

Employee Motivation and Organisational Performance during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT: Empirical evidence has shown that motivated employees bring about better organizational performance. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact that motivation or lack of it has caused on the overall performance of organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Face to face interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data from 100 employees and data was analysed using the SPSS version 20. The study found out that strategies like providing adequate resources, drafting COVID-19 policies and protocols, rewarding employees for achieving targets, recognition of good work, communicating effectively and training were of paramount importance during the pandemic to sustain business and boost employee confidence. It was concluded that employee motivation positively affects financial performance. The study recommended that benefits for employees should be increased during times of pandemics in order to increase the company's competitive advantage and avoid losing market share.

Keywords; Employee motivation, Employee performance, Employee compensation, Motivation strategies, Organisational performance, COVID-19 pandemic

I. INTRODUCTION

The business environment has become a global village and businesses were running smoothly when suddenly there was a serious global crisis following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. So serious was the pandemic that millions died globally and no country was spared. Employee motivation and performance were severely affected. Employee motivation and performance are closely related as pointed since motivation plays a vital role as a driving force to employees towards achieving personal goals and organizational goals.

The COVID-19 crisis caught the business world flat-footed and potential billions of dollars were lost in revenue thereby affecting the world economic growth trajectory. However, the pandemic presented a good time for organizations to be proactive and prepare for the future by creating more tailor-made responses to challenges facing workplaces. Individual needs evolve every day and consumers' preferences change every day. Organizations are trying to adapt and adopt to the new dynamic business environment. This era comes with opportunities for organizations to visit their employees' perspectives and differences.

When Zimbabwe was hit by the pandemic, people and businesses had to adjust accordingly and government issued regulations from time to time but because of fear, many people were in the denial mode as the situation was uncertain. Lockdowns were declared all over the world from March 2020. The world's stock exchange dropped so did the exchange rates because nobody knew about what would happen the next day. People were dying, businesses closing down and the world was on lockdown and all forms of travel were banned. Fear of the unknown was what everyone in the business community experienced. The standards of living for most employees declined and their disposable incomes were reduced in that other employees lost their jobs. When COVID-19 pandemic prevailed, Spar Group Zimbabwe tried to push up more sales not taking into consideration the welfare of its employees, as the community started demanding more. Burney and Widener (2007) noted that motivation influence employees to carry out given tasks and forces a rise to a given behaviour.

This study looked at the situation that Zimbabwe is facing which include COVID-19 virus, inflation related that is high prices, exchange rates and the fluctuation of interest rates. Deci & Ryan (2009) argue that individuals develop certain motivational drives on cultural environment in which they live and these drives affect the way people view their jobs. They added that motivational strategies that are can be used by organizations are good salaries, bonuses and special

allowances, proper machinery, job security through signing of contracts, appreciation packages, clean and safe working environment and freedom to make decisions and having a flexible working hours during the post COVID-19 pandemic.

Labour has become an important asset in the 21st century (Hafiza, Shah, Jamsheed & Zaman, 2011). The most valuable and important asset of any institution is a well-motivated and stable workforce which is competent, dedicated and productive. Retail sector has become very competitive as all grocery stores are offering homogenous products and brands to consumers calling for retail companies to be innovative and creative in providing services so as to compete in this dynamic global market facing uncertain viruses and killer diseases. Employee motivation has become an important and a valuable factor in the retail sector during the COVID-19 pandemic because human labour drives sales depending on their performance. It is against this background that the study sought to analyse the influence of motivation on company performance and growth in the trying times of the pandemic, to explore employee motivational strategies that were used by Spar Group Zimbabwe during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to assess the effects of employee compensation during COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Spar Group Zimbabwe has not been performing well in the market since the spread of the COVID-19 virus and customer preferences have been shifting, customer complaints coming up every day and declining in customer loyalty as compared to surrounding competitors such as TM Supermarkets, OK Zimbabwe and Bon Marche' which are in and around Zimbabwe. Changes in the work environment affected employee motivation and ultimately employee performance leading to effects on the productivity as well. Workers complaints increased and the company profits lowered. When unforeseen situations happen in business, there should be divergent strategies to counter and ensure that motivation and production are not affected but that was not the case for the Spar Group. If employee motivation is not restored, production would continue to dwindle until the company faces viability problems and ultimate closure thereby putting the future of workers and shareholders in disarray. Given its size, the collapse of the Spar Group would affect the economic performance of Zimbabwe. There was need for a study which analysed the motivation and production situation at Spar Group to assess how it was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic so that solutions to remedy the situation could be proffered. Earlier studies on the link between employee motivation and performance did not cover a global pandemic situation and none of them studied Spar Group which is a major player in the retail business in Zimbabwe thereby creating a knowledge gap which needed to be filled.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of this study was to assess the impact of motivation on the performance of the Spar Group Zimbabwe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The specific objectives were:

1.2.1 To analyse the employee motivational strategies that were used by Spar Group Zimbabwe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2.2 To assess the effects of employee compensation on employee performance during COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 Hypothesis of the study

The study was based on the following 4 hypotheses:

H₁: Employee compensation is positively associated with their performance.

H₂: Employee motivation is positively associated with the company's financial performance.

H₃: Employee motivation is positively associated with customer satisfaction.

H₄: Employee motivation is positively associated with company's growth.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Key Terms

2.1.1 Employee Motivation

According to Chris (2013) motivation is the drive to do something. This definition goes hand in hand with Young (2015) who defined motivation as the force within an individual that account for the level, direction and persistence of efforts

expanded at work. Jones et-al (2014) also mentioned motivation as the driving force when they defined motivation as the psychological force that shows a person's level of effort applied in order to persist with obstacles and achieve his/her target and the way he/she behaves in an organization.

Abiro (2013) defined motivation as a set of factors that cause people to engage in one behaviour rather than the alternative. He further stated that the idea of motivation can be adopted by organizations as he considered motivation as a set of driving forces. Most scholars outlined motivation as a driving force, however Latham (2013) pointed out that motivation is a process where a person allocates his/her effort as according to the level of importance of motives or tasks. According to Armstrong (2009), the desire to achieve beyond expectations, by being driven by internal rather than external forces, and to be involved in a continuous striving for improvement brings about motivation. In every day to day basis, motivation is commonly used to describe why a person carry out a specific task.

Nevid (2013:33) quoted that:

"The term motivation refers to factors that activate, direct, and sustain goal-directed behaviour. Motives are the 'whys' of behaviour, the needs or wants that drive behaviour and explain what we do. We don't actually observe a motive; rather, we infer that one exists based on the behaviour we observe."

2.1.2 COVID-19

COVID-19 is an abbreviation where 'CO' means corona, 'VI' means virus and 'D' is for disease while '-19' for the year it was discovered, 2019. World Health Organization (WHO) describes coronaviruses as a group of viruses belonging to the family of Coronaviridae, which infect both animals and humans. Human coronaviruses can cause mild disease similar to a common cold, while others cause more severe disease (such as MERS - Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and SARS - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). A new coronavirus that previously has not been identified in humans emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019 (WHO, 2020).

Cennimo, (2021:pg 38) defines Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as an illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China.

2.2 Organizational Performance

According to Richard et al, (2009) organizational performance points out three important areas of an organization's performance which include financial performance for example profits and return on investment, product market performance which includes sales, market share and shareholder return which looks at total shareholder return and economic value added. In many fields, there is an increased concern on organizational performance which plays a role for strategic planners, operations, finance, legal, and organizational development. Many organizations have attempted to manage organizational performance in recent years were the business environment has become very open to markets using the balanced scorecard methodology where performance is tracked and improved in multiple dimensions.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The study utilised the Abraham H. Maslow's theory which states that motivation is formed because of a hierarchy of needs. However, employees focus on the two basic needs regarding physiological needs related to food, daily needs and safety needs for employees at work. In the current situation, employees at Spar Group Zimbabwe have the need of security and food through their allowances which were not being met so that the hierarchy moves to the higher stage. The essence of Maslow's theory is that human needs are in a hierarchical structure because, if needs at the lower level have been met or satisfied, people tend to demand more thereby bringing about other needs at a higher level. According to Maslow, every manager who wants to motivate his/ her employees, needs to understand the hierarchy of needs because satisfying employees' needs continuously is the key to motivating them so they work well (Lucyanda&Siagian, 2012) especially during the COVID-19 crisis.

2.4 Effects of COVID-19 on organisational performance

The COVID-19 crisis was an indicator for organizations to create more tailor-made responses to challenges being faced at workplaces. Most organizations are addressing employees' basic needs highlighted by Maslow which include safety, stability and security just to mention a few during this COVID-19 era. Individual's needs evolve every day and consumers' preferences change every day and organizations are trying to adopt to the new operations of the business environment. According to Richard et al, (2009) organizational performance points out three important areas of an

organization's performance which include financial performance, product market performance, and shareholder return. There is an increased concern on organizational performance which plays a role for strategic planners, operations, finance, legal, and organizational development. Many organizations have attempted to manage organizational performance in recent years where the business environment has become very open to markets using the balanced scorecard methodology where performance is tracked and improved in multiple dimensions.

2.5 Employee motivational strategies during COVID-19

It is important for employers to know what motivates employees rather than emphasizing on increasing productivity and coming up with tailor-made strategies that best suit their organisation's goals. Frequent communication about changes taking place in the organisation due to COVID-19 should be with honest and also two-way, being a major factor that if not satisfied an individual may consider switching to another organization. Managers should introduce and include constructive discussions of major issues that occur at the workplace. Employees desire to work in environments where they are considered and involved in airing complains and ideas. Therefore, a manager should use the best motivational strategy that suit a particular individual and a particular time.

The working environment in which employees work as a team should be created and sustained to achieve a common goal. Motivation is then given more attention in the organization to know employees and their behaviour regarding to shifts and changes in the business environment. In any organization, every staff member is unique in their own way and performs tasks based on their abilities. If a staff member is appreciated for working hard, he/she is more likely to be motivated in terms of innovativeness and high performance. Modern approaches of motivation draw attention towards the value and long-term goals set by the employees as they are the most crucial asset. Simons and Enz (1995) highlighted that, now the employees perform the task not only to fulfil the basic needs but also to increase their value, become successful and satisfied from their performance. More so, motivation had been considered as a tough task when the economy is now taking into consideration the coronavirus crisis.

2.6 Motivational Strategies

In the COVID-19 prone environment, health and safety measures for employees need to be taken into consideration by any organization. This can be done through the provision of personal safety equipment, masks, disinfectants, and appeals to a healthy lifestyle starting from food and regular exercise, especially at this time (Neaet *al.*, 2017; Syakriah, 2020a). Organisations can also consider remote working whereby employees can work from home (Felstead&Henseke, 2017; Humala, 2017), offering remuneration and allowances in the form of special pay, gain share pay, special allowances like hardship and COVID-19 allowances, performance-based salaries and yearly bonus for attraction and motivation of employees. Training and development are particularly important in certain jobs which require constant skill updating amid COVID-19. When employees believe that the organization is doing well in training and developing them, acquiring organization's specific skills that contribute to status or economic advantage with the company, a stronger commitment to contribute to the organization develops (Eisen, 2020). Recognition and reward receiving for performance is a crucial motivator to retain employees as a way of showing gratitude and oneness in the COVID-19 crisis which if not considered may result in most employees resigning.

2.7 Ways to motivate employees during the COVID-19 era

Motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic era can be achieved through work shifts, managerial support, effective communication, and teamwork. Work shifts can be used for improving work-life balance among the employees and managerial support is key in motivating employees. This should be implemented through organisational policies and regulations so that employees are protected and comfortable (Morley *et al.*, 2015; Verburg *et al.*, 2013). Effective communication should be encouraged between employers and employees as this would motivate workers who would feel to be part of the organisation (Morley *et al.*, 2015). Teamwork assist the employees in helping each other when they face challenges thereby improving emotional relationships and trust between employees, and ultimately motivating each other (Kaulet *al.*, 2017; Martins *et al.*, 2004).

2.8 Organisational performance and employee motivation during COVID-19

Organizational performance can be greatly affected by employee motivation in the COVID-19 pandemic era since performance is equivalent to the famous 3Es which are economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Organizational performance can also be measured using indicators such as productivity, firm performance and customer outcomes. Productivity performance is measured by the revenue or output, inefficiency and the cost of production, and motivating employees has an impact on the productivity of an organization. Sales/ output can be affected by poor implementation of suitable motivational strategies since workers may be demotivated to work and much more concerned with their health wellbeing from COVID-19. Efficiency can be achieved when tasks are completed in the least amount of time possible with the least number of resources possible by utilizing certain time-saving strategies and saving resources (Bratton & Gold, 2007). Cost deals with replacement costs which are incurred when new staff are employed. Replacement costs include reemployment administrative expenses, cost of attracting applicants, cost of entrance interviews, testing cost, staff costs, travel and moving expenses, post-employment information gathering and dissemination costs and cost of post-employment medical exams.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study utilised the epistemology research paradigm underpinned by the positivist philosophy which believes that the society shapes individuals and rely on scientific quantitative methods. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires and online interviews, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS) to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test casual relationships between employees and the management, and generalise results to a wider population. The descriptive quantitative research design was used to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of the population (Bhandari, 2020). Employees of Spar Group Zimbabwe was the population and 100 people were sampled using random sampling technique. A pilot test was done with 10 employees and five managers to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. Permission was sought from Spar Golden Stairs before carrying out the study and consent of participants was sought during the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There was an 85% response rate whereby 85 out of the 100 distributed questionnaires were returned. Lucy et al. (2010) indicated that a response rate of 60% produce reliable results. The gender of the respondents showed that the majority were male (58.02%) as compared to the female (41.98%). This is in line with the findings by Dzvuke (2015) who indicated that most positions in Spar Group Zimbabwe were filled by males. Heidari (2019) added that there are gender stereotypes that limit women’s access to organisational posts especially in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. The age group that had the majority of people was 31-40 years and these are the economically active individuals with the ability to execute greater experience but with more needs as highlighted by the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The education level shows that the majority (40.62%) are degree holders and people are employed on the basis of their qualifications.

Organisational performance of Spar Group Zimbabwe during the COVID-19 pandemic was measured by using a five point Likert scale and the results are shown in table 1:

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for organisational performance (N=85)

<i>P Value = 0.05</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
The company is making good profits.	1.2612	.87078
The company’s customers are satisfied with its goods and services.	2.2132	.88362
The company’s internal business processes are efficient and effective.	1.3993	.84541
The company’s employees are satisfied with their jobs.	3.4865	.93159
The company’s market share is growing	2.0541	.70498
The company has a strong brand image	4.1210	.70722

Overall mean = 2.4225, SD=0.7421, M = Mean, SD= Standard deviation

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The overall mean of 2.4225 and standard deviation of 0.7421 show that the organisational performance was poor as this represent a disagree response on the Likert scale. This results resemble what was stated by Nyangara (2019) who postulated that the business environment in Zimbabwe has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is envisaged that there would be significant negative impact on the organisational performance and market returns.

Employee performance was measured on a Likert scale of 1-5 and the majority of respondents were undecided. Since the organisational performance was poor, employees might also perform below average and it would be difficult to be innovative and produce quality work under lockdown restrictions. A relationship of the findings can be established with the study by Heidari (2019) who pointed out that movement restrictions and a limit on the number of employees as part of fighting the pandemic in the organisation had deterred a lot of employees from performing to their best.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Performance (N=85)

<i>P Value = 0.05</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Employees are punctual most of the time and complete job tasks on time	3.9459	.77981
Employees are team workers and reach out to others to offer assistance	3.8919	.73725
Employees are creative and innovative one of the organization's values	3.7027	.87765
Employees have the ability to perform in many key areas of given roles.	2.1081	.77401
Employees are consistent in their work given any situation either working from home or from the office.	2.4832	0.905
Employees are producing quality work.	2.2304	0.680

Overall mean = 3.06, SD=0.7923, M = Mean, SD= Standard deviation

Employee motivation was also measured using a 1-5 Likert scale and the results as shown in table 3 indicate that the employees are not motivated. This can be linked to poor organisational performance where most organisations are in a quandary that includes financial burden and high debts due to shrinking economy of Zimbabwe.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Motivation (N=85)

<i>P Value = 0.05</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Employees do care and take great pride in working for the company when the company meet for their security and safety needs	2.63	0.932
Employees are satisfied with their job.	2.66	0.844
Employees' goals at work are to get better and better all the time through training and development programs.	2.97	0.684
Some employees have left the company recently due to unpaid salaries and allowances and lack of job security.	2.57	1.027
Employees at our company help and support each other building trust between themselves and the employer in these trying times of COVID-19	3.44	0.835

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Virtual meetings have reduced absenteeism and working for short hours by employees.	2.59	0.831

Overall mean = 2.81, SD=0.8588, M = Mean, SD= Standard deviation

Employee compensation was measured using a five point Likert scale and the results are in table 4. The results showed that employees disagree that they were compensated and as such most of the employees did not receive their bonus in 2020 and did not receive full salaries during the lockdown. The findings concur with the study done by Agarwal and Helfat (2019) which indicated that as a way of dealing with poor financial performances owing to unforeseen emergence of COVID-19, organisations had to delay salary payments and cut bonuses and allowances that employees used to get.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Compensation (N = 85)

<i>P Value= 0.05</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
I got my annual bonus for 2020.	1.47	0.942
I got paid a risk allowance for working during the lockdown.	2.73	1.830
I got paid my salary on time during the lockdown.	2.60	0.673
I was paid my full salary during the lockdown.	1.24	1.202

Overall mean = 2.01, SD=1.1617, M = Mean, SD= Standard deviation

Employee motivation strategies which were collected using a five point Likert scale are shown table 5 and the results indicated that the management should implement and execute strategies that help the organisation to survive. The strategies can involve providing adequate resources, drafting COVID-19 policies, rewarding employees, communicating effectively and training so as to counter the detrimental effects of COVID-19 to business operations.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for employee motivation strategies (N=85).

<i>P Value= 0.05</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Management must provide adequate resources to support employee work performance so that they have a balance work and social life	4.2113	1.239

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Management need to clearly define objectives and goals according to the work environment which suit employees' needs	3.5523	1.345
Management need to define each employee's job description so that they understand what is important for each employee's experience in the organization.	4.9571	0.864
Employees should be rewarded for good performance to boost their morale	4.3224	1.121
Management should be transparent and should communicate effectively with employees, their work areas and give clear, timely and constructive feedback.	3.6648	0.767
Management should offer further education and training and development opportunities.	3.6956	0.912
Management should draft and implement a COVID-19 policy to protect employees from the COVID-19 infections.	4.7248	0.877

Overall mean=4.1612; Standard deviation=1.0178; N=85

The findings are in line with the study by Alaadel& Arnold (2017) who stated that companies in East Africa are struggling in their performance and hence they improve their communication, training and developing staff from time to time and provide adequate tools for employees as strategies to increase their performance.

4.1 Hypothesis testing

This section presents results on the effects of motivation on organizational performance. In this regard, regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses.

H₁: Employee compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic is positively associated with their performance

The results showed that employee compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic is positively associated with their performance as shown in table 6, table 6.1, and table 6.2.

Table 6: H₁ Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.315 ^a	.093	.094	4.29602
a. Predictors: Employee Motivation				

Table 7 H₁ analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1010.090	1	1010.090	52.720	.000 ^b
	Residual	9246.361	501	18.456		
	Total	10256.453	502			

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Table 8: H_1 Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.126	.778		13.013	.000
	Employee Compensation	.159	.021	.315	7.393	.000
a. Dependent variable: performance						

Research findings from Table 6 show that employee compensation explains about 9.83% of changes in performance. This means that there are other aspects that explain the other 90% difference in company's performance. Results from Table 7 show that the model is statistically significant as indicated by the F statistic value of 52,720 and significant at $p = 0.001$. This therefore means that the model is dependable. Results from Table 8 show that employee compensation positively influences performance as shown by Beta value of 0.315, t value of 7.393 significant at $p = 0.01$. This implies that employee compensation enhances performance and therefore, H_1 is accepted.

H_2 : Employee motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic is positively associated with the company's financial performance

The results for hypothesis two which was testing employee motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic as positively associated with the company's financial performance are shown in table 9, table 10 and table 11:

Table 9: H_2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.235 ^a	.063	.061	3.86313
a. Predictors: , Employee Motivation				

Table 10: H_2 analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	418.530	1	418.530	29.048	.000 ^b
	Residual	7476.798	501	14.924		
	Total	7895.328	502			
a. Dependent Variable: Financial Performance b. Predictors: Employee Motivation						

Table 11: H₂ coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.400	.691		12.162	.000
	Employee Motivation	.101	.019	.235	5.2887	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Financial Performance						

Results from Table 9 indicate that employee motivation explains about 6% of changes in financial performance. This explains that there are some factors that lead to about 94% changes in financial performance. Furthermore, results from Table 10 show that the model is statistically significant as shown by F statistic of 29.048 and significant at p = 0.001. This therefore implies that the model is dependable. Results from Table 11 show that employee motivation positively affects financial performance as indicated by Beta value of 0.235, t value of 5.2887 and significant at p = 0.01, therefore, H₂ is accepted. This finding is supported by Qureshi et al. (2018) who stated that when employees are motivated they can produce high level of productivity which can be converted to financial performance such as attractive shareholder’s dividends and good market returns.

H₃: Employee motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic is positively associated with customer satisfaction

The results for hypothesis 3 which was testing employee motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic as positively associated with customer satisfaction are shown in Table 12, Table 13 and Table 14.

Table 12: H₃ model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.371 ^a	.089	.087	3.83667
a. Predictors: Employee Motivation				

Table 13: H₃ analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	638.634	1	638.634	42.274	.000 ^b
	Residual	7418.899	504	14.720		
	Total	8057.534	505			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction b. Predictors: Employee Motivation						

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Table 14: H₃ coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.901	.689		11.470	.000
	Employee Motivation	.125	.019	.371	5.541	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

As can be illustrated from table 12, about 10% of changes in customer satisfaction is influenced by employee motivation. The results justify the existence of other factors that explains the 90% changes in customer satisfaction. Results from Table 13 demonstrate that the model is statistically significant as shown by the F-statistic of 42.274 significant at $p = 0.001$ and hence, implies that the model is dependable. Results from Table 14 depict that employee motivation positively affects customer satisfaction as indicated by Beta value of 0.371; t value of 5.541 and significant at $p = 0.01$ and thus concluding that, employee motivation enhances customer satisfaction, therefore, H₃ is accepted. The results are in tandem with the findings by Denegri-Schroeder (2001) who pointed out that among the possible causes of satisfaction, employee motivation plays a pivotal role.

H₄: Employee motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic is positively associated with the company's growth

The results of hypothesis 4 were testing employee motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic as positively associated with company's growth are shown in table 15, Table 16, and table 17.

Table 15: H₄ model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.128 ^a	.018	.016	4.11276

a. Predictors: Employee Motivation

Table 16: H₂ analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	137.821	1	137.821	8.128	.004 ^b
	Residual	8491.219	502	16.915		
	Total	8629.040	503			

a. Dependent Variable: Growth b. Predictors: Employee Motivation

Table 17: H₄ Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.429	.734		16.941	.000
	Employee Motivation	.058	.020	.128	2.844	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Growth

Research findings demonstrated in Table 15 indicate that employee motivation explains about 2% of changes in company's growth meaning that there are some factors that influences 98% change in company's growth. Findings from Table 16 denote that the model is statistically significant as shown by the F statistic of 8.128 significant at $p = 0.01$, implying that, the model is dependable. Results from Table 17 indicate that employee motivation positively affects growth as indicated by Beta value of 0.126, t value of 2.84 and significant at $p = 0.01$. This therefore means that employee motivation enhances company's growth, therefore, H_4 is supported. This is also supported by Giacobbi, Hausenblas & Frye (2005) who argued that organizations that exhibit high level of employee motivation have high probability of growth.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that it is important to motivate employees during pandemics such as the COVID-19. There is need to employ strategies such as providing adequate resources, drafting policies, rewarding employees, communicating effectively and training employees during pandemic times so as to boost employee confidence and improve the performance of an organisation. It is also vital to compensate employees to improve their work performance and this study showed that most employees did not get their bonuses and agreed COVID-19 allowances in 2020 as well as their full salaries during the lockdown period. As a result, employee performance was affected as they felt demoralised leading to lack of innovativeness and poor commitment due to poor compensation from the organisation. It was also noted that organisational performance was affected by the pandemic leading to poor profitability and reducing performance in the business environment. The results also show that employee motivation positively affects financial performance. Therefore, employee motivation strategies are crucial for organisational performance to achieve profitability, sales volume and market share. There is a positive relationship between employee motivation and performance and as a result, motivation should be kept as a priority in organisations.

The study recommended that organisations should benchmark their activities with leading competitors locally and regionally to develop strategies to motivate their employees. Organisations should seriously and intentionally look into the compensation policies and match them with prevailing the business environment to ensure that employees are satisfied during times of strategic uncertainty. This can be done through offering small allowances to cushion the employees from the effects of the pandemic. Moreover, organisations should shift their culture towards innovation as the business environment is now dynamic. It is important to focus on profitable market links domestically and internationally to ensure that diverse avenues are opened at the same time reducing risk through diversification of markets. Employers should also come up with strategies that promote equity, fairness and encouragement. There is need to apply the Maslow's hierarchy of needs through looking at employee expectations and lifestyles. Physiological needs such as food, clothing and shelter should always be available and management should take into cognisance to develop, implement, maintain and review motivational schemes and policies. There should be a continuous process of assessing the needs of employees with clearly defined and communicated goals for recognition as a way of motivating the employees.

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