

**MOTIVATION AND EMPLOYEES' PRODUCTIVITY: AN  
EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE ABIA STATE MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION (2014 – 2024)**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examined the impact of motivation on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education (2014 – 2024). It set out to probe the ability of the personnel officers to implement quality staff motivation strategies, utilizing the various forms of government motivations available, moderating the challenges against the employees' productivity, and ascertaining whether government motivations have impacted the employees' productivity in Abia State Ministry of Education. A survey research design was adopted for the study. A total sample size of 365 personnel was randomly selected out of 4,150 staff in the three education zones [EZs] - Aba, Ohafia, and Umuahia in Abia State Ministry of Education. A questionnaire titled "Motivation and Employees' Productivity Survey Questionnaire" (MEPSQ), structured in a four-point Likert format, was administered for data collection, complemented by interviews and secondary data. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and means. The study was anchored on Expectancy Theory. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. It was found that the various forms of government motivation available were not effectively utilized, the moderation against the challenges to employees' productivity was insufficient, and therefore, had little positive impact on the productivity of the Abia State Ministry of Education. It was recommended that personnel officers should effectively utilize the various forms of government motivation available, moderate the challenges to employees' productivity, and thereby positively impact the ministry's productivity.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Employees' Productivity, Personnel Officers, Strategy, Challenges, Utilization

## **INTRODUCTION**

Motivation as a process started with a need in a human being, which creates a vacuum in a person. In an attempt to fill the vacuum, an internal driving force is generated, which starts and sustains a chain of action and reaction. It is at that point that the vacuum is also filled. Motivation is seen as the internal or external driving force that produces the willingness to perform an act to a conclusive end. This first aspect of motivation describes internal motivation, which is the driving force that originates within an individual. The second aspect is the external motivation that is applied to the

organizations. This is because employees are motivated to identify with the organization to satisfy their varied and diverse needs and desires. Until they have been identified and properly addressed, they will continue to impede the smooth operation of the organizations (Ezeibe, 2022).

When employees are motivated, they perform their functions effectively, thereby improving productivity. The productivity of an organization is tied and defined by the individual-level actions, relationships, and behaviour expressed or manifested within the organization. Organizations that achieve their objectives recognize the importance of employee productivity and develop systems that leverage motivational advantages within the organization (Agena & Odeh, 2023). Employee effectiveness is a demonstration of competency and ability in achieving predetermined goals. Employee's productivity or effectiveness therefore rests on one's capacity to regularly make a significant contribution towards favourable results in organizations like Abia State Ministry of Education, Abia State Ministry of Agriculture, Abia State Ministry of Works, Abia State Ministry of Health, etc. (Chukwu, 2021).

Employee productivity is generally understood as the ability of an employee to take input (instructions, directives, requirements, etc.) and turn them into output. Effectively, it measures how employees produce input and turn it into output within a given period of time. Employee productivity is defined as an assessment of value generated by an individual employee within a specific time period (Gunu, 2017). Productivity has a direct correlation with organization outcomes (both near-term and long-term) and return on investment (ROI). Without this correlation, an activity cannot be viewed as productive. High or low productivity depends on a company's internal average and where the employee, team, and department stand as per this predefined baseline (Dikachi, 2022).

The Abia State Ministry of Education came into existence upon the creation of Abia State in August, 1991. It is located at the Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe Secretariat, Umuahia, Abia State. The ministry provides Policy Guidelines, Standards, and Programs for the facilitation and acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs as a fundamental human right for an all-inclusive education for development. This is paramount for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (No. 4) and the UNESCO Education 2030 Agenda, as well as one of the five Economic Pillars of the past administration of Governor Okezie Victor Ikpeazu (PhD). The ministry aligns with federal government policies on education (Nwachukwu, 2021). The cardinal objective of the ministry is to, through the general goals of the state education sector, achieve the acquisition of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competences to empower the individual to live in, and contribute positively to the society (Obiechilie, 2022). This study examines the impact of government motivation strategies on employee productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education, focusing on motivation as the key to unlocking productivity.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the years, there has been an organic linkage or relationship between the poor motivational impact of the government and the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. Studies such as Egwu (2021) and Obiechilie (2022) have affirmed that Abia State Ministry of Education is characterized by a dwindling rate of employees' productivity, particularly judging

from the statistical analysis of the 2015, 2018, 2021, and 2023 productivity ratings, where low performance was observed in the major departments in Abia State Ministry of Education. Studies from various scholars also confirmed that low motivation affected the proficiency of employees in ministries and departments across the country (Adebayo, 2019; Ubah, 2021; Anderson & Feder, 2024). According to Akaeze (2016), the salaries of employees in the Abia State Ministry of Education are generally low, and options for merit-based pay are lacking. For instance, in the ministry, employees receive demoralizing salaries per month, which are considerably less than those of private sector employees.

The Abia State Ministry of Education usually awards promotions based on length of service (or merit), but evidence suggests that this often works differently in practice. Employees from the state ministry, for instance, often report that promotions are neither based on length of service nor merit, but on favouritism and the relationship between the politicians and employee in question (Chukwu, 2021). Lack of incentives for enhanced performance, low status, and recognition are associated with the employees of the state ministry, which affects their morale. A lack of operational funds for equipment, transportation, communication, and research facilities further diminishes employees' morale and capacity for high performance (Ezekwesiri, 2015). Employees are often assessed based on the activities they undertake rather than the outcomes they achieve. Job risks (insecurity, hardships, etc.). Inadequate incentive packages, allowances, fringe benefits, and bonuses, among others, given to employees further reduce their performance (Birmir, 2018). In all, these multiple factors not only lead to poor and inadequate services but also increase the cost of such services due to high staff turnover (depletion of competent officers) and increased costs of hiring and training new employees (Ekwuma, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of motivation on employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of the study is to examine the impact of motivation on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the forms of government motivations to enhance the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.
2. To explore the motivational challenges affecting the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.
3. To ascertain whether government motivations have impacted the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the objectives, the following research questions were posed for the study:

1. What are the forms of government motivations to enhance the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education?
2. What are the motivational challenges to the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education?

3. How has government motivation impacted the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

**Ho1:** Forms of government motivations available cannot enhance the employees' productivity, if well implemented in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Ho2:** There are no motivational challenges to the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Ho3:** Government motivations have not impacted the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Motivation and its Role on Employees**

Motivation is the driving force behind human behaviour, pushing individuals to take action and achieve their goals. In the context of management, motivation refers to the strategies and techniques used to inspire and encourage employees to perform at their best and contribute to the organization's success (Orika, 2022). In the view of Ademolekun (2020), it plays a crucial role in management, as it directly impacts employee performance, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. This is because when employees are motivated, they are more likely to be engaged, committed, and enthusiastic about their work. For him, this in turn leads to higher levels of job satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and increased organizational success. The role of motivation in effective management is to create a positive work environment, characterized by open communication, trust, and respect (Egwu, 2021). This could have inspired Agena and Odoh (2023) to observe that human resource officers or administrators in ministries can create such an environment by actively listening to their employees, providing support and guidance, promoting a culture of collaboration, and offering recognition. Employee engagement is closely linked to motivation, which is why engaged employees are passionate about their work, committed to the organization's goals, and willing to go the extra mile (Ubah, 2021).

When employees understand how their individual goals align with the organization's larger goals, they are more likely to be motivated to achieve them (Effiom, 2021). On this note, Nkanu (2017) asserts that a ministry administrator can facilitate this alignment by clearly communicating organizational objectives, providing regular feedback, and ensuring that employees have the necessary resources and support to achieve their goals. He argues that employees thrive on feedback and recognition, and managers, in turn, should provide constructive feedback regularly, highlighting areas for improvement and acknowledging achievements. He points out that recognition can take the form of simple gestures, such as a heartfelt thank you, public appreciation, or even small rewards. Effiom (2021) appears to be in alignment with Nkanu (2017), who observes

that employees are motivated when they see opportunities for personal and professional growth. He notes that managers should provide training programs, workshops, or mentorship opportunities that can help employees acquire new skills and develop their potential. Motivation plays a vital role in fostering strong team dynamics. Subscribing to this, Ubah (2021, p.47) submits that “When team members are motivated, they are more likely to work together, support one another, and collaborate effectively”. For him, a motivated team is like a well-oiled machine, each member contributing their unique skills and talents towards a shared goal. As a manager, it's essential to create an environment that fosters teamwork and cultivates positive relationships among team members (Dike, 2022).

### **Forms of Motivation**

Motivation is the process of initiating a conscious and purposeful action. According to Ademolekun (2020), motive means an urge, or a combination of urges, to include conscious or purposeful action. It is a process of initiating a conscious and purposeful action (Agena & Odoh, 2023). Egwu (2021) avers that motives arising from natural urges or acquired interests can have positive effects on employees, pointing out that dynamic forces affect the thoughts, emotions, and behavior of people. Here are the main forms/types of motivation as viewed by some scholars in this field of study:

1. **Intrinsic Motivation:** In the view of Igweobi (2021), intrinsic motivation represents all the things that motivate employees based on internal rewards like self-improvement or helping a friend in need. For example, according to him, an extension worker may be motivated to get a promotion because he/she will learn valuable skills. Conversely, they might be motivated to succeed because they want to positively impact the lives of the people around them (Igweobi, 2021).
2. **Extrinsic Motivation:** Chukwu (2021) posits that extrinsic motivation represents all the things that motivate employees based on external rewards like money or praise. Obiechile (2022) points out that extrinsic motivation is more common than intrinsic motivation, which involves achieving things due to a tangible incentive, fear, or expectation, all of which depend on external factors. For example, people want to get a promotion because of the expected rise in income.
3. **Competence & Learning Motivation:** According to Ademolekun (2020), competence motivation is also known as learning motivation. In his opinion, people are motivated more by the process itself rather than by the reward at the end. Egwu (2021) argues that individuals motivated by competence motivation are driven by the act of learning or improving as they progress toward the completion of a goal or task, rather than by the goal itself. For example, if you want a promotion because you will learn valuable skills, rather than for the higher expected salary, you are motivated by competence or learning motivation.
4. **Attitude Motivation:** This refers to the type of motivation that is cultivated through the desire to change the way you or other people think and feel. For example, if you are motivated to work for a non-profit or volunteer in a soup kitchen because making people feel good brings you joy, you are driven by a change in attitude (Nwachukwu, 2021).



5. **Achievement Motivation:** People are driven by the desire to pursue and achieve specific goals. People driven by this type of motivation desire the achievement of a task or goal itself, rather than the reward associated with it (Igweobi, 2021). If you are driven by achievement motivation, you are typically self-motivated and process-oriented, meaning that you value the process of improvement more than the outcome itself (Effiom, 2021).
6. **Creative Motivation:** According to Nkanu (2017), many people are motivated by creativity or the innate drive for creative expression. When you are motivated by the desire to express yourself, you are tapping into creative motivation. Examples of creative motivation include things you desire to create, such as the motivation to write a book, serve the public, act in a movie, play the guitar, build a product, or start a business (Dike, 2022).
7. **Physiological Motivation:** Often, humans are driven by some internal force beyond their explanation. For example, considering Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, all humans are motivated by basic needs such as food and shelter, as well as higher-level psychological needs and self-fulfillment. These needs are innate in all of us, and we are internally motivated to achieve them at all costs, making it helpful when trying to understand our own thought process or that of others (Obiechile, 2022).
8. **Incentive Motivation:** Incentive motivation, unlike achievement motivation, says that people are motivated more by reward than by achievement of a goal, adding that the forms of government motivations obtainable can improve the employees' efficiency in an organization (Ubah, 2021). Ademolekun (2020) presents a contrary view, arguing that employees are motivated not by the pursuit of a task but by incentives driven by the desire to take action due to the expectation of a reward. According to him, for example, if you want a promotion because of the higher salary and not because of the new responsibility, you are motivated by incentives over achievement (Ademolekun, 2020).
9. **Fear Motivation:** Fear motivation is a motivational type that uses consequences to drive people into action (Nkanu, 2017). Fear motivation can be thought of as a "negative motivator," in that it is not driven by a reward but by the avoidance of pain or consequences (Igweobi, 2021).
10. **Power Motivation:** Power motivation is a motivational factor that says people are motivated by control over their own lives and the lives of others (Orika, 2023).
11. **Affiliation and Social Motivation:** Humans are social creatures. Social motivation is also known as affiliation motivation (Gunu, 2017). This means that people are motivated by social factors like belonging and acceptance (Nwachukwu, 2021). Humans have an innate desire to connect with others, and social motivation causes us to seek connections by contributing to a social group (Nkanu, 2017).

### **Motivational Challenges of Education Officers**

The persistent administrative lapses in the education sector have dwindled the employees' general motivation for improved performance (Agena & Odoh, 2023). Chukwu (2021) observes that development opportunities in the education system are based on seniority and length of service rather than qualifications, arguing that the payment is low, as well as poor working conditions, which result in low morale. Since this is not only an institutional but also an organizational issue, changing the incentives for employees in isolation from the rest of the bureaucracy is likely to be difficult (Birner & Anderson, 2023). This could have prompted Mbile (2019) to argue that the

proficiency, efficiency, and effectiveness of personnel can only be achieved through the motivation of personnel within the organization. However, Ezekwesiri (2015) identified the following key factors lowering the performance of public officers:

- **Poor Professional Advancement:** Professional development opportunities such as conferences, seminars, and workshops are poorly organized due to limited resources, which negatively affects the performance of the education officers.
- **Lack of Encouragement from the Government:** Education officers overwhelmingly feel unappreciated by the government, and their accomplishments go unnoticed in the hierarchical administrative structures, deflating their motivation and esteem.
- **Low Remuneration:** Salaries of education officers are generally low, and options for merit-based pay are lacking.
- **Lack of Rewards and Promotion Opportunities:** Education officers are usually awarded promotions based on length of service (or merit), but evidence suggests that this often works differently in practice.

In brief, as previously emphasized, these numerous factors not only lead to poor and inadequate public services but also increase the cost of such services due to high staff turnover (depletion of competent personnel) and increased hiring and training costs for new employees in the ministries (Garba & Mohammed, 2023).

### **Employee Productivity**

Employee productivity is generally understood as the ability of an employee to take input (instructions, directives, requirements, etc.) and turn them into output (Chukwu & Enudu, 2021). Effectively, it measures how employees produce input and turn it into output within a given period of time. Employee productivity is defined as an assessment of value generated by an individual employee within a specific time period (Gunu, 2017). Productivity has a direct correlation with organizational outcomes (both near-term and long-term) and return on investment (ROI) (Obiechile, 2022). Without this correlation, an activity cannot be viewed as productive (Birmir, 2018). According to Dikachi (2022), a company's productivity is determined by its internal average and the position of the employee, team, and department in relation to this predefined baseline. Chukwuma & Obiefuna (2024) subscribe to the notion that low performance in any organization is due to poor working conditions, noting that motivation has a significant impact on these conditions, which in turn affect employees' productivity—a phenomenon rarely observed in ministries.

The overall success of an organization is largely determined by the efficient and effective productivity of its workforce (Obieze, 2016). Regardless of business opportunities, investments, or the strategic direction you take, on-ground execution and innovation come down to your employees (Igweobi, 2021). That is why companies are so eager to improve employee productivity and help them perform better in the workplace (Opera, 2022). To accurately understand what the concept of employee productivity means for your company, you must first identify the intended value added from the employee's efforts (Richard, David, Steven, & Jeffrey, 2017). In a similar

vein, Beach (2020) noted that human resources development programmes at all levels are indeed indispensable if the nation expects a result-oriented public service.

When workers are effective, they perform their functions very well and that leads to improved productivity (Birner & Anderson, 2023). According to Kim (2020), the productivity of an organization is tied and defined by the individual-level actions, relationships, and behaviour expressed or manifested within the industry. This could have positioned the minds of Namusonge, Willy, and Olawoye (2016) to submit that an organization's success depends significantly on its employees and their productivity. The work environment is crucial, and human resources play a significant role. The environment encompasses an organizational culture that fosters a work-life balance, employee engagement and well-being, the development of achievable performance metrics, and incentives to reward outstanding performance. Systems and technology are also important, as they can greatly increase employee productivity if the personnel are properly motivated to work as planned (Birmir, 2018).

### **Measurement of Productivity**

Many variables could be used to measure productivity. This work used employee retention, employee discipline, industrial harmony, employee effectiveness, organizational effectiveness, and organizational efficiency.

- i. **Employee Retention:** Employee retention can be used to measure productivity because when hard-working forces are made to remain and work with their organization, productivity will continue to increase. When such hardworking employees leave, it hinders productivity in the organization (Zaman, 2018). The problem of instability and a low compensation system has led many staff in public and private sector organizations in Nigeria to leave their organizations or country and join other organizations within or outside the country. If the situation must be stopped, employers of labour must improve their human resource management system to achieve employee retention. Employee retention is concerned with keeping or encouraging employees to remain in an organization for as long as possible (Shrewdman, 2017). For that, effective employee retention is a systematic effort by employers to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed by having policies and practices in place that address their diverse needs.
- ii. **Employee discipline:** Employees who are very disciplined in performing their functions will add value to the productivity of the organization. Obieze (2016) defined discipline as a positive approach to creating an attitude and organizational climate where employees conform to the organization's set of rules and regulations. This is achieved by applying rewards and penalties. Here, rewards should be given to the employee with outstanding disciplinary performance. By this method, organizations do not lay emphasis only on the misconduct of an employee. Knight & Okoye (2022) define discipline as a pattern of behaviour that can be traced back to a particular training. This behavior is portrayed by a person to demonstrate their personal traits.
- iii. **iii Industrial harmony:** When there is an industrial dispute within an organization, it means productivity will be affected. Regular strike reduces the effective productivity of the



organization (Omuya, 2018). For that, there is a need for industrial harmony in the public and private sector organizations. The term "industrial harmony" is composed of two words: industrial and harmony. Industrial means the process of productivity-activity in which an individual is (or a group of individuals are) engaged. At the same time, harmony is the peaceful coexistence between two parties (of opposing interests) in an organization. Industrial harmony refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationships between employers and employees, intended to benefit both parties in an organization (Otobo, 2023).

- iv. **iv Organizational efficiency:** An efficient organization is a productive organization. Organizational efficiency is the organization's ability to implement its plans using the smallest possible expenditure of resources (Kajogbola, 2020). It is an important factor in the firm's organizational effectiveness, referring to the ease and degree of success with which the organization accomplishes its aims. Organizational efficiency is about determining how to be more effective by utilizing fewer resources, as well as less time and money, to achieve the same goal. Organizational efficiency is time-based, effort-based, and measurable. Organizational efficiency measures the relationship between organizational inputs (resources) and outputs (goods and services provided) (Thapa, 2020).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Expectancy theory is also known as the 'Expectancy theory of motivation', propounded by Vroom (1964). This theory posits that an individual will behave in a certain way because they are motivated to select a specific behavior over others, based on what they expect the result of that selected behavior will be (Comas, 1998). Therefore, the motivation of the behavioural selection is driven or determined by the derivability of the 'result' (Dave, 2003). Nevertheless, at the centre of the expectancy theory is the mental process of how an individual weighs the result. Vroom summarized his theory under the following:  $\text{motivation} = \text{expectancy} + \text{instrumentality} + \text{valence}$ . He notes that motivation is the degree to which people will be motivated by the situation they find themselves in. It is also a function of expectancy that a person's perception (i.e., effort) will result in performance/productivity (Omuya, 2018). While instrumentality is the person's perception that performance/productivity will be rewarded or punished. Valence is the perceived strength of the reward or punishment that will result from the performance. It can also be seen as the value the individual personally places on the rewards (Asuke & Aniagulu, 2016).

In applying the theory to the subject of the study, it is evident that motivation is the degree to which people will be motivated by the situation they find themselves in. It is also a function of expectancy, which is a person's perception that effort "through motivation" will improve performance, that is, "result". Instrumentality is the person's perception that the productivity "result" will be rewarded or punished. For example, the person's assessment of how well the amount of reward (motivation) correlates with the quality and quantity of work acquired. Finally, valence is the value the individual personally places on the rewards "through improved wages and salaries, incentives, allowance, fringe benefits, bonus, good working conditions, etc". Suppose the working conditions received by the staff of the Abia State Ministry of Education are of low standard. In that case, the motivation to work will be low, even if expectancy and instrumentality are perfect. On the contrary, if the working conditions received by the personnel are of high

standard, the motivation to work will be high as well. Based on this, productivity in Abia State Ministry of Education workers is a function of motivation. (i.e. performance = motivation). With this, improved salaries, monetary and non-monetary incentives, allowances, fringe benefits, bonuses, promotions, praises, etc, should be seen as motivational to the productivity of the employees of Abia State Ministry of Education.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of the 3 three educational zones [EZs] in the state - Aba, Ohafia, and Umuahia - with a population size of 4,150 serving personnel from the ministry. Using the 'Taro Yamane formula', a sample size of 365 respondents was randomly selected out of 4,150 personnel. The respondents were randomly selected through a stratified technique in the 3 three zones on the basis of 4 local government areas for each zone. The researchers constructed an instrument for the study titled Motivation and Employees' Productivity Survey Questionnaire (MEPSQ), structured in a four-point Likert format, (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree), which was administered for data collection, complemented with interviews and secondary data. In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument for the study, the researchers ensured that the questionnaire covered the research questions of the study and was given to experts from Abia State Ministry of Education and Measurement of Evaluation for scrutiny. This was pilot tested, and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and mean. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for interpretation of the results was that of a mean score of 2.5 and above, which was regarded as agreed/accepted, while below 2.5 was disagreed/rejected.

## RESULTS

### Data Presentation and Analysis

It should be noted that out of 365 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 363 copies were properly filled and returned, whereas two copies were not returned.

**Research Question 1:** What are the forms of government motivations to enhance the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education?

**Table 1: Response to the Forms of Government Motivations Available to Enhance the Employees' Productivity in Abia State Ministry of Education.**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items   | SA  | A   | D  | SA | N   | ΣX    | X    | DEC    |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-------|------|--------|
| 1.  | Intrinsic motivation represents all the things that motivate employees based on internal rewards like self-improvement or helping a friend in need. | 130 | 110 | 85 | 38 | 363 | 1,058 | 2.91 | Agreed |

|    |   |     |     |     |     |     |       |             |           |
|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------------|-----------|
| 2. | All employees are not motivated by basic needs such as food and shelter, as well as higher-level psychological needs and self-fulfilment.           | 25  | 83  | 116 | 139 | 363 | 720   | 1.98        | Disagreed |
| 3. | Extrinsic motivation represents all the things that motivate employees based on external rewards like money or praise.                              | 140 | 105 | 83  | 35  | 363 | 1,076 | 2.96        | Agreed    |
| 4. | Incentive motivation, unlike achievement motivation, says that people are motivated more by reward than by achievement of a goal.                   | 121 | 112 | 90  | 40  | 363 | 1,040 | 2.87        | Agreed    |
| 5. | Fear motivation can be thought of as a “negative motivator” because you are not motivated by a reward, but by the avoidance of pain or consequences | 135 | 101 | 86  | 41  | 363 | 1,056 | 2.91        | Agreed    |
|    | <b>Grand mean</b>   |     |     |     |     |     |       | <b>2.73</b> | Agreed    |

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Table 1 revealed that the respondents in items 1, 3, 4, and 5, with mean scores above 2.50, agreed on the forms of government motivations to enhance the employees’ productivity in Abia State Ministry of Education. Only the respondents in item 2 with a mean score below 2.50 disagreed. Furthermore, the grand mean for research question 1 is 2.73, which underscores the fact that people believe that forms of government motivation available can enhance the employees’ productivity, if well implemented in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Research Question 2:** What are the motivational challenges to the employees’ productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education?

**Table 2: Response to Motivational Challenges and Employees’ Productivity in Abia State Ministry of Education.**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items  | SA  | A   | D  | SA | N   | ΣX    | X    | DEC    |
|-----|--|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-------|------|--------|
| 6.  | There is poor professional advancement, which negatively affects the performance of the education officers | 118 | 99  | 96 | 50 | 363 | 1,011 | 2.79 | Agreed |
| 7.  | Salaries of education officers are generally low and options   | 119 | 101 | 98 | 45 | 363 | 1,014 | 2.79 | Agreed |

|     |   |     |     |     |     |     |       |             |           |
|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------------|-----------|
|     | for merit-based pay are lacking.  |     |     |     |     |     |       |             |           |
| 8   | There are lack of incentive packages and promotion opportunities in the ministry                                      | 138 | 107 | 80  | 38  | 363 | 1,071 | 2.95        | Agreed    |
| 9.  | There is enough encouragement from the government to the personnel of the ministry to enhance employees' proficiency. | 41  | 86  | 103 | 133 | 363 | 761   | 2.10        | Disagreed |
| 10. | The ministry rarely encourages for higher education or the acquisition of additional skills in the service.           | 134 | 115 | 87  | 27  | 363 | 1,082 | 2.98        | Agreed    |
|     | <b>Grand mean</b>   |     |     |     |     |     |       | <b>2.72</b> | Agreed    |

**Source: Survey Data, 2024.**

Table 1 revealed that the respondents in items 6, 7, 8, and 10, with mean scores above 2.50, agreed on the motivational challenges against the employees' productivity in Abia State Ministry of Education, while only the respondents in item 9, with a mean score below 2.50, disagreed. Furthermore, the grand mean for research question 2 is 2.72; this implies that people believe there are motivational challenges to employees' productivity in the ministry.

**Research Question 3:** How has government motivation impacted the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education?

**Table 3: Response on Government Motivation and Employees' Productivity**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items   | SA  | A   | D  | SA | N   | $\Sigma X$ | X    | DEC    |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|------------|------|--------|
| 11. | The government has not helped to boost the retention of employees by offering a competitive pay structure.      | 144 | 93  | 83 | 43 | 363 | 1,064      | 2.93 | Agreed |
| 12. | There are a few motivation strategies that reduce the effectiveness of employees' productivity in the ministry. | 120 | 113 | 91 | 39 | 363 | 1,040      | 2.87 | Agreed |
| 13. | There is a lack of commitment to efficiency on the part of management, which cannot ensure                      | 133 | 103 | 86 | 41 | 363 | 1,054      | 2.90 | Agreed |

|     |   |     |     |    |    |     |       |             |        |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-------|-------------|--------|
|     | employees' commitment to increasing efficiency.   |     |     |    |    |     |       |             |        |
| 14. | Employees are willing to show commitment to service, if the government improves on their working condition in the ministry. | 125 | 112 | 64 | 62 | 363 | 1,026 | 2.83        | Agreed |
| 15  | There no enough government motivation to impact on the employees' productivity in the ministry.                             | 117 | 102 | 93 | 51 | 363 | 1,011 | 2.79        | Agreed |
|     | <b>Grand mean</b>   |     |     |    |    |     |       | <b>2.86</b> | Agreed |

**Source: Survey Data, 2024.**

Table 3 revealed that all the respondents in items 11 - 15 agreed that the government's motivations had not impacted enough on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. Again, the grand mean is 2.86. This implies that the people believe that few government motivation strategies have not really impacted enough on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

### Testing of Research Hypotheses

**Ho1:** Forms of government motivations available cannot enhance the employees' productivity, if well implemented in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Table 4: Testing hypothesis one, data in Table 1 were used.**

|            |   |  |              |
|------------|---|--|--------------|
| <b>Ha1</b> | Forms of government motivation available can enhance the employees' productivity if well implemented in the Abia State Ministry of Education. | Pearson Correlation (r) = 0.97<br>Sig = 0.05<br>N = 363<br>Grand mean = 2.73 | <b>VALID</b> |
|------------|---|--|--------------|

As can be seen, the table shows that Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation is 0.97, indicating a strong correlation between the forms of government motivations available and employees' productivity, if well implemented in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Ho2:** There are no motivational challenges to the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Table 5: To test Hypothesis 2 above, the data in Table 2 were used.**



|            |   |   |              |
|------------|---|---|--------------|
| <b>Ha2</b> | There are motivational challenges to the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. | Pearson Correlation (r)= 0.89<br>Sig = 0.05<br><br>N = 363<br><br>Grand mean = 2.72 | <b>VALID</b> |
|------------|---|---|--------------|

As can be seen, the table shows that Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation is 0.89, indicating a strong correlation between motivational challenges and employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Ho3:** Government motivations have not impacted the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

**Table 6: Testing hypothesis three, data in table 3 were used.**

|            |   |  |              |
|------------|---|--|--------------|
| <b>Ha3</b> | Government motivations have impacted the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. | Pearson Correlation (r) = 0.96<br>Sig = 0.05<br><br>N = 363<br><br>Grand mean = 2.86 | <b>VALID</b> |
|------------|---|--|--------------|

The table above shows that Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation is 0.96, indicating a strong correlation between certain government motivations and the low productivity of employees in the Abia State Ministry of Education.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the results from Tables 1 and 4 above, it can be seen that the forms of government motivations available could enhance employees' productivity if well implemented in the Abia State Ministry of Education, which is in tandem with the alternative hypothesis earlier postulated. Further assessment revealed that the forms of government motivation were not effectively implemented, resulting in little positive effect on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. This established that the personnel were not sufficiently remunerated, which led to below-average performance in the ministry. This result aligns with Ubah (2021), who posits that the forms of government motivations available can enhance employees' efficiency in an organization. Additionally, Ubah notes that incentive motivation, unlike achievement motivation, focuses more on reward than on achieving a goal. This finding is supported somewhat by Ademolekun (2020), who contended that instead of employees being motivated by the pursuit of a task, they are motivated by incentives driven by the desire to act because of an expected reward. Corroborating the finding, an employee of the Abia State Ministry of Education, in an

interview, stated that the forms of government motivation available in the ministry were insufficient; therefore, they were not capable of optimally enhancing employees' productivity.

The responses from the respondents in tables 2 and 5 above revealed that there were motivational challenges against the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education, which is in line with the alternative hypothesis earlier postulated. Additional evaluation indicated that motivational challenges had a negative impact on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. In consonance with this position, Akena and Odoh (2023) observed that persistent administrative lapses in the education sector have eroded employees' motivation for improved performance. This result aligns with Mbele's (2019) discovery, which suggests that the proficiency, efficiency, and effectiveness of personnel can only be achieved through the motivation of personnel within the organization. Chukwu (2021) aligns his findings with existing results and argues that development opportunities in the education system are based on seniority and length of service rather than qualification. He submits that the payment is low, and the working conditions are poor, resulting in low morale among workers.

The responses from the respondents in tables 3 and 6 above showed that government motivations had little impact on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education, which agrees with the alternative hypothesis earlier postulated. Further assessment revealed that government motivations (i.e., incentive packages, working conditions/fringe benefits, remuneration, and promotion) are insufficient; therefore, they have had little positive effect on the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education. This finding aligns with Obieze (2016), who pointed out that incentive packages are not readily available in the Abia State Ministry of Education, resulting in discouragement among the ministry's employees. As a result, according to him, is the persistent misbehaviour of some employees in the ministry. Corroborating the result, Chukwuma & Obiefuna (2024) agreed that low performance in any organization is often due to poor working conditions, noting that motivation has a significant impact on employees' productivity, which is rarely seen in ministries.

## **Conclusion**

Motivation is the internal or external driving force that produces the willingness to perform an act to a conclusive end. Motivation is closely related to ability, effort, and action. Ability is the power to act, like the ability to work or write. Individuals can have abilities without exercising them. They are more likely to be motivated to do something if they can do it. Having the ability is not a requirement; it is possible to be motivated even without the corresponding ability. When employees are motivated, they perform their functions effectively, thereby improving productivity. The productivity of an organization is tied and defined by the individual-level actions, relationships, and behaviour expressed or manifested within the organization. Therefore, if the Abia State Ministry of Education is capable of achieving its objectives and recognizing the importance of employee productivity, it should create a system that enables the utilization of motivational advantages within the organization.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. The management of the Abia State Ministry of Education should implement effective forms of motivation strategies, such as merit-based pay structures, capable of inspiring the employees to improve the productivity of the ministry.
2. The management of the ministry should adopt well-thought-out, effective strategies (i.e., structured training programmes, recognition systems, etc.) to address motivational challenges against the employees' productivity in the Abia State Ministry of Education.
3. The management of the ministry should effectively utilize the available motivational indices (i.e., incentive packages, working conditions/fringe benefits, high remuneration, etc.), which can improve the employees' productivity in the ministry.

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