output (rewards, recognition) in the organisation. This finding is in line with the works of Radi (2020) on selected multinational companies (MNCs) in Egypt. The author found that a fair equity increase in compensation lowers the level of absenteeism, leading to a higher level of motivation and attitude among employees. When employees are treated well, they feel valued, respected, motivated, engaged, and satisfied in their roles. Ultimately, employees are more likely to give their best and improve efficiency and productivity as well as that of the organisation. Hence, the importance of equity and fairness as motivational tools for organisations.

The last theme that emerged from the data is career growth (P10). This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Arquisola & Ahlisa (2019). The researchers conducted a study in FMCG industry in Indonesia and found that the employees are motivated to undergo learning and development to fulfill the motivational needs for power, and achievement. Other studies across sectors have shown similar findings. For example, Setyawati et al. (2022) found that career development, motivation, and promotion have a significant effect on employee performance. In addition, Ratnasari et al. (2019) demonstrated in their study that career development has had a direct influence on the employees' performance. A recent article by Baskin (2023) in MIT Sloan Management Review emphasized the need for organisations to focus on career advancement. This is as per a result of their recent survey of more than 1000 workers in 25 organisations which found that while 67% of the respondents indicated they want to advance in their career, 49% alluded to a lack of good career advice affecting their job trajectory. These findings have managerial implications, especially in this era of rapid changes in the organisation's workplace environment.

Furthermore, emerging from the data are concerns raised by the study participants

"Currently the organisation gives the training and development, but the training should come with a form of certificate. Because going forward it should act as a proof of one's skills development." (P1)

"The organisation should provide training on customer service and communication development." (P3)

"I would say training on leadership skills. Even though I am still in Level 1, someday I might be promoted as a manager. Leadership skills would help me learn how to lead and manage people in a way that I would like to be led." (P9)

"We need training on conflict resolution amongst teammates. The management should also provide management training and team-building exercises." (P5)

"We also need training on team building and self-improvement. To be honest with you, we really lack that here." (P11)

A common thread across the participants is the acknowledgment of training as an essential strategy for improving productivity. Many participants identified areas where training can be improved or expanded to meet their personal and professional needs. These illustrative statements show that the participants see training as not only enhancing productivity but also fostering a sense of growth and accomplishment. The request for certifications and leadership skills reflects employees' desire to see tangible rewards for their efforts and a pathway to career advancement. Employee empowerment not only hones a sense of responsibility and ownership toward one's task but also translates into higher motivation and productivity in an organisation (Aghazamani & Hunt, 2017). Team building, exercises, well-being, and conflict-resolution training enhance workplace harmony and efficiency. Addressing interpersonal issues can prevent workplace disruptions and lead to more productive collaboration among team members. In addition, The study's emphasis on well-being aligns with growing trends in FMCG, where employee burnout is a concern due to demanding schedules. Organizational policies could include flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid models for office and field staff, to support work-life balance. This is supported by Workplace Flexibility in FMCG, which notes that flexible arrangements can reduce turnover by 20%.

Conclusion

This research study employed qualitative inquiry and thematic analysis to investigate the impact of motivation on staff efficiency and productivity inside a specific Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) firm in South Africa. The study specifically examined the prevalent motivational strategies utilised by the selected FMCG and their impact on employee efficiency and production. The findings indicated that the participants possess a robust comprehension of the idea of motivation, which they described as the 'force' driving specific behaviours. The findings indicate that the motivating strategies predominantly employed by the chosen FMCG are categorised into topics of workplace environment, remuneration, well-being, and learning and progress. Likewise, the findings from research goal two indicate that factors such as training and development, sense of belonging, equity and justice, and career advancement predominantly affect the participants' efficiency and productivity. Motivation is a multifaceted term shaped by inherent and external variables. The findings indicate a harmonious interaction between inner and extrinsic motivators inside the examined FMCG organisation. Although the interplay of workplace environment and salary acts as significant extrinsic motivators, several individuals also pursue intrinsic fulfilment through training and development for personal advancement and social engagement. Comprehending and utilising both forms of motivation can result in increased efficiency and heightened employee productivity. From a theoretical perspective, these findings illustrate how the FMCG firm utilises the ACR components of SDT to motivate its people. The autonomy component enables participants to manage their behaviour in executing daily activities, while the pursuit of professional advancement through training and development facilitates the enhancement of their skills and knowledge towards competence. The FMCG organisation fosters relatedness by cultivating an environment in which employees experience a feeling of belonging, alongside the principles of equity and fairness. These findings indicate that a positively motivated workforce is essential for enhancing employee efficiency and organisational production. Consequently, motivation propels people both individually and together as teams inside the workplace.

To augment the impact of motivation on staff efficiency and productivity within the chosen FMCG organisation in South Africa, the researchers propose the following comprehensive implementation techniques for FMCG managers and HR practitioners:

The FMCG organisation should implement extensive training and development programs throughout its departments. These programs can be initiated by first performing a needs assessment to determine training requirements and evaluate present abilities in relation to job specifications prior to implementation and assessment. Training and development are essential for sustaining competitiveness, particularly in light of the swift transformations within the FMCG business. Consequently, regular training and development sessions would enhance the technical abilities pertinent to corporate operations.

Moreover, a sense of belonging is a crucial element that contributes to enhancing employee engagement and increasing productivity. Consistent employee recognition practices, team-building initiatives, and transparent communication channels should be utilised to sustain employee motivation, enhance a supportive work atmosphere, and cultivate collaboration. Managers ought to allocate resources to team-building activities as an essential motivational instrument. To cultivate an open communication channel, the FMCG should encourage a work atmosphere in where workers feel secure in sharing their ideas, via regular team meetings and anonymous feedback tools.

Ultimately, upholding a transparent diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policy, encompassing clear hiring processes, compensation, promotions, and rewards, mitigates perceptions of bias and guarantees equity and justice. Equitable treatment fosters employee dedication within a varied workforce and competitive environment. Moreover, equitable career advancement can be facilitated through mentorship programs that connect employees with senior personnel for guidance, the establishment and communication of

explicit career trajectories delineating roles and advancement prospects, and the promotion of effective inclusive leadership practices, including active listening, appreciation of diverse viewpoints, and the provision of fair growth opportunities.

The primary limitation of this study is that collecting qualitative data via interviews can be exceedingly time-intensive. This approach frequently necessitates prolonged engagement with participants, who are available only within a specific timeframe. Therefore, future research should incorporate additional digital communication methods, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp, when conducting interviews.

Subsequent research could investigate the correlation between leadership styles and employee motivation to ascertain which leadership methodologies are most efficacious in enhancing efficiency and productivity within the FMCG sector.

The findings from this study may inform modifications in how businesses interact with employees and use incentive strategies to ensure a productive and efficient endeavour.

This study provides valuable insights into the influence of motivation on staff productivity in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector in South Africa, and its implications for strengthening operational efficiency and competitive advantage.

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