

Relationship between Rewards and Employee Motivation in the Non-Profit Organizations of Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between rewards and employee motivation in the non-profit organizations of Nepal. Employee motivation is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and awards, fringe benefits, and promotion. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and awards, fringe benefits, promotion, and employee motivation. The study is based on primary data of 130 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of rewards and employee motivation in the non-profit organizations of Nepal.

The study showed a positive impact of career growth opportunities on employee motivation. It indicates that satisfactory career growth opportunities lead to increase in employee motivation. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of challenging tasks on employee motivation. It indicates that higher the level of challenging tasks, higher would be the employee motivation. Likewise, the study also revealed a positive impact of recognition and awards on employee motivation. It indicates that employee who get recognized and are awarded are highly motivated to perform their job. Further, the study observed a positive impact of fringe benefits on employee motivation. It indicates that better fringe benefits attract the employees to be more motivated towards their job. In addition, the study observed a positive impact of promotion on employee motivation. It indicates that higher the opportunities of promotion, higher would be the employee motivation.

Keywords: career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and awards, fringe benefits, promotion, employee motivation

1. Introduction

Motivation is a complex psychological process that drives individuals to initiate and sustain goal-directed behaviors. Non-profit organizations (NPOs) are entities that operate for purposes other than generating profit. Their primary mission is to serve the public interest or a specific social cause, such as education, health, human services, arts and culture, environmental conservation, and more. Employee motivation is a crucial aspect of organizational success, particularly in non-profit organizations (NPOs) where the focus is on mission-driven work. Employee motivation in non-profit organizations (NPOs) is a critical factor that influences the performance and effectiveness of these organizations. One of the key factors that contribute to employee motivation in NPOs is the reward system. Rewards can be broadly classified into intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), motivation can be defined as the inner drive that prompts individuals to take certain actions and persist in those actions to achieve their goals. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959) suggested that intrinsic factors like recognition, achievement, and advancement opportunities are key drivers of motivation, while extrinsic factors such as salary, benefits, and job security primarily influence job satisfaction. In addition, (Ryan and

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Deci, 2000) states that intrinsic rewards are internal to the job itself and include aspects such as the sense of accomplishment, recognition, autonomy, and career growth opportunities that employees derive from their work (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Extrinsic rewards, on the other hand, are external to the job and include tangible rewards such as salary, bonuses, promotion and fringe benefits (Hafiza *et al.*, 2011).

Paswan *et al.* (2004) examined the motivational dimensions for membership in a nonprofit art museum. The study found a significant differences in museum membership motivation, including social recognition and philanthropy, across membership levels. Similarly, Hafiza *et al.* (2011) analyzed the relationship between rewards and employee motivation in non-profit organizations in Pakistan. The study showed a direct relationship between extrinsic rewards and employee motivation, while intrinsic rewards have an insignificant impact on employee motivation. Likewise, Bang *et al.* (2012) identified that job satisfaction as a partial mediator in the relationship between volunteers' motivation and affective commitment in non-profit sport organizations. Further, Rosman *et al.* (2016) investigated the relationships between internal control, budgetary participation, and performance effectiveness of NPOs. The study found a positive relationship between control environment, risk assessment, control activities, monitoring, and budgetary participation with performance effectiveness. In addition, Ekhayemhe *et al.* (2018) assessed the relationship between intrinsic rewards, extrinsic rewards, and employee motivation. The study revealed that extrinsic rewards have a direct and positive relationship with employee motivation.

Park *et al.* (2012) examined the role of service motivation in the public and nonprofit sectors, showing that while public and nonprofit managers placed similar importance on intrinsic motivation, certain types of extrinsic motivation, such as advancement motivation and work-life balance motivation, were highly correlated with intrinsic motivation in both sectors. The study highlighted the importance of balancing intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to motivate employees in both sectors. Furthermore, Oberholster *et al.* (2013) investigated the motivation factors for expatriation among religious and humanitarian workers. The study found that the workers in the not-for-profit sector were primarily motivated by altruism i.e., integrating the organization's mission with personal purpose in their decision to work abroad. In addition, De Oliveira *et al.* (2015) examined the effects of high-performance work systems (HPWS) and leader-member exchange (LMX) quality on employee engagement in a non-profit Brazilian organization. The study revealed that both HPWS and LMX quality were positively related to employee engagement. Furthermore, Van Schie *et al.* (2015) investigated how the organizational context of an NPO influenced the motivation and work behaviors of volunteers. The study showed that organizational factors positively influenced volunteers' motivation, with task-related motivation primarily driving general motivation and alignment with the organization's values influencing organization-focused motivation. Additionally, Nencini *et al.* (2016) explored the individual and organizational factors that promote volunteer satisfaction in Italian NPOs. The study revealed that volunteers' perception of their relationship with other members of the NPO and their motivation played a key role in maintaining satisfaction or fostering a desire to leave the organization.

Mobiny *et al.* (2020) examined the challenges and opportunities faced by nonprofit managers in Sweden and Brazil. The study found that that financial constraints and staff retention were significant issues despite sectoral differences. Similarly, Nguyen *et al.* (2020) investigated the effect of organizational commitment on employee motivation. The study

indicated that normative and continuance commitment significantly influence motivation, with opportunistic behavior and knowledge sharing as mediators. Furthermore, Haryono *et al.* (2020) investigated how training and job promotion affect work motivation and performance among employees in South Lampung Regency, the study found positive impacts, though motivation did not mediate the effects on performance. In addition, Iridinid Wolof *et al.* (2020) examined the influence of e-training, e-leadership, and work-life balance on millennial employees' performance. The study showed positive effects on motivation and performance. Similarly, Demir *et al.* (2020) analyzed the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and job outcomes. The study revealed that increased self-efficacy boosts job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and involvement. In addition, Manzoor *et al.* (2021) assessed the impact of intrinsic rewards on employee performance. The study found significant positive effects mediated by motivation. Furthermore, Sapta *et al.* (2021) examined factors motivating employees in rural banks in Bali. The study found that technology, organizational culture, and job satisfaction positively influence motivation and performance.

Mahmoud *et al.* (2021) analyzed generational differences in work motivation. The study revealed distinct preferences: Generation Z values intrinsic motivation and material rewards, Generation X values social rewards, and Generation Y values introjected and identified regulation. In addition, Sugiarti (2022) looked at the impact of training, work environment, and career development on motivation and performance at PT. Suryamas Elsindo Primatama. The study revealed significant positive relationships. Further, Zeng *et al.* (2022) studied the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on work engagement among nurses in Japan. The study revealed that intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and age positively influenced engagement, while extrinsic motivation did not, contributing to high turnover rates.

In the context of Nepal, Sharma (2015) emphasized the importance of a promotion system for career development and recognition at work for employee satisfaction and motivation. Additionally, Gautam (2019) highlighted the positive relationship between a comprehensive reward system, including compensation, benefits, and career opportunities, and employee motivation. Further, Chauhan (2019) revealed that training and development programs in Nepalese banks significantly improved the performance and motivation of bank staff. Similarly, Silwal (2021) demonstrated the positive impact of both monetary and non-monetary rewards on employee job satisfaction in the Nepalese banking sector. Acharya (2021) examined the impact of the reward management system on employee motivation at merojob.com, finding that both financial and non-financial rewards significantly influenced employee motivation. Moreover, Shrestha (2022) investigated the impact of performance appraisal on employee motivation in the IT sector. The study revealed that performance management, succession planning, and management support had a negative relationship with employee motivation, though statistically insignificant. Similarly, Maharjan (2023) examined the impact of the performance appraisal system on employee motivation in Nepalese insurance companies. The findings of the study indicated that training and development, reward and recognition, communication, commitment, and feedback system were positively correlated with employee motivation.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the relationship between rewards and employee motivation in non-profit organizations. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and

in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the relationship between rewards and employee motivation in the non-profit organizations of Nepal. Specifically, it examines the relationship of career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and appreciation, fringe benefits, and promotion with employee motivation in Nepalese non-profit organizations.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from 130 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and appreciation, fringe benefits, promotion, and employee motivation. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model estimated in this study assumes that employee motivation depends upon impact of rewards on employee motivation. The dependent variable selected for the study is employee motivation. Similarly, the selected independent variables are career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and appreciation, fringe benefits, and promotion. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

Employee Motivation = f (career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and appreciation, fringe benefits, and promotion)

More specifically,

$$EM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FB + \beta_2 P + \beta_3 RA + \beta_4 CG + \beta_5 CT + e$$

Where,

EM = Employee motivation

FB = Fringe benefits

P = Promotion

RA = Recognition and appreciation

CG = Career growth opportunities

CT = Challenging tasks

Employee motivation was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the

respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Recognition and appreciation for my work motivate me to perform better”, “The opportunity for career growth and advancement motivates me to excel in my current role”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.825$).

Recognition and appreciation was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Recognition and appreciation for my work are important factors that motivate me to perform well”, “When I receive recognition and appreciation for my contributions, I feel more motivated to continue working hard”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.863$).

Career growth opportunities were measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Having opportunities for career growth and advancement motivates me to perform at a high level”, “Knowing that there are opportunities for professional development within the organization increases my motivation to succeed”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.789$).

Challenging tasks were measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Being given challenging tasks that push me to grow and develop motivates me to perform well”, “Finding my work intellectually stimulating increases my motivation to succeed”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.879$).

Fringe benefits were measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Satisfactory fringe benefits provided by the organization contribute to my overall motivation at work”, “Knowing that the organization provides competitive fringe benefits increases my motivation to perform well”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.859$).

Promotion was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Knowing that there are opportunities for promotion within the organization motivates me to work hard”, “Clear criteria for promotion within the organization increase my motivation to achieve my goals”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.849$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Fringe benefits

Fringe benefits as the nonfinancial forms of compensation provided to employees,

including health insurance, retirement plans, and various types of leave (e.g., vacation, sick leave) (Mathis and Jackson, 2018). According to Milkovich and Newman (2016), comprehensive benefits packages, including health insurance and retirement plans, are positively associated with employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Additionally, Smith *et al.* (2019) suggested that fringe benefits can serve as a tool for attracting and retaining talent, especially in competitive labor markets. According to Noe *et al.* (2019), fringe benefits are nonfinancial forms of compensation provided to employees, such as health insurance, retirement benefits, and paid time off, which can enhance employee satisfaction and well-being. Furthermore, Armstrong and Taylor (2014) described fringe benefits as the extras provided by employers to employees, such as health insurance, pension schemes, company cars, and subsidized meals, which form part of the overall reward package. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between fringe benefits and employee motivation.

Promotion

Promotion in the workplace refers to the advancement of an employee to a higher-level position within the organization, often accompanied by increased responsibilities, authority, and potentially higher pay. According to Ng and Feldman (2010), promotion is often seen as a reward for past performance and a recognition of an employee's potential for future success. It can serve as a powerful motivator, encouraging employees to strive for excellence and to develop their skills and capabilities. Additionally, Tziner *et al.* (2011) suggested that promotion opportunities are positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as they signal to employees that their contributions are valued and that there are opportunities for advancement within the organization. Similarly, Cascio (2018) defined promotion as the advancement of an employee within an organization to a position with greater responsibility, typically accompanied by a higher salary, increased benefits, and a higher level of authority. Furthermore, promotion can have broader implications for an organization's performance and success. Likewise, Lazear and Shaw (2007) suggested that promoting from within can lead to higher levels of organizational performance, as internally promoted employees tend to be more familiar with the organization's culture, values, and goals. Additionally, promoting from within can enhance employee morale and loyalty, as it demonstrates to employees that there are opportunities for growth and advancement within the organization. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between promotion and employee motivation.

Recognition and appreciation

Recognition and appreciation are key components of employee motivation and engagement, contributing significantly to an individual's job satisfaction and overall well-being in the workplace. According to Kaul and Mitra (2019), recognition has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. Additionally, Grant (2008) suggested that appreciation, when expressed authentically and sincerely, fosters positive emotions, builds trust, and strengthens relationships between employees and their supervisors or colleagues. Furthermore, Harter *et al.* (2002) highlighted the link between recognition and improved performance, showing that employees who feel recognized and

appreciated are more likely to be productive, innovative, and committed to organizational goals. Additionally, Gagné and Deci (2005) proposed that recognition can enhance intrinsic motivation by satisfying the basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between recognition and appreciation and employee motivation.

Career growth opportunities

Career growth opportunities refer to the chances and pathways available to employees to progress and advance in their careers within an organization. According to Farooq *et al.* (2014), career growth opportunities are positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement. According to Tziner *et al.* (2011), career growth opportunities serve as a powerful motivator for employees, leading to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Additionally, Kowske *et al.* (2010) suggested that career growth opportunities play a crucial role in talent retention. Similarly, Farooq *et al.* (2014) argued that career growth opportunities play a crucial role in employee engagement, providing employees with a sense of purpose and direction in their careers. Likewise, Judge *et al.* (1995) emphasized that opportunities can have a positive impact on organizational performance, as employees who are given chances to advance are more likely to be motivated and productive. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between career growth opportunities and employee motivation.

Challenging tasks

Challenging tasks refer to assignments or projects that require individuals to stretch their abilities, learn new skills, and overcome obstacles to achieve a goal. According to Amabile (1988), challenging tasks can have a positive effect on employee motivation and job satisfaction. Additionally, Grant (2007) suggested that challenging tasks can enhance intrinsic motivation, as they provide employees with opportunities to use their skills and abilities to the fullest. Furthermore, Grant (2008) suggested that challenging tasks can foster a sense of autonomy and control, as employees are given the freedom to explore new ideas and approaches to solving problems. Additionally, Gagne and Deci (2005) proposed that challenging tasks can enhance intrinsic motivation by providing employees with opportunities for personal growth and development. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between challenging tasks and employee motivation.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has

been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficient matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent variable and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 130 observations. The dependent variable is EM (Employee motivation). The independent variables are CG (Career growth opportunities), CT (Challenging tasks), RA (Recognition and award), FB (Fringe benefits), and P (Promotion).

Variables	Mean	SD	EM	CG	CT	RA	FB	P
EM	3.517	0.334	1					
CG	3.971	0.553	0.775**	1				
C	3.022	0.690	0.902**	0.884**	1			
RA	3.475	0.570	0.671**	0.854**	0.783**	1		
FB	4.365	0.380	0.051**	0.036**	0.215**	0.248**	1	
P	4.223	0.294	0.310**	0.531**	0.434**	0.815**	0.396**	1

Notes: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the result are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows that career growth opportunities are positively correlated to employee motivation indicating that satisfactory career growth opportunities lead to increase in employee motivation. Likewise, challenging tasks are positively correlated to employee motivation. It indicates that higher the level of challenging tasks, higher would be the employee motivation. Similarly, recognition and award are positively correlated to employee motivation. It indicates that employee who get recognized and are award are highly motivated to perform their job. Further, fringe benefits are also positively correlated to employee motivation indicating that better fringe benefits attract the employees to be more motivated towards their job. Likewise, promotion is positively correlated to employee motivation. It indicates that higher the opportunities of promotion, higher would be the employee motivation.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and appreciation, fringe benefits, and promotion on employee motivation in Nepalese non-profit organizations.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and appreciation, fringe benefits and promotion on employee motivation

The results are based on 130 observations using linear regression model. The model is $EM = \beta_0 + \beta_1CG + \beta_2CT + \beta_3RA + \beta_4FB + \beta_5P + e$ where the dependent variable is EM (Employee motivation). The independent variables are CG (Career growth opportunities), CT (Challenging tasks), RA (Recognition and award), FB (Fringe benefits), and P (Promotion).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R _{bar} ²	SEE	F-value
		CG	C	RA	FB	P			
1	1.318 (15.188)**	0.554 (25.577)**					0.835	0.136	654.175
2	2.196 (38.157)**		0.437 (23.545)**				0.811	0.145	554.358
3	2.057 (16.104)**			0.420 (11.577)**			0.508	0.234	134.017
4	4.429 (13.380)**				0.209 (2.765)**		0.049	0.326	7.646
5	5.510 (14.221)**					0.472 (5.162)**	0.165	0.305	26.581
6	1.609 (16.292)**	0.333 (6.860)**	0.194 (4.985)**				0.861	0.124	400.445
7	1.724 (18.324)**	0.397 (8.511)**	0.262 (6.798)**	0.165 (4.844)**			0.882	0.115	321.998
8	0.042 (0.234)	0.249 (3.437)**	0.835 (13.193)**	0.083 (3.102)**	0.510 (10.156)**		0.935	0.085	463.44
9	1.424 (4.760)**	0.120 (1.754)	0.655 (10.184)**	0.116 (2.783)**	0.327 (5.967)**	0.381 (5.082)**	0.948	0.076	473.961

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
- iii. Employee motivation is dependent variable.

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for career growth opportunities are positive with employee motivation. It indicates that career growth opportunities have positive impact on employee motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Manzoor *et al.* (2021). Likewise, the beta coefficients for challenging tasks are positive with employee motivation. It indicates that challenging tasks have positive impact on employee motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of De Oliveira *et al.* (2015). In addition, the beta coefficients for recognition and award are positive with employee motivation. It indicates that recognition and award have positive impact on employee motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Maharjan (2023). Further, the beta coefficients for fringe benefits are positive with employee motivation. It indicates that fringe benefits have positive impact on employee motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hafiza *et al.* (2011). In addition, the beta coefficients for promotion are positive with employee motivation. It indicates that promotion has a positive impact on employee motivation. This finding is similar to the findings of Haryono *et al.* (2020).

4. Summary and conclusion

Employee motivation in non-profit organizations (NPOs) is a critical factor that influences the performance and effectiveness of these organizations. Motivation can be defined as the inner drive that prompts individuals to take certain actions and persist in those actions to achieve their goals. In the context of NPOs in Nepal, understanding the factors that drive employee motivation is essential for enhancing organizational effectiveness and achieving social impact. One of the key factors that contribute to employee motivation in NPOs is the reward system. Rewards can be broadly classified into intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are internal to the job itself and include aspects such as the sense of accomplishment, autonomy, and personal growth that employees derive from their work. Extrinsic rewards, on the other hand, are external to the job and include tangible rewards

such as salary, bonuses, and recognition. Rewards can be an important factor in motivating employees and improving their performance in many organizations, including non-profit organizations. Rewards can be an effective way to motivate employees in non-profit organizations to work harder and achieve better results. Rewards play a crucial role in non-profit organizations as they can motivate employees to work harder and achieve better results. Rewards can be used to encourage employees to meet specific performance targets, such as improving customer satisfaction, or reducing costs.

This study attempts to examine the relationship between rewards and employee motivation in the non-profit organizations of Nepal. The study is based on primary data of 130 respondents.

The study showed that career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and award, fringe benefits, and promotion have positive impact on employee motivation in the non-profit organizations of Nepal. It indicates that higher the career growth opportunities, challenging tasks, recognition and award, fringe benefits and promotion, higher would be the employee motivation. The study also concludes that career growth opportunities followed by promotion is the most influencing factor that affect the change in the level of employee motivation in the context of non-profit organizations of Nepal.

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