

Exploring the Influence of Recognition on Employee Motivation at the Parliament Office of Guyana

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Abstract

This paper explores the influence of recognition on employee motivation at the Parliament Office of Guyana. In doing so, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory were examined. Both theories underscore the importance of recognition on motivation, fulfilling esteem needs and being a critical motivator. This paper also examines the resulting effects of recognition on motivation and performance of the employees of the Parliament Office of Guyana. To this end, 110 workers were surveyed with the use of questionnaire containing closed-ended questions. The findings were clear, revealing that 78% of the respondents agree that recognition influences motivation. The types of recognition discussed encapsulate verbal praise, written praise, and milestone recognition, which were the prominent ones selected by the respondents. In addition, recognition positively correlated with heightened performance, the use of greater initiative, and employee loyalty to the workplace. The findings of this research are in keeping with the major theories explained in this paper, further solidifying the importance of non-monetary recognition programmes in public sector institutions. In conclusion, the implementation of wholistic employee recognition programmes in the Parliament Office of Guyana has the capacity to make employees feel valued, motivating them and boosting their performance, which will redound to the benefit of the Parliament of Guyana and the Guyanese citizenry at large.

Keywords: Employee Motivation, Parliament Office, Performance, Recognition.

Introduction

Recognition has long been identified as a factor which motivates employees. Recognition is described as “the acknowledgment of an individual's contribution, efforts, or achievements, typically in a timely and sincere manner” [1].

Both Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Herzberg's two-Factor Theory highlight that recognition is vital to motivation. For Maslow, recognition forms part of his esteem needs, which result in employees feeling valued at the workplace. Herzberg, on the other hand, believe that recognition forms part of motivators and motivated employees usually perform better.

Recognition can sometimes be earned but not given. It is observed by the researcher that there is wide scope for recognition in the Parliament Office which is underutilised. Many employees work beyond the call of duty to execute activities not captured in their job descriptions.

The case study conducted by the author on “effectiveness of motivation on employee performance at the Parliament Office” revealed that majority of the employees indicated that they need motivation to perform. While the study focused on monetary and non-monetary motivation, and monetary dominating the responses as the type needed, nonmonetary factors such as recognition were also highlighted.

In light of the above-mentioned study, managers and employers must pay attention to the non-monetary factors as well. The study did recommend same. As a result, this study explored one non-monetary factor – recognition. Recognition was selected by majority of the respondents as a motivator for them. By placing emphasis on this factor of recognition, employees can be motivated. Motivated employees drive organisational performance [2], and that is paramount for any parliamentary institution since it is one of the branches of Government, and that redounds to the benefit of the general citizenry.

This research helped to fill the gap of research on recognition as a specific factor that influences motivation. More so, research on this specific factor relating to the Parliament Office of Guyana has not been conducted. It will add to the literature on employee motivation in parliamentary institutions, and, by extension, Government offices.

Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the research were:

1. To explore the effects of recognition on motivation at the Parliament Office of Guyana; and
2. To determine whether motivation by recognition influences performance of employees at the Parliament Office of Guyana.

Review of Literature

Recognition, from time immemorial, has been identified as a critical factor of motivation in various spheres of life, but more particularly in the workplace. Therefore, research on the topic is available and is continuing to be conducted [2]. Maslow and Herzberg acknowledged the importance of recognition on motivation and, as a result, job performance.

Maslow opined that the need of recognition being fulfilled can lead to employees experiencing job satisfaction and will therefore perform to their best [3]. In the same vein,

Herzberg, who categorised recognition as a motivator, posited that recognition as a factor of motivation has the capability to result in heightened job satisfaction, and, as a result, exceptional performance [4]. Moreover, McClellan's Acquired Needs Theory affirms the position of Maslow and Herzberg that recognition empowers needs of recognition, belonging or affiliation and others, which serve as major players in motivation and boosting employee performance [5].

Recognition is the act of showing appreciation for the efforts put into the successful completion of tasks by employees. This can be done in many ways, some of which are awards, verbal praises and acknowledgement, whether in private and/or public, and written commendation [2, 6]. These types were positively correlated with employee motivation in a study conducted on 76 employees from varying sectors [2]. Public recognition sustains performance and commitment to the organisation [7]. When the recognition is in keeping with personal values of the employees, motivation does not dwindle; it becomes sustainable [8].

Types of Recognition

Recognition can come in monetary and non-monetary ways. Monetary recognition is a form of acknowledging the commitment and contributions of workers for particular tasks with money. However, for the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on non-monetary recognition. Non-monetary recognition is very effective in increasing employee motivation and performance [9].

Verbal Praise

When employees complete tasks or perform exceptionally, managers tell them how good of a job they have done. This is verbal praise. It can be privately or publicly done and ignites a feeling of appreciation. Verbal praise has been found to make employees feel valued, particularly when that praise is done in a

genuine and swift manner [10]. One such example is a manager openly thanking an employee or commending an employee in a meeting, conference or seminar or even in his office. When the verbal praise is done quickly, then the work environment is positive and performance standards are maintained [11].

Written Praise

Written praise can be in the form of letters of appreciation or emails expressing gratitude or commendations. Whichever the form, written praise is more substantive than verbal and has the ability to motivate staff [9]. It is there for posterity when a reminder is needed [9]. For emphasis, when the written acknowledgement is personal and details the actions while naming the staff, it is more effective [12].

Formal Recognition

This is a structured recognition framework such as 'employee of the month' and 'top performer of the year'. These are usually target-centered recognition methods aligned with organisational goals [13]. These titles are usually displayed in the physical open office spaces of companies, newspapers, social media, *et cetera*. Formal recognition also encourages workers to fortify their value within the organisation while showing that they can achieve the desired goals of the organisation [14].

Informal Recognition

This form of recognition is ad hoc, done sporadically for a particular reason and heightens motivation. A goal may be reached or a target achieved, and a supervisor or manager may recognise the employee with a spa day voucher. This type of informal recognition mainly exists in public or government offices [15, 16]. The more frequent the recognition, the more valued a worker feels and motivation is boosted [12].

Milestone Recognition

Employees may also be recognised for their dedication to an organisation for serving a number of years. For example, the Parliament of Guyana recognises employees who have served the Parliament for 10 years. This type of recognition builds employees motivation, making them more committed to the organisation [17].

Peer-to-peer Recognition

This type of recognition involves a horizontal level acknowledgement of a job well done and creates the environment for colleagues to acknowledge each other's efforts [18]. This type of recognition positively influences motivation and, as a result, improves performance because it fulfils the psychological need of humans, and that is motivation [19], which was recognised by Maslow. However, if not done correctly, this type of recognition can cause employees to feel unappreciated and devalue them [20].

Correlation among Recognition, Motivation and Performance

There is a positive relationship between recognition and motivation. Recognition enhances motivation which, in turn, according to a study by the author on the Effects of Motivation on Employee Performance, heightens performance. It satisfies the psychological need. Psychologically, the wellbeing of the employee is being sustained with acknowledgement of and appreciation for their work [21].

A study on Employee Recognition, Task Performance, and OCB: Mediated and Moderated by Pride showed that employee recognition directly positively influences employee task performance [8]. Evidently, employee recognition boosts motivation of employees by making them fulfil intrinsic needs such as a sense of purpose and belonging [22]. Not only is a sense of belonging ignited, but also commitment to the job is reinforced in

the employee [23]. Motivation positively influences motivation as well as employee engagement [2]. It is a form of appreciation that ignites a sense of value, resulting in a rise in motivation and enhance performance [22].

Another study on “The Impact of Employee Recognition Programs on Employee Engagement and Motivation: A Case Study of Southwest Airlines” confirmed that recognition programmes in workplaces positively impact staff motivation as well as enable a positive workplace culture [24].

Methodology

Population and Sampling

As referenced in the previous study by the researcher, the population of the study is 123 employees from the Parliament Office. A definition of sampling is, “the process of choosing a sample of a population from an individual or a large group for a certain type of research objective” [25]. The sample is the whole population of employees for a comprehensive study. The sampling method was purposive sampling to ensure that the census method captures all employees of every level within the Parliament Office to have an understanding from different employees. This type of sampling is appropriate for a population of 123 and their relevance to the research [25]. As a result, the findings which emanated from the study are relevant in the field of research.

Data Collection Instrument

Data collection methods and tools are “the techniques and tools used in research to collect various data which are processed quantitatively

or qualitatively, then arranged systematically” [26]. The study was completed using a descriptive, analytical approach, *via* questionnaires to as the data gathering tool. The questionnaires were distributed to the employees of the Parliament Office of Guyana, and then analysed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20).

The questionnaire is an inexpensive means of acquiring data directly from the sample, provides confidentiality because of their anonymity. The researcher created the questionnaire which was distributed by the same Researcher. It comprised 15 closed ended questions which targeted demographics, effects of recognition on motivation at the Parliament Office of Guyana, and influence of motivation by recognition on performance of employees at the Parliament Office of Guyana. These questions were geared towards achieving the answers to the research questions. The respondents were given one week before the questionnaires were retrieved.

The SPSS was a quick and simple way to analyse the data. It produced graphs and tables that were easily described and explained.

The Head of the Parliament Office, the Clerk of the National Assembly, granted permission to the researcher to undertake the research.

As in the previous research by the author, for the questionnaires to possess a high standard of validity and reliability, they were tested on a small group of staff who identified ambiguities which were corrected. The amended final questionnaires were then distributed.

Results

Table 1. Recognition as a Motivator

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	78
No	24	22

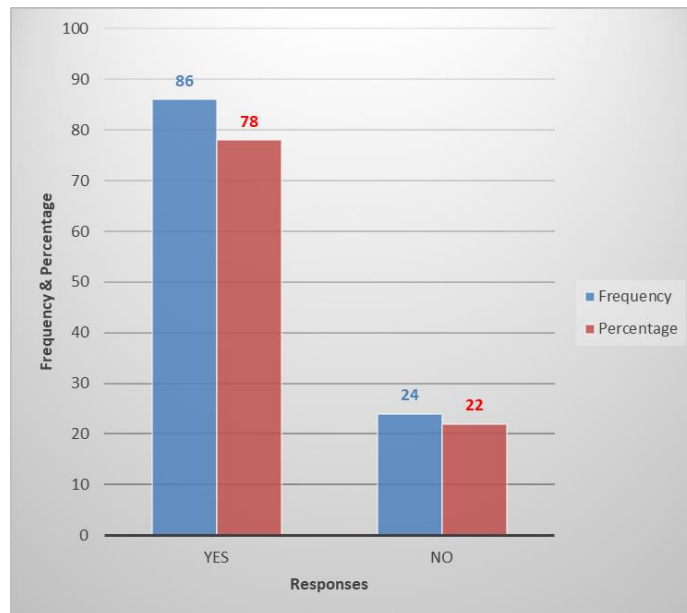


Figure 1. Recognition as a Motivator

Table 1 and Figure 1 show respondents' answers to whether recognition motivates them to perform. From the results, 78% of the employees indicated that, yes, recognition

motivates them to perform in an advanced manner while 22% of them chose no. This affirms that recognition plays a significant role in motivating employees to perform better.

Table 2. Absence of Recognition leading to Demotivation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	78
No	24	22

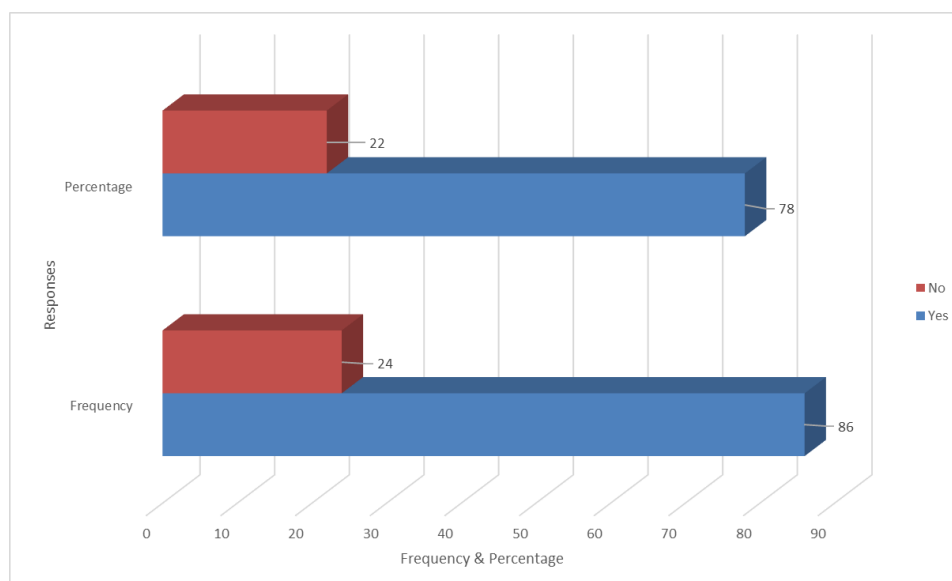


Figure 2. Absence of Recognition leading to Demotivation

Table 2 and figure 2 depict that 78% of the employees believe that lack of recognition demotivates them while 22% do not share that

belief. These results are exactly the same as figure 1, emphasizing the point that recognition motivates and non-recognition does not.

Table 3. Types of Recognition preferred

Types of Recognition preferred	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal praise	77	70
Written praise	68	62
Formal recognition	60	55
Informal recognition	55	50
Milestone recognition	75	68
Peer-to-peer recognition	50	45

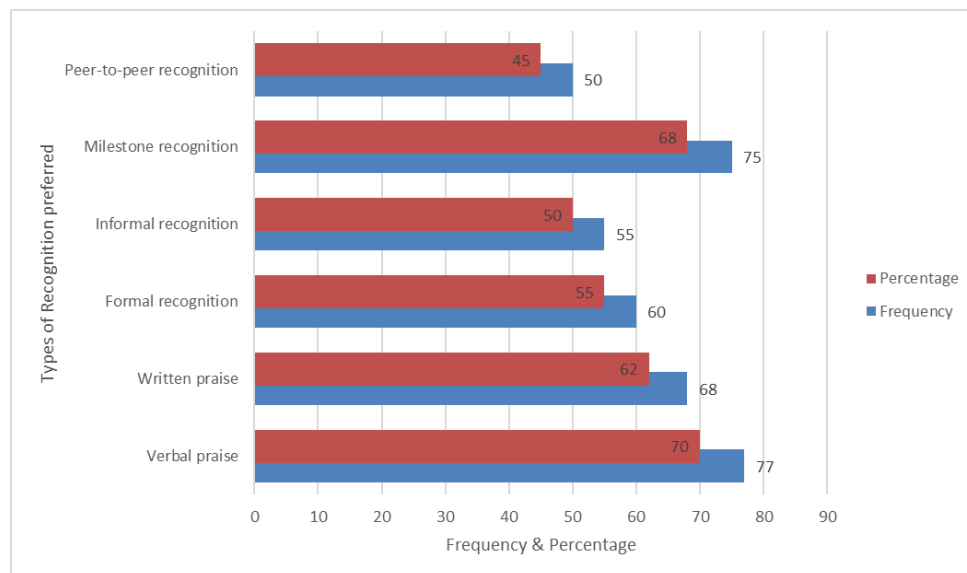


Figure 3. Types of Recognition preferred

Table 3 and Figure 3 depict the types of recognition preferred by the respondents. It is seen that verbal praise received 70%, milestone recognition received 68%, written praise received 62%, formal recognition received 55%, informal recognition received 50%, and

peer-to-peer recognition received 45%. The results vividly demonstrate that verbal praise, milestone recognition and written praise are the three dominant forms of recognition preferred by the workers.

Table 4. Influence of Recognition on Motivation and Performance

Influence on Performance	Frequency	Percentage
Increased productivity	79	72
Greater initiative used	66	60
Increased loyalty to the organisation	60	55

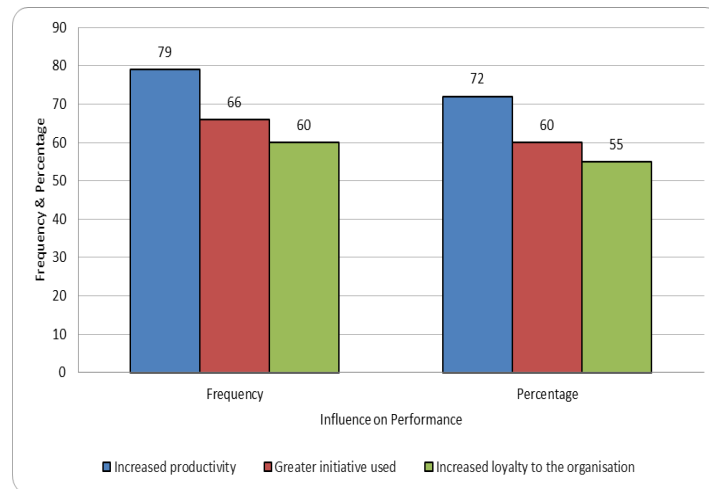


Figure 4. Influence of Recognition on Motivation and Performance

Table 4 and Figure 4 showcase that when recognition is in play, workers are motivated. Increased productivity is had in 72% of the employees, greater initiative used by 60% and there is increased loyalty to the organization of 55% of the respondents. These are all indications by the workers themselves.

Discussion

The results of the research indicate that recognition is indeed critical in influencing employee motivation within the Parliament Office of Guyana. It is glaring that the majority of respondents (78%) indicated in the affirmative that recognition motivates them to perform in a better manner (See table 1 and figure 1), and another glaring 72% indicated that recognition increases their productivity (See table 4 and figure 4). The revelations from the figures aforementioned are in keeping with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, which posits that recognition forms part of esteem needs of workers. In Similar vein, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is cemented in the results of the study, showing that recognition is a motivator which enhances performance.

It is seen in the research that the workers have varying preferences for different types of recognition. Recognition in the form of verbal praise and milestone were highly preferred (see table 3 and figure 3). This gives credence to the notion that direct and personal recognition is

important, in keeping with studies done (Kubo and Hori (2023). Peer-to-peer recognition was not as popular as verbal praise and milestone recognition (see table 3 and figure 3) but still made its impact on some employees. This reveals that peer-to-peer recognition, which is horizontal, is not ineffective, even though not as effective for some staff.

There can be no doubt, from the literature review as well as the results of the study, that there is a positive correlation between recognition and motivation, which leads to enhanced performance. This is in keeping with McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory, detailing that recognition helps with the fulfilment of the need for achievement.

The research highlights that non-monetary recognition within the Parliament Office can be used to make employees feel valued and motivated, and will redound to better service delivery to the Members of Parliament and, by extension, the people of Guyana.

Conclusion

This research was conducted to determine the influence of recognition on employee motivation and its effect on performance at the Parliament Office of Guyana. The findings demonstrate that recognition is a direct influencer of motivation, impacting workers engagement, commitment and dedication to accomplishing tasks in an increased efficient

manner. The research also showed that recognition which is direct and personal is more favoured by employees. Importantly, the results were in consonance with well-known theories by Maslow, Herzberg and McClelland; recognition fulfils esteem needs and is a motivator.

The findings have led to the conclusion that the Parliament Office of Guyana will benefit from a wholistic recognition programme which encapsulates verbal, written, formal and milestone recognition. This will lead to a sense of value which will transcend to a motivated staff compliment and will boost performance, redounding to the benefit of all Guyanese.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher conducted the research in an unbiased and professional manner. It is an

independent study which meets the standards of integrity. There was no influence of the researcher on the respondents or the outcomes. As a result, it is safe to say that there is an absence of conflict of interest in this research.

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