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**EQUITY THEORY OF MOTIVATION AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED SOUTH EAST
UNIVERSITIES**

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ABSTRACT

The study examines equity theory of motivation and work performance in higher institutions with particular reference to NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State University (Igbarian Campus) and Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The objective of the study is to assess the extent to which employees' behaviour affects job performance in organizations. The study employed the descriptive research design. Primary and Secondary sources of data were the major instruments used for this study. The findings reveal that there is a significant relationship between employees work behaviour and job performance. The study concludes that fair treatment should be used to motivate employees. By giving them the best possible rewards they expect. It was recommended that institutions and other corporate organizations should consider and recognize the contribution of each employee to the achievement of the institution's and the organizations objectives.

JEL CODE 41 – BF

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Employees motivation has been a concern for organizational management (Rue and Byars, 2005). One of the factors that encourage managers to be interested in motivation and its management is the awareness that employees and their motivation are key for an organization to be efficient and effective. This idea is emphasized by Certo (2006), when he says that employees must want to do a good job. The author observes that many supervisors would wish to motivate their employees; but unfortunately, they are not aware of the factors that make employees want to work effectively. The major concern of man has been work which has been a cogent and potent feature of both the old and modern societies. Work plays an important role in the daily lives of a person, in that it allows individuals to support themselves and others. It also takes a considerably part of the overall time at man's disposal during his life time, and the economic benefits accruable to him become a

major index of his standard of living (Adelema, 2009). According to Vroom (1964), man works because he believes that his engagement in work certainly brings him to a state of being more satisfied than his present status. Universities are places where higher education is acquired. They are expected to discover and impart new knowledge, prepare people for leadership positions in all works of life and strive to promote equality and social justice. They are entrusted with the responsibility of providing semi-skilled and skilled workforce for the economy. The relevance of the university and its conceived role as a major panacea for all societal problems has led to an unprecedented increase in social demand for education in Nigeria (Akpotu & Nwadiani, 2003).

Higher education institutions in Nigeria are confronted with several challenges. The challenges facing Nigerian universities are complex. It is a combination of limited success, late payment of salaries, increasing cost, decreasing quality of staffs and inflexibility among the top management (Olujuwon, 2005). Perhaps, the most formidable task confronting universities in Nigeria is to articulate the triple relationship between the mission of the university and the specific needs of university's works. This is of central significance to the lives of everybody including university workers in that it provides an individual with inner creative joy and saves him from the dullness and boredom of life. In any organization, job performance of individuals becomes crucial to its survival. Seatant, Sulumnad, Thanpitak and Sungkaew (2010) opine that success or failure of an organization depends to a large extent, on the job performance of the individuals in that particular organization. Furthermore, Wright and Noe (2006) see job performance representing behaviours that are relevant to the organization's goals and the indices of job performance are measured in terms of each individual's proficiency and the level of contribution. To get optimum performance from employees, there is need for some sort of motivation beyond the monthly salary. Motivated employees are essential for the survival of organizations. Motivated employees are needed in our rapidly changing work places like universities because they are productive and help organizations to survive.

Motivation is one of the characteristics required so as to achieve tangible things in life, and without it, an individual prematurely gives up at the first sign of adversity (Valez, 2008). In order to maintain equity in the environment of Nigerian Universities, fundamental reforms will be needed in both the academic and administrative staffs. There is need for Nigerian universities to move towards more businesses like management and governance. According to Cory (2006) in Idemobi (2010), in management, the equity theory of employee motivation describes the relationship between how fairly an employee perceives how he/she is being treated and how hard he/she is motivated to work. The structure of equity in the work place is based on the ratio of inputs to outcomes. The belief is that people value fair treatment which causes them to be motivated to keep the fairness maintained within the relationships of their co-workers and the organization.

A motivated employee is one who not only feels satisfied with his or her job but is empowered to strive for excellence and growth in the organization. When administrative staffs are motivated, they become satisfied and more committed to their teaching job. It eventually leads to or contributes positively to the attainment of educational goals and objectives. The more satisfied administrative staffs are with their job, the more productive they will be, and the healthier they will be physically, emotionally, socially and academically. This is only possible if the necessary motivational factors that enhance job performance and satisfaction are in place. Motivational factors are those aspects of the job that make academic staff want to perform the duties. They help to propel, stimulate, channel, direct, energize, arouse, sustain and influence the staffs' behaviour towards striving for excellence. They also encourage academic staff and increase their persistence level in the teaching-learning process for the achievement of university educational goals and objectives. Researchers such as Rawsthorne and Elliot (2000), and Sansone, and Harackiewicz (2000) are of the opinion that motivational factors (intrinsic motivation) make employees to persevere, work harder and produce result of higher quality. For administrative staff to be committed to their job, university authorities and government should find ways to keep them in the profession by motivating them. Although a positive relationship exists between work behaviour and job

performance. It is moderated by the use of motivational factors and the nature of employees' attitude towards their job. This study therefore is poised to investigate equity theory or motivation and work performance in selected South East Universities of Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When individuals at the work place think that their inputs are rewarded according to their outputs and are equal to the other around, they are satisfied. But when they notice that others are getting more recognition and rewards, in spite of doing the same amount of work, they become dissatisfied. The reason is that inadequate motivation may lead to frustration and drudgery and the attendant results may be low job performance and turnover in organization. This therefore is a problem for most organizations. Hence, there is need to fashion out a new way of motivating employees fairly and justly. When all employees are rewarded equally, the general feelings about the organizations become fair and appreciable. People will perform higher when they are motivated enough. This study aims at the factors that can be taken to motivate employees in order to improve their performances in the selected South-East universities under study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to ascertain how the equity theory of motivation can be applied in organizations in order to influence workers performance. The specific objective is to assess the extent to which employees work behaviour affects job performance in organizations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the statement of the problem and the objectives of the study, the following question was postulated.

- To what extent does employees work behaviour affect job performance in organizations?

HYPOTHESIS

Ho: Employee work behaviour has no significant effects on job performance

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is considered relevant to the employers and employees of the selected institutions under study and other organizations. Since inequity brings disorderliness among the employees of organizations, equity tends to help both the employers in managing the organizations smoothly and as well motivate the employees to work harder.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study covers equity theory of motivation and work performance at NnamdiAzikiwe University, Anambra State University and Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The institutions have multiple departments and equity must be applied in all the departments for better job performance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study however was not without hindrances and these limited the research work. Some of the limitations encountered by the researchers are:

1. The inability to gain access into some offices of the selected universities.
2. There was also the refusal of taking out important articles relating to the field of study for proper studying.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Equity theory was first developed in 1963 by John Stacey Adams, while working as a research psychologist with the General Electric Company in Crotonville, New York. He developed and tested an equity theory of motivation. Equity can be defined as a ratio between the individual's job inputs (such as effort or skill) and job rewards (such as pay or promotion). People judge the equity of rewards by comparing them either to the rewards other are receiving for similar input or to some other effort reward ratio that occurs to them (Chiekezie, Nzewi&Orogbu 2009). It involves feelings, perceptions and comparative process. The equity theory of motivation is used to describe the relationship between the employee's perceptions of how fairly he/she is being treated and how hard he/she is being motivated to work. Equity theory is classified into two forms which are distributive equity and procedural equity. Distributive equity is concerned with fairness with which people feel they are rewarded in accordance with others, while procedural equity is concerned with perception employees have about the fairness with which the organization procedures are being operated. For instance, appraisal and promotion (Armstrong 2009).

Equity theory proposes that individuals who perceive themselves as either under-rewarded or over-rewarded will experience distress and that this distress leads to efforts in order to restore equity within the relationship. Equity, thus, measures the contribution and benefits earned by each individual (Idemobi 2010). Muchinsky (2004) in his views said that job performance is the set of worker's behaviours that can be monitored, measured and assessed in terms of achievement at individual level. Moreover, these behaviours must also be in tandem with the organizational goals. In other words, worker's performance is an important factor to be considered for any organization claiming to be excellent. Thus, it could be referred from the assertion that organization's success or failure depends, to a large extent, on job performance of the individuals working for the organization. In industrial and organizational psychology, it is frequently expressed that job performance is a function of ability and motivation (Pritchard 2006). In essence, it commonly refers to whether a person performs his/her job well or not. Hence, performance can be regarded as almost any behaviour directed towards a task or being seen as a satisfactory performance by one's boss. Job performance could also be regarded as goal-relevant actions that are under the control of the individual and directed toward some objectives of the organization.

Viswesvaran (2009) introduced a more recent definition of job performance as "scalable actions" that is, behaviour and outcomes that employees engage in or bring about that are linked with and contribute to organizational goals. The central theme of all the definitions revolves round behaviours that are relevant and contribute to the realization of the organizational goals and objectives. Motivation is concerned with all the inner striking conditions often described as drives, desires and wishes which make the individual act in a certain way. It is the internal or external driving force that produces the willingness to perform an act to a conclusive end (Nnabuike, 2009). According to Robbins (2012), motivation is the process that accounts for an individual, intensity, direction and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal. It is the activation of an energized goal-oriented behaviour. It is seen not only in humans, but even animals show a level of motivation to achieve their goals. Everyone takes up a job as they are motivated by some factors or the other. Some are motivated by the challenge they face in carrying out their job, some are motivated by the level of fame they earn, others and majority of people are motivated by the money they earn. People will work better when they are motivated enough with the pay scale, the incentives and the wages they are offered in return of a job well done (Robbins 2012).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on behavioural management theory which was developed in 20th century by a group of theorists like Elton Mayo, Abraham Maslow and Douglas McGregor, in response to the need to account for employee's behaviour and motivation. The shift moved management from the production orientation (classical leadership theory) to a leadership style

focused on the worker's human need for work. Related satisfaction and good working conditions. The behavioural management theory is often called the Human Relations Movement because it addresses the human dimensions of work. Behavioural theorists believe that a better understanding of human behaviour at work, such as motivation, conflict, and expectations and group dynamics improve productivity (Kreitner, 2004 in Nnabuife, 2009). The theorists who contributed to this school view employees as individuals, resources and assets to be developed and worked with, not as machines as in the past. Several individuals and experiments contributed to the theory. Behavioral management theory relies on the notion that managers will better understand the human aspect of workers and treat employees as important assets (Stoner, 2007 in Nnabuife, 2009).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

A number of studies have been carried out by various researchers on equity theory of motivation and work performance in organizations. A study was conducted by Shaffer (2004) on a small firm with fifty employees who performed similar tasks and had similar pay. When one group was given additional pay than the other group, a feeling of inequity existed which in turn led to lower performance as a result of this feeling. This reaction is predicted by equity theory in which people tend to reduce their outcomes as one of the methods to restore equity. The literature also indicates a strong relationship between the pay and performance of top executives. Executive's incomes are a good representation of their company's performance such as profit, sales, shareholder wealth, stage of development, and industry. Dumville (2003) has also indicated a strong relationship to exist between pay satisfaction and motivation. Work motivation is viewed as an invisible and internal construct; it should result in satisfaction and performance. A study was conducted on players in a major league baseball team, in the year prior to their free agency. As predicted by equity theory, individuals who were under compensated choose to decrease their performance and had less motivation (Ambrose & Kulik, 2009). From reviewing the literature it appears that when there is two-way communication between managers and employees, it will increase their satisfaction with their jobs and pay will not be an employee top priority. A study was conducted on ten corporate locations which found that when managers and employees have two-way communication, their perception of pay equity was higher than the other group where there was no communication. Even though both groups were paid almost the same as the first group, the first group felt they were equitably paid while the second group had the perception that they were underpaid (Huseman & Hatfield, 2000).

In a study conducted by Jimoh (2012) to find out whether situational judgment, emotional labour and demographic factors were predictors of job performance among university administrative workers in South Eastern Nigeria, found out that situational judgment, conscientiousness, emotional labour, marital status, gender and length of service, all played major roles in determining the job performance of university administrative workers. According to him, if such variables are properly and positively manipulated, it will lead to enhance job performance of workers in private and public institutions. Furthermore, he gives recipe for enhancing job performance of workers which include; helping employees to acquire competencies such as perception, appraisal and expression of emotion, emotional facilitation of thinking, understanding and analyzing emotion as well as emotional knowledge. Elias and Yaakub (2009) in a study conducted to find out the influence of job motivation on job performance of 82 recipients for excellent service found out that, high job performance is not solely dependent on job motivation alone, rather, other factors such as good leadership, good working facilities and environment, as well as ability also play significant roles to enhancing good job performance. According to them, while job motivation was moderate, job performance was high. He further found no correlation between job motivation and job performance.

Studies on motivation and job performance by Litwin and Stringer (2000) and Chemers and Ayman (2002) show negative relationship between these two variables. However, Shouksmith (2007) reported affiliation motivation was not correlated with job performance. There were other studies

that reported positive between affiliation motivation and job performance (Effraty and Sirgy 2000). Job motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic (McCormick and Tiffelin 2009) both extrinsic (externally granted) and intrinsic (self granted) rewards, when properly administered, can have a positive impact on job performance and satisfaction (Ryan and Deci 2009). There is no single best employee compensation plan; however, a flexible and varied approach to compensation will eventually help managers to maximize the motivational impact of extrinsic rewards. Such approaches include rewarding to satisfy individual needs, believing that effort will lead to reward, while rewards must be equitable and linked to performance. In another study to find out the relationship between rewards and employee performance in a cement industry in Pakistan, Qureshi, Zaman and Shah (2010) found a significant relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and employee performance. According to them, both extrinsic (concrete and financial/material) and intrinsic (non financial/material) can be utilized privately to enhance job performance behaviour of workers. Thus, management of Nigerian universities must be able to apply both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational strategies to engender good performance among their workers. However, this study examines the need to recognize the factors that motivate individual employees for working harder or across the board wage increase. The researchers focused on the dangers of inequitable treatment of employees and its overall consequences on organizational performance.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study made use of survey research method, while the area at which the study was carried out covers Administrative staff of NnamdiAzikiwe University, Anambra State University and Enugu State University of Science and Technology.

THE POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The total population of the study who were eligible to assist in filling out the questionnaire is 77 staff from Anambra State University (Igbariam Campus), 99 staff from NnamdiAzikiwe University and 55 staff from Enugu State University of Science and Technology giving a total population of 231 employees who have had 5 years and above experience.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data for the research was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data are materials which were originated by the researcher for the purpose of inquiry at hand. They were obtained through questionnaire. The questionnaires were structured, simple and direct questions, the respondents were placed on objective response for each statement on a five point likert scale. The response scoring weights were strongly agree- 5 points, Agree- 4 points, Undecided- 3 points, Disagree- 2 points, Strongly Disagree -1 point. The secondary data are materials not originated by the researchers but obtained from already existing data. They include magazines, journals, newspapers, internet published work which the researcher used for the literature review.

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE RELIABILITY

The reliability test of the questionnaire was done with the aid of SPSS, the test result below shows the computed Cronbach Alpha value.

Table 3.1: Questionnaire Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.712	10

Source: SPSS Ver. 22

The Cronbach Alpha value was 712 which means that 71.2% of the variance in the scores is reliable variance.

Table 3.2: Questionnaire Frequency Distribution

	SA	A	UD	D	SD
You are being motivated by your employer.	10 6.9%	105 72.9%	20 13.9%	2 1.4%	7 4.9%
Your performance is being recognized by your immediate supervisor.	18 12.5%	91 63.2%	27 18.8%	6 4.2%	2 1.4%
The level of motivation in your organization increases your performance at work.	12 8.3%	88 61.1%	38 26.4%	6 4.2%	-
Fair treatment increases productivity and reduces labour turnover in your organization.	16 11.1%	72 50.0%	51 35.4%	4 2.8%	1 7%
You are being treated fairly with those in the same rank with you.	27 18.8%	79 54.9%	34 23.6%	4 2.8%	-
Individual employees are being rewarded for working harder in your organization.	25 17.4%	83 57.6%	33 22.9%	3 2.1%	-
Your input contribution in your organization is equivalent to your outcomes.	25 17.4%	89 61.8%	27 18.8%	3 2.1%	-
Motivation is very important in your organization as far as job performance is concerned.	17 11.8%	87 60.4%	38 26.4%	2 1.4%	-
Inequity brings disorderliness among the employees of your organizations.	21 14.6%	66 45.8%	47 32.6%	5 3.5%	5 3.5%
There is no link between equity and performance in your organization.	7 4.9%	114 79.2%	18 12.5%	5 3.5%	-

Source: Field Survey (2015)

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 4.1: Schedule of Questionnaire Distribution

Name of University	No of Questionnaires Administered	No of Questionnaires returned
Anambra State University, Igbariam Campus	77	33
NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka	99	85
Enugu State University Of Science And Technology	55	25
Total	231	144

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Male	60
Female	84
Total	144

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 4.6: Questionnaire Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
You are being motivated by your employer.	144	1.00	5.00	3.7569	.80424
Your performance is being recognized by you immediate supervisor.	144	1.00	5.00	3.8125	.75696
The level of motivation in your organization increases your performance at work.	144	2.00	5.00	3.7361	.66885
Fair treatment increases productivity and reduces labour turnover in your organization.	144	1.00	5.00	3.6806	.73525
You are being treated fairly with those in the same rank with you.	144	2.00	5.00	3.8958	.72632
Individual employees are being rewarded for working harder in your organization.	144	2.00	5.00	3.9028	.69281
Your input contribution in your organization is equivalent to your outcomes.	144	2.00	5.00	3.9444	.66667
Motivation is very important in your organization as far as job performance is concerned.	144	2.00	5.00	3.8264	.64047
Inequity brings disorderliness among the employees of your organizations.	144	1.00	5.00	3.6458	.89653
There is no link between equity and performance in your organization.	144	2.00	5.00	3.8542	.54154
Valid N (listwise)	144				

Source: SPSS Ver. 22**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS****HYPOTHESIS ONE**

H0: Employees work behaviour has no significant effects on job performance

Table 4.5.1: Correlation Result of Hypothesis one

		Employee Work Behaviour	Job performance
Employee Work Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.631
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	144	144
	Pearson Correlation	.637	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	144	144
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)			

Source: SPSS Ver. 22

The Pearson result shows a significant and positive relationship between Employee Work Behaviour and job Performance. Thus, we reject the null and accept the alternate hypothesis that employees work behaviour has significant effect on job performance.

FINDINGS

From the analysis carried out, it was found that equity theory of motivation contributes to organizational performance. It further reveals that there is positive relationship between employees work behaviour and job performance. For an effective organizational performance, it is vital that organizations must take cognizance of factors that motivate individual employees. People will work better when they are motivated enough with the pay scale, the incentives and the wages they are offered in return for a job well done (Robbins 2012).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that fair and just treatment are major factors that motivate employees in organizations. When organizations take cognizance of these factors to be done and actions to be taken to motivate employees, by giving them the best possible rewards they expect, it will lead to high job performance and also reduce employees turnover.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Institutions should give employees tasks that permit them to collaborate with other institutions, it is also important that institutions maintain the implementation, and where necessary, reinforce the good practice of non-discrimination among staff members.
2. Institution and other corporate organizations should consider and recognize the contribution of each employee to the achievement of the institution's and organizations objectives. This is in accordance with Adam's equity Theory, which is based on fairness and equity in the organization.
3. Government should work together with university authorities in order to create a pleasant and supportive work environment that motivates staffs.

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APPENDIX

S/N		SA	A	U	D	SD
1	You are being motivated by your employer.	5	4	3	2	1
2	Your performance is being recognized by your immediate supervisor.	5	4	3	2	1
3	The level of motivation in your organization increases your performance at work.	5	4	3	2	1
4	Fair treatment increases productivity and reduces labour turnover in your organization.	5	4	3	2	1
5	You are being treated fairly with those in the same rank with you.	5	4	3	2	1
6	Individual employees are being rewarded for working harder in your organization.	5	4	3	2	1
7	Your input contribution in your organization is equivalent to your outcomes.	5	4	3	2	1
8	Motivation is very important in your organization as far as job performance is concerned.	5	4	3	2	1
9	Inequity brings disorderliness among the employees of your organizations.	5	4	3	2	1
10	There is no link between equity and performance in your organization.	5	4	3	2	1