

EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION AT WORK ACCORDING TO THEIR LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of motivation at work appears as the motor of the worker's behavior, without which no professional success is foreseeable. In a post-crisis context in Ivory Coast where individual factors like self-esteem and social well-being have been toughly well-tried, one can wonder lawfully concerning the impact of such factors on workers' motivation. So, one hundred and thirty one employees of private sector in Abidjan have been selected with the snowball method and surveyed at their workplace by a multidimensional questionnaire. Results show a significant relation of motivation at work with self-esteem specifically and the two predictors together – self-esteem and social well-being – suggesting so to take these factors into account when reinforcing workers' motivation.

Keywords: Self-esteem, social well-being, motivation, work, Ivorians

INTRODUCTION

The role of human factors, individual or social, in workers' motivation has been particularly emphasized following the Taylorist theories which saw the need to take into account only economic factors (Francès, 1995). Thus, classical theories such as that of Alderfer (1969) link motivation to individual basic needs. Today, many studies concerning the impact of individual characteristics on motivation at work have examined the role of personality, affect, interest and value factors (Kanfer *et al.*, 2008). Insofar as motivation appears to be the driving force of human behavior, the interest of such a research is both scientific and social. Indeed, although motivation at work is among the themes which have generated the most theories (Baron, 1991) the present research will help to understand this phenomenon a little more and to increase knowledge in this area. In addition, this research is essential for the implementation of interventions aiming to increase motivation at work. While the individual is an element of the group, it is undeniable that the social group depends on the social individual (Moreland, 2000). From this point of view, such a work aims at the highest level of the whole society's development.

As a dynamic state that encourages the worker to choose an activity, to commit himself and to persevere in achieving the activity with an end in view (Benabou & Tirole, 2004), motivation at work appears to be a complex phenomenon. It does not only depend on the type of activity accomplished, but it also varies in accordance with a plurality of factors among which the working conditions and the worker's perceptions of these conditions. It should therefore be expected that the worker's self-perception has an impact on motivation, since he couldn't be motivated at work if he feels weak. Therefore, it seems lawful to ask the question of the role of self-esteem and social well-being on motivation at work.

Taking into account workers' self-esteem is of major importance insofar as it is an intimate relationship with oneself that impacts the individual's thoughts on himself, his environment as well as his behaviors and emotions. Self-esteem is by definition a psychological component of the personality which has a development strongly dependent on contexts - family and environmental - quality of interactions and communications that every person manages to undertake in his different environments of life, the appreciation it will have on his successes and difficulties (Malandin, 1997; André & Lelord, 1999). According to André (2006), self-esteem has three pillars that are self-love (loving oneself despite one's flaws and limitations), self-vision (self-assessment of one's abilities and flaws) and trust in himself (thinking that one is able to act adequately in the important situations of life). These three pillars of self-esteem are so linked that the self-esteem would be greatly affected if one of them is weak. We can easily notice that each of these pillars of self-esteem can lead the individual to a greater motivation in his work. Duclos (2000) shows, moreover, that self-esteem has a positive value one can globally recognize as an individual and in each of the important areas of life. To be successful, it is important for the worker to have the conditions for a good quality of life. The concept of well-being therefore refers to all factors contributing to the good quality of life a person needs. It refers to two main designations, one physical (feeling of body primordial needs satisfaction) and the other psychological (result of an individual assessment). If the well-being thus reflects the fact of satisfying one's needs, the term "social" accompanying it designates the whole society in its disparities between groups within it. Therefore, social well-being has the same characteristics as physical or mental well-being. It is a relative concept (linked to the cultural and professional environment), subjective (specific to each person) and variable (in time and space). The concept of social well-being thus encompasses phenomena that positively affect the quality of life, such as a pleasant work, a supportive environment, a healthy lifestyle and harmony with one's environment. This ability of individuals to live for themselves and for others is possible through a meaningful work and a good health. It is therefore reasonable to think that being in your own skin can be a factor of productivity.

Can we then argue that people's self-esteem and social well-being determine their motivation at work? The problem at the origin of this question derives from the working conditions of the employees in the post-crisis period. Indeed, in the aftermath of the post-election crisis, companies in Ivory Coast are experiencing difficulties of many kinds (Mieu, 2011). In this context characterized by the decline in the purchasing power of citizens, the deliquescence of values and the insecurity in a broad sense, the discomfort of the worker in particular seems more pregnant and factors such as self-esteem and good social well-being of workers are put to the test. In an environment made unbalanced by the belligerents of the military-political conflict, social well-being is a concept that makes perfect sense. Indeed, it is difficult for the worker to achieve a positive assessment of himself or herself since he has no satisfactory conditions of life and work. Viau & Darveau (1997) indicate that positive self-evaluations have a positive impact on motivation at work. When Careau & Fournier (2002) show that social well-being has intrinsic (related to satisfying a curiosity, acquiring knowledge, pleasure of doing an activity) and extrinsic (related to performance and recognition of others) goals that are complementary, we can easily notice that the positive evaluations mentioned above come from both the self-esteem and the social well-being of the worker. The concern with these factors is that, despite the difficult work situations, many workers who are willing to keep their jobs find themselves in conditions acting unknowingly on their professional behavior.

Our quest for an answer to the raised question is based on the self-determination theory of Deci & Ryan (1991). This then stipulates that the human being tends to satisfy three basic

psychological needs that are autonomy, competence and relation to others. Autonomy supposes that the individual voluntarily decides about his action and he is the agent who carries out this action so that it is congruent with him and he assumes it entirely. Competence refers to the individual's feeling of efficiency on his environment. It's an asset that stimulates curiosity and a taste for challenges. The need for relations with others implies a feeling of being connected to people who are important to oneself. It can therefore be said that the satisfaction of the needs described by this theory determines the individual's behavior at work. Thus, we can predict that this behavior will be guided by the satisfaction of needs contributing to the individual's well-being and the feeling of growing up. The individual will thus adopt behaviors of exploring and acting efficiently at the workplace. He will be so motivated and will easily accomplish his tasks insofar as he perceives a source of internal causality.

Therefore, if the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs is held back by the professional environment, the worker's self-esteem and social well-being will be affected and his motivation will be diminished. The worker in this case would perform his work with disinterest and show withdrawal behaviors such as delays, absenteeism or presenteeism. These developments lead us to the following operational Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The level of employees' motivation at work increases with their level of self-esteem;

Hypothesis 2: The level of employees' motivation at work increases according to their level of social well-being;

Hypothesis 3: Considered together, self-esteem and social well-being contribute significantly to increased motivation at work.

These hypotheses are put to the test by means of a methodology that now needs to be elucidated in order to take the most advantage of the data.

METHODOLOGY

One hundred and thirty-one employees were selected in the Abidjan metropolis by the snowball method to participate in this study. All of these employees are male and are from Ivorian private sector companies. The analyses performed will provide further details on the sample's characteristics. All these contacted individuals agreed to submit to our study instrument.

The instrument developed for this purpose is a questionnaire for collecting from the workers the data necessary to answer the research question. This questionnaire is organized around three sections relating respectively to biographical data, independent predictors (self-esteem and social well-being) and motivation at work. Biographical data were obtained from open or closed questions providing some factual information such as gender, CSP and seniority in the workstation. The second part of the questionnaire, measuring the variables self-esteem and social well-being, is based on the subscales of the French version made by Guillemin *et al.* (1997) of the DHP (Duke Health Profile) scale. The subscales used measure respectively self-esteem (example of item: "I feel good as I am") and social well-being (example item: "I am comfortable with others"). Each of these scales is made of 7 items that one must answer with a cross in a three points continuum: Not at All/A little/Much. The score of each participant corresponds to the total of the 7 items, all coded positively.

The score obtained for each subscale varies from 7 (lower limit) to 21 (upper limit). The third part of the questionnaire includes a measurement scale of motivation at work. This scale is called IVMAE – *Inventaire des valeurs de Motivation Appliquée aux Employés* – in french meaning the Inventory of Motivation Values Applied to Employees (Francès & Mogenet, 1988). This scale totals 35 items to be answered by ticking a four-point continuum of answers. An example item is: "For you it's very important/important/a little important/not important to invest in your work."

After adaptation using the judges method (ten workers from Abidjan) and the pre-test (fifteen private sector employees), we obtain an instrument with questions that the respondents can understand easily, with a completion time of 13 to 21 minutes. The agents' motivation at work appears as a continuous quantitative variable evaluated on a four-degree numerical scale and varies between 35 and 120. It is therefore the highest if it is close to the upper limit (120) and the weakest when it is close to the lower limit (35).

The questionnaire was administered in the industrial zones of Koumassi, Vridi and Yopougon, located respectively in the South, Center and North of Abidjan. This administration was carried out during the workers' break times, by direct administration in order to get questionnaires correctly completed by the persons contacted. The data were then stripped to be ready for analysis.

Scale rating was done in number of points. It also took into account the modality of the responses and the positive or negative valence of the item. Thus, for the items with negative valence, describing the unfavorable aspects of the variable, the quotation principle was reversed.

The analyses were performed statistically using Spearman's r with regard to the nature of the data involved: scores expressing for the explained variable the level of motivation at work and for the predicting variables respectively the levels of self-esteem and social well-being. For interactive hypothesis analysis - the interactive effect of self-esteem and social well-being on motivation at work - the technique of multiple regression was used. All of these analyzes were done using the SPSS program.

RESULTS

The information obtained from the members of the sample have characteristics provided in the following table:

Table 1. Description of information about the three distributions

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Social well-being	131	15,98	5,82433	-0,579	0,212	-1,432	0,420
Self-esteem	131	11,85	3,27807	0,768	0,212	0,185	0,420
Motivation at work	131	63,69	21,8469	0,688	0,212	-0,294	0,420

Individuals from whom the study was conducted (N = 131) have an average motivation at work of 63.69 on the administered scale. Standard deviations remain within acceptable limits. The asymmetry and flattening coefficients indicate normal law distributions (Skewness coefficients <1 and Kurtosis <1.5).

The results of simple and partial correlations analysis performed are provided by the following table:

Table 2. Simple and partial correlations between variables

Control Variables			Motivation at work	Social well-being	Self-esteem	
-none ^a	Motivation at work	Correlation	1,000	0,196	0,340	
		Significancy (bilateral)	.	0,025	0,000	
		Dof	0	129	129	
	Social well-being	Correlation	0,196	1,000	0,194	
		Significancy (bilateral)	0,025	.	0,026	
		Dof	129	0	129	
	Self-esteem	Correlation	0,340	0,194	1,000	
		Significancy (bilateral)	0,000	0,026	.	
		Dof	129	129	0	
	Self esteem	Motivation at work	Correlation	1,000	0,141	
			Significancy (bilateral)	.	0,110	
			Dof	0	128	
Social well-being		Correlation	0,141	1,000		
		Significancy (bilateral)	0,110	.		
		Dof	128	0		
Social well-being	Motivation at work	Correlation	1,000		0,313	
		Significancy (bilateral)	.		0,000	
		Dof	0		128	
	Self esteem	Correlation	0,313		1,000	
		Significancy (bilateral)	0,000		.	
		Dof	128		0	

a. Cells contain simple correlations (Pearson)

The simple correlation indices indicate that the two predictors (self-esteem and social well-being) are significantly related ($r = 0.194$, $dof = 129$, $p < 0.05$). Hence the need to control the other variable, by means of partial correlations, when it is necessary to obtain the relation between one of them and the motivation at work. This table also contains information that helps to test afterwards the two specific hypotheses later.

Self-esteem and motivation at work

The analysis of the relationship between self-esteem and motivation at work, by controlling the variable social well-being, indicates, according to the previous table, a significant correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.313$, $dof = 128$, $p < 0.01$). This result makes it possible to reject the null hypothesis and to maintain the hypothesis 1 according to which the more the worker's self-esteem level increases, the more his level of motivation at work increases.

Social well-being and motivation at work

The preceding table also provides the result of the relationship between social well-being and motivation at work analysis when the variable self-esteem is controlled ($r = 0.141$, $dof = 128$, ns). This result shows no significant correlation between scores of well-being and scores of motivation at work. This leads to maintaining the null hypothesis and asserting that employees' social well-being does not predict their motivation at work.

In addition to the specific relations of motivation at work with respectively self-esteem and social well-being, the results are also assessed, in accordance with the hypotheses, in relation between motivation at work and the two predictors considered jointly.

Self-esteem, social well-being and motivation at work

Do the variables self-esteem and social well-being, introduced in the relation, help to improve significantly the variability of motivation at work? Information provided in the following table answer this question.

Table 3. Contribution of predictors to regression

Model	Sum of squares	Dof	Average squares	F	Sig.
1 Regression	8243,906	2	4121,953	9,806	0,000
Residue	53803,881	128	420,343		b
Total	62047,786	130			

a. Dependent variable: Motivation at work

b. Predicted values: (constant), self-esteem, social well-being

We can see from this table that the value expressing the strength of predictors' joint contribution to the regression of motivation at work is significant ($F = 9.806$, $p < 0.01$). This leads to reject the null hypothesis and maintain hypothesis 3. Therefore, Self-esteem and social well-being, considered together, improve employees' motivation at work.

Since it is known that self-esteem and social well-being have a joint contribution to improving employees' motivation at work, information in the following table helps to determine this contribution.

Table 4: Correlation between motivation at work and the two predictors considered together^b

Model	R	R-two	R-two adjusted	Standard error of estimate	Change in statistics				
					Variation of R-two	Variation of F	Dof1	Dof 2	Sig. Variation of F
1	0,365 ^a	0,133	0,119	20,50226	0,133	9,806	2	128	0,000

a. Predicted values: (constant), self-esteem, social well-being

b. Dependent variable: Motivation at work

This table provides several interesting information:

Firstly, the value of the multiple correlation $R = 0.365$ representing the strength of the relationship between the predictors' combination and motivation at work;

Secondly, the meaning of R-two is evaluated according to the contribution of the model. The variation of F associated with this model is significant ($p < 0.01$). This model accounts so for a significant proportion of motivation at work. We therefore went from $R\text{-two} = 0$ to $R\text{-two} =$

0.133 ($p < 0.01$). This model therefore contributes significantly to improving the variability of motivation at work;

Thirdly, remember that the value of R-two, multiplied by 100, indicates the percentage of motivation at work variability explained by the model (predictors). The results suggest that 13.3% of employee motivation is explained by the combination of self-esteem and social well-being;

What then is the regression equation that allows us to predict the level of employees' motivation at work based on these predictors? The following table contains information that lead to answering this question.

Evaluation des paramètres du modèle

Table 5. Standardized and non-standardized coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	30,852	7,712		4,001	0,000
Social well-being	0,507	0,315	0,135	1,612	0,110
Self-esteem	2,088	0,559	0,313	3,734	0,000

a. Variable dépendante : Motivation at work

We know that the regression equation for predicting variables is built on the following model: $Y_i: (B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \dots + B_nX_n) + \epsilon_i$. By replacing the B with the coefficients provided by this table, we obtain:

$$Y(\text{motivation at work}) = 15,594 + 0,507(\text{Social well-being}) + 2,088(\text{Self-esteem})$$

The sign of the coefficient indicating the direction of the relationship allows us to say that the level of motivation at work increases as the level of self-esteem increases. The value of the t in the table tells us if the coefficient is significant or not. It leads to confirm the previous results concerning the specific relations between each of the two predictors and motivation at work.

The standardized Beta coefficient provides another information by indicating that a change in the self-esteem standard deviation (3.27807) is associated with 0.313 increase in the motivation at work standard deviation ($0.313 \times 21.8469 = 6.84$), while the change in the standard deviation of social well-being (5.82433) is associated only with 0.135 increase in the standard deviation of motivation at work ($0.135 \times 21.8469 = 2.95$).

What relationships do the two predictors have then mutually in their prediction of motivation at work?

Mediating effects

By examining inter-correlations between the three variables, we can question whether one of the two predictors plays a mediating role in the correlation between the other and motivation at work. In other words, does social well-being play a mediating role in the correlation between self-esteem and motivation at work? Does self-esteem play a mediating role in the correlation between social well-being and motivation at work? We know there is a significant correlation between these two predictors ($r = 0.313$, $dof = 129$, $p < 0.01$) and between self-esteem and motivation at work according to the different results. However, when we observe the simple and partial correlations indices, we can notice that the simple correlation between

social well-being and motivation at work is significant ($r = 0.196$, $dof = 129$, $p < 0.05$) whereas this correlation is no longer significant if we control the self-esteem variable ($r = 0.141$, $dof = 128$, ns). This leads to the assertion that the correlation between social well-being and motivation at work is significant only when self-esteem variable is present.

Self-esteem appears as an intermediate variable between employees' social well-being and motivation at work. In practical terms, this means that social well-being contributes to improving motivation at work only among employees who have self-esteem.

DISCUSSION

With the objective of examining self-esteem and social well-being contribution to increase employees' motivation at work, this study led to three types of results relating respectively to the link between self-esteem and social well-being, as well as the link between motivation at work and these predictors considered together. Specifically, the results show that self-esteem predicts motivation at work, but it's not the case for social well-being. However, these two variables jointly predict motivation at work. In the light of the self-determination theory, we can argue that a high level of self-esteem leads to the satisfaction of basic needs such as autonomy and competence at work, reinforcing so the feeling that the individual can succeed on his own. This determines his motivation to work, because the more he feels that he controls his activity (in its course and consequences), the better his motivation at work. A worker who perceives his professional success as a result of his abilities will feel safer and more motivated than if he attributed his success to a favor from the assessor. Moreover, the employee's estimation for his ability to succeed in his job and for himself as a worker leads him to perceive himself as competent. The higher this perception is, the greater the motivation at work. For example, if a worker perceives himself as being "strong" at work, he is probably one of those who enjoy doing that work and make much effort to succeed.

These results are consistent with the explanations of Lévy-Leboyer (2001) for whom self-esteem includes the individual desire for self-expression. For this author, self-esteem drives the individual to act and allows him to set larger goals. The worker is therefore not willing to make any effort if he has convictions that his efforts will be unsuccessful. Better, Rousset (2006) presents the self as a "stock" of data informing the person about his past achievements in comparable situations as well as his potential and his future aptitudes. It appears that the employee's positive perceptions and opinions about himself are a good indicator of his reactions to the tasks he will face. The fact that self-esteem and social well-being contribute together to motivation at work is an indication of social well-being efficiency for an individual who has a high self-esteem. Ollier-Malaterre (2005) indicates that positive feelings about oneself determine professional success. El Akremi (2000) follows this position by asserting that the individual's self-determined behavior is elicited by cognitive affective motives. These motives impel him to preserve a positive self-state that results in self-perception as competent and effective. The influence of this perception on motivation is revealed by Viau & Darveau (1997). Contrariwise, there are works with results not going in the same direction as present research. This is the case for Benabou & Tirole (2004) who show that the individual is motivated by the relationships he weaves with his colleagues, the recognition and the respect granted to him. For their part, Colquitt *et al.* (2001) find that the way people are treated (with politeness, dignity and respect) is linked to factors such as job satisfaction. Frimousse *et al.* (2008) from 302 employees in various sectors of activity in France indicate that employees give more importance to the quality of interpersonal treatment: interactional justice accounts for 64% of work performance, compared to only 14% for procedural justice and 11% for distributive justice. Moreland (2000) nuances these

results by showing that besides technology, the reward system and all the "interactional justice" (cohesion, teamwork, quality of communication between members, team performance, behavior of team leader), performance also depends on personalities and individual abilities. This relationship is specified by Reis *et al.* (2000) who indicate that the sensitive and sympathetic attention that is given to someone can affect his motivation if it confirms that he is important to others and the object of concern for them.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study enrich the reflections on suitable factors for enhancing employees' motivation. They suggest that motivation at work increases as the worker's self-esteem increases and that the contribution of social well-being the motivation at work becomes important only when the worker's self-esteem increases. These results underline the prominent place of self-esteem in the perspective of reinforcing employees' motivation. This implies in a practical way that beyond workers' social well-being, it is their self-esteem should be strengthened first. In particular, this study contributes to the personnel management of the companies in exit of crisis situations where people were reached in their self-esteem and underwent narcissistic wounds of all kinds. Business managers must therefore redefine their management policy in order to bring workers to a high level of self-esteem. For this, all practices in this way would be welcome, whether by strengthening employees' autonomy (to get them to realize themselves in their work), by being attentive to their extra-professional suffering even by addressing them a greeting in the morning on arrival at work. Such practices are likely to develop the employees' impression of being a valued and needed person. Without such self-esteem, employees' are likely to evolve into various kinds of psychological withdrawal from work. Such a detriment to productivity would not be beneficial to the company or the society as a whole.

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