

MOTIVATION A CATALYST FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE: CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT CHOBA PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT: *The study x-rayed motivation as catalyst for high performance in a context of University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Motivation as a two edged sword was explained, as 79% of the workforce were highly dissatisfied with management not fulfilling her motivational promise of extra one month salary, is capable of generating industrial unrest-strike action and negative attitude to work. Analyzed graduands' performance for academic sessions 2011-2014, showed that out of 13393 graduands only 0.3 % (38) and 18 % (2383) made 1st class and 2nd class upper division respectively. While 64.3 % (8612) graduated with 2nd class lower division. Based on this analysis, we documented that employees' performance is average, to improve this output (quality graduates), 56.8% and 65% of respondents out of 400 selected as a sample size through stratified sampling technique strongly agree that unconventional promotion and social activities respectively will improve their performance.*

KEYWORDS: Motivation, Remuneration, Employee, Performance, Unfulfilled Promises

INTRODUCTION

The award of degree in our higher institutions is based on character and learning. This informed the believe that education is the bedrock for every meaningful social, political and economic development in any given society. If well nurtured and trained graduates of our various institutions turned out every year into the society are actually given the best in terms of character and learning, the decadence and poor manpower in the society would have been minimal. One of the ways, we can evaluate the performance of both teaching and non-teaching staff in our universities is through the quality of students that we graduate every year. For instance, for the period of 2011 -2014 academic sessions 38 (0.3%) and 2383 (18%) graduated with 1st class and 2nd class upper division respectively of out of 13,393 granduands (table 1). If the students are not graduating with a better grades and not doing well in the society, it then mean that there is need to examine how the workforce of our institutions are been motivated to do their work in order to achieve high performance which will be reflected in the character and knowledge (class of degree) been acquired by our students.

Motivation is a propelling factor that affects individuals reasoning, action, way, strength and eagerness of behaving towards work. (Mcshane and Von Glinow, 2003 and Petri and Given, 2004). Motivated employees are willing to devote time to certain level of commitment for a particular objective in an organization. Certain actions which include not rewarding exceptional employees, lack of unconventional promotions to workers that performed excellently, communication gap between employees and management, inability of managers to fulfill reward promises, no good accommodation, “and relegating many employees, in the motivation process are significant enough to affect the levels of trust and commitment necessary for employees to perform work requirements. Moreover, employee needs are

changing as the younger generation employees have different expectations to their work than old workers as a result of globalization which has made workforce variations the complex issue of motivation” (Mcshane and Von Glinow, 2003 cited Ocran ,2010). Yesterday’s needs are no longer indeed today’s needs as the world has become a global village. “Effective managers who want their employees to make a maximum effort know they need to tailor their motivational practices to satisfy the needs and wants of those employees”. (Robbins *et al* 2000).

We perceived motivation as a two edged-sword tool that managers, CEOs of organizations and university authorities should understand in their dealing with employees. This is informed by the definition of motivation “as the willingness to exert high levels of effort to reach organizational goals, conditioned by the efforts ability to satisfy some individual need” (Robbin *et al*, 2000). As manager rolled out the organizational goal and reach agreement with staff unions that if the organizational goal is attained, in return management will reward them through such as 13th month salary, holidays with family abroad, good accommodation and other packages, the tendency that employees will increase their effort will be high towards achieving the organizational objective (Ralph and Gary, 1983). On the other hand, employees having the needs of these promises by management will be stimulated. According to Robbin *et al* (2000) “an unsatisfied need creates tension that stimulates drives within an individual. These drives generate search behaviour to find particular that if attained, will satisfy the need and reduce the tension”. When this happen, there will be healthy working force and communication, trust and confidence in management that will bring about success of the organization. It becomes apparently clear that when this goal is attained and management fail to fulfill their promises to employees that another round of tension which we call negative tension will build up which it’s inducing effort and need are also negative. This negative tension will lead to incessant industrial unrest i.e. strike actions, lack of trust, confidence and good communication between management and employees resulting to low productivity.

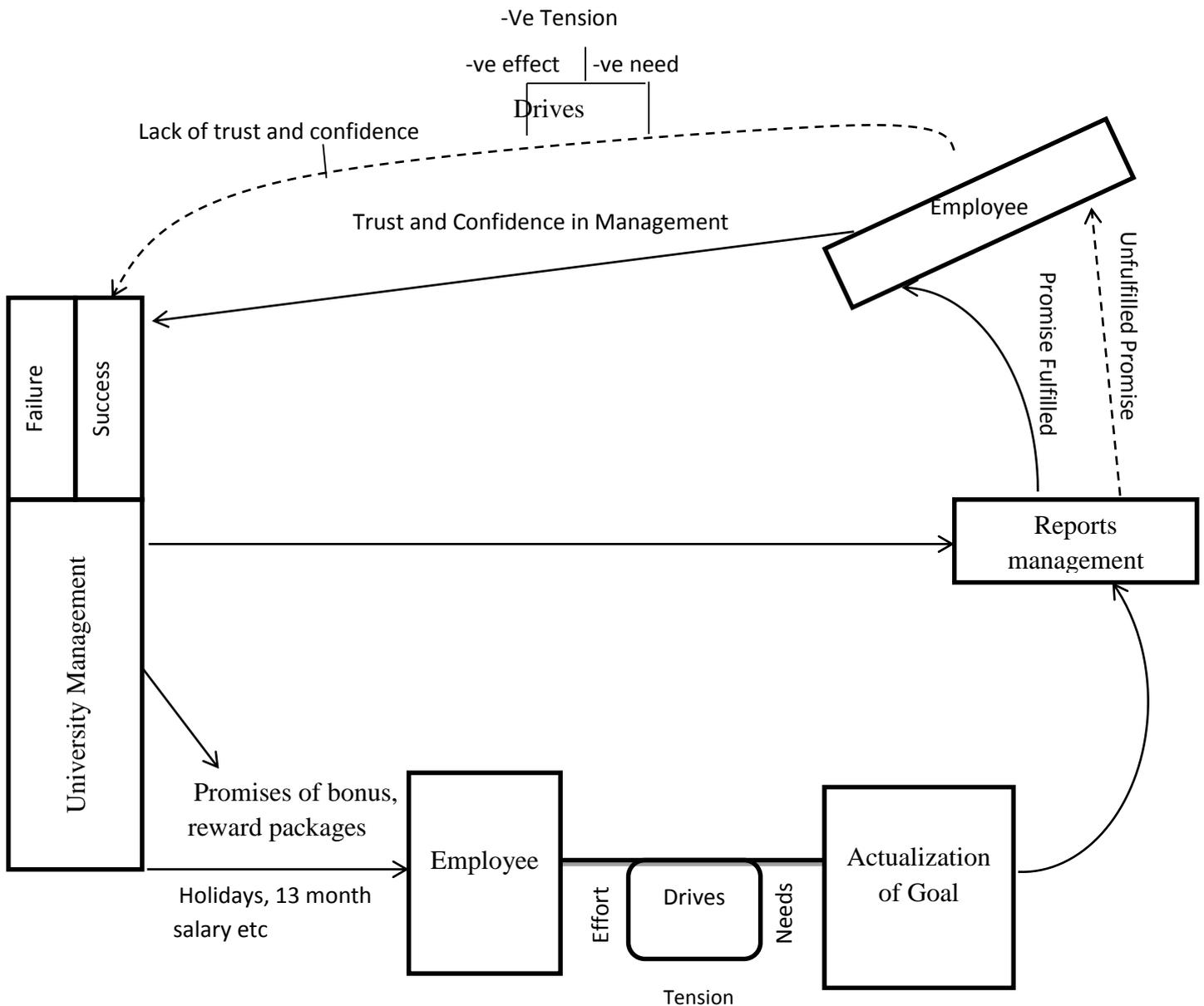


Figure 1: Motivation Promise a Tow Edge-Sword Tool

It is on this background, that this study is to investigate how the University of Port Harcourt, Choba Nigeria (Uniport) can motivate her employees for high performance at the workplace. The primary objective will particularly be to study the factors of motivation that will lead to teaching and non- teaching staff being highly motivated in impacting good knowledge and character to our ever increasing students.

Problem Statement

The incessant strike actions by university workers in particular, employees of Nigerian education sector in general and poor quality graduates as acclaimed by employers of labour is a clear evidence that something is wrong in this industry. The continue dwelling in average performance (see figure 3) that seem to be a comfort zone for our universities is really worrisome and call to examine the working condition of the university employees. The

inability of management to honour their agreement with various workers unions poses a great danger. Previous researchers are based on the motivating factors that could possibly influence positive output (employee performance) and some are based on qualitative. We choose this topic to provide quantitative performance evidence of the core product (graduates) of the study university and the impact of motivation on employee performance.

Significance of the study

The study aimed at identifying the effects of fulfilled and unfulfilled motivational promises on employees' performance. Therefore the study add value to the current literature on motivation and employees output. It will guide managers of our institutions in particular and other captains of industries in general in making policies that will boost performance.

Objectives of the study

The major objective of the research is to study the effect of motivation on employees performance of University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, the following objectives are pursued:

- To analyse the academic performance of the graduands
- The effect of promises of remuneration on employees performance
- The impact of unconventional promotion employees performance
- To determine Social Activities (Provision security of Relaxation Centres, Sponsoring of Holidays for employees with the family) (SOA).

Limitation of the study

Basically the study examined motivation in relation to performance of University of Port Harcourt employees. The study is limited to only employees of the University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Nigeria. Some questionnaires were not responded to and were not returned.

Research Question

The study intends to find answers to the following questions:

- Has students' performance improved above average level?
- Does fulfilment of management promise of extra one month salary has any impact on employee's performance (success)?
- Does unconventional promotion of hardworking staff lead to higher performance?
- Does provision of social amenities to employees improves productivity?

LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

There are a lot of theories that underpin motivation, important once that are reviewed in this section formed the foundation for the study. As said that faces are different so also individual behaviour, desire and needs are different. What motivate Harry, Tom and Dick to bring out the best in them may not be the same.

According to Robbin *et al* (2000) “Certainly, individuals differ in motivational drive, but overall motivation varies from situation to situation”. The present days managers of organizations such as University of Port Harcourt faces a great challenge of understanding the best approach to motivate every employee in order to achieve the great objectives of the institution.

THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory is one of the early theories of motivation published in 1954 is based upon a consideration of human needs. Although contemporary theories have emerged, yet this theory formed the foundation for all motivation theories. He categorizes these human needs into five as depicted in the figure 2 below (Abraham, 1954)

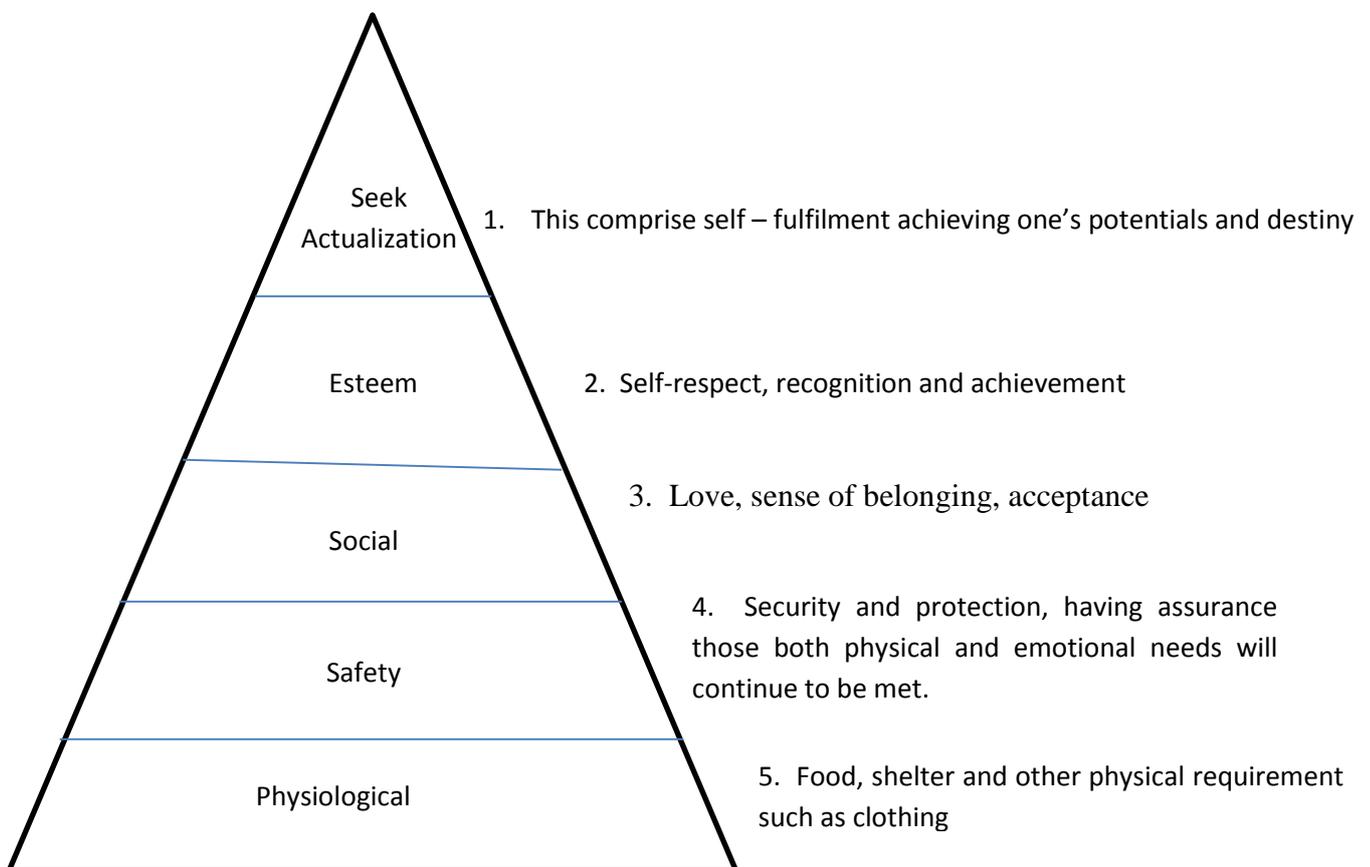


Figure 2: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow further categorized the five needs into higher and lower levels. Lower needs are physiological and safety needs while social, esteem and self-actualization were described as higher order needs. (Robbin *et al*, 2000; Baridam and Nwibere, 2008). Robbin *et al* (2000) stated that “Maslow’s need theory has received wide recognition particularly among practicing managers”.

An aspect of Maslow's theory that is important to our study is one of the assumptions that is a crucial point. It states that unsatisfied needs cause frustration, conflict and stress. See figure 1 above from management and human understanding, there is no doubt that "unsatisfied needs are dangerous because they may lead to ineffectual job performance and low productivity" (Nwibere *et al.*, 2009), industrial actions, lack of trust and confidence on management.

Theory X and Theory Y

McGregor (1960) proposed two distinct views about the nature of humans. The negative and positive views labeled theory X and theory Y respectively. The assumptions of theory X and theory Y are stated in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Assumptions of McGregor (1960) Theory X and Theory Y

Theory X	Theory Y
Employees inherently dislike work and will attempt to avoid it, whenever possible.	Employees view work as being as natural as rest or play
Employees must be covered, controlled or threatened with punishment to achieve desire goal	Employees will exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the objectives.
Employee incapable of assuming reasonability and seek formal direction whenever possible	The average person can learn to accept, and even seek responsibility
Most workers place security above all other factors associated with work and will display little ambition.	The ability to make good decisions is widely dispersed through the population and isn't necessarily the sole ability of managers.

Although noted that there was no evidence to confirm that either set of above assumptions is valid (Robbin *et al.*, 2000) we argue that every employee is a carrier of both assumptions of Theory X and Theory Y that managers should not rely on a particular assumption rather he/she should note that change in situation brings about its own corresponding change in behaviour of the employees. In the figure 1 it is probably not possible that a manager that promise a theory y inherent employee an extra one month salary, and failed to fulfill the promise after the employee has attained the goal as a condition for getting the promise will still view "work as being natural as rest or play". This theory begs for acceptance in our study, though many managers of institutions still think in that direction.

Motivation – Hygiene Theory

Motivation – Hygiene Theory was developed by Frederick Herzberg in which he divided Maslow's hierarchy of needs into five categories. He investigated the question "what do people want from job?" The theory made a very clear distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ganawa, 2013). Amabile (1993) in his study on "motivational synergy: toward new conceptualizations of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the workplace", explains intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as follows: 1. Employees are intrinsically motivated when they desire for social amenities such as provision of relaxation center, holidays etc. and or personal challenge in the work. 2. "Individuals are extrinsically motivated when they engage in the work in order to obtain some goal that is apart from the work itself" (Ganawa, 2013)

The Variables and Hypotheses Development

Dependent Variable

The high performance (the quality of graduate) of the University was used as dependent variable and several motivation variables were used as independent variables to find the relationship between the motivation variables and the attainment of high performance.

Primary Independent Variables (Motivation Variables)

- a. Remuneration (Paying extra month salary – 13th month) (Remu)
- b. Unconventional Promotion (as reward for hard work) (UP)
- c. Social Activities (Provision security of Relaxation Centres, Sponsoring of Holidays for employees with the family (SOA).

Remuneration (Promise or reward of 13th Month Salary)

Human capital is the most assets that every manager should recognize. Asin (2013) in the study of education sector of Pakistan, documented that performance of the employees showed that there is a significant relationship with the financial rewards. “Salary and security, two of the hygiene factors identified by Herzberg, make it possible for employees to satisfy the physiological and security needs identified by Abraham Maslow in his theory of needs” (Lipsey *et al*, 2015) On the other hand, kovach (1999) found that employees rank of wage or monetary reward as what they want was 5 contrary to employers’ rank of 1. We perceived that in our study group, the workers value this monetary reward and there is a promise for such. According to “platinum rule” managers should do employees as they do to him (Kepner and Wysocki, 2002). An effective and efficient manager should be a complete “gentile man” that celebrates and fulfil promises to his workers as they achieve a goal. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria Public Service Rules (Amended, 2010) reward of an outstanding work may come in the form of medals, gifts of cash or kind.

Ho: Employees’ are not dissatisfied with management unfulfilled promises of monetary reward.

Unconventional Promotion (as reward for hard work) (UP)

In this study, unconventional promotion is a type of promotion that employee strictly merit based on hard working, it is not based on normal promotion rule/system of university in which a staff only qualify for promotion based on number of years (i.e. 3years) (Uniport Regulations Governing Conditions of Service, 2015). This quite unlike private sector where employees are promoted any time based on exceptional performance. Syed Umer farroque et al (2010) cited in Asim (2010) found that promotional factor directly effects the motivation in the organization and works of the employees, while Kovach (1999) documented 6 and 3 for associates’ (workers) and employers’ ranking of promotion/growth respectively.

Ho: There is no relationship between unconventional promotion and employees’ performance.

Social Activities (Provision of security, Relaxation Centres, Sponsoring of Holidays for employees with the family (SOA).

A number of studies have found a positive relationship between non-financial factors and workers performance (Koontz and Weihrich 1990; Kovach.1999; Hosain, 2012; Misbah and Samreen, 2015; Asim, 2013; Ian *et al*, 2012). Also providing a conducive environment will directly effect high performance (Rasheed *et al*, 2010; Afful-Broni, 2012). A terrorized work environment and lack of good relaxation centres can be frustrating and has bearing to low productivity.

Ho: there is no relationship between social activities and employees' performance.

METHODOLOGY

Selection of Sample

Stratified sampling technique was used. Each union in the university was considered as a stratum. There are four unions, which formed the 4 stratum and 100 employees from each stratum had been selected purposively which is in line with Hasan *et al* (2013).

Table 2: Distribution of Population and Sample Size of the University Employees

Stratum	Population	Sample Size	Sample as percentage of Population	Percent of total sample
ASSU	1398	100	7.2	25
SSANU	1819	100	6.0	25
NAAT	202	100	49	25
NASU	1346	100	7.4	25
TOTAL	4765	400	67	100

Applicable to the study is dissimilar of sample size of percentage of population, but the percent of sample size of each stratum was equal i.e. 25 percent Hasan *et al* (2013). We allowed the same sample size of 100 (49%) of population for NAAT because recently hazard allowance was removed from their take home pay.

Research Design

Tables, graphs and percentage analyses are used to investigate motivation practices and employees performance of the Uniport.

Data Source

Data collected were both primary and secondary. For primary, close ended questionnaire were distributed according to sample size (Table 2). 391 questionnaires responded out of 400 distributed. On the other hand, secondary data on graduands performance were collected through the university convocation brochure published in 2015.

DATA ANALYSIS**Percentage Analysis for Student Performance**

Class of Degree	1 st	2 ¹	2 ²	3rd	P	MBBS	BDS	BPharm	Total
Session									
2011/2012	6	796	3706	1149	8	0	4	38	5707
2012/2013	17	1005	3725	681	0	141	5	0	5574
2013/2014	15	582	1179	1422	2	182	11	0	2112
Total	38	2383	8612	1972	10	324	20	28	13393

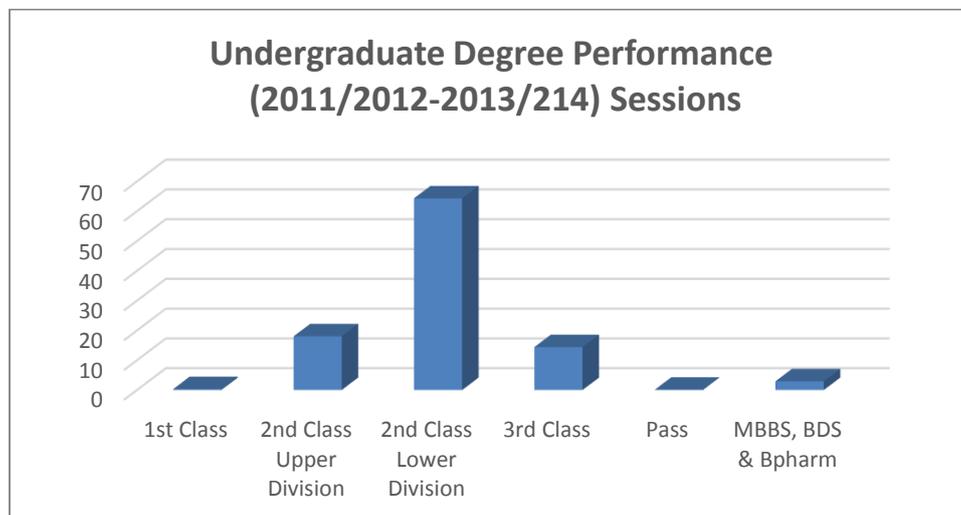
Table 4 Percentage analysis of student performance

Ist Class	38/13393 *100/1	0.3%	Poor Performance expected to be high
Second Class Upper	2383/13393*100/1	18%	Poor performance expected to be high
Second Class Lower	8612/13393*100/1	64.3%	Average Performance
3 rd Class	1927/13393*100/1	14.4%	Poor Performance expected to be low
Pass	10/13393*100/1	0.1%	Good performance low percentage
(MBBS, BDS & BPharm)	382/13393*100/1	2.9%	Fewer manpower for medical profession

Table 4 shows that 0.3% (38) and 18% (2383) out of 100% (13393) graduands made 1st class and 2¹ upper credit division respectively, while 64.3% (8612) students made 2² second class lower division. The result shows average performance for employees output (graduate)

Graphical Design

The following figure shows the class of undergraduate degrees and their percentage scores.

**Figure 3**

Hypotheses

Ho: Employees' are not dissatisfied with management unfulfilled promises of monetary reward.

Table 5: Response about management fulfillment of promise of remuneration (13th month salary)

S/NO	PARTICULAR	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Highly satisfied	5	1.3
2	Satisfied	19	5
3	Neutral	5	1.3
4	Dissatisfied	52	13.2
5	Highly dissatisfied	310	79.2
	Total	391	100

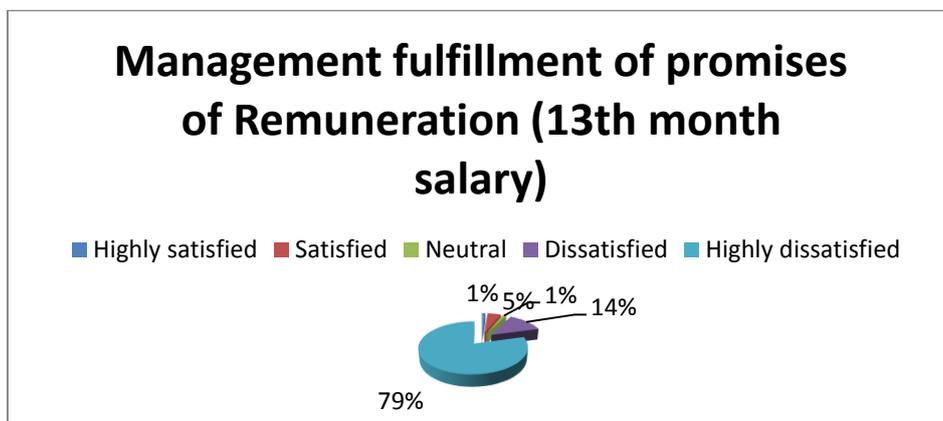


FIGURE 4

Interpretation

The table shows that 79.2% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with the inability of the management in fulfilling her promises especially remuneration (13th month salary). Therefore, we reject null hypothesis that employees' are not dissatisfied with management unfulfilled promises of monetary reward and accept that employees' are highly dissatisfied with management unfulfilled promises of monetary reward.

Ho: there is no relationship between unconventional promotion and employees' performance.

Table 6: Unconventional promotion a honey for higher performance

S/NO	PARTICULAR	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Strongly Agree	222	56.8
2	Agree	120	30.6
3	Neutral	25	6.4
4	Disagree	14	3.6
5	Strongly Disagree	10	2.6
	Total	391	100

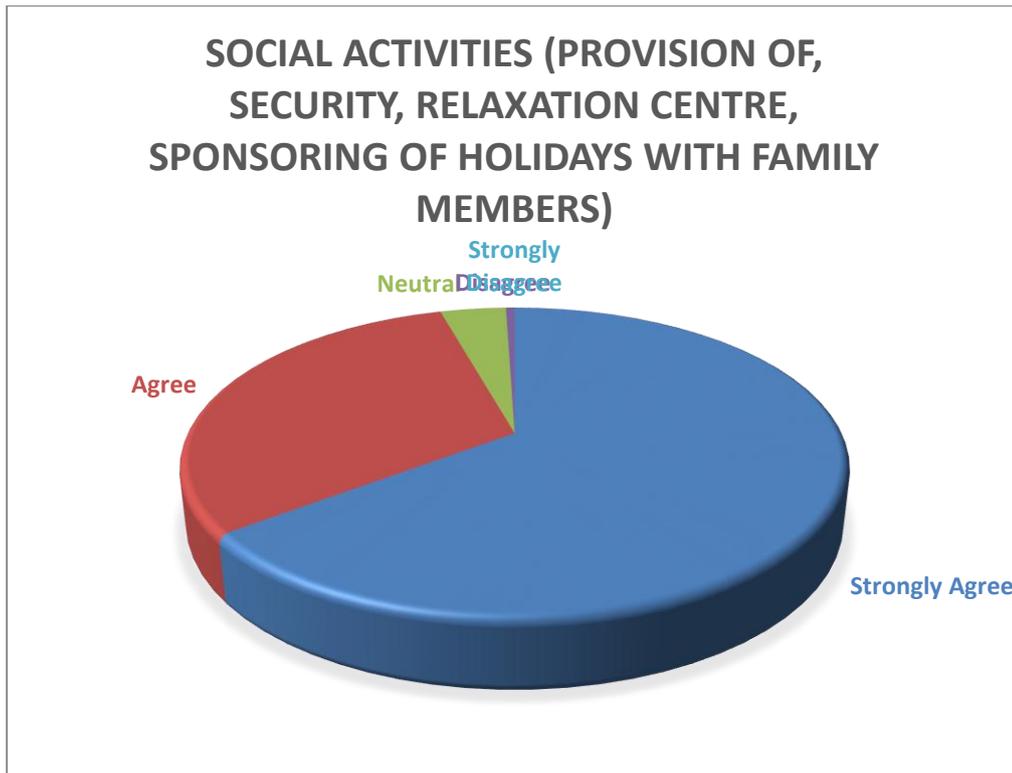
**FIGURE 5****Interpretation**

The table 6 shows that 57% of the respondents strongly agree that unconventional promotion not only the normal statutory promotion will encourage them to work hard, thereby improving the quality of students. We reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis that there significant relationship between unconventional promotion and employees' performance

Ho: there is no relationship between social activities and employees' performance.

Table 7 Social Activities (Provision of Security, Relaxation Centers, and Sponsoring of Holidays for employees with the family (SOA)).

S/NO	PARTICULAR	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Strongly Agree	253	65
2	Agree	121	31
3	Neutral	15	3
4	Disagree	2	1
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Total	391	100



Interpretation

The table shows that 65% of the respondents are of the opinion that Social Activities (Provision of Relaxation Centre, Sponsoring of Holidays for employees with the family etc) (SOA) will motivate them work hard for higher productivity. Therefore, we reject Ho and accept H1 that there is significant relationship between social activities and employees' performance

Discussions

The objective of the current study is to examine motivation as a tool for management to improve the performance of employees of University of Port Harcourt. The study documented that 0.3% and 18% of 1st class and 2nd class upper division respectively were insignificant. Though arguably, this low performance can be attributed to the result of the inability of management to honour her promises of monetary reward (13th month salary) to employees. For instance, about 79% of respondents were highly dissatisfied for not been rewarded as promised. This finding agrees with Asin (2013) in the study of education sector of Pakistan, documented that there is a significant relationship with the financial rewards and workers performance. When employees do not get the remuneration as promised by management there arise grievances such as strike actions. According to Robbin *et al* (2000) "an unsatisfied need creates tension that stimulates drives within an individual. These drives generate search behaviour to find particular goal that if attained, will satisfy the need and reduce the tension". This finding also agrees with one of Maslow's assumptions. It states that unsatisfied needs cause frustration, conflict and stress. This result implies that motivation is a two edged sword if management honours her agreement and pay the promise of monetary reward, workers will satisfy their pressing needs and be happy to work harder (success). On the other hand, if management refuses to fulfill her promises, the workers will not be able to satisfy their needs this will generate negative tension in the work place and lack of trust and confidence on the management which can cause low performance (failure). The finding is contrary to kovach (1999) result on

associate motivation survey, it is not surprising, cost of living in Nigeria as a developing country is high. Prices of goods and services have gone up. Kovach's finding may hold water in developed system where there are adequate infrastructural amenities. As noted by Kepner and Wysocki, (2002) employers should adhere to "platinum rule".

Recognition of excellent employees of public establishments as it is done in their private counterpart and not waiting for a fixed period before it will send a good signal that hard work and excellent performance pays. From the study, we observed that about 57% of respondent strongly agree that unconventional promotion is a honey for higher performance. This finding is in line with Syed Umer farroque *et al* (2010) cited in Asim (2013). Our finding also contradicts the result of Kovach (1999). Probably the economic situation makes the workers believe that as they get the promotion their pay will increase and also another opportunity to work hard.

Our finding on Social Activities (Provision of Security, Relaxation Centers, and Sponsoring of Holidays for employees with the family (SOA) agrees with Koontz, 1993; Kovach, 1999; Hosain, 2012; Misbah and Samreen, 2015; Asim, 2013; Ian *et al*, 2012 that documented positive relationship between non-financial motivation and workers performance. Especially conducive environment will directly effect high performance (Rasheed *et al*, 2010; Afful-Broni, 2012). The incessant killings around University environs can be challenging to employees as well as employers and can hinder effective and efficient performance. On this 65% of respondents agreed that there is no relationship between social activities and employees' performance.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the above discussion that motivational promises, especially monetary is a two edge sword that the holder if used well will get a successful result (high performance) but if not used well can generate crisis in the work environment and the result will be failure (low performance). The motivational variables used in this study no doubt if effectively applied can significantly influence the performance of the university workers in particular and other institutions in general.

Finally, we acknowledged that this present study has a potential limitation. Students who have a big role to play in making sure they graduate with quality result is not included in the study. The hindrances associated with management assessing fund from federal government was not considered.

Opportunities for Further Research

The results of this study calls for further investigation on university performance in Nigeria generally using government funding and student performance index.

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