

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

AN APPRAISAL OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG ACCOUNTANTS IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC (CIVIL SERVICE)

*Iyoha, F.O and Adeniji, A.A**

INTRODUCTION

The world business environment is fast changing and posing some serious challenges to both corporate and public sector operators through a phenomenon called *globalisation*. Globalisation is a state of increasing interaction among persons and institutions across the globe. This situation calls for value creation as one of the most potent instruments to preserve the future viability and growth of any institution or organization. The process requires the accountant in collaboration with other relevant professionals to re-define new processes, new working environments, new tools of analysis, new systems and new relationships.

Therefore, in any human organization, the quantity and quality of available personnel influence the level of productivity of the organization. Employees are therefore one of the most essential resources of an organization. They coordinate all the other resources to achieve maximum results. It can therefore be said that without employees, organizations would cease to exist.*

In all of this, the accountant stands out by virtue of his role as a *change agent*. In this capacity, the accountant does not only

* Mrs. Iyoha and Adeniji are lecturers in the Department of Accounting, Covenant University, Ota

manage change, he also initiates changes in any environment in which he finds himself.

In order to recruit and retain the right caliber of accountants, there has to be adequate job satisfaction embodied in compensation packages in the organization. Compensation is a function of human resource management, which involves rewarding employees for performing organizational tasks. Compensation management is one of the most complex functions of human resource managers. It can be viewed as a matter that is closest to the heart of every employee and employer (Banjoko, 2002). It includes all monetary and non-monetary goods or commodities used to reward employees in order to derive job satisfaction.

The concept of job satisfaction has therefore been of great interest to social scientists for a number of reasons. First, is the personal value system which assumes that work which enables satisfaction of one's needs furthers the dignity of the individual. Secondly, there is the desire to improve productivity and organizational functioning by improving the quality of work experiences of employees. The third reason is the evidence that has linked the degree of satisfaction with work to the quality of ones' life outside the work role- especially one's physical and mental health.

Employers/management and employees are in a dependent relationship such that employees have their skills, knowledge,

manpower, experience and information to offer in exchange for rewards from employers that may be financial or non-financial. Financial compensation includes pay that is received in form of wages, salaries and bonuses or commissions as well as vacations, insurance, paid sick leave and scholarship payment. Non-financial compensation affects an employees motivation, productivity and satisfaction (Ivancevich, 2003). This includes recognition, promotion, praise and self-esteem.

Compensation, according to Belcher (1979:15) is “ a double input – output exchange between a worker and an employer”. It determines how well an employee lives in the society. The main objectives of a compensation structure is to attract quality workers from the market, retain and maintain the best employees the organization already has and motivate them towards greater productivity to achieve the organization’s corporate goals. Some workers view compensation as a return in an exchange relationship between them and their employers. Others view it as something they are entitled to as members of the organization. In whatever perspective is looked at, it should be competitive and easy to administer (Kerlinger and Nalbandian, 2003)

Job satisfaction results when there is a fit between job characteristics of an employee and his wants. Job satisfaction is dynamic and has to be maintained in every organization. A worker’s level of job satisfaction therefore is a function of the range of specific satisfaction and dissatisfaction that he experiences with respect to the various dimensions of work.

In the Nigerian public service, whatever happens in the service touches everyone because it is the largest employer of labour. But the question that bothers everyone is whether accountants who work as public servants experience job satisfaction. The impression this question creates is that there has been no successful attempt to establish the way in which meanings and the various satisfactions that work provides combine to determine job satisfaction in the Nigerian public service. This paper attempts to partially fill this gap in our understanding of job satisfaction.

Objectives of Study

The objectives of this paper are to:

- (i) determine the effect on job satisfaction of the level of an accountant within the organizational hierarchy of the ministry.
- (ii) Examine the factors that determine the extent to which individuals are able to obtain job rewards.

The results of this study should prove useful to (a) Chief Executives interested in providing a positive atmosphere for productive and high quality work in the civil service. (b) researchers interested in determining whether those in the Ministries are similar to those in the industry in the attainment of job satisfaction and (c) government in planning to harmonize conditions of service in the public sector.

Literature Review

Compensation is a contractual relationship in the work place involving input of efforts and output of wages to workers (Fajana, 2002). Compensation consists of direct and indirect monetary and non-monetary rewards (Anjorin 1992). Banjoko, (2006 : 2) defines compensation as "the totality of financial and other non-financial rewards that an employee receives in return for his labour or services." In his view, compensation determines an employees economic worth, social status, reflects economic growth and maturity within the organization. The purpose of every compensation package is to attract, retain, maintain and motivate employees. Flippo (1984), identifies the components of a

compensation package as individual pay, incentives and supplementary pay or benefits. In essence, job satisfaction is a function of values, rewards/compensation and degree of control. Values in this context relates to a whole set of non-work related factors unique to particular individuals.

Amaram (2005) posits that compensation is just one of the thirteen (13) components of a reward system. Other components include feedback, security and work/among others. However, compensation must be stressed because not much of the others can be archived without adequate financial and other rewards.

He opined that cost could be managed by using a good reward system. With recent advancement in technology, it has become more cost effective to retain employees rather than recruiting new ones.

Compensation must be seen to be fair and equitable to employees. According to Fisher (2003 : 32), intrinsic and extrinsic elements of job satisfaction need to be equally synchronized to make basic pay or salaries more quantitative achievement.

One of the crucial elements of the compensation package is the basic pay. The basic pay is the amount people receive for work (Amaram, 2005). In time past, salary secrecy was used to minimize comparison of salaries among employees leading to job dissatisfaction. This is however an outdated policy. Organizations now prefer to be open with their salaries. It can be said that a worker that is satisfied with his/her basic salary will prefer to remain on the job. Therefore, fixing prices of jobs should include a philosophy of equal work that enhances or boosts satisfaction.

Besides the basic pay is Performance Incentives payments made to an individual or a group of people based on the amount of time worked or output achieved (Fajana). They are also referred to as variable pay. They tie rewards to an individual's performance- they are performance-based rewards.

According to Armstrong (1995 : 457), the aim of incentives is to "motivate employees to higher levels of performance; to make greater contribution by increasing efforts and output

and producing better results expressed in profit sales, objectives and productivity” Shobowale (2001) sheds light on incentives, saying that employees will be more satisfied if pay increase are reflected by relative performance.

Some authorities have argued whether incentives actually improve job performance. Wright cited in Armstrong (1995 : 223) emphasize that “if employees decide to reduce their employees earnings, it may result in employees restricting their output.” Bernadin and Russel (1998 : 546) have contributed to this assertion, saying, “Incentives only motivate temporarily to alter their behaviour. Once the reward is taken away, employees will revert back to their old patterns of behaviour

It has also been observed that employee benefits and job satisfaction are related. Many definitions of benefits tend to agree that they are additional costs and additional remuneration to the employer and the employee respectively. Benardin and Russel (1998 : 34) define benefits as a form of indirect compensation that is intended to maintain and improve the quality of life of employee. Banjoko (2006 : 103) views them as supplementary or “in kind” payments made available to all employees of the organization in addition to their basic salaries.

Benefits are directed “towards assisting employees to maintain a particular lifestyle and providing for their long term welfare and security.” Bernardin and Russel.(1998 : 314)

This provision and security on the job leads to a sense of satisfaction on the job. Carell et al,(2000) have purported that various benefits offered to employees create high job satisfaction and company commitment and are used to retain employees in their place of work. Hence, the needs of the employees require to be put into consideration, as already satisfied needs do not yield more satisfaction. This is in consonance with the economist’s marginal utility theory.

Relationship between Compensation, Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

When pay of an organization is administered contingent on performance, there is the possibility of achieving increase in

performance and satisfaction. Banjoko (2002) indicates that the relationship between pay and performance is contingent on the fact that increased pay is tied to higher performance. Employees therefore believe that better performance will always lead to more pay and that their efforts will always result in better performance and hence attain job satisfaction. In this context, Job satisfaction therefore refers to an overall affective orientation on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying.

It has become the general belief in recent times that a happy workers is a productive worker. Thus, an unhappy worker cannot perform maximally on the job. A satisfied worker on the other hand will be less resistant to managerial efforts aimed at increasing productivity and performance.

It can be said from the foregoing exposition that performance and job satisfaction are functions of compensation. It is a cycle. The totality of this is that performance invoke rewards, which invariably leads to higher expectations, the result of which is a feeling of satisfaction in employees.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

The public service of the federal republic of Nigeria is the nation's largest employer of labour. Section 2 of the pension Act of 1951 defines the civil service as "the service in civil capacity under the government of the federation or in a college, university or a pensionable employment under local authority." According to Eghe (2003 : 261), it is the "administrative structure employed in civil capacity to fulfill the government policies and programs". He classified the Nigerian Public Service as being under the West Minster model and gave some of its characteristics as;

- Consisting of professionals in different areas coming together to accomplish a single aim
- Security of tenure or performance. Civil servants remain employed even if there are changes in government. Only an extreme cases of misbehaviour may he or she be dismissed from the job
- Hierarchy: that is, a separation between superior and subordinate officers. There is a system of bureaucracy

where promotion and career development is based on seniority and merit.

Mazumba and Mozaheri (2002) argue that public service employment accounts for nearly half of total wage employment in most countries. This has highlighted the importance of proper compensation systems since it has a nationwide effect. Every individual employed in the civil service falls under particular salary grade

Anjorin divides pay in the Nigeria public service into three phases: pay before the public service review commission, Unified grading and salary structure and Partial Unification of pay system. The Nigerian Public service relates pay to the income of the country.

Conceptual framework

The empirical research on job satisfaction has relied on two basic concepts—the maintenance motivation theory of Herzberg and the need hierarchy concept proposed by Maslow. The need hierarchy framework as adapted by Straver, Ivancevich and Lyon, (2002) has been used in this study. Maslow argues that every adult human being has basic needs which he classified as physiological, security, esteem, social and self-actualization. Once a lower need is satisfied, every adult turns to satisfy the next higher need because Maslow perceives the five classifications of need as being in hierarchy. This is why people exhibit decreasing percentages of satisfaction as one higher -order need replaces a lower need in predominance.

Since the 1960's, Maslow theory of motivation has been used in a number of studies of on-the-job need satisfaction of managers. One of such studies was that by Porter. Porter (1961) studied the relationships between such organizational characteristics as job level and total organization size on the one hand, and managerial perception of job satisfaction on the other. He concluded that :

- (i) Lower and middle-level managers are more dissatisfied than top level managers in trying to satisfy esteem, autonomy and self-actualization needs

- (ii) The increasing dissatisfaction at the lower levels of management represents the increasing differences between what is expected and what is obtained
- (iii) The self-actualization, autonomy and esteem areas seem to be the most critical areas of need fulfillment at all levels of management with the possible exception of the very top, chief executive level.

Porter's technique has been used by other researchers to study job satisfaction of union members, government managers and military officers. The general trend of findings in these works has been that the job satisfaction of respondents improves as one moves up the organizational hierarchy. (Strawser, Ivancevich & Lyon, 2002)

Methodology

This study is based on responses to a Modified Porter Need Satisfaction Questionnaire (MPNSQ) administered on two Parastatals of a Federal Ministry at Abuja, Nigeria. One of the Parastatals (herein after called "DEPT A") is Commercially oriented in its operations while the second "DEPT B" is service oriented. Based on this structure, the condition of service in the two departments are different in some respects. The questionnaire used 13 need items based on Maslow's theory of human motivation. The questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 280 accountants (Civil Servants) in the two departments.

A total of 270 respondents reported their perceptions of the need satisfaction opportunities in their respective departments. Of this figure, only 235 were useable.

Results, Analysis and Discussion

Table 1.

Average need Satisfaction Scores of Top and Middle level Accountants

Dept A versus Dept B.

Need categories and items	Top Level			Middle Level		
	Dept A N= 48	Dept B N=59	Level of sig.	Dept A N=60	Dept B N= 68	Level of sig.
I Security Need						
1.(security in job)	.212	.586	.02	.286	.500	
II. Social Need						
1.(opportunity to help others)	.192	.733	.001	.429	.250	
2.(opportunity for friendship)	.576	.387		.321	.667	
III. Esteem Need						
1. (feeling of self-esteem)	.515	.600		.286	.875	.001
2. (prestige inside Dept)	.879	.767		.679	.583	
3. (Prestige outside Dept)	.697	.633		.392	.708	
IV Autonomy Need (Physiological)						
1. (Opportunity for independent thought and action)	.545	.640		.702	.542	
2. (authority in position)	.485	.439		.857	.583	
3. (opportunity to participate in goal setting)	.515	.400		.643	1.534	.001
V. Self-Actualization Need						
1. (opportunity for growth and development)	.303	1.033	.001	.877	.958	
2. (feeling of self fulfillment)	.182	.615	.02	1.000	.810	
3. (feeling of accomplishment)	.242	.800	.001	.892	1.333	
VI. Non-Specific Need	.363	1.433	.001	.892	.792	.03

(source, field survey and authors' calculations)

Only levels of significance below .05 are shown. The t-test statistic was used.

Note: The higher the mean value, the greater the need deficiency.

The above table presents a summary of the average need satisfaction scores of the top and middle level accountants in both departments. Top level accountants are those officers who carryout accounting and related assignment and on Salary Grade Level (SGL) 13 and above and need not have obtained any professional accounting qualification. The middle level accountants are the officers on SGL 6-12 and carryout routine accounting functions. It was observed that

where statistically significant differences were found, accountants in Dept B reported less perceived need satisfaction. (i.e higher mean score) than accountants in Dept A. For top level accountants, each of the three self-actualization need items were significantly different. Top level accountants in DEPT A perceive more opportunities for growth, development, self-fulfillment and accomplishment in their departments than their counterparts in DEPT B. This could perhaps be ascribed to the commercial nature of the services their Ministry performs which has close resemblance to those of the pure private sector operators. There were only three statistically significant differences found when middle level accountants were compared. An examination of each item score shows that for seven of the 13 need items, accountants in DEPT A indicate more satisfaction, i.e lower mean scores with the accountants in DEPT B reporting more satisfaction in the other six items. Tables 2 and 3 classify the 13 need items into five need categories. These tables are used so that comparisons between the theoretical propositions of Maslow and Porter and the findings of the present study can be made.

Table 2. Need satisfaction scores in rank order. Top Level Accountants in DEPT A versus DEPT B.

Rank	DEPT A: N=48		DEPT B: N=59	
	Need category	Score	Need category	Score
1.	Security	.212	Autonomy	.493
2	Self-actualization.	.283	Social	.560
3.	Social	.384	Security	.586
4.	Autonomy	.515	Esteem	.667
5.	Esteem	.697	Self-actualization	.816

(source, field survey, 2006) Note: The aggregate scores for each of the five categories are totaled and averaged to derive the score.

The need category scores in table 2 indicate that the findings for top-level accountants in DEPT A and DEPT B do not square with the need hierarchy model nor with the majority of research findings reported which use industrial managers, union officials and military personnel as subjects. The DEPT A top level accountants indicate that the self-actualization need is the second most satisfied category and the esteem need the least satisfied. The DEPT B top level accountants report that the most satisfied need category is autonomy and the least is self-actualization. In both cases, the Porter's theory is not supported by the findings of this study.

Table 3.

Need Satisfaction Scores in Rank order: Middle Level accountants in DEPT A versus DEPT B.

Rank	DEPT A: N= 60		DEPT B: N= 68	
	Need category	Score	Need category	Score
1.	Security	.286	Social	.458
2.	Social	.370	Security	.500
3.	Esteem	.452	Esteem	.722
4.	Autonomy	.734	Autonomy	.886
5.	Self-actualization	.923	Self-actualization	1.033

(source, field survey, 2006)

Note: The aggregate scores for each of the five categories are totaled and averaged to derive the score.

Table 3 above reports the category scores for the middle level accountants. Rank orders of the category scores are similar to the hierarchy of need satisfaction postulated by Porter.

Implications

The implications of these findings are:

1. The type of occupation and the structure of the organization in which a respondent is employed has a significant influence on the relative satisfaction of the self-actualization need. It would seem the opportunities currently afforded in DEPT A are more promising. This could be the result of the commercial nature of the department.

2. There is a relatively high degree of satisfaction in the security need for top and middle level accountants in DEPT A and the autonomy need for DEPT B top level accountants and the social need for DEPT B middle level accountants should be considered in the development and implementation of motivation programmes.

3. The findings also reveal that for middle level accountants, there is little difference in need satisfaction for accountants in DEPT A or DEPT B. These findings are important for planning recruitment strategies for officers aspiring to enter middle level accountants positions.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study suggest the usefulness of programmes designed specifically to retain and advance the degree of need satisfaction of top-level and low level accountants in the Nigerian civil service. These programmes should be adapted to the size, level of management and the present need deficiencies of the accountant. Without careful behavioural investigation of accountants' need satisfactions, costly and sometimes misdirected motivation programmes may develop and the evil of corruption would then be difficult to fight. Besides, the Ministry would be starved of professionally qualified accountants. Therefore, programmes to periodically monitor the need satisfaction of accountants would seem to offer some promise to those responsible for developing cohesive, productive and psychologically satisfied accountants at all levels of the management hierarchy in the civil service. The result of the study also shows that it might be necessary to harmonize the salary structure of the civil service to remove the present distortions arising from the nature of service rendered by different arms of the same service.

REFERENCES

- Amaram, D.I (2005) "Issues in Compensating the Modern Workforce" *Dias Technology Review*: Vol.2, No 1.
- Anjorin, D. (1992). "Compensation Scheme in the Public Sector." *The Nigerian Accountant* . Vol.XXv, No 1.
- Armstrong, M. (1995). *A Handbook of Personnel Management Practice*.5th edition. England, Clay.
- Baner, M.E and Rodger, R.A (2000). "How are International Oriented HRM Policies Related to High Performance Work Practice? Evidence from Singapore". *International Journal of Human Resources Management*. Vol. 11, No 6.
- Banjoko, S.A (2002). *Human Resource Management: An Expository Approach*. Lagos, Pumark Nig. Ltd
- Banjoko, S.A (2006). *Managing Corporate Reward Systems*. Lagos, Pumark Nig. Ltd.
- Belcher, D.W (1974). *Compensation Management*. Engle Cliffs, prentice - Hall.
- Bernadin,, H.J and Russel, J.E (1998). *Human Resource Management: An Experiential Approach*.2nd edition. Singapore, Irvin Mc Graw Hill.
- Carell, M.R, Elbert, N.F and Hartfield, R.O (200). *Human Resource Management: Strategies for Managing A Diverse and Global workforce*. Florida, Harcourt College
- Eghe, E.V. (2002) *Rudiments of Public Administration*. Kaduna, Joyce Printers.
- Fajana, S. (2002). *Human Resource Management: An Introduction*. 2nd edition. Lagos, Labotin Press.
- Flippo, E.B (1984). *Personnel Management*. New York, Irvin Mc Graw Hill
- Ivancevich, J.M (2003). *Human Resource Management: 9th edition*. New York, Irvin McGraw Hill,
- Kerlinger, D.E and Nalbandian, J.(2003). *Public Personnel Management: Context and Strategies*. New Jersey, Prentice Hall
- Mazumber, D and Mazaheri, A (2002). *Wages and*

Employment in Africa. England, Ashgate Publishing.
Porter, W.L. (1962) "Job Attitudes in Management: Perceived
Deficiencies in Need Fulfillment as a Function of Job level"
Journal of Applied Psychology. Vol. 46, No 3.