

The Impact of Employee Motivation on Job Performance in Libyan Companies

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أثر تحفيز الموظفين على الأداء الوظيفي في الشركات الليبية

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المخلص

استكشفت هذه الورقة البحثية العلاقة بين مكونات دافعية الموظفين الأربعة (الدافعية الذاتية، والدافعية الخارجية، والدافعية الداخلية، وانعدام الدافعية) وأداء العمل في المؤسسات الليبية. جمعت البيانات من عينة مكونة من 451 عاملاً من مختلف المجالات في طرابلس وما حولها، وجرى تحليلها باستخدام مقياس الدافعية الخارجية والداخلية للعمل، بالإضافة إلى أداة لقياس الأداء.

كانت العلاقة الإجمالية بين الدافعية والأداء الوظيفي ذات دلالة إحصائية ($r = 0.56$ ، $p < 0.001$). وقد أظهر الأفراد ذوو الدافعية أداءً وظيفياً أفضل بشكل ملحوظ من الأفراد غير ذوي الدافعية ($t = 7.69$ ، $p < 0.001$). لوحظ اتجاه مماثل للدافعية الخارجية ($t = 2.86$ ، $p = 0.0045$)، وإن كان بدرجة أقل. أظهر الأفراد ذوو الدافعية الداخلية مستويات أداء مماثلة لأولئك الذين لديهم دافعية ذاتية ($t = 7.05$ ، $p < 0.001$) حيث لم يكن هناك فرق معنوي في درجات الأداء بين العاملين المتحمسين ($t = -0.46$ ، $p = 0.6451$). وقد ثبتت موثوقية كلا المقياسين المستخدمين (معامل ألفا لكرونباخ = 0.79 لمقياس الدافعية؛ معامل ألفا لكرونباخ = 0.81 لأداء العمل).

كما تُظهر النتائج أنه على الرغم من مساهمة قوى الدافعية الداخلية والخارجية، إلا أن الدوافع المتجذرة في الذات أكثر أهمية لأداء العمل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحفيز الموظفين؛ الأداء الوظيفي؛ الدافعية الذاتية؛ نظرية تقرير المصير؛ السلوك التنظيمي؛ ليبيا.

Abstract

This paper explored the relationship between the four components of employee motivation (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, internalized motivation, and amotivation) and job performance in Libyan organizations. Data from a sample of 451 workers across various fields in and around Tripoli were collected and examined using the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale and a performance measurement instrument. A statistically significant overall relationship between motivation and job performance was $r = 0.56$ ($p < 0.001$). Motivated individuals demonstrated significantly better job performance than unmotivated individuals ($t = 7.69$, $p < 0.001$). A similar trend was observed for extrinsic motivation ($t = 2.86$, $p = 0.0045$), though to a lesser extent. Individuals with internalized motivation exhibited performance levels comparable to those who had intrinsic motivation ($t = 7.05$, $p < 0.001$). There was no significant difference in the performance scores among motivated workers ($t = -0.46$, $p = 0.6451$). Both the reliability of the measures employed proved adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$ for the motivation scale; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$ for job performance). The results show that although internal and external motivational forces contribute, internally grounded motivations are more important for job performance.

Keywords: Employee motivation; job performance; intrinsic motivation; Self-Determination Theory; organizational behavior; Libya.

1. Introduction

No issue within organizational studies has received as much attention as the effect of employee motivation on job performance. Most practitioners and scholars consider it common sense that motivated employees will perform better than unmotivated ones. However, despite the surface-level agreement, the situation becomes more complex upon delving into various theoretical approaches to motivation. The hierarchy of needs framework considers motivation as a gradual realization of needs. Herzberg's two-factor theory distinguishes between hygiene factors and true motivators. Expectancy theory views motivation as a process of decision-making about the relationships among effort, performance, and rewards. Self-Determination Theory distinguishes between intrinsic motivation, different types of extrinsic motivation with regard to levels of internalization, and amotivation.

Generally, empirical studies find that motivation positively affects job performance. Nevertheless, individual motivations are not always viewed positively in separate analyses. Intrinsic motivation has usually shown a strong correlation with performance. Extrinsic motivation shows a positive but lesser connection compared to intrinsic motivation. Studies investigating multiple dimensions of motivation at once remain rather uncommon. Another notable fact is that most previous research has focused on Western organizational environments.

Indeed, Libya is a useful case in point for testing such correlations, given the political and economic instability and the reconstitution of business culture it has faced over the last decade. Managerial approaches incorporate a mixture of cultural heritage, post-revolutionary features, and global tendencies (Shafter et al., 2016). Workers' attitudes toward motivational aspects might differ significantly from those of workers in Western or Northern American firms; however, there are very few academic works dedicated to investigating the motivational correlates of work performance.

The purpose of this paper is to try to address this research gap by identifying whether any correlation between these motivational variables exists among themselves and their relationship with the job performance indicators of companies operating in Libya.

2. Literature Review

The role of employee motivation in the assessment of their performance and organization effectiveness has always been well-established (Shafter et al., 2016). According to empirical studies conducted by Shahzadi et al. (2014), it is important to note that motivated employees are likely to perform better as far as productivity, commitment, and effectiveness in work is concerned; hence motivation becomes a primary source of organizational effectiveness. Likewise, Hemakumara (2020) in the literature review on motivation states that intrinsic or extrinsic motivation of the employees helps in improving performance and engagement.

Indeed, several studies have been conducted that reveal the connection between motivation and job performance in various organizational contexts. For example, Rahman et al. (2019) noticed that motivation and job satisfaction increase performance because motivated individuals manage to achieve organizational goals. On the other hand, Ghaffari et al. (2017) found that motivation practices influenced job performance by fostering employees' dedication and effort. Furthermore, recent research by Dahlan et al. (2024), Grzesiak et al. (2024), and Vikash and Narmadha (2025) has revealed the fact that motivation leads to better performance among employees and increases organizational effectiveness.

Motivation plays a crucial role in organizational behavior in Libya. As Sherif et al. (2014) have mentioned, motivation is a very important concept for future business professionals from Libya as it has a direct effect on their attitudes and aspirations. Motivation and job satisfaction were positively linked to performance among Libyan school employees from

Malaysia by Ismail et al. (2019). Moreover, Salem (2015) showed that job satisfaction served as a mediator of the relationship between work environment and productivity of employees in Libyan petrochemical organizations. Finally, Altajouri and Ibrahim (2023) found that training increased job performance through motivation and job satisfaction in Libyan banks.

Motivational antecedents have further been discussed in recent literature. For example, as stated by Joseph-Armstrong (2023), leadership plays a major part in enhancing employee motivation and performance. Likewise, it is pointed out by Ahmed (2026) that organizational performance improves as a result of high-performance work systems among the employees. In addition, job satisfaction and motivation were discussed as essential elements of organizational performance by Monga and Soni (2023) and Varma (2017). It should be mentioned that Ismail and Hilif (2025) repeatedly pointed to the significance of employee motivation for performance.

While numerous research studies indicate that employee motivation significantly contributes to job performance, there is not enough literature that discusses this relationship in companies working in Libya due to the diversity of industries involved. Previously carried out researches conducted in Libya are concentrated mainly on the spheres of education, banks, and petrochemicals (Shafter, M. E. A., & Ruth, C., 2020). This means that there is a lack of literature on the effect of different kinds of motivation on job performance within a certain business context. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of employee motivation on job performance in companies working in Libya by analysing motivation levels, job performance, and relationships between them, as well as the effect of motivation types on job performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Sampling

A cross-sectional survey approach that is qualitative in nature was employed. The respondents consisted of employees from firms that work in Libya, mainly in Tripoli and its industrial areas. 451 responses from questionnaires were gathered using convenience sampling techniques. They involved employees from big, medium-sized, and small firms in different fields like manufacturing, services, and trading. Age differences, gender, education level, duration of work with the firm, and levels within the organizational hierarchy among others were achieved.

3.2 Participants

Figure 1 presents the research model guiding the study.

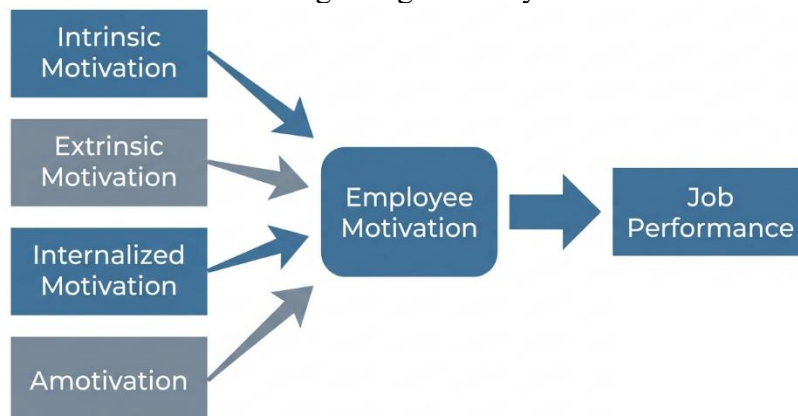


Figure 1. Research Model

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 451)

Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Female	42.22%
	Male	57.78%
Age	25 years or less	8.43%
	26–35 years	65.63%
	36–45 years	21.95%
	46–55 years	2.00%
Marital status	Married	54.99%
	Single	43.46%
	Other	1.55%
Education	High school	3.99%
	Associate degree	23.95%
	Bachelor's degree	42.35%
	Master's degree	26.39%
	Doctorate	3.33%
Job tenure	0–1 year	4.88%
	2–5 years	49.45%
	6–8 years	31.71%
	9–14 years	11.75%
	15 years or more	2.22%
Monthly income (LYD)	500 LYD or less	1.33%
	501–1,000 LYD	13.08%
	1,001 LYD or more	85.59%

The sample was slightly skewed toward men (57.78% male). A majority of the respondents were in the 26–35 age group (65.63%). Respondents who were married (54.99%) outnumbered the unmarried by a small margin (43.46%). The level of education was high among the respondents, with most holding a bachelor's degree (42.35%) and a master's degree (26.39%). Regarding job tenure, most respondents had between 2 and 5 years (49.45%) and 6 and 8 years (31.71%). Regarding income levels, almost all respondents reported incomes over 1,001 Libyan Dinars. Figure 2 demonstrates the age distribution, while Figure 3 represents the education distribution.

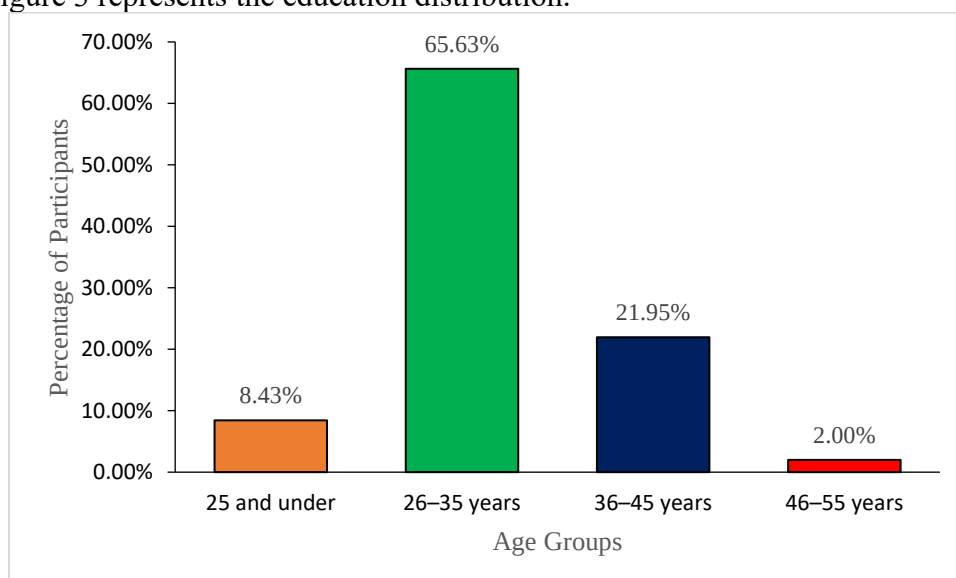


Figure 2. Age Distribution of Participants

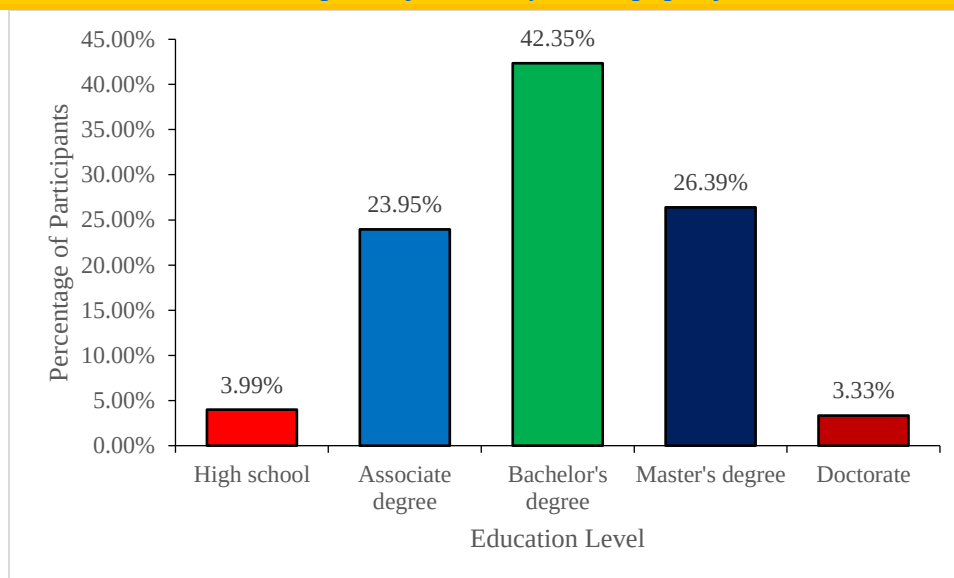


Figure 3. Education Level Distribution

3.3 Instruments

Motivation was measured using the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) questionnaire developed by Tremblay et al. (2009) and translated into Arabic using the back-translation procedure. It consisted of 18 questions that reflected SDT's motivational continuum across six scales: intrinsic motivation (three questions), integrated motivation (three questions), identified regulation (three questions), introjected regulation (three questions), external regulation (three questions), and amotivation (three questions). Respondents were asked to rate statements on a five-point scale: from "does not correspond at all" to "corresponds exactly." The translation version showed Cronbach's alpha values of 0.53 to 0.89.

Employee performance was assessed using a 14-item scale developed by Ergün (2008) and translated into Arabic. Performance measures were conducted based on job quantity, job quality, goal accomplishment, external communication, information dissemination, technical skill, time management, teamwork, and assessment process fairness. Answers were collected using the 5-point Likert scale.

3.4 Procedure and Analysis

The data-gathering process used paper-and-pencil surveys administered to employees of Libyan firms through workplace connections. Participants were assured of confidentiality. Survey results were entered into SPSS for analysis.

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess normality; non-normality was observed in all variables except one. Descriptive analysis provided information about the distribution of variables. The correlation analysis determined correlations between demographic variables and motivation/performance dimensions. An independent-samples t-test revealed differences in performance scores between high- and low-motivation groups for each motivational dimension.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability

Internal consistency for the motivation scale was 0.79, while that for the performance scale was 0.81. Both values exceed the conventional 0.70 threshold for acceptable reliability.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Results

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Motivation Scale	0.79
Performance Scale	0.81

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Mean intrinsic motivation (3.64) was higher than mean extrinsic motivation (3.40), implying that participants were more interested in intrinsically based satisfaction. The performance evaluation factors had almost identical mean scores, with fairness (3.51) slightly higher than team coordination (3.49) and technical knowledge (3.40). The median of 4.0 across all measures suggests moderately positive perceptions among respondents.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Intrinsic motivation	3.64	0.78	1.0	4.0	5.0
Extrinsic motivation	3.40	0.96	1.0	4.0	5.0
Performance fairness	3.51	0.74	1.0	4.0	5.0
Performance team coordination	3.49	0.78	1.0	4.0	5.0
Performance technical knowledge	3.40	0.80	1.0	4.0	5.0

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Some trends include the fact that older individuals were more likely to have high intrinsic motivation ($r = 0.35$) and a more positive performance perception ($r = 0.28$). Those who are married showed extrinsic motivation ($r = 0.30$) and low intrinsic motivation ($r = -0.15$), whereas those who are single did not. There is a positive relationship between education and performance perception ($r = 0.40$). Performance perception showed a high correlation with job tenure ($r = 0.50$). Income was positively related to both intrinsic ($r = 0.45$) and extrinsic motivation ($r = 0.20$).

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Motivation-job performance relation was significant with an r value of 0.56 ($p < 0.001$) and thus supported H1.

A comparison between high- and low-intrinsic-motivation employees revealed a significant difference in performance ($t = 7.69$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H2.

A comparison of high- and low-extrinsic-motivation employees also showed significant performance differences ($t = 2.86$, $p = 0.0045$), thereby supporting H3.

The difference in performance levels due to internalized motivation was also quite significant ($t = 7.05$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H4.

However, there were no significant performance differences for amotivated employees ($t = -0.46$, $p = 0.6451$) and hence H5 was not supported.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Test Statistic	p-value	Result
H1: Motivation-performance correlation	$r = 0.56$	< 0.001	Supported
H2: High vs. low intrinsic motivation	$t = 7.69$	< 0.001	Supported
H3: High vs. low extrinsic motivation	$t = 2.86$	0.0045	Supported
H4: High vs. low internalized motivation	$t = 7.05$	< 0.001	Supported
H5: Amotivation vs. higher motivation	$t = -0.46$	0.6451	Not supported

As illustrated in Figure 4 below, there is a strong positive correlation between employee motivation and performance ($r = .56$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the more motivated an employee is, the higher his or her performance will be. Regression analysis indicates that motivation accounts for 31% of the performance variability ($R^2 = 0.31$), underscoring the importance of this factor while showing that other variables, such as skills and

organizational support, also play a role in performance. These results confirm Hypothesis 1 and align with theories about motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vroom, 1964).

This is exemplified by Figure 4 below, where both intrinsic motivation ($t = 7.69$, $p < 0.001$) and internalized motivation ($t = 7.05$, $p < 0.001$) have much greater influence on performance than extrinsic motivation ($t = 2.86$, $p = 0.0045$). This phenomenon supports Self-Determination Theory, which proposes that internally motivated people perform better than those motivated externally (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

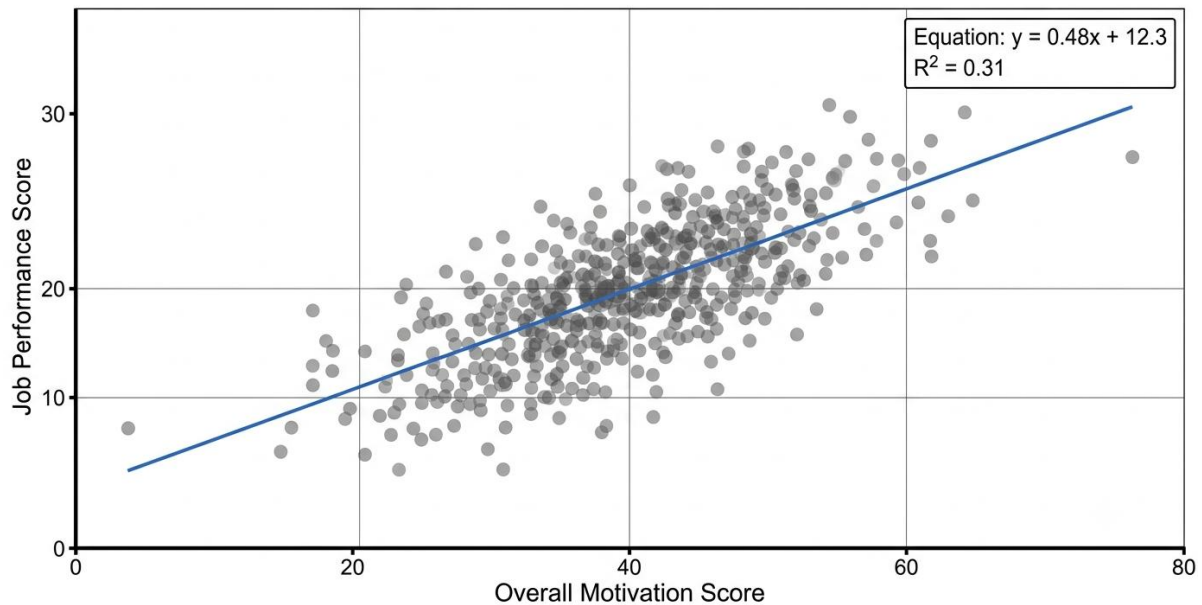


Figure 4: Correlation Scatterplot (Motivation vs. Performance)

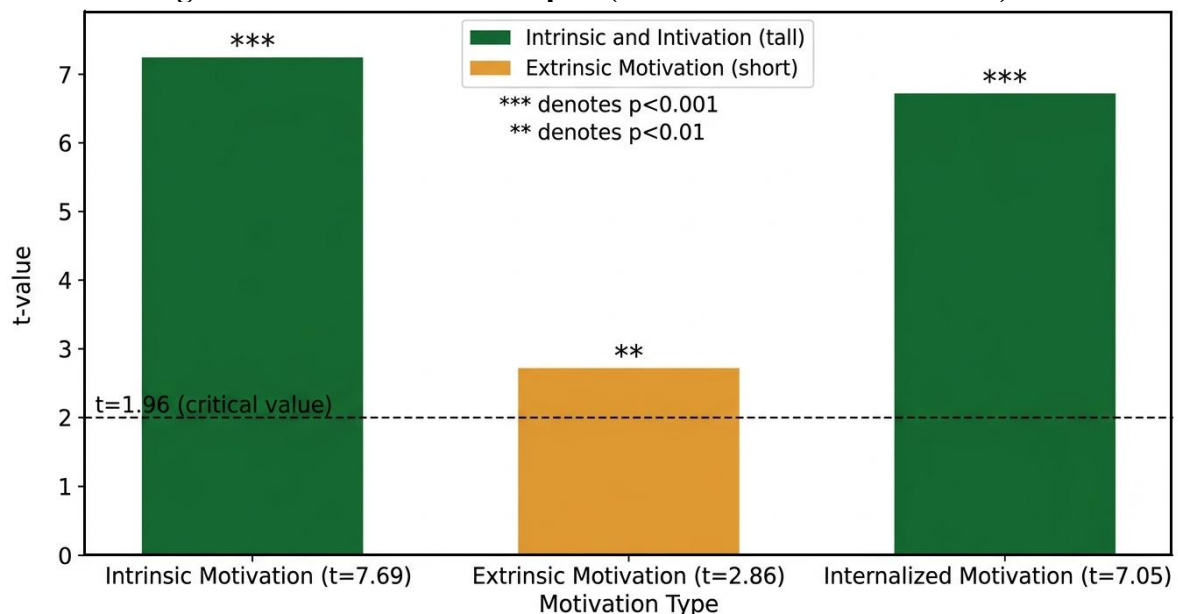


Figure 5: Comparison of t-test Results (Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic vs. Internalized)

5. Discussion

Clearly, the findings have been quite informative. For one thing, motivation does make a difference in performance, as the 0.56 general relationship is well within the values reported in prior meta-analytical studies. However, motivations do not matter equally; indeed, the relationship between intrinsic motivation and performance was the strongest. Specifically, individuals who found their work intrinsically rewarding, liked learning something new, and relished the challenge of difficult tasks outperformed others on almost

any conceivable measure. This is consistent with SDT's assertion that intrinsic motivation provides the most sustainable form of behavioral regulation. From a practical perspective, Libyan firms may derive greater benefit from job design than from rewards.

Internal motivation, which means workers are motivated to attain job-related objectives because these objectives have become personally rewarding and incorporated into one's sense of self, yielded results just as significant as intrinsic motivation. The significance of this finding is that it offers a means for organizations to motivate their employees in environments where intrinsic motivation can be difficult to achieve. Not all jobs can be considered interesting in themselves. However, workers can adopt a perspective on the task at hand and identify its relevance to their personal values.

However, extrinsic motivation showed a statistically significant relationship with performance, though it was significantly weaker than intrinsic motivation. Motivation arising from external factors does occur, but its influence seems relatively small compared to the impact of internally motivated types of motivation. The rationale behind this is quite clear when examined within the framework provided by SDT. External motivation leads to compliance, but compliance will not produce effort, creativity, and persistence, which are required for high performance.

The lack of identification of any difference in the performance of unmotivated employees from that of other participants necessitates cautious interpretation. The reason could be that, in this case, it might not be a motivation but merely a momentary state of disengagement, which is why these employees could not be identified as such. Alternatively, unmotivated employees perform at minimum levels despite lacking motivation, possibly due to external controls. Nevertheless, it is clear that performance does not decline to zero when motivation is low.

The demographic trends are worthy of discussion. A positive association between age and intrinsic motivation is consistent with life-course theories, which predict that as individuals age in their careers, they become more internally focused. The negative association between marital status and intrinsic motivation and the positive association between being married and extrinsic motivation can be attributed to growing financial obligations to one's family, which affect the motivational direction – something particularly relevant in Libya, where family support plays a bigger role (Belkur et al., 2017; Shafter, 2021). Education and tenure were positively associated with perceptions of the performance evaluation process, indicating that educated and more experienced employees had more positive opinions about it. As for income, it showed an interesting association with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, positively correlating with both but stronger with the latter.

The above conclusions are relevant in the context of applications in the Libyan corporate world. First, managers must give precedence to intrinsic motivation and internalization. A form of job design that encourages self-governance, skill attainment, and awareness among employees on the significance of the job in realizing favorable results may bring more advantages compared to reward-based performance initiatives. Secondly, while extrinsic motivators cannot be done away with, they need to be brought into place in a manner that will inspire, and not demotivate intrinsically motivated persons; for instance, by informing them about their competence level, and not coercing them using reward packages. Lastly, in addressing amotivation, it is important to factor in psychological needs restoration.

Nevertheless, there are certain issues that need to be addressed about the results. First, it should be mentioned that it is impossible to talk about the causality due to the design of the study. Second, reverse causality can happen because of the fact that driven individuals get more chances or praise from others, thus performing better. Third, it should be stressed that the chosen sample cannot be called representative since it was collected on a convenient basis.

6. Conclusion

This study involved comparing the relationships among different motivational aspects and job performance within a single group of employees from Libyan organizations. In this case, the conclusions suggest that internally motivated forms, including intrinsic and internalized types, display a significantly stronger relationship with performance than externally motivated motivation, while amotivation shows no significant correlation. This highlights the need for Self-Determination Theory to emphasize the type rather than the amount of motivation.

Organizations based in Libya, for example, will get more benefit from creating an atmosphere that facilitates internal motivations rather than being too concerned with external motivators. In terms of research, narrowing down the study of motivation into only one aspect of motivation might not be ideal, and a comparative study analyzing various aspects of motivation would prove to be more effective than studying just one.

Longitudinal studies could help establish causality; intervention studies that would examine if enhancing autonomy, competence, and/or relatedness would improve performance; comparative studies between different countries in the MENA region; and qualitative studies of the experiences of motivated Libyan workers. The connection between motivation and performance is both solid and complex. The relationship between the two is clear, but depending on whether workers internalize the motives for performing, motivation affects certain types of performance.

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