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More than just a job: the motivational forces behind public sector employees' performance

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Abstract

The public sector relies on human capital as its most valuable resource, which directly affects the performance level of a government. Hence, employee motivation is crucial to ensure the efficient use of public resources to achieve policy objectives. This study examines the factors influencing public servants' motivation and performance using Self-Determination Theory, which encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Data were collected from 303 public servants and analyzed using SmartPLS software. The findings indicate that compensation, empowerment, and job satisfaction have a positive impact on motivation, whereas self-development and the work environment do not. Motivation is also linked to employee performance. These insights can help policymakers enhance motivation strategies and improve efficiency, retention, and service quality while maintaining low operating costs. This study also contributes to Self-Determination Theory by offering practical implications for researchers and practitioners seeking to understand and enhance motivation in the public sector. Strengthening these factors can improve public service outcomes and overall sector effectiveness.

Keywords:
Compensation empowerment; Job satisfaction; Self-development; Work environment; Motivation; Employees' performance.

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1. Introduction

The public sector is an essential catalyst for any country. It implements government policies and deploys resources that reflect efficient and effective governmental machinery. Basu et al. (2012) demonstrated that unlike the private sector, the public sector's primary objective is to utilize public funds and resources more effectively, efficiently, and economically to achieve the government's objectives for a particular country. Carmeli (2004) and Ciobanu and Androniceanu (2015) commented that human capital is a valuable governmental asset. This is the first point of contact with the public. Therefore, the government must find ways to motivate this mechanism to be productive. However, motivating the public sector remains challenging. In addition to reports of low service quality, bureaucratic delays, and ethical conduct, the public sector force is aging and plateauing. Reports of an unmotivated workforce further affect public sector performance.

Public sector management must find solutions that attract and retain human capital. However, the question of whether the private sector's traditional human resource practices are suitable for the public sector remains. In the private sector, motivation is important to spur employee

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performance. Motivational factors include both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. However, the private sector's existence is driven by profitability, whereas the public sector aims to provide services, promote economic growth, and protect vulnerable groups. The public-sector environment is also challenged by limitations in managerial freedom and bureaucratic procedures. Such complexities hinder the motivation of public service employees and affect their performance. Questions remain as to whether the factors that have a motivational effect on performance in the private sector would yield similar results in the public sector. Using a combination of intrinsic (empowerment, job satisfaction, and self-development) and extrinsic (compensation and work environment) factors, this study aimed to further investigate the factors influencing performance in a public sector environment.

Such findings will help devise a suitable compensation system to enhance the efficiency of the government. Additionally, this would ensure the delivery of efficient and effective services to the public. With this, a road map for policymakers and public service management could be used for retention programs and succession planning (Güngör, 2011). Ultimately, such a strategy would increase public sector employees' commitment as well as effective and efficient government machinery.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions: RQ1: To identify the factors of compensation, self-development, working environment, empowerment, and job satisfaction that led to employees' performance (RQ2). To examine the moderating effect of motivation among compensation factors, self-development, working environment, empowerment, and job satisfaction on employee performance. This study is comprised of five sections. Section one introduces the topic. This is followed by a literature review and a review of the rationale in section two. The research methodology is presented in Section Three. Section four highlights the research findings and answers to the objectives. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations are presented in Section Five.

2. Theoretical and research hypotheses development

Performance can be defined as accomplishing predetermined objectives and goals within specified time, cost, and service level constraints (Iqbal et al., 2013). Employees' performance is indicated by their ability to execute assigned tasks effectively and efficiently (Tinofirei, 2011) within the stipulated timeframe (Nanzushi, 2015; Obiageli, Uzochukwu, & Ngozi, 2015). Re'em (2011) suggests using motivational theories to reflect employee performance. This is further supported by Leisink and Steijn (2009), who state that the relationship between public sector motivation (PSM) and performance requires further investigation (Agranoff, 2008). However, Andrews (2016) highlighted recent research indicating that public service motivation (PSM) and self-determination theory have gained momentum. This was attributed to the concept of New Public Management (NPM), an approach in public administration that focuses on efficiency and effectiveness, making it a key performance measure for modern bureaucracies (Klenk & Reiter, 2019).

Motivation is one of the foremost determinants of employee performance. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a complete framework for understanding human motivation and personality (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Anderman (2020) noted that SDT focuses on variables that encompass intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as psychological well-being. Ryan and Deci (2000, 2024) affirmed the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action, ultimately leading to the basic distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as a field of other motivation types. Rockmann and Ballinger (2017) argued that the elements of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are separated. Both motivations had exclusive antecedents and outcomes, and neither was on the opposite end of a continuum. In any organization, employees can experience both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation simultaneously while performing the same work, as financial rewards are often accompanied by interesting tasks. This would, in turn, impacts employees' performance and well-being (Deci et al., 2017; Manganelli et al., 2018). Anderman (2020) recently expanded SDT research to the field of psychological outcomes that lead to socioemotional learning (SEL). This new approach examines physiological learning that correlates with self-government-supportive contexts (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). However, Taylor et al. (2014) note that a debate persists between intrinsic motivation and achievement. Their research indicated that the relationship flows from motivation to achievement, with intrinsic motivation emerging as the most crucial component of success. In contrast, Garon-Carrier et al. (2014) presented inconsistent findings, suggesting that prior achievement is linked to later intrinsic motivation over time. The hypothesized relationships examined in this study are shown in Figure 1.

2.1 Compensation and rewards

Compensation consists of cash and non-cash employee payments in exchange for the services provided (Parvin & Karbin, 2011). It can be financial or non-financial in nature (Johari et al., 2012). According to Hemakumara (2020), promotions and bonuses are tangible and extrinsic rewards, whereas feelings of inspiration and satisfaction are psychological and intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards provide monetary fulfilment to employees, whereas intrinsic rewards help acknowledge employees' contributions (Ajmal et al., 2015).

Compensation and rewards policies in an organization can affect employee performance (Subramaniam et al., 2011). According to Arokiasamy et al. (2013), compensation, including pay, promotion, and fringe benefits, is essential for improving employees’ job satisfaction. Rahman et al. (2015) confirmed that salary and promotion opportunities are fundamental for enhancing employees' job contentment and improving their performance. Furthermore, Masilamani et al. (2013) affirmed that employees' salaries that do not correspond to their jobs can result in a high level of stress, and when the stress level reaches a point of weariness, their performance deteriorates (Nixon, 1979). Based on the above, the following hypothesis was developed:
H1: There is a significant relationship between compensation and rewards and motivation.

2.2 Empowerment

Empowerment refers to the distribution of information, knowledge, and power among employees. Organizations implement both behavioral and physiological empowerment, which enhances employees' job satisfaction (Pelit et al., 2011). Empowerment can be affected by autonomy, job constraints, education, and seniority in an organization (Kassim & Fong, 2012). Employee empowerment, mediated by performance appraisal, can also affect employee performance (Rajalingam et al., 2015). Studies have revealed that organizations that encourage employee empowerment can improve their social, environmental, economic performance (Yusoff et al., 2016) as well and organizational performance (Raquib et al., 2009). Similarly, implementing empowerment through delegation of authority and management participation allows organizations to boost employee performance (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Hence, empowerment is essential in providing employees with the confidence to perform effectively (Beh, 2014). Thus, based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis was formed:
H2: There is a significant relationship between empowerment and motivation.

2.3 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as a person's orientation towards a work role. It can be affected by physiological, psychological, or environmental factors faced by employees in organizations. These factors may be internal, such as career advancement opportunities, the job itself, role overload, role ambiguity (Senggaravellu, 2018), or level of organizational support, or external, such as work climate (Aziri, 2011; Bustamam et al., 2014). According to Ismail (2012), performance appraisal is the leading factor influencing job satisfaction, followed by salary and incentives, professional growth, promotion prospects, co-workers' relationships, communication, and job nature.

Organizations with flexible working hours, sound career prospects, meaningful job functions, and sufficient support from superiors can improve employee satisfaction (Mohd et al., 2014). Hashim (2015) states that employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs tend to leave the organization unless compensation is improved. Dissatisfied employees in the public sector often choose to remain with their organizations because of the lack of career opportunities and job security in other sectors, which inevitably leads to low productivity (Daud, 2014). Thus, the relevant hypothesis is as follows:
H3: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and motivation.

2.4 Self-development

Self-development involves individuals' personal growth, which can be achieved by acquiring new knowledge, developing their strengths, and enhancing self-confidence levels (Bhattacharya et al., 2013). It is self-directed intellectual advancement, emotional enhancement, and economic expansion to improve one's life (Engler et al., 2024).. Self-improvement themes may differ, but they cannot be separated from the disciplines of training, coaching, and mentoring (Aboalshamat et al., 2014).

Organizations provide training opportunities for employees to gain knowledge and skills and adjust their behaviors in line with organizational directions (Dabale et al., 2014; Yunus et al., 2022). The improved competencies gained through training and development enable employees to perform better, which in turn increases organizational productivity (Hameed & Hameed, 2012). Studies in the public sector indicate that general and technical training can enhance employees' professionalism and job performance among civil servants (Muda & Rafiki, 2014). This, in turn, develops employee competencies and skills that can boost their performance in government institutions (Abas-mastura, 2013). Ting et al. (2012) reported that offering practical training can improve the job performance of government schoolteachers. The relevant hypothesis is as follows:
H4: There is a significant relationship between self-development and motivation.

2.5 Working environment

Working environment refers to the setting and atmosphere surrounding the workplace. It consists of physical components that connect the workplace environment with users and behavioral components that connect users within the same environment (Sinnappan, 2017). The workplace environment can substantially affect employees' motivation (Sutanto et al., 2018) and performance (Naharuddin & Sadegi, 2013). Organizations with a conducive working environment enable their employees to feel comfortable in places where they spend most of their time, thus increasing their productivity and efficiency (Khuong & Yen, 2016).

Inadequate working space affects an organization's corporate image and leads to ineffective working habits among employees (Chandrasekar, 2011). These studies concur with Herzberg's research that excellent and conducive working conditions are crucial for maintaining job satisfaction. Organizations with a safe and positive working environment can motivate employees to perform better and enhance their organizational performance (Sahiri, 2015). The working environment hypothesis is as follows:
H5: There is a significant relationship between the working environment and motivation

2.6 Motivation

Motivation reflects employees' energy, commitment, and creativity (Shahzadi et al., 2014). The energetic force comes from within and inspires an individual to fulfil a need (Manzoor, 2011). Organizations that meet employees' needs can motivate them to perform (Kaur, 2013). For instance, providing on-the-job training can increase the motivation and job satisfaction of both skilled and unskilled employees, resulting in better job performance (Mat et al., 2017). This enables employees with firm beliefs to motivate others to improve their performance (Salleh, 2011).

According to Che Embi et al. (2016), employees intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to achieve optimal outcomes. Intrinsic motivation focuses on the inherent fulfilment of self rather than expecting the reward or encouragement to complete a task (Good, Hughes, Kirca & McGrath, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2020, 2024). At the same time, for extrinsic motivation, the individual acts with the expectation of rewards that are linked to performance and compensation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2008; Deci et al., 2017).

Organizations use monetary returns or incentives to motivate employees (Patil & Syam, 2018; Viswanathan et al., 2018). This finding is supported by Bommaraju and Hohenberg (2018) and Li et al. (2020), who established a positive relationship between employees' performance and extrinsic motivation. Aarabi et al. (2013) argued that intrinsic motivational factors are more important than extrinsic factors in inspiring employees to enhance job performance. Thus, based on this empirical evidence, we formulate the following hypothesis:
H6: There is a significant relationship between motivation and employees' performance.

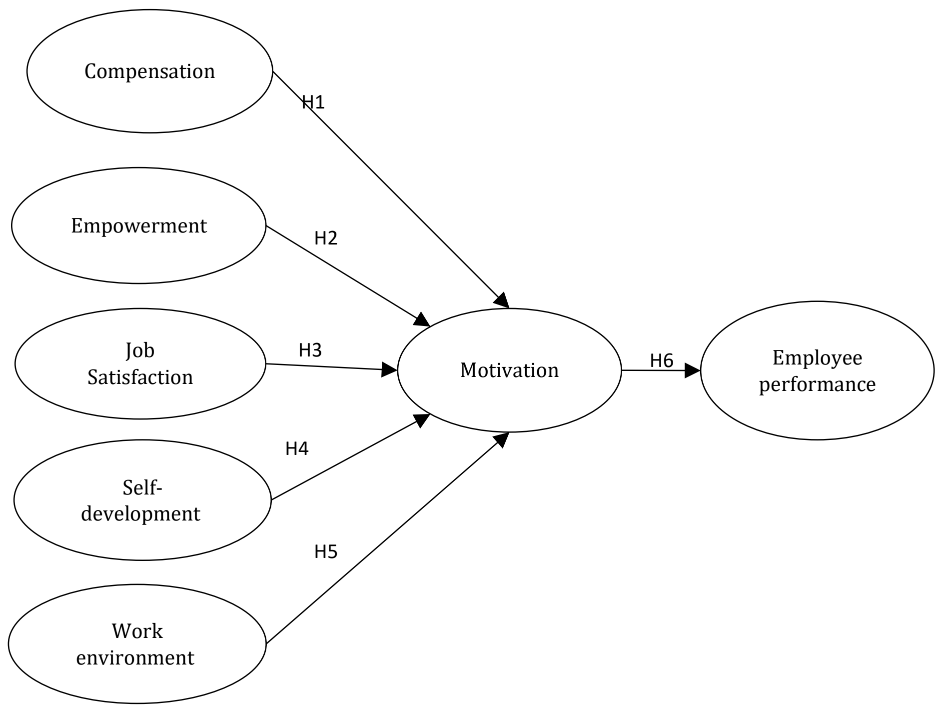

Figure 1: Theoretical framework

3. Methods

3.1 Research instrument

This study employed a self-administered questionnaire as the primary data-collection instrument. The questionnaire included a cover page to introduce the participants to the study and ensure informed consent. The survey questionnaire elicited demographic data and responses to the seven tested variables. The working environment was gauged using six statements about office furniture, workplace layout, lighting, ventilation, safe work environment, workplace culture, and work satisfaction that are sufficient for the employee to perform well and complete the assigned tasks. Job satisfaction includes elements of flexible working hours, enthusiasm towards work, satisfaction with daily workload, enjoyment towards work, and satisfaction with the allocation of work. Self-development opportunities include six statements related to a clear view of work roles through training programs and dedication towards performance development, such encouragement towards making criticisms, increasing productivity and production, skills and knowledge improvements, and provisions for career advancement.

Compensation and rewards are measured based on six statements related to employees' satisfaction with salary, fringe benefits, and the performance evaluation system. Empowerment is measured based on the given autonomy, encouragement towards doing the right thing, minimal supervision, control over the job, and satisfaction with empowerment. Motivation was gauged using six statements related to enthusiasm, pride, happiness, and motivation towards work. Employee performance is a self-reported statement related to employees' adaptability, work skills, competency, confidence, willingness to accept change, proactive attitudes, and overall satisfaction with work performance. All the questions were mandatory to ensure a complete dataset. Each variable was assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

A pilot test was conducted with 20 civil servants in Putrajaya to assess the clarity and usability of the questionnaire. Respondents completed the required pilot test, with some providing additional feedback such as correcting duplicated sentences. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with the items having a coefficient alpha exceeding 0.70. Hence, all the items were considered reliable, ensuring internal consistency among the measured constructs.

3.2 Population and sample

The target population comprised public servants working in Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur across various service grades, including top management (JUSA and above), middle management and professionals (Grades 41–56), non-executives level 1 (Grades 29–40), and non-executives level 2 (Grade 28 and below). Putrajaya was chosen as it hosts 21 ministries, while Kuala Lumpur remains the location of three ministries. This study aimed to capture diverse perspectives across hierarchical levels.

The sample was selected using convenience sampling. The invitation to participate in the study was sent to potential respondents via email and instant messaging applications. In total, 303 staff members responded to the survey. According to Hair et al. (2017), a ten-to-one ratio is acceptable for testing the number of independent variables, thus, meeting the required criteria. The sample size was determined based on prior research guidelines, considering confidence levels, margin of error, and population size. Table 1 shows respondents' profiles.

Table 1: Respondents' demographic profile

		Percentage
Sex	Male	44.6
	Female	55.4
Age	21 – 30 years old	8.3
	31 – 40 years old	68.3
	41 – 50 years old	19.1
	51 – 60 years old	4.3
Ethnic group	Malay	61.1
	Chinese	27.7
	Indian	4.0
	Others	7.2
Education	PT3/PMR/SPM/O Level	0.3
	STPM/A-Level/Diploma	6.6
	Bachelor's degree	53.8
	Professional Certificates (Exp: ACCA)	1.3
	Master's degree	35.0
	Doctor of Philosophy	3.0
Monthly salary	RM2,001 – RM4,000	18.8
	RM4,001 – RM6,000	45.9
	RM6,001 – RM8,000	19.8
	RM8,001 – RM10,000	7.2
	Above RM10,000	7.6
Employment grade	Top executive	3.0
	41 – 56	86.1
	29 – 40	7.6
	28 and below	3.3
Years in service	Less than 5 years	15.8
	6 – 10 years	41.6
	11 – 20 years	35
	21 – 30 years	6.3
	More than 30 years	1.3

4. Results

This study employs Partial Least Squares (PLS) (Wold, 1985; Chin, 1998; Chin et al., 2003) to analyze the data. This method adopted a distribution-free approach. A bootstrapping procedure (Chin, 2003) using 5,000 subsamples to assess the fit of the structural model. A two-step process is employed to test the validity and reliability of the measurement model. Internal consistency reliability was the first criterion assessed. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability metrics were used to evaluate the reliability of the constructs. For composite reliabilities exceeding 0.7 and an average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5, Cronbach's alpha should surpass the 0.7 threshold, as recommended by Nunnally and Berstein (1994).

Subsequently, the proposed structural model was evaluated for hypothesis testing and validation. Convergent and discriminant validity (Chin, 1998) were employed to validate the measurement models and provide evidence of the model's goodness of fit. To assess convergent validity, factor loadings, composite reliability, and AVE were used (Hair et al., 2017; Gholami et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2015). The factor loadings for all items surpassed the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017).

4.1 Measurement model

The measurement model demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability (Table 2). Composite reliability (CR) coefficients range from 0.920 to 0.965, exceeding the recommended loading value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Only two items, Job Satisfaction 1 and 3, were excluded from the model because their loadings were below the recommended value (<0.5). Convergent validity is also confirmed. The constructs loaded highly on their respective factors and less on other factors, thereby establishing discriminant validity.

Table 2: Reliability analysis, convergent and discriminant validity

Model construct	Measurement item	Loading	CR	AVE
Compensation	Compen1	0.806	0.921	0.661
	Compen2	0.866		
	Compen3	0.745		
	Compen4	0.750		
	Compen5	0.813		
	Compen6	0.887		
Employee performance	E perform1	0.720	0.929	0.623
	E perform2	0.707		
	E perform3	0.866		
	E perform4	0.815		
	E perform5	0.800		
	E perform6	0.779		
	E perform7	0.784		
	E perform8	0.829		
Empowerment	Empower1	0.889	0.946	0.746
	Empower2	0.898		
	Empower3	0.731		
	Empower4	0.815		
	Empower5	0.915		
	Empower6	0.919		
Job satisfaction	Job Satis 2	0.798	0.920	0.742
	Job Satis 4	0.904		
	Job Satis 5	0.863		
	Job Satis 6	0.875		
Motivation	Motivation1	0.877	0.965	0.822
	Motivation2	0.924		
	Motivation3	0.931		
	Motivation4	0.902		
	Motivation5	0.887		
	Motivation6	0.916		
Self development	Self Dev 1	0.879	0.958	0.793
	Self Dev 2	0.880		
	Self Dev 4	0.904		
	Self Dev 5	0.913		
	Self dev 3	0.862		
	Self dev 6	0.904		
Working Environment	Work envin1	0.873	0.935	0.705
	Work envin 2	0.853		
	Work envin 3	0.852		
	Work envin 4	0.835		
	Work envin 5	0.737		
	Work envin 6	0.881		

4.2 Crossed loadings

Table 3 presents the cross-loading results for all the constructs and indicators. The findings indicate that all measurement items had higher loadings on their respective latent variables than on the other variables. Additionally, the results confirmed that each block's loading was higher than that of any other block in duplicate rows and columns. Consequently, the cross-loading results validated the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Therefore, this study confirmed the discriminant validity of all constructs.

Table 3: Loadings and crossed loadings

	Compen	E perform	Empower	Job Satis	Motivation	Self-develop	Work Environ
Compen1	**0.806**	0.241	0.371	0.297	0.317	0.324	0.271
Compen2	**0.866**	0.278	0.447	0.417	0.432	0.441	0.341
Compen3	**0.745**	0.269	0.371	0.342	0.397	0.348	0.393
Compen4	**0.750**	0.351	0.460	0.486	0.480	0.525	0.357
Compen5	**0.813**	0.247	0.387	0.310	0.382	0.351	0.324
Compen6	**0.887**	0.275	0.467	0.369	0.410	0.433	0.360
E perform1	0.252	**0.720**	0.304	0.422	0.419	0.284	0.356
E perform2	0.151	**0.707**	0.326	0.319	0.351	0.243	0.198
E perform3	0.196	**0.866**	0.405	0.416	0.482	0.301	0.252
E perform4	0.263	**0.815**	0.347	0.326	0.410	0.237	0.201
E perform5	0.248	**0.800**	0.385	0.356	0.435	0.299	0.211
E perform6	0.359	**0.779**	0.519	0.494	0.583	0.486	0.439
E perform7	0.298	**0.784**	0.391	0.457	0.523	0.358	0.252
E perform8	0.346	**0.829**	0.543	0.576	0.639	0.472	0.415
Empower1	0.474	0.469	**0.889**	0.570	0.578	0.570	0.502
Empower2	0.472	0.494	**0.898**	0.528	0.558	0.574	0.433
Empower3	0.330	0.363	**0.731**	0.349	0.358	0.356	0.247
Empower4	0.449	0.383	**0.815**	0.425	0.425	0.504	0.342
Empower5	0.428	0.504	**0.915**	0.579	0.569	0.552	0.458
Empower6	0.515	0.486	**0.919**	0.634	0.623	0.651	0.506
Job Satis 2	0.344	0.487	0.481	**0.798**	0.628	0.508	0.512
Job Satis 4	0.387	0.514	0.532	**0.904**	0.763	0.634	0.572
Job Satis 5	0.473	0.398	0.546	**0.863**	0.677	0.698	0.554
Job Satis 6	0.402	0.494	0.538	**0.875**	0.719	0.614	0.540
Motivation1	0.456	0.525	0.566	0.744	**0.877**	0.593	0.512
Motivation2	0.477	0.544	0.554	0.752	**0.924**	0.609	0.496
Motivation3	0.445	0.572	0.557	0.772	**0.931**	0.599	0.503
Motivation4	0.449	0.591	0.573	0.709	**0.902**	0.563	0.488
Motivation5	0.413	0.583	0.474	0.684	**0.887**	0.503	0.415
Motivation6	0.502	0.599	0.609	0.749	**0.916**	0.647	0.550
Self Dev 1	0.453	0.425	0.547	0.655	0.582	**0.879**	0.504
Self Dev 2	0.420	0.449	0.607	0.675	0.589	**0.880**	0.541
Self Dev 4	0.475	0.334	0.501	0.584	0.563	**0.904**	0.520
Self Dev 5	0.473	0.420	0.590	0.668	0.628	**0.913**	0.512
Self dev 3	0.393	0.329	0.500	0.586	0.516	**0.862**	0.515
Self dev 6	0.492	0.401	0.612	0.637	0.569	**0.904**	0.577
Work envin1	0.318	0.267	0.372	0.485	0.411	0.481	**0.873**
Work envin2	0.401	0.326	0.414	0.497	0.421	0.492	**0.853**
Work envin3	0.318	0.329	0.376	0.467	0.400	0.420	**0.852**
Work envin4	0.348	0.330	0.415	0.503	0.413	0.439	**0.835**
Work envin5	0.306	0.241	0.371	0.493	0.415	0.456	**0.737**
Work envin6	0.420	0.403	0.502	0.677	0.618	0.635	**0.881**

The Fornell-Larcker criterion offers a more conservative method for assessing discriminant validity. Table 4 demonstrates that each square root of AVE (shown diagonally and in bold) is greater than the inter-construct correlations. This means that the AVE square root value must exceed all correlations between any two constructs, indicating that the variance explained by the respective construct is greater than the measurement error variance (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). In this context, the discriminant validity of the measurement instrument was confirmed, with a loading value above 0.5, which is considered significant (Hair et al., 2013).

Table 4: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Compen	E perform	Empower	Job Satis	Motivation	Self-develop	Work Environ
Compen	0.813						
E performance	0.346	0.789					
Empower	0.520	0.526	0.864				
Job Satis	0.466	0.550	0.609	0.861			
Motivation	0.505	0.628	0.614	0.812	0.906		
Self-develop	0.507	0.443	0.630	0.714	0.647	0.890	
Work Environ	0.424	0.383	0.494	0.633	0.546	0.593	0.840

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). As noted by Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT represents the correlation between two constructs. A threshold value of 0.90 is applied, where values exceeding 0.90 suggest a lack of discriminant validity. Additionally, the confidence intervals for HTMT should not encompass a value of 1. Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	Compen	E perform	Empower	Job Satis	Motivation	Self-develop	Work Environ
Compen							
E perform	0.364						
Empower	0.558	0.549					
Job Satis	0.513	0.594	0.657				
Motivation	0.536	0.651	0.636	0.881			
Self-develop	0.538	0.454	0.658	0.778	0.677		
Work Environ	0.458	0.395	0.513	0.689	0.567	0.623	

4.3 Reliability analysis

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability metrics were used to evaluate the reliability of the constructs further. According to Nunnally and Berstein (1994), Cronbach's alpha should exceed a 0.7 threshold. Composite reliability ranged from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability. As shown in Table 2, the composite reliability values ranged from 0.920 to 0.965, with the AVE values exceeding 0.5. Based on the data in Tables 2 and 6, it can be concluded that the constructs exhibit sufficient internal consistency reliability. Measures that did not meet these requirements (job satisfaction items 1 and 3) were excluded from the analysis.

Table 6: Results of the reliability test

Construct	Measurement item	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Compen	Compen1,2,3,4,5,6,	0.897	6(6)
E perform	E perform1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	0.914	8(8)
Empower	Empower1,2,3,4,5,6	0.931	6(6)
Job Satis	Job Satis 2,4,5,6	0.883	6(4)
Motivation	Motivation1,2,3,4,5,6	0.956	6(6)
Self-develop	Self Dev 1,2,3, 4,5,6,	0.948	6(6)
Work Environ	Work envin1,2,3,4,5,6	0.916	6(6)

4.4 Structural model

Hypotheses H1 to H5 tested the motivational constructs of the model. Hypothesis H1's direct effect between compensation and motivation is significant (β=0.112, p<0.00). H1 was supported. Thus, compensation influences motivation. Hypothesis 2 had a direct effect on empowerment and motivation (β=0.134, p<0.00). Similarly, H3 had a significant effect on job satisfaction and motivation (β=0.648, p<0.00).

These results support H1, H2, and H3. Additionally, the evaluation of the structural model was explained using the *R*-squared and path coefficients. The model's predictability was established with dependent variables ranging from 0.392 to 0.687. The *R2* for motivation (MOTIV) was 0.687, in which approximately 69% of the variation was explained by the constructs of compensation (Comp) (β=0.112, p<0.00), empowerment (EMP) (β=0.134, p<0.00), and job satisfaction (JS) (β=0.648, p<0.00). However, H4 and H5 were not supported. Hence, self-development (*β=0.047, p>0.00) and work environment (β=0.005, p<0.00) have no significant* relationship to motivation. Factor loadings also indicated that job satisfaction (0.648) played an important role in motivation, followed by empowerment (0.134) and compensation (0.112). Thus, Hypothesis 6 is also supported. The contribution of *R2* to employee performance (EP) is 0.392, indicating that 39% of the variation in employee performance can be attributed to motivation (β=0.628, p<0.00).

Table 7: Path coefficients and hypothesis testing

	Hypothesis	Coefficient	*t*- value	*p*-value	Supported
H1	Compensation -> Motivation	0.112	2.317	0.021	Yes
H2	Empowerment -> Motivation	0.134	2.375	0.018	Yes
H3	Job Satisfaction -> Motivation	0.648	9.965	0.000	Yes
H4	Self-development -> Motivation	0.047	0.779	0.436	No
H5	Work Environment -> Motivation	-0.005	0.094	0.925	No
H6	Motivation -> Employee performance	0.628	14.330	0.000	Yes
		R-Square	Adj. *R*-Square		
	Employee performance	0.394	0.392		
	Motivation	0.692	0.687		

5. Discussion

The research showed a relationship between compensation, empowerment, and job satisfaction in terms of motivation, whereas self-development and work environment were not significantly related to motivation. In addition, the results show a significant relationship between motivation and employee performance. This suggests that motivational factors are influenced by the environment in which public-sector employees are exposed. Of all the intrinsic factors, only empowerment and job satisfaction are significantly related to motivation. Similarly, extrinsic factors, such as compensation, are important, while the work environment is not significantly related to motivation.

Empirical studies by Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2013, 2015) also highlight that employee empowerment is positively related to motivation and innovation. This has led to high performance and enhanced positive work-related attitudes in the public sector. The main elements of empowerment include self-esteem, power allocation, and the authority to motivate employees and increase job performance (Amani & Shabahang, 2017).

Job satisfaction describes the contentment of team members, top management, and the overall organization. It motivates employees and companies to perform daily jobs (Fu & Deshpande, 2014; Khan et al., 2012). Battaglio et al. (2022) and Yao et al. (2013) commented that the underlying connection between job satisfaction and employees' psychological needs promotes the efficiency and effectiveness of public institution managers. Compensation influences motivation, and ultimately, organizational performance. This is similar to the results of a previous study (Subramaniam et al.,2011). An organization uses compensation to motivate staff to be committed, which eventually leads to employee and organizational performance.

However, the work environment does not significantly relate to an organization’s motivation. This finding contradicts Lankeshwara's (2016) research, which showed that the physical working environment affects employee performance. Public servants enjoy a conducive working environment; therefore, they do not view it as a significant factor that could motivate them in their daily activities (Hussain et al., 2015).

Self-development opportunities had an insignificant effect on job performance. Again, this finding is consistent with the research by Lam et al. (2011) but not with those of Ahmed et al. (2016) and Nassazi (2013). Public sector employees have fixed salaries and benefits. Although performance evaluation exercises were initiated, there was no clear relationship between rewards and self-development efforts. In addition, there is a lack of performance-based incentives to promote self-improvement and personal growth.

Ultimately, the results reveal a significant correlation between employee motivation and performance. This is supported by Güngör (2011), who found that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations impact employee performance. This directly affects the quality of work and contributes towards performance (Ahsan et al., 2009). Intrinsic motivation, when adequate, functions like internal driving, engaging, and encouraging individuals to perform at their best. Conversely, extrinsic motivation, such as financial incentives, material benefits, positive evaluations, and recognition, can enhance employee attendance, productivity, and work quality (Che Embi et al., 2016). The findings revealed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are important. Neglecting any of these factors leads to issues such as high absenteeism, which impacts job performance (Nayan, 2012). For example, depending solely on compensation and incentive systems, performance evaluations may provide short-term gains at the expense of self-development, job performance, and work engagement.

6. Conclusion

This study enriches the existing theory and enhances the body of knowledge on the factors linking motivation and employee performance, particularly in the government sector. The self-determination theory can enhance knowledge and insight into the interdependence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which influences worker motivation, performance, and well-being. (Battaglio et al., 2022; Andrews, 2016). It further highlights employees' psychological and motivational needs, making it an important area for future undertakings (Gagné et al., 2022; Rigby & Ryan, 2018)

Overall, the results of this study are beneficial to the public sector and the government's ruling parties. The government plays the role of an employer, who ultimately benefits from increased performance. Thus, these findings are insightful for managing human talent. Further surveys could extend the research into different domains of human resource management. This compensation and rewards system can be further enhanced to motivate employees.

In addition, a major proportion of the government budget involves the cost of managing its human resources. Thus, the factors that motivate and increase government employees' performance are of great interest. With these findings, policymakers can take a more proactive stance in managing service delivery and the efficient use of its delivery to affected citizens. Finally, this study contributes to the knowledge of government servants' performance and positively to the literature on the public sector. The results have shown the enlightenment and value of a New Public Management (NPM), which is an approach in public administration focusing on efficiency, effectiveness, and performance measurement in modern bureaucracies (Klenk & Reiter, 2019).

The population of focus is the Federal Government Administrative Center of a democratic nation. Although the sample collected represents diverse demographic profiles, grades, schemes, years of experience, and ministries, further investigation of different governing systems may yield different results. Future research can also be extended to state and local authority levels, making this study more comprehensive for policymaking. Such targeted profiling results in more accurate data for analysis.

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