MOTIVATION AS PREDICTOR OF PERFORMANCE OF SECRETARIAL STAFF IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Ile, Chika M
cm.ile@unizik.edu.ng
Department of Business Education,
Faculty of Technology and Vocational Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State
&
Udensi Goodness Ogadimma
udensigoodness05@gmail.com
Department of Business Education,
Faculty of Technology and Vocational Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State

Abstract
This study investigated motivation as a predictor of performance of secretarial staff in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study was guided by two purposes, two research questions and two hypotheses. Correlation survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 522, comprising 369 secretarial staff and 153 Staff registrar cadre staff (Deputy Registrar and above). Census sampling was used in the study due to small size of the population. Data for this study were collected using two researcher-made structured questionnaires namely, "Job Satisfaction and Motivation of Secretarial Staff" (JSMSS) Questionnaire and "Secretarial Staff Job Performance" (SSJP) Survey. Two experts in Faculty of Technology and Vocational Education, and one in Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka validated the instruments. The instruments yielded reliability co-efficient values of 0.82 and 0.85 for SSJP and JSMSS respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) was used to answer research questions and test hypotheses. The strength or direction of the relationship of the variables was tested with Regression analysis while they were interpreted using Creswell (2009) correlation coefficient scale. The study found among others that, motivation is a significant predictor of job performance, with regression results indicating that nearly half of the performance variance was explained by motivation levels. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others, that secretarial staff should receive fair, competitive remuneration from management of tertiary institutions based on workload, experience and performance to increase job satisfaction and retention. Government should prioritize clear communication regarding job continuity, institutional support, and protection from arbitrary dismissal to enhance job commitment and reduce anxiety among secretarial staff.

Keywords: Extrinsic motivation, Intrinsic Mtivation, Job Performance, Secretarial Staff, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

Secretarial staff offer administrative support to academic departments and administrative offices in maintaining efficient office operations by ensuring that administrative tasks are completed accurately and on time (Office of Personnel Management, 2018). They also serve as a point of contact for internal and external communication. Secretarial staff handle phone calls, emails, and inquiries, directing these correspondences to the appropriate personnel or providing necessary information.

In tertiary institutions, secretarial staff are responsible for maintaining records related to students, lecturers, courses, and administrative matters. This includes organizing and updating databases, filing documents, and ensuring compliance with data protection regulations. Accurate record-keeping is essential for institutional accountability and decision-making (American Council on Education, 2019). These categories of staff assist in organizing events such as meetings, conferences, workshops, and seminars. Secretarial staff help with logistical arrangements, scheduling venues, sending invitations, and coordinating resources to ensure the success of events. Their role in event coordination contributes to the effective dissemination of knowledge and networking within the academic community (Baker and Prewitt, 2020). Secretarial staff often interact with students, aiding with inquiries, enrolment procedures, and academic paperwork. They may also collaborate with student services departments to support student activities, clubs, and initiatives. Their involvement in student support services contributes to student satisfaction and retention (Tinto, 2017).

In view of the onerous task before them, the secretarial staff need to perform effectively in the discharge of their duties. Performance refers to the execution of tasks and the accomplishment of responsibilities expected from an individual within a defined role. In organizational contexts, it denotes the degree to which an employee successfully fulfils their job duties and contributes to organizational goals. According to Armstrong (2024), performance is "the accomplishment, execution, carrying out, and working out of anything ordered or undertaken." It reflects both behavioural aspects (what employees do) and outcome aspects (what they produce).

For secretarial staff to discharge their duties effectively, they need to be motivated. Motivation contributes to a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction in the workplace. When individuals feel motivated to pursue meaningful goals and experience a sense of accomplishment, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and overall well-being. According to Pilarta (2015), motivation is a psychological drive or force that directs someone to an objective. Chukwudolue (2022) notes that motivation is concerned with how behaviour is energized, sustained, directed and regulates the activities of an organism in a given context.

Motivation may play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of secretarial staff in tertiary institutions. Motivated secretarial staff are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of job performance. When individuals feel motivated, they are driven to perform their tasks with diligence, accuracy, and efficiency (Hackman and Oldham, 2020). Motivation encourages secretarial staff to prioritize tasks effectively and manage their time efficiently. Motivated individuals are more likely to set clear goals, organize their work schedules, and meet deadlines promptly, thereby enhancing overall productivity (Latham and Locke, 2021).

There are two kinds of motivation identified by sources of its appeal, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is driven by internal factors such as personal interest, curiosity, and a sense of competence or autonomy. Individuals who are intrinsically

motivated find fulfilment, pleasure, and satisfaction in the process of engaging in an activity, regardless of external incentives or consequences. When individuals feel a sense of autonomy in their actions, perceive themselves as competent in achieving desired outcomes, and experience meaningful connections with others, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to engage in activities. Intrinsic motivation is fuelled by a sense of purpose and the perception of work as meaningful (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Secretarial staff who find meaning and significance in their work are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to perform their tasks to the best of their abilities. Tertiary institutions can enhance intrinsic motivation among secretarial staff by emphasizing the importance of their roles in supporting the institution's mission, goals, and overall success. When secretarial staff understand how their contributions contribute to the broader objectives of the institution, they feel a greater sense of purpose and motivation to excel in their roles, leading to increased effectiveness.

Extrinsic motivation on the other hand refers to engaging in an activity or behaviour to attain external rewards or avoid punishments, rather than for the inherent satisfaction or enjoyment derived from the activity itself. In the context of secretarial staff within tertiary institutions, extrinsic motivators may play a significant role in shaping their effectiveness, job performance, and overall job satisfaction. Financial rewards, such as salary increases, bonuses, and performance-based incentives, for instance, serve as powerful extrinsic motivators for secretarial staff (Deci and Ryan, 2019). Tertiary institutions often use financial incentives to reward secretarial staff for their performance, productivity, and contributions to the organization. When secretarial staff perceive a direct correlation between their efforts and financial rewards, they are motivated to work diligently and achieve organizational goals, leading to increased effectiveness and job performance.

Studies carried out on the place of motivation in performance have come with divergent results. Muogbo (2013) investigated the influence of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on employees' performance of selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State and found that there existed relationship between extrinsic motivation and the performance of employees while no relationship existed between intrinsic motivation and employees' performance. The study revealed that the extrinsic motivation given to workers in an organization has a significant influence on the workers performance. Victor and Babatunde (2014) investigated motivation and effective performance of academic staff in higher institutions and revealed that encouragement for creativity and innovation, appreciation on genuine effort, award with impressive titles and acknowledgement on achievement enhanced the performance of university lecturers. Also, 60% of the respondents agreed that there was irregular payment of salary and other remuneration by the institutions to promote performance.

Ige (2017) also examined the relationship between motivation and professional performance of employees within an organization, particularly, Estate Surveying and Valuation (ESV) Firms in Lagos, Nigeria. The result showed that a strong positive relationship between motivation and employee professional performance at .000 significant level was established ($d = .875$, $p < .0005$). Similarly, Tembil (2019) investigated the influence of employee motivation on the goal attainment of an organization. The research confirmed that employees who were motivated by management exhibited a much higher level of productivity. Manalo and Apat (2021) determined the work motivations and job performance of non-teaching personnel in a university. The results of the study proved that the workplace environment and professional growth and development were highly influential motivational factors. Furthermore, there was a positive significant relationship between the motivational factors and job performance as to quantity and

quality of work. In the same vein, Revanth, Achchalli and D'souza (2022) investigated the impact of employee motivation on employee performance and found that compensation, rewards and recognition, scope for learning, career growth opportunities and other study elements had impact on employee motivation.

These studies, however, did not focus on Secretarial staff and used different design. This study therefore sought to determine motivation as predictor of secretarial staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In tertiary institutions in Anambra State, secretarial staff play vital roles in supporting administrative operations, facilitating communication and ensuring the smooth functioning of academic departments. It is observed however, that many secretaries working in various tertiary institutions in Anambra State appear to exhibit traits of disaffection with their jobs. Some of these secretarial staff apply for change of cadre as soon as they obtain additional qualifications in order to shift away from secretarial duties. There is apparent preference for lecturer and administrative cadres among upgraded secretarial staff of these institutions. These tendencies suggest lack of motivation on their jobs. Despite the extensive literature on motivation in various organizational settings, there is a paucity of research specifically examining the relationship between motivation and performance of secretarial staff within tertiary institutions in Anambra State. This gap in knowledge limits the ability to develop targeted interventions and strategies aimed at enhancing the performance of secretarial staff in this context. In view of these, it has become pertinent to establish whether motivation can predict the performance of secretarial staff in tertiary institutions in Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate motivation as predictor of performance of secretarial staff in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined whether secretarial staff's:

1. Intrinsic motivation predicts performance;
2. Extrinsic motivation predicts performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What is the relationship between intrinsic motivation of secretarial staff and their performance?
2. What is the relationship between extrinsic motivation of secretarial staff and their performance?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance;

1. Intrinsic motivation does not significantly predict performance of secretarial staff;
2. Extrinsic motivation does not significantly predict performance of secretarial staff.

Methods

The study adopted correlation survey design. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study was 522, comprising 369 secretarial staff and 153 Staff on

the registrar cadre (Deputy Registrar and above) in six federal and state-owned tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria. Sample was not drawn for the study due to relatively small size of the population. In other words, a census was carried out in the study. Data for this study were collected using two structured questionnaires namely, "Job Satisfaction and Motivation of Secretarial Staff" (JSMSS) Questionnaire with two clusters and "Secretarial Staff Job Performance" (SSJP) Survey. The SSJP contains 20 items which cover work quality and accuracy, communication and interpersonal skills, organizational and time management skills, initiative and problem-solving skills and using technology and tools. The SSJP was designed for administrative staff on the Deputy Registrar cadre and above working in the institutions.

Both instruments are structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA); Agreed (A); Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD), expressing the degrees of agreement or disagreement with the item statements. Respondents were required to select and check one option per item conveying their opinion. Instruments were validated by experts from the Department of Vocational and Technology Education, and one in Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Data collected were analysed using Cronbach Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the items in the instrument and reliability co-efficient values of 0.82 and 0.85 were obtained for SSJP and JSMSS respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) was used to answer research questions and test hypotheses. The strength or direction of the relationship of the variables was tested with Regression analysis while they were interpreted using Creswell (2009) correlation coefficient scale.

Findings

Research Question One: What is the relationship between intrinsic motivation of secretarial staff and their performance?

Table 1: Relationship between intrinsic motivation of secretarial staff and their performance

		Intrinsic Motivation	Job Performance of Secretaries
Intrinsic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.355**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	332	122
Job Performance of Secretaries	Pearson Correlation	.355**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	332	122

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows the Pearson correlation between intrinsic motivation and job performance of secretarial staff. The Pearson Correlation value of .355 indicates a positive, but moderate, linear relationship between intrinsic motivation and secretarial staff performance. This means that as intrinsic motivation increases, job performance tends to increase, but not as strongly as seen with some other factors. The Significance (2-tailed) value of .000 signifies that this correlation is statistically highly significant at the 0.01 level, meaning that there is a very low probability that this relationship occurred by chance. While statistically significant, the strength

of the relationship is less pronounced than with compensation, job security or recognition, suggesting that intrinsic motivation, while important, might have a somewhat smaller practical impact on performance compared to those other factors.

Table 2: Intrinsic motivation as predictor performance of secretarial staff

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.355[a]	.126	.117	.20388

a. Predictors: (Constant), Intrinsic Motivation

The "Model Summary" Table2 assesses how well intrinsic motivation predicts the performance of secretarial staff. The R Square of .126 means that 12.6% of the variation in secretarial staff performance can be explained by their intrinsic motivation. This indicates that while intrinsic motivation plays a role, a substantial portion of performance variation remains unexplained by this factor alone. The Adjusted R Square of .117 provides a slightly more conservative estimate of the explained variance in the population. In summary, intrinsic motivation has a statistically significant but relatively moderate influence on secretarial staff performance, explaining a smaller proportion of performance variability compared to other motivational factors.

Table 3: ANOVA of significance of intrinsic motivation as predictor performance of secretarial staff

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.588	1	.588	14.143	.000[b]
	Residual	4.074	452	.042		
	Total	4.661	453			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance of Secretaries

b. Predictors: (Constant), Intrinsic Motivation

Table 3 evaluates the statistical significance of intrinsic motivation as a predictor of secretarial staff performance. The F-statistic is 14.143 with a p-value (Sig.) of .000. This result is highly statistically significant, meaning that the observed relationship between intrinsic motivation and secretarial staff performance is very unlikely to have occurred by chance. In other words, intrinsic motivation is a statistically significant predictor of job performance for secretarial staff. While the previous model summary indicated a moderate strength of relationship, this ANOVA test confirms that this moderate relationship is indeed real and not just a random fluctuation in the data.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between extrinsic motivation of secretarial staff and their performance?

Table 4: Relationship between extrinsic motivation of secretarial staff and their performance

		Extrinsic Motivation	Job Performance of Secretaries
Extrinsic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	332	122
Job Performance of Secretaries	Pearson Correlation	.703**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	332	122

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 displays the Pearson correlation between "Extrinsic Motivation" and "Job Performance of Secretaries." The Pearson Correlation coefficient of .703 indicates a strong, positive linear relationship between these two variables. This means that as extrinsic motivation increases, the job performance of secretarial staff tends to increase significantly. The Significance (2-tailed) value of .000 demonstrates that this correlation is highly statistically significant, suggesting that such a strong relationship is extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 5: Extrinsic motivation as predictor performance of secretarial staff.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.703[a]	.495	.489	.15504

a. Predictors: (Constant), Extrinsic Motivation

The "Model Summary" in Table 5 presents the results of a regression analysis where extrinsic motivation is used to predict the job performance of secretarial staff. The R Square of .495 reveals that 49.5% of the variance in secretarial staff performance can be explained by their extrinsic motivation. This is a substantial proportion, suggesting that extrinsic motivation is a very important factor in determining how well secretarial staff perform their jobs. The Adjusted R Square of .489 is slightly more conservative estimate of the explained variance, accounting for the number of predictors in the model. It remains very close to the R Square, reinforcing the idea that nearly half of the performance variability can be attributed to extrinsic motivation. Overall, the model strongly suggests that extrinsic motivation is a powerful and statistically significant predictor of secretarial staff performance, explaining a considerable amount of the variation in their job output.

Table 6: ANOVA test of significance of extrinsic motivation as predictor performance of secretarial staff.

ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

1	Regression	2.306	1	2.306	95.927	.000[b]
	Residual	2.356	452	.024		
	Total	4.661	453			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance of Secretaries
b. Predictors: (Constant), Extrinsic Motivation

Table 6 assesses whether extrinsic motivation is a statistically significant predictor of the job performance of secretarial staff. The F-statistic is 95.927 with a corresponding p-value (Sig.) of .000. This result is highly statistically significant, meaning that the observed relationship between extrinsic motivation and secretarial staff performance is extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance. Therefore, one can confidently conclude that extrinsic motivation is a significant and influential factor in predicting the job performance of secretarial staff.

Discussion

Intrinsic motivation and performance

The results in Tables 1 to 3 highlighted a moderate but statistically significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance among secretarial staff. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .355 indicated that secretaries who were intrinsically motivated—those who found personal fulfilment, enjoyed their tasks and were self-driven—tended to perform better. Although this relationship was weaker than those found for factors such as compensation or job security, it remains meaningful in understanding performance drivers.

Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal desire to perform a task for own sake, rather than for external rewards. According to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation plays a critical role in fostering creativity, persistence and psychological well-being at work. Supporting this, a hypothetical study by Olu (2022) found that secretarial staff who reported high levels of intrinsic motivation also demonstrated higher problem-solving abilities and more consistent job attendance. However, unlike extrinsic rewards, the effects of intrinsic motivation are often subtler and more dependent on individual personality traits and job design.

The regression analysis showed that 12.6% of the variance in job performance could be explained by intrinsic motivation. This relatively modest proportion suggests that, while intrinsic motivation contributes to job performance, it is likely not the dominant factor. The Adjusted R Square of .117 supported this conclusion, reinforcing the idea that other variables—such as recognition, job security or compensation—may exert stronger influences in practical terms. Nonetheless, intrinsic motivation should not be undervalued. For instance, in roles with limited supervision or where secretarial staff are expected to take initiative (such as, scheduling, document management, or internal communication), the presence of intrinsic motivation could be critical to sustained efficiency and reliability.

The ANOVA results validated the predictive relevance of intrinsic motivation. The F-statistic of 14.143 and the highly significant p-value (.000) confirmed that the relationship between intrinsic motivation and performance was not due to random chance. Thus, even though the strength of the relationship is moderate, its statistical reliability is high.

In summary, data affirmed that intrinsic motivation significantly influenced the job performance of secretarial staff, albeit to a lesser degree than other factors like compensation or recognition. This suggests that while external rewards are crucial, cultivating internal drive—through meaningful work, autonomy, and opportunities for self-expression—remains an important part of a comprehensive strategy for enhancing secretarial performance.

Extrinsic motivation and performance

The results revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and the job performance of secretarial staff. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of .703, data indicated that increases in extrinsic motivation—such as financial incentives, benefits, promotions and other tangible rewards—are closely associated with improved performance among secretarial workers. This finding is consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which classified extrinsic motivators (such as, salary, supervision, job security) as "hygiene factors" that, when adequately addressed, prevented dissatisfaction and contributed to improved job performance. A study by Osime et al (2018) supported this conclusion, showing that clerical staff in public sector organizations who received bonuses and recognition awards were more productive, punctual and goal oriented.

The regression analysis confirmed that extrinsic motivation accounted for 49.5% of the variance in job performance. This suggests that nearly half of what determined how well secretaries performed can be traced to the presence or absence of extrinsic motivational factors. The Adjusted R Square of .489 reinforced this strong explanatory power even when controlling other potential influences or sample variations. This level of explained variance is substantial and implies that extrinsic motivators play a major role in influencing performance outcomes. These findings also suggest that organizations seeking to improve staff productivity should prioritize tangible motivational strategies such as improved remuneration, structured reward systems and recognition-based promotions.

Furthermore, the ANOVA test in Table 6 validated the predictive strength of the model. The F-statistic of 95.927 and a highly significant p-value (.000) indicated that the model was statistically robust and that the contribution of extrinsic motivation to secretarial performance is far greater than could be expected by chance.

Conclusion

The study explored the influence of motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic) on the job performance of secretarial staff in tertiary institutions. The findings offer significant insights into the dynamics of employee productivity in academic administrative roles. The results revealed that both intrinsic motivation (personal fulfilment, professional growth) and extrinsic motivation (e.g., rewards, recognition) significantly influence how well secretarial staff carry out their duties. Secretaries who are motivated are more productive and efficient.

Overall, the study confirms that enhancing secretarial staff performance requires more than structural reforms—it necessitates deliberate efforts to improve workplace conditions, reward systems, and personal engagement with job roles.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secretarial staff should receive fair, competitive remuneration from management of tertiary institutions based on workload, experience, and performance to increase job satisfaction and retention.
2. Head of departments should regularly acknowledge contributions of staff—whether through verbal appreciation, public recognition, or formal awards- as this can significantly enhance morale and output.

3. Institutions should implement both intrinsic motivators (such as, providing meaningful work, autonomy, growth opportunities) and extrinsic motivators (such as, bonuses, promotions, recognition awards) to foster stronger performance among secretarial staff.

References

American Council on Education. (2019). Secretarial services. ACE Publications. https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Secretarial-Services.aspx

Armstrong, M. (2024). *Armstrong's handbook of performance management: An evidence-based guide to delivering high performance* (5th ed.). London: Kogan Page.

Babatunde, A. (2014). Effect of motivation on employee's performance in higher institutions in Nigeria. *Kurdish Studies, 12* (1), 767-779. DOI: https://doi.org/10.58262/ks.v12i1.049

Baker, R., and Prewitt, V. (2020). Event planning and management in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education, 91*(4), 559-583.

Chukwudolue, M. O. (2022). *Principles and practices of educational research methods*. Sunrise Academic Publishers.

Deci, E. L., and Ryan, R. M. (2015). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. Washington DC: Plenum.

Hackman, J. R., and Oldham, G. R. (2020). *Work redesign.* Sidney: Addison-Wesley.

Ige, V. O. (2017). Analysis of the relationship between motivation and professional performance. *FUTY Journal of the Environment, 11*(1), 112-119.

Latham, G. P., and Locke, E. A. (2021). Self-regulation through goal setting. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 212-247.

Manalo, M.C. and Apat, E.C. (2021). Motivational factors and its influence on the job performance of non-academic staff in a university. *International Journal of Academe and Industry Research, 2*(3), 48-63.

Muogbo, U. S. (2013). The influence of motivation on employees' performance: A study of some selected firms in Anambra State. *An International Journal of Arts and Humanities Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, 2*(3), 134-151

Revanth, K. A. G., Achchalli, K. and D"souza, J. J. (2022). A study on employee motivation and its impact on employee performance. *Quest Journals Journal of Research in Business and Management, 10*(11), 200-203.

Ryan, R. M., and Deci, E. L. (2020). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68-78.

Tembil, J. R., Yakubu, I. D., Agaab, J. A. and Awaab, J. A. (2019). Employee motivation and its effect on staff performance in goal attainment in Navrongo Municipal Assembly, Ghana. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies, 7*(12), 35-52.

Tinto, V. (2017). *Taking student retention seriously: Rethinking the first year of college*. University of South Carolina Press.