

Assessing Lecturers' Perceived Motivational Strategies in Nigerian Private Universities During Covid-19 Lockdown: Evidence from Al-Hikmah University

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Abstract

The novel covid-19 pandemic led to lockdown measures, part of which disrupted academic activities in Nigerian universities. It is on this premise that this study examined lecturers' perceived motivational strategies in Nigerian private universities during covid-19 lockdown with evidence from Al-Hikmah University. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The research design adopted was a descriptive type of survey. The population consists of all academic staff in Al-Hikmah University. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 108 respondents across the seven faculties in the university. An instrument titled "Lecturers' Perceived Motivational Strategies Questionnaire (LPMSQ)" was adapted to elicit relevant data. The data collected were analysed using a descriptive method. Findings from the study showed the motivational strategies that were used to motivate lecturers during the lockdown. The strategies include promotion, salary and working condition. The findings also revealed challenges that were associated with the motivational strategies in the university. The challenges are paucity of fund and lack of support from external bodies. Based on the findings, the study recommended that salaries and allowances of lecturers should be sustained. Also, lecturers should be promoted as at when it is due. This is with a view to reducing the phenomenon of brain drain in the university.

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation is seen as the propelling force in the behaviour of individuals. It makes people to undertake certain activities, persist in such activities and bring them to a conclusive end. In terms of job satisfaction, which is an effective reaction of feeling by an employee on how happy or satisfied he is with his job, supervision, co-workers' salary, and his current and future career progress and potentials (Boruvka & Perry, 2020; Zambat, Ciftci & Duran, 2020), motivation plays a crucial role. According to Mullins (2007), extrinsic motivation is related with meaningful rewards such as salary/incentives, promotion and the work environment

while intrinsic motivation concerns the psychological rewards such as the opportunity available to the employee to use his/her ability and a sense of challenge and achievement in the workplace. Moreover, extrinsic motivation is external, while intrinsic motivation is internal or self-motivation. Motivational strategies are generally seen as a process through which workers are made to voluntarily give their best towards the achievement of organizational goals in way that they would have performed even if not motivated. Motivational strategies are processes, hence require a rational laid down procedure in their application in order to be effective. What motivates a particular worker may not motivate other workers. A manager therefore needs to design a special and appropriate way of motivating the

workers in the organization. This is what is referred to as motivational strategy. Higher salaries and allowances as well as improved conditions of services to raise the morale of lecturers are instances of motivational strategies that are capable of enhancing dedication and commitment to duty. Poor conditions of service have always been the major complaints of lecturers in Nigeria (Daudu & Mohammed, 2012; Raza, Qazi & Yousufi, 2020; Tella & Ibinaiye, 2020).

Folunsho, Adewale and Abodunde (2014) opined that academic staff is essential because good and quality tertiary education is an important avenue towards nurturing the teachers needed for primary education; the experienced doctors, nurses and community workers needed for better welfare and health facilities, the accountants, economists and journalists required for better private business and better governance. It is noted that motivation is what makes people to help certain activities, persist in such activities and move them to a conclusive end.

Akinfolarin and Ehintola (2014) believed that the lack of adequate working conditions and motivation mechanism has, no doubt, resulted in lecturers' low morale which perpetually affects students' academic performance negatively. Munyengabe, Haiyan, Yiyi and Jifei (2017) highlighted the following as factors that can aid lecturers' motivation: promotion, incentives, adequate salary, conducive lecture room, codes of conduct and sheer love of career. According to Yamoah and Ocansey (2013), motivation creates a central component in going through the process of human learning. If an organization does not provide the ability to motivate its employees, the knowledge within the organization would be practically optimized. Thus, motivation refers to how much a person tries to work hard and well to the arousal, direction and subsistence of effort in work environments.

Coronavirus disease, also known as Covid-19, is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The virus was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The disease has since spread globally, leading to what is called a pandemic. In early 2020, the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic crippled all facets of economy across the globe. The pandemic disrupts educational arrangements worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions (UNESCO, 2020). According to reports, about 800 million learners were affected due to school closures in response to the virus. The closure impacts not only students, teachers, and families but have far-reaching societal consequences. School closures due

to the pandemic have shed light on countless social and economic issues (UNESCO, 2020).

As a result of the foregoing, the Federal Government of Nigeria decided to close educational institutions in an attempt to shrink the spread of the virus and announced a total lockdown, resulting in lack of activities in majority of Nigerian private universities. Some of the few private universities that were operating were badly affected due to unpaid salary, retrenchment and lack of promotion among others (Yusuf, Rasaq, Mustapha, Oladimeji & Nwogu, 2021). Despite the lockdown, Al-Hikmah University was among the few universities that engaged their lecturers in online teaching so as to ensure uninterrupted academic activities. In view of the above, this study assesses lecturers' perceived motivational strategies in Nigerian private universities during Covid-19 lockdown with reference to Al-Hikmah University.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Research to date indicates that works on motivation were carried out using one or two factors of motivational strategies (Alrawahi, Sellgren, Altouby, Alwahaibi & Brommels, 2020; Olajide, 2010; Olofinkua, 2020; Tella & Ibinaiye, 2020; Uyanne, Badamas & Balogun, 2020). For instance, the study conducted by Tella and Ibinaiye (2020) correlates staff motivation and job performance of staff in Nigerian University using salary as a factor that can predict effectiveness. He concluded that prompt payment of staff salary motivates them to do more for the university with reference to staff in the library department. Uyanne, Badamas and Balogun (2020) assessed the relationship between motivation and teachers' effectiveness in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. It was established that factors such as good salary payment and regular training are key determinants of effectiveness in the school settings. Therefore, staff motivation is an important factor for organizational development. The study by Olofinkua (2020) on academic staff's job satisfaction and motivation in Catholic Universities in Nigeria used promotion as one of the strategies for motivating employee concluded that promotion is needed to boost staff morale in universities.

Israfilov, Borisova, Kartashova, Davydova, Biserova and Gryaznukhin (2020) focused on promotion as predictor of employee effectiveness and found that working condition encouraged staff to be efficient and effective in discharge of their duties. Thus, motivational strategies stimulate staff to take action that will accomplish desired goals. It is the wilful desire to direct one's behaviour towards the goal. The study of Göktepe,

Yalçın, Türkmen, Dirican and Aydın (2020) examined the relationship between nurses' work-related variables and job motivation. The study found that motivation factors such as promotion and working condition are needed for the growth employee in organization. Therefore, motivation strategies can be seen as complex forces or mechanisms that start and maintain voluntary activity directed towards the achievement of employee personal goals. Olajide (2010) established that employees' promotion is a motivating factor used by managers to motivate their workers. It is observed that regular payment of lecturers' salary will help them meet their needs and be stimulated to work harder. Ulabor, Chima and Hakeem (2014) investigated the form and scope of employee motivation method in Nigerian universities using survey method for data collection. They found that employees are satisfied when they earn better wages and salaries, which leads them to satisfaction and fulfilment. Obalum and Fiberesima (2012) found that Nigerian employees who place so much value on employer who uses incentives to motivate employees tend to achieve success in the organization. Handy (2017) concluded that comfortable workplace would motivate lecturers to perform their jobs very well. He mentioned that work environment may facilitate lecturers' job performance to be provision of adequate equipment such as public address system, computer, resource materials for effective teaching. Also, adequate working environment provides comfort to lecturers and boost their morale. On the other hand, bad working environment brings frustration and regret and it will affect negatively the job performance of lecturers.

Abejirinde (2009) examined the relationship between motivation and work performance in Nigerian universities. The outcome of the study revealed that promotion is an important factor that can be used to increase employees' performance in the organization. Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) assessed the relationship between motivation, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in universities and established that promotion and allowances motivate workers to carry out their duties as scheduled. The study concluded that when lecturers are promoted as and when it is due, they are highly encouraged to do their work with passion. In fact, promotion of lecturers to senior ranks may attract higher responsibilities and greatly motivate them.

Boruvka and Perry (2020) assessed motivational practices in organizations and found that practices such as incentive, promotion and facilities are key determinants of employee effectiveness. Therefore, the reasons why staff are ineffective include poor salary, lack of promotion opportunities, unsatisfactory leader

behaviour, work load, student discipline problems, uncooperative colleagues and unconducive working environment among others. Raza, Qazi and Yousufi (2020) focused on motivational factors (promotion and salary) as determinants of success in an organization. The study concluded that motivating staff in the organization enhanced staff recognition and positive feedback. Also, it increased job security, professional development programs, empowerment and authority. Therefore, inadequate motivation of employee could lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness. The work of Munyengabe, Haiyan, Yiyi and Jifei (2017) established some major factors affecting staff motivation in universities. They concluded that paucity of fund, unfavourable working condition and inconsistent policies are often responsible for it. In support of the foregoing, Daudu and Mohammed (2012) established that poor salary, inadequate incentives and promotion lead to staff dissatisfaction among teaching and non-teaching personnel.

Furthermore, this study is anchored on two factor theory of motivation. The theory was propounded by American psychologist, Frederick Herzberg, who is considered as one of the great original scholars in the field of management and motivational theory. He determined the effect of attitude on motivation, by asking workers to describe the times when they felt really good, and negatively about their occupations (Thant & Chang, 2021; Yousaf, 2020). Herzberg found that workers who felt good about their work gave diverse answers from the workers who felt otherwise. The theory postulates that there are two different sets of factors that encourage job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction in organization. They are hygiene factors (also known as extrinsic factors) and motivation factors (also known as intrinsic motivators). Hygiene factors have the tendency to represent more tangible, basic needs (i.e., the kinds of needs included in the existence class of needs in the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs). Extrinsic motivators include job security, status, salary, and fringe benefits. Motivation factors tend to epitomize less tangible, more emotional needs (i.e., the kinds of needs identified in the relatedness and growth categories of needs in the advanced levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs). Intrinsic motivators include recognition, relationships, challenging work, and growth potential (Yousaf, 2020). The factor that distinguishes two-factor theory from the others is the role of workers' *anticipations*. According to proponents of the theory, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators have an inverse relationship. This means that intrinsic motivators tend to surge motivation when they are present, while extrinsic motivators tend to decrease motivation when they are not present or absent.

This can be linked to employees' expectations. Extrinsic motivators (e.g., salary and promotion) are expected, therefore they will not increase motivation when they are in place, but will cause unhappiness when they are absent. Additionally, intrinsic motivators (e.g., growth potential and challenging work), on the other hand, can be a basis for extra motivation when they are available (Nazari, Sayadi, Pourkiani & Kamali, 2020; Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020).

Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is lecturers' perception on motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University?
2. What are the challenges associated with motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University?
3. What are the measures for improving motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University?

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey type. The population of the study consists of all academic staff in Al-Hikmah University. Specifically, it consists of 142 academic staff based on the data obtained from the Registry Unit of Al-Hikmah University. Based on the population of 142 academic staff in Al-Hikmah University, the sample size of 108 was determined via the use of Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table. More so, two sampling techniques were used to determine the respondents. Firstly, stratified sampling technique was used to group faculties in the university (agriculture, education, health sciences, humanities and social sciences, law, management sciences and natural and applied sciences). Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select 108 respondents from the faculties. In this study, instruments adapted from the study conducted by Mustapha (2021) was used to elicit relevant data. The instrument is tagged "Lecturers' Perceived Motivational Strategies Questionnaire (LPMSQ)". The instrument was subjected to both face and content validity in order to ensure that items contained in the instrument measure the objectives of the study. To achieve the foregoing, the instrument was given to lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University for their inputs to ascertain both face and content of the adapted instrument. Furthermore, the reliability of the instrument was achieved to ensure that the instrument is reliable and can be used for data collection. To achieve this, a pilot study was conducted with 50 lecturers that were selected from Kwara State University, Malete. The data collected were

analyzed which yielded the Cronbach alpha of 0.96, 0.84 and 0.81 for motivational strategies, factors and measures respectively.

Before the questionnaire was administered, the consent of respondents was sought where the purpose of the study was communicated with them. After they had been properly informed, questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants. Specifically, cross-sectional method of data collection was employed because the questionnaires administered were collected from the respondents immediately. The data collected were subjected to screening analysis through the use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software. Descriptive analysis was performed based on the research questions of the study.

4.0 ANALYSIS

4.1 Response Rate

In the research conducted, 120 questionnaires were administered to lecturers in Al-Hikmah University. Out of 120 questionnaires administered, 91 questionnaires were returned, while 29 were not returned. 9 invalid questionnaires and the usable questionnaires were used for the analysis. Therefore, 82% response rate was considered appropriate for the analysis of this study, which is recommended by Sekaran and Bougies' (2016). It is suggested in the study that a response rate of 30% of the above is normal for a research survey. The table below displays the response rate of the questionnaires.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response	Rate
Questionnaires distribution	120
Questionnaires returned	91
Questionnaires not returned	29
Invalid questionnaires	9
Usable questionnaires	82
Response rate	76%

Table 2: Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	65	79.3
Female	17	20.7
Total	82	100

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital Status		
Single	12	14.6
Married	69	84.1
Divorced	1	1.2
Total	82	100
Lecturer I	47	57.3
Lecturer II	19	23.2
Assistant Lecturer	14	17.1
Graduate Assistant	2	2.4
Total	82	100
Highest Qualification(HQ)		
BSc/Bed	2	2.4
MSc/MSc	30	36.6
PhD	50	61.0
Total	82	100
Length of Service		
Less than 5 years	56	68.3
6-11 years	23	28.0
11 years and Above	3	3.6
Total	82	100

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents that participated in the study. The profile includes gender (male 65 (79.3%) and female 17 (20.7%). Marital status (single 12 (14.6%), (married 69 (84.1%), divorced 1 (1.2%), widow 0 (0.0)). The highest qualification (B. Ed. or B. Sc. 2 (2.4), M. Ed. or M. Sc. 30 (36.6), Ph. D. 50 (61.0)). Length of service (less than 5years 56 (68.3), 6-10 years 23 (28.0), 11 years and above 3 (3.6).

Research Question 1: What is lecturers' perception on motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University?

Table 3: Promotion Strategy

S/N	Items	S	A	S	D	Remark
1	Promotion is based on my performance and achievement.	61	15	6	0	Agreed
2	There is no prejudice in promotion exercise.	67	11	2	2	Agreed
3	Advancement to the position of increased responsibilities accompanies my promotion.	40	40	2	0	Agreed
4	I am promoted as and when due	53	22	0	7	Agreed
5	Promotion is often	59	21	2	0	Agreed

	followed by increment in salary and allowance.					
6	Requirements for promotional exercise are stressful and cumbersome.	6	76	0	0	Agreed

Results presented in Table 3 show that 61 respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 'promotion is based on my performance and achievement'. 67 respondents strongly agreed with 'there is no prejudice in promotion exercise'. Likewise, 40 respondents strongly agreed and 40 agreed to the statement, 'advancement to the position of increased responsibilities accompanies my promotion'. 53 respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 'I am promoted as at when due'. Furthermore, 59 respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 'promotions are often followed by increment in salary and allowance'. Finally, 76 respondents agreed to the last statement in Table 3, 'requirements for promotional exercise are stressful and cumbersome'.

Table 4: Salary Strategy

S/N	Items	SA	A	S	D	Remark
1	Poor salary results in ineffectiveness of staff.	50	15	6	11	Agreed
2	My regular salary enhances psychological needs.	60	18	2	2	Agreed
3	Higher salaries and allowances raise my morale.	45	35	2	0	Agreed
4	Academic staff compensation package adequately meet their needs.	53	20	2	7	Agreed
5	The salary paid in this university commensurate with lecturers' qualifications.	59	21	2	0	Agreed

Results presented in Table 4 show that 50 respondents strongly agreed with the statement, ‘poor salary results in ineffectiveness of staff’. 60 respondents strongly agreed with ‘my regular salary enhances psychological needs’. Likewise, 45 respondents strongly agreed that ‘higher salaries and allowances raised my morale’. 53 respondents strongly agreed to the statement that ‘academic staff compensation package adequately meet their needs’. Furthermore, 59 respondents strongly agreed to the statement that ‘salary paid in this university commensurate with lecturers’ qualifications’.

Table 5: Working Condition Strategy

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Remark
1	The university library lacks internet facilities.	60	15	6	1	Agreed
2	I teach under most unsafe and unhealthy conditions.	64	11	5	2	Agreed
3	The university environment provides support for academic staff.	40	20	20	2	Agreed
4	The university administrators set the tone for a save environment.	53	20	2	7	Agreed
5	Sharing of offices with other academic staff limits lecturer productivity.	50	21	2	9	Agreed

Results presented in Table 5 show 60 respondents strongly agreed with the statement that ‘university library lacks internet facilities’. 64 respondents strongly agreed with ‘I teach under most unsafe and unhealthy conditions’. Likewise, 40 respondents strongly agreed to the statement, ‘university environment provides support for academic staff’. 53 respondents strongly agreed to the statement ‘the university administrators set the tone for a save environment’. Furthermore, 50 respondents strongly agreed that ‘sharing of offices with other academic staff limits lecturer productivity’.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges associated with motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University?

Table 6: Challenges associated with motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Remark
1	Inadequate fund.	70	8	4	0	Agreed
2	Lack of external support.	60	19	3	0	Agreed
3	Inadequate facilities.	30	48	2	2	Agreed
4	Lack of promotion.	30	50	2	0	Agreed

Results presented in Table 6 display that 70 respondents strongly agreed with the statement of ‘inadequate fund’, 60 respondents strongly agreed to the statement of ‘lack of external support’. 48 respondents agreed to the statement ‘inadequate facilities’. Lastly, 50 respondents agreed to the statement of ‘lack of promotions’.

Research Question 3: What are the measures for improving motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University?

Table 7: Lecturers perceived measures for improving motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Remark
1	Adequate fund.	61	11	10	0	Agreed
2	Support from external bodies.	58	22	2	0	Agreed
3	Constant promotion.	60	19	3	0	Agreed
4	Constant payment of salary.	67	11	2	2	Agreed
5	Adequate provision of facilities	42	40	0	0	Agreed

Results presented in Table 7 above show that 61 of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement of ‘adequate fund’. 58 respondents also strongly disagreed with the statement of ‘support from external bodies’ like (e.g. Tertiary Education Trust Fund, Petroleum Trust Fund). Likewise, 63 respondents strongly agreed that constant promotion given. 67 respondents agreed to the statement constant payment of

salary. Lastly, 42 strongly agreed to the statement adequate provision of facilities.

5.0 DISCUSSION

In line with the first research question of the study, which is based on lecturers' perceived motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University during Covid-19 lockdown, it was found that three strategies were used to motivate lecturers during the lockdown in Al-Hikmah University. The strategies include promotion, salary, and good working condition. The finding is synonymous with the study of Olofinkua (2020) who found that factors such as good salary, condition of service, prompt and regular promotion, recognition and feedback, increased job security, professional development programs, empowerment and authority, good working environment influenced lecturers' effectiveness in higher institutions. Specifically, salary and promotion were found to motivate lecturers to be committed to their work. The finding of Olajide (2010) established that employees' promotion is a motivating factor used by managers to motivate their workers. It was also found that regular payment of lecturers' salary stimulates them to work harder. Furthermore, Ulabor, Chima and Hakeem (2014) concluded that workers in any organization need to be motivated via salary and promotion for them to be more alive to their responsibilities. Obalum and Fiberesima (2012) found that the employees place value on employer who grants medical allowances as incentives. Specifically, employees who have access to medical treatment will be more committed to their job.

The second research question was based on the challenges that are associated with the motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University during the Covid-19 lockdown. The outcome of the study indicates that the challenges associated with the motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University include inadequate fund, lack of external support, and inadequate facilities. Specifically, inadequate fund was highly perceived as the major challenge confronting motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University. The finding is in consonance with the work of Munyengabe et.al, (2017) who concluded that there are factors associated with low job satisfaction of employees in higher institutions. Boruvka and Perry (2020) established several factors affecting motivation in institutions. The factors include low self-esteem, paucity of fund, and inadequate facilities. The finding is also in tandem with the work of Raza, Qazi and Yousufi (2020) who established reasons for low job satisfaction in teaching profession. The reasons include low salary, lack of promotion opportunities, unsatisfactory leader behaviour, and variety of work load, student discipline

problems, uncooperative colleagues and uncondusive working environment. In the same vein, Daudu and Mohammed (2012) concluded that poor salary, inadequate incentives and promotion lead to staff dissatisfaction among teaching and non-teaching personnel.

The third research question was based on the measures that can be used to improve motivational strategies in Al-Hikmah University. Findings of the study show that several measures were suggested, which include adequate fund, support from external bodies, constant promotion, regular payment of salaries, and adequate provision of facilities. In fact, the findings indicate that payment of salary was highly perceived as the most effective measure that can be used to motivate lecturers. The finding is in sync with the work of Ulabor, Chima and Hakeem (2014) who found that determinants of staff motivation in organization are promotion, training and re-training, conference, workshop, and seminar. The finding is also in consonance with the two factor theory of motivation. The theory postulates that extrinsic motivators such as fringe benefits, job security, status and promotion have the tendency to stimulate employees' effectiveness (Thant & Chang, 2021; Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020; Yousaf, 2020).

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the importance of motivational strategies in private universities during Covid-19 pandemic cannot be underestimated, hence the need for constant motivation for lecturers to be efficient and effective. To motivate employees, organizations should be concerned with the nature of the work itself and the prospects it presents to workers for gaining status, assuming responsibility, and accomplishing self-realization. To ensure satisfied and productive lecturers, the following recommendations were made:

- (1) Management of Al-Hikmah University should ensure that salaries and allowances of lecturers are sustained since they are found to motivate the lecturers towards greater job performance.
- (2) Al-Hikmah University should promote qualified lecturers as at when due in order to motivate them in their job performance. This will reduce brain drain in the university and ensure staff retention.
- (3) More offices should be erected to accommodate lecturers; this will enable them to perform better.
- (4) Attention should be given to staff development such as workshop, training and workshop. This

will motivate them to be more efficient and effective.

- (5) Staff working condition should be improved for the overall growth and development of Al-Hikmah University.

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