Chapter 5. Health worker motivation: role of individual, organizational and cultural factors

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Outline

1. Defining motivation to work
2. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks of motivation
3. Illustrative primary research articles
4. Research challenges and gaps
5. Future directions
1. Defining Motivation

• Quick introspection - please take a couple of minutes to think about what motivation means to you in the following contexts:
  - What motivated you to opt for the academic course/profession that you are currently engaged in?
  - What motivates you to complete your course/remain in this profession?
  - What motivates you to do your best in your course/job?
1. Defining Motivation

• Motivation in the work context is typically defined as the “willingness to exert and maintain an effort towards organizational goals” (Franco et al. 2002, p. 1255)

• Motivation develops in individuals as a result of the interaction between individual processes, immediate organizational work context and cultural dynamics.

• Motivation is a complex construct, closely interrelated with the concepts of job satisfaction, retention and performance.
2. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks of motivation

• Motivation is studied in a variety of disciplines, including psychology, organizational behaviour and economics.

• In the context of organizational psychology and behaviour, two sets of theories are used to understand motivation
  – **Content theories**: postulate that people are motivated by the desire to satisfy their inner needs and values.
  – **Process theories**: focus more on the cognitive processes underlying motivation, including factors that initiate, direct, sustain and halt behaviour.
2. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks of motivation

- Franco et al. (2002) developed a conceptual framework for understanding determinants of motivation for the health workforce
  - **Individual processes** pertain to a person’s goals, values and expectations along with self-efficacy.
  - **Organizational factors** into organizational resources (infrastructure, medicines, supplies, human resources, monetary funds), structures (hierarchies, autonomy, management, feedback), processes (communication, procedures of work) and culture (set of shared norms, leadership).
  - **Cultural factors** include association between existing social norms and functioning of an organization as well as societal values and expectations manifested as relationships between clients and health workers.
2. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks of motivation

• Self-determination theory of motivation postulates that individuals are motivated from within and by external stimuli of different kinds (Gagné and Deci, 2005).

• Economists tend to be most interested in the “crowding out” effects of intrinsic motivation due to extrinsic incentives (Frey and Jegen, 2000).

• Especially relevant for the health workforce in LMICs, where low wages are systemic and several schemes, using extrinsic incentives, have been initiated to influence motivation.
Multidisciplinarity a key aspect of HPSR

- Descriptive: To describe to enable comparability with other contexts and experiences
- Exploratory: Initial research to understand and build hypotheses, concepts, theories
- Explanatory: In-depth research using and testing theory to explain causal mechanisms
- Predictive: To inform about the consequences of preferences and decisions
- Emancipatory: To jointly understand a problem, act on it, and learn from working collaboratively and address power
- Influence: To assess the impact of one variable on another (adequacy, plausibility and probability analysis)

How and why?

What, when where?

Multidisciplinary HPSR research inferences

HPSR Reader on HRH
3. Illustrative primary research articles

• Measuring health worker motivation
  – Mixed methods (Chandler et al 2009)
  – Economic games (Smith et al 2013)

• Social factors of motivation and job preferences
  – Respect, recognition and violence from the community (Razee et al 2012)
  – Preferences for serving in rural and remote areas (Huicho et al 2015)

• Evaluating the impact of motivation interventions
  – Effect of Performance-based financing on motivation (Shen et al 2017)

• Meso-level determinants of motivation
  – Organisational justice (Aberese-Ako et al 2014)
  – Transformational leadership (Choi et al 2017)
### 3. Illustrative primary research articles

#### Measuring health worker motivation


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cadres</th>
<th>Public sector non-physician clinicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>United Republic of Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Mixed: ethnography in two district public hospitals over 6 months and Likert scale development with clinical officers in 13 public hospitals and assistant medical officers in other smaller public hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research inference</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What makes it exemplary?

• Article distinctive in its adaptation of the Franco et al. (2002) framework to measure motivation
• Study conducted among non-physician clinicians working in district hospitals, a cadre rarely studied
• Uses a combination of ethnographic research to understand the working environment of non-physician clinicians and quantitative measurement using a Likert scale of motivation constructs
• Draws a distinction between intrinsic and environmental factors of motivation
3. Illustrative primary research articles

Measuring health worker motivation


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cadres</th>
<th>Nursing students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>Kenya, South Africa, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Quantitative: Economic (Dictator) Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research inference</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
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</table>
What makes it exemplary?

- **Uses economic field experiments** to measure **altruistic behaviour** allowing for greater consideration for personal values, rather than only job characteristics, in order to understand determinants of motivation.
- **Cross-country comparison** shows the significance of socioeconomic contexts for influencing altruistic behaviour.
3. Illustrative primary research articles

Social factors of motivation and job preferences


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cadres</th>
<th>Public and private sector health extension workers, community health workers, nurses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Qualitative: interviews and observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research inference</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
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</table>
What makes it exemplary?

- Explores thematic areas such as **identity** of health workers, **respect and support** received from communities, and role of **trust and cooperation** between health workers and communities.
- Identifies specific de-motivators pertaining to **gender roles, norms and violence**.
- Limited evidence base from this **geographic region**.
3. Illustrative primary research articles

Social factors of motivation and job preferences


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cadres</th>
<th>Medical, nursing and midwifery public university students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>Peru</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Qualitative: interviews and focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research inference</td>
<td>Explanatory</td>
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What makes it exemplary?

- Article describes career choices among medical, nursing and midwifery students to be driven mostly by vocation and for the opportunity to improve the health of their communities.
- Respondents expressed reservations about difficult working environments in rural settings and a stronger preference for working in urban areas.
- Article finds that nursing and midwifery students, especially those from rural backgrounds, expressed a stronger willingness to serve in rural areas.
3. Illustrative primary research articles

**Evaluating the impact of motivation interventions**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cadres</th>
<th>Multiple public sector facility based health workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>Zambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Quantitative: randomized control design for pre-test/post-test changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research inference</td>
<td>Influence, Explanatory</td>
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</table>
What makes it exemplary?

- Measures **impact of performance-based financing** on motivation, job satisfaction and retention.
- **Explores the channels** through which incentive payments affected motivation.
- Concludes that PBF could **improve both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations** by providing a better platform for serving the community and opportunities for professional development and dedication.
### Meso-level determinants of motivation


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<tr>
<th>Cadres</th>
<th>Multiple public sector hospital based health workers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Qualitative: ethnography; participant observation, conversation and in depth interviews over 16 months in two public hospitals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research inference</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
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What makes it exemplary?

- Found health workers perceived 
  procedural, distributive and 
  interactional injustice regarding 
  poor conditions of service, 
  inequitable distribution of 
  incentives, lack of respect and 
  protection.

- Argues that health workers 
  should be considered internal 
  clients of a health system, and 
  their perceptions of fairness and 
  justice in organizational and 
  governance structures should be 
  given importance.
3. Illustrative primary research articles

Meso-level determinants of motivation


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<th>Cadres</th>
<th>Public and private sector nurses and medical assistants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>Quantitative: Provider survey using Likert scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research inference</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
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</table>
What makes it exemplary?

- Innovative techniques of measurement of constructs such as transformational leadership, empowerment and job satisfaction, and their inter-linkages.

- Article suggests that there was a partial mediating effect, suggesting that employee empowerment explained at least some component of the positive association between transformational leadership and job satisfaction.
4. Research challenges and gaps

• Complexity of motivation as a construct
  - Different theoretical underpinnings
  - Overlapping definitions with job satisfaction, retention, performance

• Large body of descriptive research, with less emphasis on analytical or evaluative work

• Limited geographical diversity

• Greater focus on doctors and nurses and not other cadres of HRH
5. Future directions

• Critical reflection of existing methods and constant innovation to measure motivation.

• Rigor in using and validating measurement instruments such as self-reported scales.

• More emphasis on evaluating different strategies designed to improve motivation.
Thank you

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http://www.who.int/alliance-hpsr/resources/publications/9789241513357/en/