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Employee Motivation and Workforce Development at Akwa Ibom State Water Company Uyo Nigeria

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Abstract

Employee motivation is an important consideration in workforce development, but its contribution must be distinguished from the effects of skills, resources, and organizational conditions. This study examines employees reported motivational preferences at Akwa Ibom State Water Company, Uyo, through a descriptive reanalysis of aggregate tables preserved in an undergraduate research project. The source reports 24 questionnaires distributed and 20 usable returns, giving a corrected response rate of 83.33%. Frequencies and percentages were recalculated without reconstructing individual records or conducting unsupported inferential tests. Promotion was the most frequently selected means of creating a motivational climate, identified by 10 respondents (50%), while recognition for achievement was the leading response to a separate question about the most important motivator, selected by 12 respondents (60%). All 20 respondents believed that training would improve performance. Fifteen respondents (75%) supported participation in decision making, and 12 (60%) strongly agreed that effective communication was needed for motivation. Only eight respondents (40%) selected performance as the perceived basis of appraisal. One internally inconsistent table was excluded from substantive interpretation. The findings suggest practical priorities involving transparent advancement, credible recognition, training transfer, employee voice, and fair appraisal. Relevant studies by Udoyiu and collaborators provide regional context concerning inclusion, leadership culture, collective values, and institutional capacity. Because the evidence is small, descriptive, and based on employee perceptions, it does not establish that motivational practices caused higher productivity. A coordinated workforce development approach and a prospective evaluation using verified personnel and service indicators are recommended.

Keywords:

Employee motivation; Organizational justice; Public water utility; Recognition; Training transfer.

1 Introduction

A public water organization depends on employees who can operate equipment, maintain records, resolve faults, communicate with customers, and coordinate work across functions. Staff development therefore concerns both competence and the willingness to apply that competence. Employees may understand a task yet hesitate to undertake it when their contribution is ignored, advancement appears unpredictable, or necessary resources are

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unavailable. Conversely, enthusiastic employees can struggle when they lack training or operational support. Research on work motivation and job design places these individual and organizational conditions within a common explanation of work behaviour, rather than treating motivation as a sufficient explanation of performance (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Humphrey et al., 2007).

The distinction is particularly important when translating an institutional project into a research article. Statements that training improves performance may describe respondents' expectations rather than observed changes in competence or output. Similarly, an employee's preference for recognition is evidence about a reported priority, not proof that a recognition programme will generate a measurable productivity gain. This study preserves the empirical contribution of the supplied project while bringing its interpretation into line with the design actually used. It examines what the available responses reveal, how those responses relate to established theory, and what management could reasonably investigate or implement next.

The original project addressed motivation as a key to manpower development at Akwa Ibom State Water Company, Uyo. The present article uses the more inclusive term workforce development to describe the acquisition, application, and maintenance of employees' capabilities. It retains the source institution and aggregate observations. It does not extend the study to other branches, infer the composition of the entire workforce, or represent the survey as a current assessment of the organization. The source tables are labelled as fieldwork conducted in 2024; the precise collection dates are not supplied. Literature published later is used retrospectively to interpret the earlier material.

The regional literature offers useful context. Udoyiu and Washington discuss inclusion and equality in Nigeria's workforce, drawing attention to the organizational consequences of exclusion and relationship-based opportunities (Udoyiu & Washington, 2023). Udoyiu and collaborators also examine leadership and innovation culture among enterprises in South-South Nigeria (Udoyiu et al., 2024b). These studies direct attention to fairness and shared managerial practices, which are relevant to employees' perceptions of appraisal and recognition. Their settings and methods differ from the water-company project, however, so they support contextual interpretation rather than direct replication claims.

The central problem is the limited evidence available for choosing among motivational practices. Organizations may favour salary adjustments, promotion, recognition, training, or participation without adequately distinguishing the problems each practice addresses. An employee seeking a fair promotion process may not respond to praise alone. A trained worker may be unable to apply new knowledge without equipment or supervisor support. An invitation to participate may have little meaning when suggestions receive no response. Motivation theories therefore provide complementary questions about needs, fairness, expectations, job content, and social relationships (Maslow, 1943; Adams, 1965; Locke & Latham, 2002; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

The study has four objectives. First, it describes the motivational preferences reported in the source tables. Second, it examines perceptions of appraisal, training, communication, and participation. Third, it assesses the numerical and methodological limitations of the available evidence. Fourth, it develops proportionate implications for workforce development in the case organization. Its contribution is a transparent descriptive case analysis with a strengthened

theoretical interpretation. It does not claim a new representative survey, a validated causal model, or an independent measurement of organizational performance.

2 Literature Review and Analytical Framework

2.1 Motivation and workforce development

Work motivation concerns the processes that influence the direction, intensity, and persistence of effort. Workforce development concerns improvements in knowledge, skills, judgement, and the organizational capacity to use them. These concepts overlap when employees choose to learn, practise new skills, share expertise, or remain engaged with difficult assignments. They are nevertheless distinct: attendance at a training event does not guarantee learning, and learning does not guarantee transfer to the workplace. Reviews of training research show why programme design and the work environment must be considered alongside trainee characteristics (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Arthur et al., 2003; Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

A useful analytical sequence moves from organizational practices to employee interpretations, then to learning and work behaviour, and finally to service outcomes. Promotion rules, recognition, supervision, and training opportunities are practices. Perceived fairness, confidence, belonging, and expectations of reward are interpretations. Skill application, cooperation, voice, and persistence are behaviours. The present data mainly concern the first two stages as reported by respondents. Service outcomes sit further along the sequence and were not measured. Keeping these stages separate prevents positive attitudes from being treated as equivalent to organizational effectiveness.

2.2 Needs and the quality of motivation

Maslow's account of human motivation helped establish the importance of needs beyond immediate material requirements (Maslow, 1943). Alderfer subsequently developed an alternative approach that allowed greater flexibility among categories of need (Alderfer, 1969). These perspectives help explain why employees may value security, recognition, relationships, and opportunities for growth. They should not be applied as a rigid progression that every employee follows in the same order. A worker may simultaneously seek dependable pay, respectful treatment, and professional advancement. The case questionnaire's distinct categories capture selected priorities but do not measure a complete structure of needs.

Self-determination theory distinguishes motivation that is experienced as personally endorsed from motivation experienced primarily as external pressure. Its application to work highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Deci et al., 2017). Recognition may support competence when it offers credible information about an achievement. Participation may support autonomy when employees have meaningful influence. Supportive working relationships may strengthen relatedness. These mechanisms explain why identical management practices can be received differently: praise delivered respectfully can communicate appreciation, while praise used to demand excessive effort can communicate control.

The distinction also limits simplistic claims about financial incentives. Experimental evidence concerning external rewards and intrinsic motivation identifies conditions under which rewards can undermine intrinsic interest (Deci et al., 1999). A broader meta-analysis shows that intrinsic motivation and external incentives can both relate to performance, with the form of

performance and incentive arrangement affecting the relationship (Cerasoli et al., 2014). The practical question is therefore how pay, recognition, and job meaning work together. A preference for recognition in a questionnaire does not show that employees are indifferent to wages or that financial obligations can be replaced by symbolic appreciation.

Ryan and Deci further connect self-determination with development and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This perspective broadens workforce development beyond extracting additional effort from employees. A credible developmental environment gives people opportunities to understand their work, build mastery, and contribute without unnecessary coercion. In the case organization, these ideas would support examining whether staff receive usable feedback, understand promotion expectations, and can ask for assistance. The survey does not directly measure psychological need satisfaction, so these remain interpretive mechanisms and subjects for future investigation.

2.3 Expectations goals and confidence

Goal-setting research emphasizes the conditions under which clear and challenging goals support performance, including commitment, feedback, and relevant ability (Locke & Latham, 2002). For workforce development, a goal should make the expected capability observable. Completing a course is different from accurately performing a new procedure. Employees also need a realistic understanding of how their actions contribute to evaluation and advancement. When appraisal criteria are unclear, the connection between effort and valued outcomes becomes difficult to interpret, potentially weakening the purpose of both training and recognition.

Self-efficacy concerns beliefs about one's capability to perform required actions. Bandura's foundational account and subsequent work-related meta-analysis link this construct to behavioural persistence and performance (Bandura, 1977; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). In practice, opportunities for guided mastery may be more developmental than repeated exhortations to work harder. A supervisor can clarify a task, demonstrate an unfamiliar step, observe practice, and provide specific feedback. The present finding that respondents favour training is consistent with interest in capability development, but the questionnaire did not establish whether confidence, skill deficits, or promotion expectations explain that preference.

2.4 Job design and meaningful contribution

Job design research directs attention to the work itself. Hackman and Oldham's model considers how characteristics such as feedback and autonomy influence employees' experiences of their jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Subsequent reviews and measurement work extend attention to social and contextual features, demonstrating the importance of a broader description of the working environment (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Humphrey et al., 2007; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). A role can be demanding yet developmental when responsibility is clear and support is available. Additional duties without authority, time, or resources can instead create strain.

Meaningful contribution is also relevant to a public service organization. Research on relational job design and task significance examines how employees understand the benefits their work creates for others (Grant, 2007; Grant, 2008). Managers could use appropriate feedback about service problems resolved to make the purpose of work more visible. This is a proposed application rather than evidence about existing practices at the company. It should complement

accurate technical feedback and reasonable working conditions, since invoking public service cannot compensate for unresolved operational barriers or unfair treatment.

2.5 Fairness support and appraisal

Equity theory places comparisons between contributions and outcomes at the centre of employees' reactions to work arrangements (Adams, 1965). Organizational justice research distinguishes fairness in outcomes, procedures, interpersonal treatment, and explanations (Colquitt, 2001). This distinction is useful when examining appraisal. Employees may consider a rating inaccurate, the process inconsistent, the interaction disrespectful, or the explanation inadequate. These are different problems requiring different remedies. A single survey item asking what appraisal is based on can indicate perceived criteria but cannot fully measure whether the system is fair.

Meta-analytic evidence links justice perceptions to several workplace attitudes and behaviours (Colquitt et al., 2001; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Perceived organizational support offers a related explanation: employees interpret organizational treatment as evidence of whether their contribution and well-being are valued (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Social exchange theory helps connect such interpretations to reciprocal commitment and cooperation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). None of these theories implies that employees automatically reciprocate every benefit. Consistency, credibility, prior experiences, and the broader employment relationship influence how a practice is understood.
Udoyiu and Washington's discussion of workplace inclusion is especially relevant to the source questionnaire's category described as "man-know-man" (Udoyiu & Washington, 2023). In this article, that phrase is interpreted cautiously as a respondent-selected perception of personal connections influencing appraisal. The three selections do not prove that favouritism occurred, identify any decision maker, or establish the extent of such practices. They do provide a reason to examine whether appraisal criteria and opportunities are sufficiently transparent. A confidential review of procedures would be more defensible than drawing allegations from a small aggregate table.

2.6 Engagement commitment and employee well-being

Motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and engagement are related but should not be used interchangeably. Commitment concerns the employee's relationship with the organization; influential research distinguishes affective, continuance, and normative forms (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). Satisfaction concerns evaluation of the job, while engagement describes a more active investment of the self in work. Kahn's account emphasizes the psychological conditions associated with such investment, and subsequent measurement research develops engagement as a distinguishable construct (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002). The source questionnaire does not contain validated measures of these constructs.

Research syntheses connect job satisfaction and engagement with performance-related outcomes, but the strength and interpretation of these relationships depend on design and level of analysis (Judge et al., 2001; Harter et al., 2002). Saks examines antecedents and consequences of engagement within an exchange-based perspective (Saks, 2006). These studies justify taking employee experience seriously; they do not justify interpreting agreement with a participation question as an observed increase in engagement or productivity. The present analysis therefore reports respondents' beliefs about these relationships without assigning unmeasured scores or importing effect sizes from unrelated organizations.

The job demands–resources literature provides an additional safeguard against overemphasizing enthusiasm. High demands and inadequate resources can contribute to exhaustion, whereas resources can support engagement and coping (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Workforce development should consequently include realistic workloads, adequate support, and opportunities to recover as well as encouragement to improve. Any proposed initiative at the company should first distinguish a lack of willingness from a lack of resources or manageable working conditions. The supplied data do not permit that distinction to be tested empirically.

2.7 Training learning and transfer

Training research consistently separates learning during an intervention from the subsequent use of learning at work. Reviews identify trainee attributes, programme design, and the work environment as relevant to effectiveness (Arthur et al., 2003; Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Salas et al., 2012). Noe's work highlights trainee attitudes and characteristics that can influence the training process (Noe, 1986). Employees' positive expectations are therefore useful starting information, but a unanimous endorsement of training does not establish an actual learning gain. It may indicate perceived need, general approval of development opportunities, or confidence in the idea of training.

Transfer is particularly important for management action. Baldwin and Ford outline a framework for understanding training transfer, while Blume and colleagues synthesize evidence on its correlates (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume et al., 2010). A programme may be well received yet have limited workplace value if employees cannot practise what they learned. Accordingly, a proposed development plan should specify the competence to be acquired, how it will be demonstrated, who will support its application, and what resources are needed. These are design implications derived from the literature rather than activities documented in the original survey.

Human capital theory offers a broader rationale for investment in knowledge and skills (Becker, 1964). Within an organization, however, investment decisions still require evidence about needs, costs, and use. Training should not be allocated solely as a reward to already favoured employees. Transparent access and role-based needs assessment can connect development with fairness. This connection is especially relevant where respondents identify several different bases for appraisal, since staff may reasonably question whether acquiring new competence will be recognized consistently or merely add to their responsibilities.

2.8 Communication voice and inclusion

Communication can provide information, explanation, feedback, and opportunities for correction. Its motivational value depends on whether employees understand and trust what is communicated. Voice adds another dimension: employees must be able to raise concerns and propose improvements. Morrison's review and research by Detert and Burris connect employee voice with the conditions created by leadership (Morrison, 2011; Detert & Burris, 2007). A manager's invitation to speak is insufficient if disagreement is discouraged or suggestions disappear without a response. Participation must be assessed through actual influence and follow-through.

Psychological safety concerns whether people can take interpersonal risks such as asking questions or acknowledging mistakes (Edmondson, 1999). Inclusion research likewise

highlights conditions under which employees can belong while contributing distinctive perspectives (Shore et al., 2011; Nishii, 2013). These ideas are relevant to learning because unspoken uncertainty can prevent early correction of problems. They also qualify the use of collective values: cooperation is useful when it enables knowledge sharing, but conformity can become counterproductive when employees with different experiences cannot question established routines.

Udoyiu and Edward's study of collectivist culture among South-South Nigerian SMEs provides regional context for the importance of interdependence (Udoyiu & Edward, 2024). Its enterprise-survival outcome is different from employee motivation in a public water organization. The present article draws only the bounded implication that shared values deserve attention when designing group learning and recognition. It does not assume that collectivism has the same effects across sectors or that individual contributions should be obscured. Team appreciation and transparent acknowledgement of specific contributions can be considered together.

2.9 Leadership culture and public service conditions

Leadership research links managerial behaviour with employee attitudes and development. Meta-analytic work compares transformational and transactional leadership, while field research examines follower development and performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Dvir et al., 2002). The practical relevance lies in behaviours employees can observe: clear expectations, support for learning, consistent feedback, and accountable follow-through. A label such as transformational leadership is less informative than evidence that managers apply these practices fairly. The case survey did not measure a leadership style, so no particular style is assigned to the organization.

Udoyiu and colleagues' research on innovation and leadership culture in South-South Nigerian SMEs supports attention to the broader organizational setting of improvement (Udoyiu et al., 2024b). Their related start-up culture study addresses cultural dimensions and entrepreneurial development (Udoyiu et al., 2024a). These works are used as regional comparators, with explicit recognition that entrepreneurial growth and public service workforce development are different outcomes. For this study, their contribution is to situate motivational practices within leadership and shared expectations. Their statistical estimates are not transferred to the water-company sample.

Public service motivation adds attention to commitments associated with serving the public. Perry and Wise develop its motivational foundations, and Perry offers an influential measurement approach (Perry & Wise, 1990; Perry, 1996). Wright examines the role of organizational mission, while Ritz and colleagues synthesize the wider literature (Wright, 2007; Ritz et al., 2016). These sources support considering whether employees connect daily work with public benefit. They do not establish that every employee in a public organization is primarily motivated by service or that public purpose makes ordinary employment needs less important.

There are also limits to relying on service commitment. Research by Potipiroon and Ford examines circumstances in which public service motivation does not translate straightforwardly into organizational commitment (Potipiroon & Ford, 2017). Weibel and colleagues discuss benefits and hidden costs of performance-related pay in the public sector (Weibel et al., 2010).

Together these perspectives suggest that management should consider incentive design, workload, and institutional constraints simultaneously. A narrowly targeted reward can encourage attention to the measured task while leaving other responsibilities undervalued, particularly when performance has several dimensions.

Udoyiu and Edward's work on privatization and commercialization in a public enterprise offers a nearby institutional comparison (Udoyiu & Edward, 2025). Their later Akwa Ibom study connects constraints on local-government autonomy with infrastructure and human capital challenges (Udoyiu & Edward, 2026). The relevance is that employees operate within financial and administrative arrangements that can influence opportunities for development. These studies concern different institutions and do not document the water company's conditions. They support examining such constraints before attributing organizational difficulties entirely to the motivation of individual employees.

2.10 Integrated analytical expectations

The literature suggests five linked expectations for interpreting the source. Employees may value visible routes to advancement; recognition may matter when it is credible; training may be attractive where staff seek competence; participation may matter where employees want influence; and appraisal may shape confidence that effort will be rewarded. These expectations organize the discussion rather than serve as statistically tested hypotheses. The available aggregate tables contain neither joint response patterns nor validated scale scores with which to estimate relationships among the proposed mechanisms.

The framework also distinguishes interventions aimed at willingness from interventions aimed at capability and opportunity. Recognition chiefly addresses appreciation and valued contribution. Training chiefly addresses capability, although it can also signal support. Participation can create opportunities to apply knowledge. Fair appraisal can strengthen confidence in the relationship between contribution and outcomes. Financial incentives may influence effort, but their design and the tasks being rewarded matter (Jenkins et al., 1998). Effective workforce development requires examining the fit among these practices instead of assuming that the most frequently selected questionnaire option should become the organization's only strategy.

3 Materials and Methods

3.1 Study design and source material

This article uses a descriptive secondary reanalysis of aggregate findings from the supplied document, Blessing Anietie Main Project.docx. The document describes a questionnaire study at Akwa Ibom State Water Company, Uyo, and labels its results as fieldwork from 2024. The present work involves extraction, arithmetic verification, restructuring, and literature-based interpretation. It does not involve new contact with respondents. The original questionnaire responses, individual records, recruitment log, and personnel sampling frame were not supplied, and no new empirical observations were added.

The case organization is retained under the name most commonly used in the source. The original alternates between "Company" and "Corporation," so this article's consistent wording is an editorial convention rather than independent verification of the legal name. The source describes participation by management and other staff categories, but their labels differ across

tables. Consequently, the analysis uses the total returned sample and does not present occupational subgroup comparisons. This avoids constructing an apparently precise sample profile from inconsistent documentation.

3.2 Sample and response accounting

The methods narrative and results chapter repeatedly state that 24 questionnaires were distributed and 20 were returned. These totals define the reported response accounting used here. The corrected return rate is calculated as 20 divided by 24, multiplied by 100, yielding 83.33%. Four questionnaires, equivalent to 16.67% of those distributed, were not returned. The source's approximately 91% return figure is an arithmetic error under these stated totals. The proportion of the organization's entire workforce represented by the respondents cannot be calculated reliably.

Other source statements are not reconciled by the available evidence. One table lists only 20 questionnaires sent, while the methodology also mentions a sample of 100 representing 15.97% of a population. The source gives insufficient support for that larger sample or the implied population. Neither figure is used in the present analysis. Selection appears to have involved accessible staff considered able to provide useful information, but the description does not establish a reproducible probability-sampling procedure. Findings are therefore attributed to the respondents, without claiming workforce representativeness.

3.3 Questionnaire and variables

The appended instrument includes background questions and items addressing promotion, recognition, salary, responsibility, challenging work, communication, appraisal, training, and participation. Responses combine categorical selections with agreement options. The instrument should not be treated as a single psychometric scale because the items address different topics and use different formats. No documented pilot study, reliability coefficient, factor analysis, or formal validation procedure appears in the supplied material. The present article does not invent any such assessment or calculate internal consistency from marginal frequency tables.

The variables analysed are the reported method of creating a motivational climate, perceived basis of appraisal, expected influence of training, perceived motivational role of communication, most important motivating factor, and views about participation. These items measure selections and beliefs. They do not measure actual promotion history, salary adequacy, training exposure, skill change, observed productivity, or service quality. The distinction is maintained in reporting: for example, respondents "believed training would improve performance," rather than training "improved performance."

3.4 Extraction arithmetic verification and exclusions

All substantive frequency tables were extracted from the Word document and compared with the accompanying narrative. Percentages for internally consistent tables were recalculated using the returned sample of 20. Each respondent therefore represents five percentage points. Narrative claims were revised when they overstated the table, such as statements that all respondents identified performance as the basis of appraisal when only eight selected that option. The numerical count in the corresponding table is retained where it is internally consistent and supported by its categories.

The item asking whether motivating and maintenance factors are the same contains an unresolved discrepancy. Its listed frequencies are seven strongly agreeing, two agreeing, four disagreeing, and four undecided, totalling 17 rather than 20. The printed percentages total 85%, despite a stated total of 100%, and the accompanying prose gives a different distribution. The remaining three cases are treated as unaccounted for in the reporting, not assigned to any category. This item is excluded from substantive conclusions because its full distribution cannot be established.

3.5 Analysis and interpretation

Analysis is restricted to frequencies, percentages, and transparent comparisons of marginal responses. Agreement categories are combined only for the participation item, where the table explicitly reports 10 strongly agreeing and five agreeing. The communication table does not separately report an "agree" category, so its 12 strongly agreeing responses are retained as printed. No correlations, regression models, significance tests, reliability statistics, or respondent-level cross-tabulations are estimated. Such calculations would require information that the aggregate tables do not provide.

Observational reporting guidance emphasizes clear disclosure of setting, participants, variables, limitations, and the analysis actually conducted (von Elm et al., 2007). Nonresponse research also shows that a response percentage alone cannot establish the absence of bias (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008). The present response rate is thus reported as an accounting measure, not a guarantee of validity. Given the undocumented sampling procedure, population confidence intervals would risk conveying unsupported precision. The analysis instead makes sample size and counts visible and keeps its conclusions descriptive.

3.6 Ethical and documentary considerations

The source questionnaire promises academic use of the information, but formal ethics approval and documented individual consent procedures were not supplied. The article does not claim that such approval was obtained. Only aggregate results are reproduced, and the questionnaire's personal information fields are not reconstructed. Outstanding authorship and institutional naming checks are listed in the separate author note.

4 Results

4.1 Questionnaire returns and data completeness

The reported distribution totals yield 20 usable questionnaires from 24 distributed. Table 1 presents the corrected accounting. The four nonreturns are not described in sufficient detail to assess whether they differed systematically from respondents. The source also provides no dependable demographic distribution for the usable sample. Consequently, the results describe aggregate preferences without comparisons by age, sex, educational qualification, length of service, or staff grade. Although those fields appear in the questionnaire, blank instrument categories are not evidence of the characteristics of respondents.

Table 1: Corrected questionnaire return accounting

Outcome	Number	Percentage of distributed questionnaires
Usable returns	20	83.33
Not returned	4	16.67
Total distributed	24	100.00

Source: Recalculated from source-project totals of 24 distributed and 20 returned.

4.2 Creating a motivational climate

Promotion was selected by 10 respondents, representing 50% of the sample, as a means of creating a motivational climate. Recognition was selected by five respondents (25%), communication by three (15%), and salary increase by two (10%). These counts total 20. The result places advancement prominently within the answers to this particular question. It does not indicate how frequently promotions occurred, whether respondents considered the promotion system fair, or whether any of these practices had already been introduced. The responses describe selected mechanisms, not an evaluation of programme effectiveness.

Table 2: Reported preferences for motivational practices

Survey item	Response category	Number	Percentage
Creating a motivational climate	Promotion	10	50
Creating a motivational climate	Recognition	5	25
Creating a motivational climate	Communication	3	15
Creating a motivational climate	Salary increase	2	10
Most important motivating factor	Recognition for achievement	12	60
Most important motivating factor	Money	4	20
Most important motivating factor	Increased responsibility	2	10
Most important motivating factor	Challenging work	2	10

Source: Source-project frequency tables; percentages checked against 20 respondents. Each survey item has its own total of 20 and 100%.

4.3 Most important motivating factor

The separate question about the most important motivating factor produced a different distribution. Recognition for achievement was selected by 12 respondents (60%), money by four (20%), increased responsibility by two (10%), and challenging work by two (10%). Recognition therefore led the responses to this item. Because promotion was not one of the reported categories in this second table, its distribution cannot be interpreted as a direct competition between promotion and recognition. Differences between the two questions may reflect their wording and available options as well as respondents' underlying priorities.

The two respondents selecting increased responsibility and the two selecting challenging work should not be interpreted as employees who alone valued development. A categorical selection identifies one response under a particular question. It does not establish that other respondents rejected that feature of work. Individual questionnaires would be required to determine whether people selecting recognition also supported training or participation. The available marginal tables show how frequently each response occurred, but not which responses belonged to the same person across questions.

4.4 Perceived basis of appraisal

Eight respondents (40%) selected employee performance as the basis of appraisal, five (25%) selected job experience, four (20%) selected qualification, and three (15%) selected personal connections under the source's "man-know-man" category. Performance was the largest single category, but it was not selected by a majority. The source narrative's claim that all respondents identified performance as the basis of appraisal is therefore unsupported. The distribution indicates different perceptions of appraisal criteria, although it does not establish whether those perceptions accurately represent written policy or actual decisions.

Table 3: Perceived basis of employee appraisal

Response category	Number	Percentage
Employee performance	8	40
Job experience	5	25
Qualification	4	20
Personal connections as worded in the source	3	15
Total	20	100

Source: Source-project appraisal table. The personal-connections category records respondent perception and is not independent evidence of misconduct.

4.5 Training communication and participation

All 20 respondents selected increased performance as the expected consequence of employee training. The observed result is unanimous endorsement of a belief about training. No comparison between trained and untrained employees, before-and-after assessment, or independent performance record was provided. The result therefore supports identifying development opportunities as a management topic, while leaving actual effectiveness untested. The narrative description of respondents as strongly agreeing is not retained because the corresponding frequency table reports an outcome category rather than a graded agreement scale.

Twelve respondents (60%) strongly agreed that effective communication was needed to motivate staff, five (25%) disagreed, and three (15%) were undecided. This distribution contains appreciable disagreement and uncertainty. It does not identify whether dissenting respondents doubted the importance of communication, interpreted the question as claiming communication was sufficient, or had experienced ineffective communication practices. The accompanying source prose varies in its wording, which reinforces the need to retain the table's categories and avoid explaining the minority responses without further evidence.

Participation received 10 strongly agreeing responses (50%) and five agreeing responses (25%). Two respondents (10%) disagreed, and three (15%) were undecided. Combining the two positive categories gives 15 respondents (75%) who endorsed the proposition that participation could contribute to satisfaction and higher productivity. This is a perception of a potential relationship. The survey does not report actual participation opportunities or directly measure either satisfaction or productivity, so the combined percentage should not be presented as the share of staff who experienced an improvement.

Table 4: Perceptions of training communication and participation

Survey item	Response category	Number	Percentage
Expected effect of training	Increased performance	20	100
Communication needed for motivation	Strongly agree	12	60
Communication needed for motivation	Disagree	5	25
Communication needed for motivation	Undecided	3	15
Participation may improve satisfaction and productivity	Strongly agree	10	50
Participation may improve satisfaction and productivity	Agree	5	25
Participation may improve satisfaction and productivity	Disagree	2	10
Participation may improve satisfaction and productivity	Undecided	3	15

Source: Source-project tables. Each item has a denominator of 20. The wording is shortened for presentation without treating beliefs as measured effects.

5 Discussion

5.1 Advancement and recognition as distinct priorities

The most prominent responses concern promotion in the motivational-climate question and recognition in the personal-motivator question. Together they suggest that visible acknowledgement of contribution deserves management attention. They should not be collapsed into a single ranking because the questions offered different choices. Promotion can involve status, responsibility, career progression, and remuneration. Recognition can occur without a change in grade. The distinction matters for policy: a transparent advancement process addresses expectations about careers, whereas timely acknowledgement addresses whether current contributions are noticed.

An appropriate interpretation combines developmental and fairness considerations. Job design research explains why responsibility and feedback can shape employees' experience of their work (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Justice research explains why the procedures governing outcomes also matter (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). If recognition is applied inconsistently, it may communicate preference rather than merit. If promotion criteria are obscure, employees may not know which capabilities to develop. These are plausible risks that the institution could investigate; the source does not establish that either condition presently characterizes its management.

Recognition should therefore be connected to identifiable contributions. A manager might acknowledge accurate completion of a difficult assignment, constructive support for a colleague, or a documented improvement in a routine. Such examples are proposed practices, not observations from the survey. Feedback research shows that interventions do not uniformly improve performance, making the focus and delivery of feedback important (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Recognition is likely to be more informative when it identifies what was done well and why it mattered than when it offers general praise without developmental content.

5.2 Why the findings do not make pay unimportant

Only two respondents selected salary increase in one question, while four selected money in another. These figures cannot support a conclusion that financial rewards are unimportant. The categories are framed differently, and the source does not provide reliable information on actual pay adequacy or employee financial conditions. A single-choice question also forces trade-offs that may not reflect the way employment conditions operate together. Employees can prefer recognition at the margin while still expecting dependable and fair remuneration as part of the employment relationship.

Research on incentives reinforces this qualified interpretation. Financial incentives can relate to performance, but the nature of the task and incentive arrangement matter (Jenkins et al., 1998). Intrinsic motivation and incentives can jointly contribute rather than forming mutually exclusive explanations (Cerasoli et al., 2014). In a public service setting, incentive design also requires attention to possible hidden costs and competing objectives (Weibel et al., 2010). The practical implication is to examine pay alongside recognition and fair procedures, without using a small preference table to justify either an exclusively financial strategy or the neglect of remuneration.

5.3 Training endorsement requires evidence of transfer

The unanimous response concerning training is the clearest expression of agreement in the dataset. It provides a basis for discussing development needs with employees. Its evidential strength ends at endorsement, however. Respondents were asked about an expected effect, and the project did not measure actual learning or work improvement. A research article must preserve that boundary even when the proposed effect is plausible and supported by wider literature. Otherwise, a descriptive belief becomes an unsupported intervention result.

Training research suggests a practical sequence of needs diagnosis, appropriate learning design, supported application, and evaluation (Salas et al., 2012; Blume et al., 2010). For this organization, a small pilot could begin with a task for which both a skill gap and a feasible opportunity for practice have been established. Assessment could include a demonstration before training and a comparable demonstration afterwards, followed by a check of workplace use. Such a design would answer a different and stronger question than the original survey: whether a specified intervention produced a meaningful change under documented conditions. Udoyiu and Edward's study of autonomy and human capital constraints provides a useful regional reminder that staff development depends on institutional capacity (Udoyiu & Edward, 2026). An employee's willingness to learn does not establish that approvals, funds, or practice opportunities are available. These constraints need direct investigation at the water company before they are asserted. Bringing them into the analytical framework nonetheless helps avoid blaming employees for performance problems that may arise from barriers outside their authority.

5.4 Appraisal as a developmental process

The dispersed appraisal responses are important because motivation depends partly on employees understanding how contribution is assessed. Performance, experience, and qualifications can all have legitimate roles in personnel decisions, but they are not identical. Qualifications may indicate preparation, experience may indicate accumulated exposure, and performance concerns the execution of work. A policy can use several criteria, yet employees need to understand which criteria apply to a particular decision and how evidence is weighed.

The questionnaire's single response format cannot determine whether respondents perceived an explicitly mixed system.

Performance appraisal and performance management research distinguishes periodic ratings from the broader process of setting expectations, monitoring progress, and supporting improvement (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). A developmental approach would allow employees to review expectations early, discuss obstacles during the work period, and understand the evidence behind the eventual rating. The three personal-connections responses justify reviewing transparency and confidence in procedures. They do not justify an accusation against management. This measured interpretation is consistent with the inclusion concerns raised in Udoyiu and Washington's discussion of Nigerian workplaces (Udoyiu & Washington, 2023).

5.5 Communication and participation need credible follow-through

Communication and participation both attracted positive responses, but they address different relationships. Communication can explain a decision after it has been made. Participation can allow employees to influence that decision before it is finalized. An organization could communicate frequently while allowing little voice, or invite suggestions without explaining what happened to them. The survey does not identify which pattern exists. Its findings support examining both access to information and opportunities for influence instead of treating them as interchangeable motivational techniques.

Voice and psychological-safety research provide practical questions for that examination (Morrison, 2011; Edmondson, 1999). Can junior staff raise operational concerns? Do managers explain why a suggestion is adopted or declined? Are employees able to acknowledge uncertainty without humiliation? These questions would clarify what meaningful participation requires. Inclusive practices can also improve the range of experiences available to a team, although the source provides no evidence about demographic differences in access to voice (Shore et al., 2011; Nishii, 2013). Proposed consultation should therefore be accessible across roles without assuming that subgroup inequalities have already been demonstrated.

5.6 Regional relevance and limits of comparison

The selected Udoyiu studies strengthen the discussion by connecting the case to research on Nigeria's organizational and institutional environment. Inclusion concerns inform the treatment of appraisal. Leadership culture informs the need for consistent supervision. Collective values draw attention to cooperation, while studies of public enterprises and local-government capacity encourage attention to structural conditions (Udoyiu et al., 2024b; Udoyiu & Edward, 2024; Udoyiu & Edward, 2025). These are distinct contributions rather than interchangeable citations. Their relevance is conceptual and contextual, with each comparison limited to the issue the cited work actually addresses.

The main boundary in these comparisons is institutional: SMEs, local governments, and a public water organization operate under different mandates and employment arrangements. A practice associated with entrepreneurial development may require substantial adaptation before it supports public service work. The broader motivation and training literature is therefore used alongside the regional studies to identify mechanisms worth examining. Future comparative research could assess whether fairness, development opportunities, and supervisor support operate similarly across these settings, while retaining separate measures for enterprise outcomes and employee capabilities.

6 Limitations and Future Research

The principal limitation is the small, incompletely documented sample. Twenty responses can identify issues for discussion but cannot establish the views of the whole workforce. Selection procedures, the population denominator, and the characteristics of nonrespondents are insufficiently described. Arithmetic corrections improve the accuracy of reporting but cannot repair these underlying design constraints. In particular, the return rate does not show that respondents and nonrespondents had similar experiences, and the unexplained staff-category differences prevent credible subgroup analysis.

Measurement limitations are equally important. Several questions ask respondents to endorse desirable outcomes or select one option from a restricted list. Agreement may reflect social desirability, interpretation of the question, or a general belief rather than experience of an existing practice. Research on common method bias explains why using a single source and similar response processes can complicate interpretation (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Here, the lack of respondent-level records prevents further assessment. The incomplete maintenance-factor item additionally demonstrates why original questionnaires and coding records should be retained for verification.

Future research should begin with a confirmed workforce list and a clearly described selection procedure. A larger study could use established measures of motivation, justice, support, and engagement, adapted carefully to the setting and checked for comprehension. Training exposure and performance outcomes should be recorded separately from perceptions. Interviews could investigate why respondents value promotion and recognition and how they understand appraisal criteria. Such qualitative work would help refine hypotheses without assuming that explanations proposed in this discussion already describe the institution.

A stronger evaluation would follow employees over time and assess the implementation of a specified intervention. Where assignment cannot be randomized, a defensible comparison and explicit account of competing changes would improve interpretation. Analysis should report the size and uncertainty of observed differences, rather than relying only on statistical significance (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). Raw data should be managed confidentially, and the reporting should document missingness, exclusions, and any departures from the planned analysis. These steps would permit more reliable conclusions about which practices support development and under what conditions.

7 Conclusion

The supplied project provides descriptive evidence that respondents at Akwa Ibom State Water Company, Uyo, attached importance to advancement, recognition, training, and opportunities to participate. Promotion led the motivational-climate responses, while recognition for achievement led a separate question about the most important motivator. Training received unanimous endorsement as a potential means of improving performance. Appraisal responses were more dispersed, and communication attracted both strong agreement and reservations. These patterns identify practical subjects for management attention without demonstrating the effectiveness of any intervention.

The reanalysis also shows that careful reporting changes the strength of the conclusions. The corrected response rate is 83.33%, the usable reported sample is 20, and the incomplete

maintenance-factor table cannot support a substantive finding. Employees' expectations are retained as expectations rather than recast as measured productivity gains. Relevant Udoyiu publications situate the discussion within regional concerns about inclusion, culture, leadership, and institutional capacity, while wider research supplies complementary motivational and developmental mechanisms.

A proportionate response is to connect transparent advancement and fair appraisal with specific recognition, supported learning, and credible employee voice. The proposed practices should be tested through a documented pilot and evaluated with separate measures of employee experience, competence, and work outcomes. This approach respects the value of the original respondents' contributions while recognizing the additional evidence required before making causal or organization-wide claims about motivation and workforce development.

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