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EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AT THE ZIMBABWE ELECTRICITY
SUPPLY AUTHORITY (ZESA) HOLDINGS COMPANY IN
ZIMBABWE

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF EXECUTIVE MASTER IN
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Abstract


This study investigated employee motivation at the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) Holdings Company, a critical state-owned enterprise in Zimbabwe responsible for national power generation, transmission, and distribution. The research addressed three objectives: assessing current motivation levels, examining factors influencing motivation, and proposing enhancement strategies. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys from 56 employees and qualitative interviews with 12 participants across five departments and five hierarchical levels. Findings revealed low motivation levels, with 71.4% of employees reporting low or very low motivation. Key motivational indicators fell significantly below neutral midpoints: job satisfaction ($M=2.34$), work engagement ($M=2.51$), and organizational commitment ($M=2.68$), all statistically significant at $p<0.001$. Hypothesis testing confirmed that motivation levels at ZESA Holdings are not high, validating concerns about workforce morale in Zimbabwean parastatals. Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that organizational and individual factors collectively explained 67% of motivation variance ($R^2=0.67$, $F=16.43$, $p<0.001$). Rewards and compensation emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.35$, $r=0.68$), followed by career development opportunities ($\beta=0.28$, $r=0.61$) and leadership quality ($\beta=0.24$, $r=0.59$). Contextual economic challenges exerted powerful negative influence ($M=4.23$, $r=-0.51$), reflecting Zimbabwe's hyperinflationary environment and currency instability. Additional organizational deficiencies included inadequate working conditions ($M=2.54$), limited career advancement pathways ($M=2.23$), and poor leadership effectiveness ($M=2.67$). Individual-level factors revealed moderate intrinsic motivation ($M=3.24$) but low autonomy ($M=2.89$) and equity perceptions ($M=2.41$). The study validated theoretical frameworks including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Adams' Equity Theory within the Zimbabwean parastatal context. Based off of the findings of the study, priority recommendations include comprehensive compensation reform indexed to inflation, transparent merit-based career pathways, participative leadership development programmes, formal recognition systems, and improved working conditions with adequate resources. These findings provide empirical evidence for urgent intervention to address the severe motivational deficit threatening organizational effectiveness and national energy security in Zimbabwe.

Key Words: Employee motivation, ZESA Holdings, parastatals, Zimbabwe, organizational performance

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my original work except where sources have been cited and acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be submitted to another university for the award of a degree.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, whose unconditional love, sacrifice, and encouragement have been my foundation throughout this academic journey. Your belief in me has been my greatest motivation.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym / Abbreviation	Meaning / Definition
B	Beta Coefficient (Standardized Regression Coefficient)
HR	Human Resources
M	Mean
MBA	Master of Business Administration
N	Sample Size
nAff	Need for Affiliation
nAch	Need for Achievement
nPow	Need for Power
OCB	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour
P	Probability Value (Statistical Significance)
R	Correlation Coefficient
R ²	Coefficient of Determination
SD	Standard Deviation
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZETDC	Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study on employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. It provides a preamble to the study by outlining its contextual background. It articulates the statement of the problem, the research objectives, and the guiding research questions. Furthermore, the chapter presents the study's hypotheses and underlying assumptions, as well as its significance, scope, delimitations, and limitations.

1.2 Background to the Study

Employee motivation in organizational research refers to the set of psychological forces that determine the direction, intensity, and persistence of work behaviour (McShane & Von Glinow, 2018). It encompasses the psychological processes that arouse enthusiasm, persistence, and commitment towards achieving organizational goals. Motivation influences the level of effort employees are willing to exert, their commitment to tasks, and their overall job performance.

Psychologists typically conceptualize motivation as encompassing both internal and external factors that determine, guide, and sustain goal-directed behaviours (Murayama, 2022; Reeve, 2018; Simpson & Balsam, 2016). Political scientists, conversely, view motivation as a dynamic process that establishes effective guidelines and direction for activities based on individual circumstances, ultimately determining the level of enthusiasm and goal orientation in human behaviour.

When applied to the workplace context, motivation can be understood as the process of boosting employees' morale to encourage them to willingly contribute

their best efforts toward accomplishing assigned tasks. Williams (2012) defines motivation as a predisposition to behave in a purposeful manner to achieve specific unmet needs, driven by an inner force that compels individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals. Employee motivation is therefore concerned with the factors that cause workers to engage in behaviours that cumulatively promote organizational profitability. Highly motivated employees are more likely to be stimulated, interested in accepting goals, and willing to identify with the organization. Conversely, low job motivation can result in costly consequences including turnover, absenteeism, tardiness, and even poor mental health (Gangai, 2014).

Scholars generally agree that motivation comprises two key components, these are intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Arguments from (Deci and Ryan, 2017) are that, these two forms of motivation types play a significant role in influencing employee performance within organizations, a view further supported by (Chaudhary, 2012), who also identifies intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as the primary drivers of employee behaviour. Intrinsic and extrinsic factors represent the two primary dimensions of employee motivation. Intrinsic factors originate from within the individual and relate to personal satisfaction derived from the work itself, such as a sense of achievement, personal growth, autonomy, and meaningful engagement. These factors are linked to internal drives that sustain motivation even in the absence of external rewards. In contrast, extrinsic factors arise from external sources and include tangible rewards such as salary, bonuses, promotions, job security, and recognition from others. While intrinsic motivation tends to foster long-term commitment and creativity, extrinsic motivation often influences short-term performance and compliance with organizational expectations (Deci, Olafsen,

& Ryan, 2017). Consequently, motivation is recognized as a critical element in maximizing employee potential. Understanding the effects of each motivator and how they interact, particularly the ways in which internal motivation can influence external behaviour and vice versa, becomes essential.

Furthermore, scholars (Deci and Ryan, 2017) emphasize the importance of considering the type of motivation when designing interventions, rather than treating motivation as a single concept. This perspective highlights not just pay or job satisfaction, but the forms of motivation and the workplace conditions that support them. A persistent debate in the workplace concerns whether financial rewards, such as pay and bonuses, or non-financial factors, including autonomy, recognition, and career opportunities, are more effective in motivating employees. Some scholars argue that pay can yield short-term results but may reduce intrinsic motivation, while others contend that in low-resource settings, material rewards remain important to meet basic needs (Van den Broeck et al., 2021). Empirical evidence from the "Great Resignation" and post-pandemic labour shifts demonstrates how employees weigh money, respect, development, and work-life balance differently across contexts, leaving no single answer to the pay versus psychological support debate (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022).

Employee motivation develops through the interaction between individual needs and organizational practices. It grows when employees feel valued, empowered, and supported in achieving their goals (Hagger et al., 2024). Organizations influence motivation by providing clear expectations, fair rewards, supportive supervision, opportunities for development, and a positive work environment. When these elements are in place, employees are more likely to show commitment, creativity, and persistence in their roles. Therefore, understanding how motivation

arises may help organizations design strategies that strengthen engagement, improve performance, and promote overall organizational effectiveness (McShane & Von Glinow, 2018; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2017; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Employee motivation involves a systematic process that begins with identifying employees' unmet needs, which may stem from both internal drives such as personal growth and achievement and external factors like salary, job security, and workplace culture (Hagger, 2024). Once these needs are recognized, a sense of tension or psychological discomfort is created, prompting individuals to seek ways to satisfy their needs. This tension drives motivation, leading employees to take action aligned with both personal and organizational goals. Managers play a key role in facilitating this process by implementing motivational strategies such as recognition programs, career development opportunities, or incentive systems. After actions are taken, it is essential to evaluate whether the intended goals have been met and to assess performance outcomes. Feedback is then provided, not only to reinforce desired behaviours but also to inform future motivational strategies. This cyclical process ensures that motivation remains dynamic and aligned with evolving organizational and individual objectives (Robbins & Judge, 2022).

Operationally, the processes relevant to employee motivation include formal human resources motivational mechanisms such as salary and bonus systems, promotion pathways, training, and performance appraisal, alongside leadership behaviours including communication, recognition, and delegation. These practices, combined with daily job characteristics such as workload, shift patterns, and exposure to hazards, shape motivational dynamics in utilities (Eskom, 2022).

This understanding of employee motivational research provides knowledge on stakeholders that shape motivation in practice. Stakeholders include employees as the primary participants, supervisors and managers responsible for implementing motivational strategies, human resources departments that design incentive and reward systems, and top management that sets the tone for organizational culture. Additionally, external stakeholders such as trade unions and policymakers indirectly influence employee motivation through labour regulations and collective bargaining agreements (Tsvangirai & Chinyamurindi, 2019).

Impacts or outcomes of employee motivation matters because disengagement imposes measurable economic costs. Estimates by (Gallup, 2024) are that low engagement reduces productivity and carries multibillion-dollar burdens for economies. From a public policy perspective, fragile workforce morale in essential services undermines service continuity and raises social risk when disruptions affect hospitals, water treatment, and industry. This framing elevates employee motivation from a human resources topic to a national infrastructure priority, as emphasized in World Bank (2023) sectoral reports. Low workforce morale in essential services can undermine service continuity and increase social risks, especially when disruptions affect critical sectors like healthcare, water treatment, and industry (AlGhenaimi, 2024; Mabe et al., 2024; Morin & Talbot, 2024). The World Bank (2023) emphasizes that fragile workforce morale in public services can compromise service delivery and elevate social risks, particularly during crises.

Organizations today face growing concerns including declining productivity, high turnover rates, and low morale. In today's competitive business environment, motivated employees are key to organizational success and sustainability (Ngwenya & Pelser, 2020). However, many organizations, especially in the public sector and

developing economies, continue to face challenges in maintaining high motivation levels due to limited resources, poor leadership, and unclear performance management systems (Mlambo, 2024). Examining what motivates employees and how motivation can be enhanced therefore provides practical insights for improving workforce morale.

Understanding employee motivation is crucial in today's dynamic work environment, where organizations must adapt to changing workforce expectations, technological advancements, and increased competition. Motivation typically impacts employee behaviour, engagement, and retention. As modern workplaces become more diverse and flexible, studying what motivates employees enables managers to implement effective strategies that align individual goals with organizational objectives (Latham, 2012). The global context on employee motivation is shaped by post-pandemic labour shifts and falling engagement scores. Gallup's (2024) global workplace report documents how engagement declines undermine productivity, creating a backdrop in which workforce dynamics have become a strategic concern for utilities. The "Great Resignation" literature, especially research by Parker and Menasce Horowitz (2022), shows how pay, respect, and advancement opportunities became central reasons for voluntary turnover between 2021 and 2022, prompting employers to reconsider how they balance monetary and non-monetary retention strategies.

Regionally, Southern African initiatives to strengthen grid resilience and cross-border transmission, notably the Southern African Power Pool's Regional Transmission Infrastructure Financing Facility launched in 2024 with a US\$1.3 billion target, make the human resource question acute. Reuters (2024) reports that while financing for infrastructure is critical, utilities will only benefit if they can

staff, maintain, and operate new lines reliably, a point also stressed in Climate Fund Managers' statements. These developments underscore that technical investment and workforce capacity must proceed together.

The World Bank (2023) diagnostics link power shortfalls to macroeconomic costs and identifying governance and operational weaknesses in power utilities. The Auditor General (2024) further documents liquidity issues, salary delays, and governance lapses in state-owned enterprises. Together, these documents demonstrate that organizational stressors and heightened job demands converge, making an empirical study of motivation in power utilities both timely and policy relevant.

In conclusion, employee motivation is a vital as it influences how employees direct their efforts, persist in their tasks, and align their goals with those of the organization. Scholars emphasize that motivation arises from a combination of internal and external factors, as well as leadership styles, workplace culture, and reward systems. Organizations that understand and effectively manage these elements are more likely to achieve stronger employee commitment, and reduced turnover. Therefore, examining the factors that drive or hinder motivation provides valuable insights for enhancing job satisfaction, and fostering a positive organizational climate that supports both individual and collective growth.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Employee motivation in public utility organisations represents a critical yet persistently neglected management challenge, particularly in developing economies where parastatals operate under compounding pressures of fiscal austerity,

governance deficits, and macroeconomic instability (World Bank, 2023). At the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) Holdings Company, these pressures manifest acutely: the organisation has recorded salary delays, documented liquidity constraints, limited career advancement structures, and deteriorating working conditions as reported by the (Auditor General, 2024).

Despite these documented organisational challenges, empirical studies in the energy sector to date have not comprehensively measured the levels of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings as the parent entity, nor systematically examined how a constellation of individual, organisational, and contextual factors interact to produce the motivational outcomes observed. The limited availability of context-specific evidence constitutes a critical gap, as it leaves management without the empirical foundation necessary for designing targeted, sustainable motivational interventions. (Van den Broeck et al., 2021) examined autonomy and psychological needs in private sector firms, but autonomy as a psychological antecedent differs fundamentally from the composite construct of employee motivation as experienced across hierarchical levels in a parastatal.

Existing scholarship, while extensive, has addressed aspects of this problem in ways that are insufficient for the ZESA Holdings context. Extensive research on motivation and its application in organizational settings (Van den Broeck et al., 2021) shaped understanding of how and why employees are motivated in the workplace. (Forner et al. 2020) studied autonomy support in private firms, but autonomy is a psychological need that drives intrinsic motivation, rather than motivation itself. The current study however, seeks to look at employee motivation as a factor and not autonomy (psychological need). Chisango (2017) analysed motivational strategies in ZETDC but did not explore variation across professional

levels or performance metrics such as service reliability, billing accuracy, revenue collection, employee productivity, and customer satisfaction. Although ZETDC is a subsidiary of ZESA Holdings, the current research focuses on ZESA Holdings Private Limited which is the parent company where research environment may vary. Also, the current study seeks to understand motivation and how it works between different professional levels.

Tsvangirai and Chinyamurindi (2019) found that pay, benefits, recognition, and career growth influenced commitment but did not link motivation to service quality or operational outcomes, which represent how motivation affects organisational effectiveness. The current research aims to look into levels of employee motivation and not just the factors driving it. In Ghana, Agyemang and Ofei (2021) found teamwork, fair treatment, and supervision affected motivation, but these findings are not fully transferable to energy utilities due to sectoral differences in work structure and performance demands. The current study is to be carried out in a power utility in Zimbabwe which will be more specific to Zimbabwe's energy sector. In Kenya, Muathe and Mukulu (2020) highlighted remuneration and work conditions but ignored intrinsic factors such as purpose, autonomy, competence, and personal growth that sustain long-term motivation. Under the current investigation both intrinsic and extrinsic factors will be considered. Similarly, Nkosi and Nkosi (2021) recognised remuneration and leadership but did not examine how organisational resources and job demands interact to influence motivation. This study seeks to understand a notable number of motivational factors not limited to just remuneration and leadership. Banda and Nkhoma (2022) noted generational and communication issues but did not assess their impact on motivation over time, leaving longitudinal dynamics unexplored. Adewale and

Omotayo (2020) found financial rewards improved short-term motivation but omitted non-financial recognition such as praise, awards, and career advancement, which are critical for intrinsic motivation. This study will seek to understand both financial and non-financial rewards and their influence on motivation. Finally, Gagné et al. (2022) confirmed the importance of intrinsic motivation globally but noted that studies rarely consider institutional constraints typical of parastatals. The power utility in this research is a parastatal in Zimbabwe and research findings may be usable in parastatal contexts.

The uniqueness of the present study rests on three distinguishing features. First, it focuses exclusively on ZESA Holdings as the parent holding company not its subsidiaries thereby generating organisation-specific evidence that is directly applicable to strategic decision-making at the corporate level. Second, it adopts a multi-level analytical lens that simultaneously examines individual-level factors (intrinsic motivation, equity perceptions, autonomy), organisational level factors (rewards, leadership, working conditions), and contextual-level factors (economic, social, political and technological factors), providing a more comprehensive account of motivational dynamics than prior studies in this context. Third, it measures motivation not only through employees' self-reported levels but also connects these to measurable indicators such as job satisfaction, work engagement, organisational commitment, and turnover intention thereby operationalising motivation in a manner that bridges theory and organisational practice.

The limited availability of context-specific, multi-level empirical evidence creates a critical gap in the development of evidence-based motivational strategies appropriate to ZESA Holdings' operational and financial realities. Moreover, how motivational factors evolve and interact amid ongoing company restructuring,

policy shifts, infrastructure challenges, and economic volatility remains largely unexplored. This study therefore addresses an empirically grounded, practically significant gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive, multi-level investigation of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings, with findings intended to inform both organisational policy and broader parastatal management practice in Zimbabwe.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study is guided by the following objectives:

- 1.3.1 To assess the current levels of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings.
- 1.3.2 To examine the factors influencing staff motivation at ZESA Holdings.
- 1.3.3 To propose recommendations for enhancing and improving employee motivation within ZESA Holdings.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the study addressed the following research questions:

- 1.4.1 What is the current level of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings?
- 1.4.2 What are the factors influencing staff motivation at ZESA Holdings?
- 1.4.3 What recommendations can be implemented to enhance and improve employee motivation?

1.6 Assumptions/Hypothesis

The study is guided by the following research hypothesis:

- Ho: Motivation levels for ZESA employees are not high.

- H1: Motivation levels for ZESA employees are high.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several groups:

1.7.1 To Academia

The research contributes to scholarly understanding of employee motivation in state-owned utilities, with specific reference to Zimbabwe. By applying theories such as Self-Determination Theory, Adam's Equity Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in a public utility context, it addresses a gap in the literature, which predominantly focuses on private sector organisations.

1.7.2 To Industry

The findings may offer practical insights for managers within ZESA and other public utilities. Understanding the motivational factors that most affect employee engagement can inform strategies to improve productivity, reduce absenteeism, and enhance service delivery.

1.7.3 To Human Resources

The study seeks to provide evidence to guide human resource management policies in public enterprises. By highlighting the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, it supports the development of policies promoting retention, fair remuneration, and performance recognition within state-owned utilities.

1.7.4 To Policy and Practice

The absence of context-specific research creates a critical gap in developing sustainable, evidence-based motivational strategies that are appropriate for ZESA Holdings' operational and financial realities. Moreover, how motivational factors evolve and interact amid ongoing company restructuring, policy changes, infrastructure challenges, and economic fluctuations remains largely unexplored. This underscores the importance of an empirically grounded, context-specific investigation, providing practical insights for organisational policy-making and strategic planning.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The research is limited to employees of ZESA Holdings based in Harare at Head Office. Other regions of Zimbabwe are excluded due to logistical and time constraints. The study focuses solely on employee motivation, specifically targeting ZESA Holdings staff, and does not include contractors, suppliers, or other external stakeholders.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

Several limitations may influence the study's scope and generalizability. Potential challenges include limited access to certain employee groups, time constraints, and the possibility of response bias in self-reported motivation levels. External factors such as ongoing organisational changes and economic fluctuations may also affect the reliability of findings.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundation for examining employee motivation. The chapter begins with examining theoretical frameworks explaining how and why people are motivated at work. It then discusses how these theories apply to the study objectives, outlines the criteria used to measure motivation, identifies factors influencing motivation levels, and develops a conceptual framework showing the relationships between independent and dependent variables.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

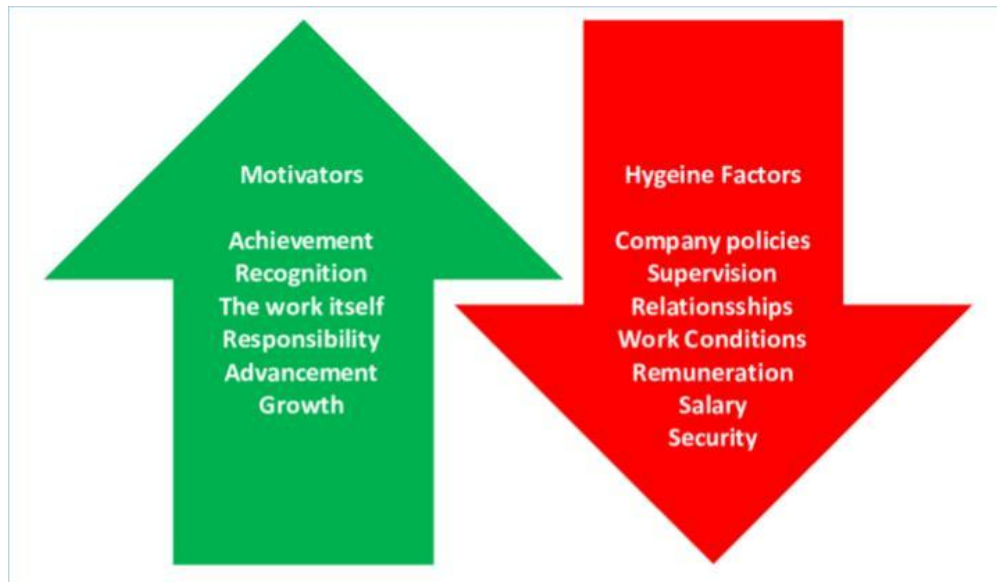
In order to guide this study, two motivational theories are examined as the primary conceptual lenses for understanding employee motivation at ZESA Holdings: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) and Adams' Equity Theory (1963). These theories have been selected for their direct alignment with the study's research objectives, the organisational context under investigation, and the motivational constructs measured in the study. Together, they provide a coherent and complementary theoretical architecture that explains both the content of motivation (what factors drive or prevent it) and the process through which fairness perceptions shape motivational outcomes.

2.2.1 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) Primary Theoretical Anchor

Frederick Herzberg developed the Two-Factor Theory in 1959 following empirical studies on job satisfaction among engineers and accountants. His findings distinguished between hygiene factors such as pay, working conditions, and job

security and motivators, which include recognition, responsibility, achievement, and opportunities for advancement (Herzberg, 1959/2017).

Figure 2.1: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory



Source: Adapted from "Motivating Millennials: The Journey to Project Success," by A. MacPherson, 2021, p. 15

(<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29251.02087>).

According to the theory, hygiene factors do not inherently motivate employees but serve to prevent dissatisfaction when adequately provided. Motivators, in contrast, actively enhance job satisfaction and drive higher levels of performance and engagement. Crucially, Herzberg argued that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposite ends of a single continuum but are independent dimensions: addressing hygiene deficiencies removes dissatisfaction but does not create motivation, while the presence of motivators generates genuine engagement and commitment.

This theoretical framework is the primary anchor of the present study for three interconnected reasons. First, Herzberg's distinction between hygiene factors and motivators directly corresponds to the study's independent variables. The organisational-level factors examined salary and compensation, working conditions, job security, and supervision map precisely onto hygiene factors, while recognition, career development, achievement opportunities, and meaningful work map onto motivators. This structural correspondence ensures that the theory does not merely contextualise the findings but actively organises the data collection and analytical framework. Second, ZESA Holdings' documented challenges salary issues, inadequate working conditions, limited career advancement pathways, and poor leadership effectiveness align with deficiencies in both hygiene and motivator dimensions, making Herzberg's model particularly apt for diagnosing the motivational landscape. Third, the study's dependent variables job satisfaction (M=2.34), work engagement (M=2.51), and organisational commitment (M=2.68) correspond directly to the motivational outcomes that Herzberg's theory predicts, enabling theoretically grounded interpretation of the empirical findings.

Contemporary scholarship affirms the enduring applicability of Herzberg's framework across sectors. Jain and Khurana (2022) demonstrate that in state-owned enterprises in developing economies, hygiene factors dominate the motivational landscape, yet motivators become increasingly critical for sustaining long-term productivity. This finding is directly relevant to the ZESA Holdings context, where addressing compensation and working condition deficits is necessary but insufficient for generating the employee engagement required for organisational effectiveness. Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021) further confirm that Herzberg's model

retains explanatory power in Zimbabwean organisational settings, supporting its selection as the primary theoretical framework for this study.

2.2.2 Adams' Equity Theory (1963) Secondary Theoretical Lens

John Stacey Adams introduced the Equity Theory in 1963 to explain workplace motivation through the lens of fairness and social comparison.

Figure 2.2 :Adams' Equity Theory



Figure 2.2. Adams' Equity Theory showing the comparison of input-outcome ratios between individuals and referent others, illustrating how perceived inequity leads to motivation for corrective action. Adapted from "Organisational Behaviour , T1 MBA ,KTU Syllabus," by M. Joy, 2018, p. 191. Kalyani Publishers.

Adams argued that employees assess their motivation not only through the absolute value of the rewards they receive but by comparing the ratio of their inputs skills, effort, experience, and time to their outputs pay, recognition, advancement, and status relative to comparable others (Adams, 1963). When employees perceive that this ratio is equitable, motivation and satisfaction are sustained. When employees perceive under-reward that their inputs exceed their outcomes relative to peers they

experience demotivation, resentment, and reduced organisational commitment. Perceived over-reward, while less common, may also produce psychological discomfort and guilt (Colquitt et al., 2021).

Adams' Equity Theory functions as an essential secondary lens for this study for the following reasons. In the ZESA Holdings context, disparities in remuneration, promotion opportunities, and workload distribution across hierarchical levels and departments create fertile ground for equity-based demotivation. The empirical data confirm this: equity perceptions emerged as a significant motivational predictor in the correlation analysis ($r=-0.51$, $p<0.001$), with employees reporting low perceived fairness ($M=2.41$). This finding validates the theoretical claim that inequity perceptions are not peripheral but central to understanding why motivation at ZESA Holdings is as severely depressed as the quantitative data reveal. Furthermore, equity perceptions extend beyond pay comparisons to encompass promotion fairness, recognition equity, and workload equity all of which were identified as concerns in the qualitative data. Adams' framework thus provides the interpretive language for translating these perceptions into actionable organisational responses.

Posthuma and Campion (2021) confirm that perceptions of fairness in performance evaluation and reward allocation strongly correlate with employee engagement and commitment, directly supporting the equity-motivation linkage documented in this study. Mapuranga and Mlambo (2022) further demonstrate that in Zimbabwean state-owned enterprises, bureaucratic promotion structures frequently generate perceived inequities that undermine retention and productivity. Adams' Equity Theory thus provides both the theoretical grounding and the practical diagnostic

framework for understanding and addressing motivation deficits rooted in fairness perceptions at ZESA Holdings.

Additionally, this theory is crucial in understanding employee motivation within ZESA, where disparities in remuneration, promotion opportunities, and workload distribution may significantly affect morale. For instance, if employees perceive that colleagues with similar qualifications and responsibilities in comparable organisations receive higher compensation, feelings of inequity may lead to dissatisfaction and reduced performance. In state-owned enterprises where, bureaucratic structures often influence promotions and benefits, the perception of fairness becomes a central determinant of motivation and retention (Mapuranga & Mlambo, 2022).

Recent studies underline the enduring relevance of Adams' theory in shaping human resource management practices. For example, research by Posthuma and Campion (2021) suggests that perceptions of fairness in rewards and performance evaluations strongly correlate with employee engagement and organisational commitment. Adopting transparent promotion policies, equitable remuneration structures, and participatory decision-making processes could mitigate demotivation caused by inequitable treatment. This positions equity theory as an essential framework for examining how fairness perceptions shape motivation among employees.

2.3 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework to the Study

The theories examined collectively provide a robust conceptual foundation for analysing employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. The deliberate pairing of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Adams' Equity Theory creates an integrated

theoretical framework that addresses motivation from complementary angles. Herzberg's theory explains the content of motivation: which organisational factors must be in place to prevent dissatisfaction (hygiene) and which can actively generate engagement and commitment (motivators). Adams' theory explains the process of motivation: how employees' subjective assessments of fairness mediate the relationship between organisational practices and motivational outcomes. Together, they address the question of what motivates and how motivation is perceived and sustained in context.

This theoretical pairing is particularly well-suited to the ZESA Holdings context because both deficient hygiene factors and perceived inequities are documented problems within the organisation. A single-theory approach would capture only part of the motivational picture: Herzberg alone would identify what is lacking but not explain why similarly situated employees respond differently to the same organisational conditions. Adams' theory bridges this gap by introducing the comparative and relational dimensions of motivation. Together, the two theories generate a diagnostic and prescriptive framework that directly informs the study's recommendations for organisational intervention.

Where additional interpretive depth is required, insights from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) will be referenced to contextualise the fulfilment of basic versus growth needs, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) will be drawn upon to explain the cognitive processes through which employees assess whether effort is likely to be rewarded. These theories serve as supplementary contextual lenses rather than primary analytical frameworks, ensuring that the study maintains theoretical focus without sacrificing conceptual richness.

The theoretical frameworks presented in the preceding section are not merely abstract academic constructs but rather provide essential analytical tools that directly inform and guide this research investigation into employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. The carefully selected theories have been chosen for their complementary strengths and their direct alignment with the study's research objectives, creating a coherent conceptual architecture that supports systematic inquiry, data collection, analysis, and the development of evidence-based recommendations. Each theory contributes unique insights that collectively enable a comprehensive, multi-dimensional examination of the complex motivational landscape within the organization. The integration of these diverse theoretical perspectives ensures that the study avoids the limitations inherent in single-theory approaches and instead captures the nuanced interplay of individual needs, organizational practices, cognitive processes, and contextual factors that shape employee motivation in practice.

2.3.1 Assessing Current Levels of Motivation

The first research objective, to assess current levels of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings, requires robust theoretical frameworks that provide clear conceptual indicators and measurable dimensions of motivation. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) provides variables for evaluating both hygiene factors and motivators. The study will look into satisfaction with contextual conditions such as salary, supervision, and policies (hygiene factors), as well as intrinsic aspects such as achievement, recognition, and advancement (motivators).

Adams' Equity Theory (1965) contributes fairness-related variables, focusing on employees' perceptions of equity between their inputs (skills, effort, time) and

outcomes (compensation, recognition, advancement) compared to others. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for identifying measurable constructs such as need satisfaction, hygiene motivator balance, expectancy-instrumentality-valence perceptions, and equity fairness. These constructs will guide the research in understanding the current levels of motivation among employees at ZESA Holdings.

2.3.2 Examining Factors Influencing Motivation

The second research objective, to examine the specific factors that influence employee motivation at ZESA Holdings requires theoretical frameworks that identify and explain the key variables, mechanisms, and contextual conditions that enhance or diminish motivational states. The selected theories collectively offer powerful explanatory frameworks for understanding the complex array of factors shaping motivation within the organizational context. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides a fundamental organizing structure by systematically distinguishing between hygiene factors and motivators, thereby enabling the research to categorize and analyze the wide range of organizational practices, policies, and conditions that influence employee motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959). This categorization is particularly valuable because it clarifies which factors primarily function to prevent dissatisfaction and employee withdrawal (such as adequate compensation, fair supervision, reasonable policies, and safe working conditions) versus which factors actively generate positive motivation and engagement (such as meaningful work, recognition of accomplishments, opportunities for achievement, assignment of responsibility, and pathways for professional growth). Understanding this distinction enables more targeted

diagnosis of motivational problems and more precise identification of intervention priorities.

Adams' Equity Theory further enriches the explanatory framework by highlighting the powerful influence of fairness perceptions and social comparison processes (Adams, 1965). The theory directs investigation toward examining factors that shape equity perceptions, including transparency of reward systems, consistency of policy application across employee categories, perceived favouritism or discrimination, communication about decision-making criteria, and the availability of information about comparison referents. Importantly, the theory reveals that motivation is influenced not only by absolute levels of rewards but by relative rewards compared to others, meaning that organizational practices creating or tolerating disparities between employee groups, departments, or hierarchical levels may generate powerful demotivating effects even when absolute reward levels appear adequate. Collectively, these theoretical frameworks guide comprehensive examination of organizational factors (policies, practices, leadership behaviours, reward systems, job design), individual difference factors (need profiles, cognitive beliefs, comparison referents), and relational factors (fairness perceptions, social comparisons, expectancy-instrumentality-valence linkages) that collectively influence motivation at ZESA Holdings, enabling rich, multi-causal explanations that capture the complexity of motivational dynamics in organizational contexts.

2.3.3 Proposing Strategies for Enhancing Motivation

The third research objective, to propose evidence-based strategies for enhancing employee motivation at ZESA Holdings requires theoretical frameworks that not only diagnose problems and explain causes but also suggest actionable

interventions and prescriptive recommendations grounded in empirical research. Several of the selected theories excel in providing such practical guidance for motivational enhancement.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory contributes a prescriptive guidance by emphasizing that sustainable motivational enhancement requires investment in intrinsic motivators rather than exclusive focus on hygiene factors (Herzberg et al., 1959). Strategic recommendations flowing from this theory include: job enrichment initiatives that increase the meaningfulness, variety, autonomy, and feedback inherent in work itself; recognition programs that systematically acknowledge employee contributions, achievements, and excellence; career development systems that provide visible pathways for advancement, skill development opportunities, and support for professional growth; assignment of meaningful responsibility that enables employees to experience ownership and impact; and creating opportunities for achievement through challenging projects, stretch assignments, and problem-solving initiatives. Importantly, Herzberg's framework reminds organizations that while addressing hygiene factors (competitive compensation, fair policies, adequate working conditions, supportive supervision) remains necessary to prevent dissatisfaction and maintain baseline engagement, genuine motivational enhancement requires strategic focus on these intrinsic motivators that connect employees to meaningful aspects of their work.

2.3.4 Core Theoretical Foundation

The selected theories contribute valuable perspectives. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Adams' Equity Theory collectively form the core theoretical foundation for this study because of their particularly strong alignment with organizational

contexts and their direct applicability to measuring, understanding, and improving motivation within work settings (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Herzberg's framework provides the fundamental content structure by identifying what factors influence motivation (hygiene factors versus motivators) and how organizations should prioritize interventions, offering clear guidance for both assessment and intervention design. Adams' Equity Theory provides the critical relational framework by highlighting how fairness perceptions and social comparisons shape motivation, thereby directing attention to the distributive justice, procedural justice, and comparative equity issues that powerfully influence employee attitudes and behaviours in organizational contexts.

These two theories are particularly well-suited to organizational research because they emerged from and have been extensively validated within workplace settings, they provide measurable constructs amenable to empirical investigation, they offer both diagnostic and prescriptive value, and they address complementary aspects of motivation (content, process, and relational). Together, they enable the study to comprehensively examine what motivates employees (through Herzberg's content categories), and what threatens or enhances motivation (through Adams' equity perceptions). This integrated theoretical foundation provides a robust conceptual architecture that guides all phases of the research from instrument development and data collection through analysis, interpretation, and the formulation of evidence-based recommendations ensuring that the study produces findings that are theoretically grounded, empirically rigorous, and practically actionable for enhancing employee motivation.

2.4 Criteria to Measure Levels of Motivation (Dependent Variables)

The measurement of employee motivation in organizational settings requires a comprehensive approach that captures both the psychological states and observable behaviours associated with motivated employees. Consistent with established literature in organizational behaviour and human resource management, employee motivation levels cannot be directly observed but must be inferred through a combination of attitudinal indicators (reflecting employees' feelings, beliefs, and intentions) and behavioural indicators (reflecting employees' actions and performance outcomes). This multi-dimensional measurement approach is essential because motivation manifests differently across individuals and contexts, and reliance on any single indicator would provide an incomplete and potentially misleading assessment of motivational states within the organization (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). The following dependent variables represent the key criteria through which this study will assess motivation levels at ZESA Holdings, each capturing distinct but interrelated dimensions of the motivational construct.

2.4.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents one of the most widely studied and fundamental indicators of employee motivation, defined as the degree to which employees experience positive emotional states and contentment regarding various aspects of their employment experience. This construct encompasses satisfaction with multiple facets including the nature of job tasks and responsibilities, compensation and benefits packages, opportunities for advancement and professional development, relationships with supervisors and colleagues, working conditions and physical environment, organizational policies and procedures, and the balance

between work demands and personal life (Luthans, 2019). Job satisfaction serves as a valuable motivational indicator because it reflects the extent to which the work environment meets employees' needs and expectations across both extrinsic factors (such as pay and working conditions) and intrinsic factors (such as meaningful work and recognition). High levels of job satisfaction typically indicate that employees find their work rewarding and that the organization is successfully addressing key motivational drivers, while low satisfaction signals unmet needs and potential motivational deficits. Research consistently demonstrates strong positive relationships between job satisfaction and important organizational outcomes including performance, retention, organizational citizenship behaviours, and overall well-being, making it a particularly valuable diagnostic indicator for assessing the health of the motivational climate within an organization.

2.4.2 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment reflects the psychological attachment, identification, and loyalty that employees develop toward their employing organization, representing a deeper and more stable attitudinal construct than job satisfaction. Meyer and Allen's (1997) influential three-component model distinguishes between affective commitment (emotional attachment and identification with the organization based on shared values and positive experiences), continuance commitment (attachment based on the perceived costs of leaving and lack of alternatives), and normative commitment (attachment based on feelings of obligation and duty to remain with the organization). Among these components, affective commitment is most strongly associated with genuine motivation because it reflects voluntary, emotionally-driven dedication to organizational goals rather than commitment driven by necessity or obligation. Employees with high

organizational commitment demonstrate greater willingness to exert effort on behalf of organizational objectives, stronger persistence in the face of challenges, reduced turnover intentions, and increased engagement in behaviours that support organizational success (Meyer & Allen, 1997). As a motivational indicator, organizational commitment is particularly valuable because it captures the extent to which employees have internalized organizational values and goals, making them willing to invest discretionary effort beyond minimum requirements. Measuring organizational commitment provides insights into whether employees feel a sense of belonging and pride in the organization or whether they view their employment as merely transactional, with significant implications for retention, performance, and organizational effectiveness.

2.4.3 Work Engagement

Work engagement represents a positive, fulfilling psychological state characterized by vigour (high levels of energy, mental resilience, and willingness to invest effort), dedication (strong involvement, enthusiasm, and sense of significance in one's work), and absorption (full concentration and being happily engrossed in work activities) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Unlike job satisfaction, which reflects contentment and positive feelings about work, engagement captures the active investment of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy into work tasks. Engaged employees are not merely satisfied but are actively enthusiastic about their work, fully present and attentive during work activities, and willing to go beyond minimum expectations to achieve excellence. Work engagement has emerged as a particularly valuable motivational indicator because it reflects the presence of positive motivational states rather than merely the absence of negative states, and because it demonstrates strong predictive relationships with individual

performance, innovation, customer satisfaction, and organizational productivity. The construct of engagement also aligns well with contemporary motivational theories emphasizing intrinsic motivation, as highly engaged employees are typically those whose work satisfies needs for autonomy, competence, and meaningfulness (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Assessing work engagement provides insights into whether employees are merely complying with job requirements or are genuinely enthusiastic and energized by their work, with important implications for service quality, innovation, and organizational adaptability in a challenging operating environment.

2.4.4 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention represents employees' conscious and deliberate wilfulness to leave the organization within a specified time period, serving as an inverse indicator of motivation such that high turnover intentions reflect low motivation and organizational attachment while low turnover intentions suggest stronger motivational engagement. Turnover intention is particularly valuable as a motivational indicator because it captures the cumulative effect of various motivational factors, employees who are satisfied, committed, engaged, and who perceive equitable treatment and opportunities for growth are significantly less likely to consider leaving, while those experiencing motivational deficits across multiple domains are more likely to contemplate and ultimately pursue exit (Nyakasoka, 2013). Measuring turnover intentions enables early identification of retention risks and provides diagnostic information about the severity and distribution of motivational problems across different employee groups, departments, or organizational levels, thereby enabling targeted retention strategies before valuable employees actually depart.

2.4.5 Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) encompasses discretionary employee behaviours that go beyond formal role requirements and are not directly or explicitly recognized by formal reward systems, but that collectively contribute to organizational effectiveness. Podsakoff and colleagues (2000) identified multiple dimensions of OCB including altruism (helping specific individuals with organizationally relevant tasks), conscientiousness (going beyond minimum role requirements in areas such as attendance, obeying rules, and taking breaks), sportsmanship (tolerating inevitable inconveniences and impositions without complaint), courtesy (behaviors that prevent work-related problems with others), and civic virtue (responsible participation in organizational governance and staying informed about organizational issues). OCB serves as a particularly revealing motivational indicator because these discretionary behaviours cannot be directly mandated or monitored but instead emerge voluntarily when employees are genuinely motivated and committed to organizational success. Employees exhibiting high levels of OCB are demonstrating that their motivation extends beyond simply meeting minimum job requirements to receive compensation, reflecting instead a deeper investment in collective outcomes and organizational wellbeing. Research consistently demonstrates that OCB contributes significantly to organizational effectiveness by enhancing coordination, facilitating knowledge sharing, improving work unit performance, and creating positive organizational climates that further enhance motivation and satisfaction (Podsakoff et al., 2000). OCB might manifest in behaviours such as voluntarily assisting colleagues with technical problems, participating in organizational improvement initiatives,

proactively identifying and addressing potential service issues before they escalate, or representing the organization positively to external stakeholders.

While all five criteria provide valuable perspectives on motivation, research on public sector organizations suggests that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are often the most reliable and meaningful indicators because they effectively capture both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of motivation within the unique constraints and opportunities characterizing public utilities (Machakaire, 2020). Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which the organization is meeting employees' diverse needs across hygiene factors and motivators, providing a comprehensive snapshot of motivational climate. Organizational commitment captures the deeper psychological bonds and identification that predict long-term retention and discretionary effort, which are particularly critical for public sector organizations that depend on accumulated expertise and institutional knowledge. Together, these two constructs provide complementary insights satisfaction reflecting current contentment with work experiences, and commitment reflecting deeper attachment and future-oriented intentions. However, a comprehensive assessment of motivation at ZESA Holdings should ideally incorporate multiple indicators from this framework, as the convergence of evidence across attitudinal measures (satisfaction, commitment, engagement, turnover intention) and behavioural measures (OCB) provides the most robust and valid assessment of motivational states and enables more nuanced diagnosis of specific motivational strengths and deficits across different employee groups and organizational contexts.

2.5 Determinants of Employee Motivation (Independent Variables)

Employee motivation is influenced by a complex interplay of factors operating at multiple levels. Following a comprehensive ecological framework, these determinants can be categorized into three broad groups: (1) individual-level factors residing within the employee themselves, (2) organizational level factors embedded in workplace structures and practices, and (3) contextual factors operating in the broader external environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This tripartite classification provides a systematic approach to understanding how various forces at different levels converge to shape employee motivation, recognizing that sustainable motivation requires alignment across all three levels.

2.5.1 Individual-Level Factors (Employee Characteristics)

Individual level factors encompass the demographic, psychographic, and psychological characteristics that employees bring to the workplace, which influence how they perceive, interpret, and respond to organizational conditions and external circumstances.

2.5.1.1 Intrinsic Motivation and Goal Orientation

Intrinsic motivation refers to the psychological satisfaction employees derive from the work itself, including interest, enjoyment, sense of purpose, autonomy, mastery, and meaningfulness. Intrinsically motivated employees engage in work because they find it inherently rewarding rather than solely for external rewards (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg's framework emphasizes that while extrinsic rewards function primarily as hygiene factors preventing dissatisfaction, sustainable motivation derives primarily from intrinsic rewards that connect employees to meaningful aspects of their work. Employees differ substantially in their intrinsic

motivation levels based on personality traits, values, interests, and the degree to which their work aligns with their personal sense of purpose. Some employees are naturally drawn to challenging problems, innovation, and continuous learning, while others may be more transactional oriented, viewing work primarily as a means to financial security. Understanding these individual differences is crucial because the same organizational intervention (such as increased autonomy or challenging assignments) will have differential motivational effects depending on employees' intrinsic orientation.

Goal orientation, closely related to intrinsic motivation, refers to individual differences in achievement motivation, growth mind set, and orientation toward learning versus performance. Employees with strong achievement orientation and growth mind sets are more likely to seek developmental opportunities, persist through challenges, and derive satisfaction from mastery experiences (Locke & Latham, 1990). These individual characteristics interact with organizational factors such as career development opportunities and challenging work assignments, with naturally achievement-oriented employees responding more positively to developmental investments.

2.5.1.2 Need for Autonomy and Self-Determination

Autonomy encompasses the degree to which individuals value freedom, discretion, and self-direction in determining how to accomplish their work. While autonomy can be viewed as both an individual preference and an organizational provision, research demonstrates substantial individual differences in autonomy needs, with some employees thriving under high autonomy while others prefer more structured guidance (McGregor, 1960). Employees with high autonomy needs experience

greater motivation when given discretion and control, as this satisfies their fundamental need for self-determination, enables them to apply their expertise and judgment, creates psychological ownership of work outcomes, and demonstrates organizational trust in their capabilities. Conversely, employees with lower autonomy needs may experience anxiety or uncertainty when given excessive discretion without adequate structure. These individual differences have important implications for job design, supervision styles, and the effectiveness of empowerment initiatives.

2.5.1.3 Demographic and Personal Characteristics

Demographic characteristics including age, education level, experience, family circumstances, and career stage influence motivational priorities and responses to organizational practices. Younger employees early in their careers may prioritize learning opportunities, skill development, and career advancement, while more experienced employees may place greater emphasis on work-life balance, job security, and recognition for expertise (Kanonge, 2020). Educational background influences career expectations, with highly educated employees typically expecting greater autonomy, challenging work, and advancement opportunities. Family circumstances, including dependents and financial obligations, affect the relative importance of salary, benefits, and job security versus developmental opportunities and intrinsic satisfaction. Gender may also influence motivational priorities, with research suggesting potential differences in valuation of work relationships, work-life integration, and leadership opportunities, though these patterns reflect both individual preferences and broader social contexts. Understanding these demographic patterns enables organizations to tailor motivational strategies to

different employee segments rather than applying uniform approaches that may resonate differently with diverse workforce groups.

2.5.1.4 Equity Sensitivity and Comparison Referents

Equity sensitivity refers to individual differences in sensitivity to fairness and inequity in employment relationships. Some employees are highly equity-sensitive, experiencing strong motivational responses to perceived over-reward or under-reward relative to comparison referents, while others are more flexible or less comparative in their orientations (Adams, 1965). These individual differences influence which comparison referents employees select (colleagues within the organization, peers in other organizations, or past personal experiences) and how strongly perceived inequities affect their motivation and behaviour. Highly equity-sensitive employees may experience significant demotivation from relatively small pay discrepancies, while less equity-sensitive employees may tolerate greater compensation variation without motivational consequences. Understanding equity sensitivity distributions within the workforce helps predict motivational responses to compensation decisions and fairness perceptions.

2.5.2 Organizational Level Factors

Organizational level factors encompass the structures, practices, policies, and conditions that organizations directly control and which shape the immediate work environment and employment relationship.

2.5.2.1 Remuneration and Financial Rewards

Remuneration and financial rewards constitute one of the most fundamental and visible organizational determinants of employee motivation, encompassing base

salary, performance bonuses, allowances, benefits packages, and other monetary compensation. Fair and competitive pay serves multiple motivational functions: it satisfies basic physiological and security needs in Maslow's hierarchy, functions as a critical hygiene factor in Herzberg's framework that prevents dissatisfaction, and serves as a tangible outcome that employees evaluate when assessing equity and instrumentality (Adams, 1965). Research consistently demonstrates that competitive remuneration enhances motivation by signalling organizational valuation of employees, enabling satisfaction of personal and family needs, and providing concrete evidence that effort and performance are rewarded. Conversely, inadequate or inequitable pay generates significant demotivation by creating perceptions of unfairness, particularly when employees compare their compensation unfavourably with colleagues, peers in similar organizations, or individuals with comparable qualifications and experience (Machakaire, 2020). The timeliness of salary payments is equally important, as delays undermine trust, create financial stress, and signal organizational dysfunction. The effectiveness of remuneration as a motivator depends on ensuring both competitive absolute levels and perceived internal equity across employee groups.

2.5.2.2 Working Conditions and Job Security

Working conditions encompass the physical, environmental, and contractual characteristics of the work setting that organizations provide, including workplace safety, availability of necessary tools and equipment, physical comfort, work schedule predictability, and employment stability. Adequate working conditions satisfy fundamental safety needs in Maslow's framework and function as essential hygiene factors in Herzberg's model their absence creates dissatisfaction and demotivation, while their presence establishes the foundation for higher-order

motivators to operate effectively (Maslow, 1943). Job security, reflecting organizational commitment to continued employment, is particularly important for motivation because employment instability creates anxiety that diverts psychological energy from productive work toward self-protection and job search activities. Working conditions also include access to functioning equipment, availability of spare parts, adequate vehicles for field operations, and safe working environments for employees handling technical systems. Poor working conditions not only demotivate through direct discomfort and safety concerns but also signal to employees that the organization does not adequately value their welfare, thereby undermining commitment and discretionary effort.

2.5.2.3 Recognition and Achievement Opportunities

Recognition involves organizational practices of acknowledging, appreciating, and celebrating employee contributions, accomplishments, and exemplary performance through both formal mechanisms (awards, public commendations, performance bonuses) and informal means (verbal praise, expressions of appreciation, highlighting achievements in communications). Recognition directly addresses employees' esteem needs and functions as a powerful motivator by providing psychological rewards that validate competence, signal value to the organization, and reinforce desired behaviours (Herzberg et al., 1959). The motivational power of recognition stems from its ability to satisfy fundamental human needs for appreciation, respect, and social validation, which are often more sustainable motivators than purely financial rewards. Achievement opportunities, closely related to recognition, involve organizational provision of challenging assignments, meaningful objectives, problem-solving opportunities, and experiences of success in work. Together, recognition and achievement create motivational synergy

achievement provides intrinsic satisfaction from mastery and accomplishment, while recognition amplifies that satisfaction by ensuring achievements are noticed, valued, and celebrated by others, thereby reinforcing achievement-oriented behaviour and strengthening organizational identification.

2.5.2.4 Career Development and Training

Career development and training opportunities encompass organizational investments in employee growth through formal training programs, skills development initiatives, mentorship arrangements, educational sponsorships, and visible pathways for advancement to positions of greater responsibility and compensation. These opportunities function as powerful motivators by satisfying multiple psychological needs: they address self-actualization needs in Maslow's hierarchy by enabling personal growth and potential fulfilment, they serve as important motivators in Herzberg's framework by providing meaningful developmental experiences, and they enhance expectancy beliefs by building competencies that increase confidence in performance capability (Kanonge, 2020). Career development also signals organizational investment in employees' futures, thereby strengthening psychological contracts and organizational commitment. The absence of development opportunities creates demotivation particularly among ambitious, achievement-oriented employees who perceive career stagnation and limited prospects for advancement. Continuous skills development is essential not only for motivation but also for maintaining professional competence in evolving technological contexts, making training investments important for both capability building and motivational maintenance.

2.5.2.5 Leadership and Supervision

Leadership and supervision styles profoundly influence employee motivation through the quality of leader-member relationships, the degree of support and guidance provided, the extent of participative decision-making, and the overall management philosophy reflected in daily interactions. Supportive, participative, and transformational leadership approaches that embody Theory Y assumptions treating employees as capable, trustworthy, and self-motivated enhance motivation by providing autonomy, involving employees in decisions affecting their work, offering constructive feedback and coaching, and creating psychological safety that encourages initiative and innovation (McGregor, 1960). Conversely, autocratic, controlling, and micromanaging supervision styles based on Theory X assumptions undermine motivation by limiting autonomy, signalling distrust, stifling creativity, and creating compliance-oriented rather than commitment-oriented relationships. Leadership quality also influences motivation indirectly by shaping the work climate, modelling desired behaviours, mediating between organizational demands and employee needs, and advocating for resources and recognition on behalf of team members. In hierarchical organizations, the quality of immediate supervision may be the most proximal and impactful determinant of day-to-day motivational experiences.

2.5.2.6 Performance Appraisal and Feedback Systems

Performance appraisal and feedback systems encompass the formal and informal organizational mechanisms through which employee performance is evaluated, communicated, and linked to consequences. Effective appraisal systems enhance motivation by strengthening instrumentality perception clarifying that performance

will be accurately assessed and appropriately rewarded and by providing regular feedback that enables performance improvement, goal adjustment, and recognition of progress (Vroom, 1964). Transparent appraisal criteria, consistent evaluation standards, regular feedback conversations, and clear linkages between appraisal outcomes and rewards (salary adjustments, promotions, recognition) all contribute to motivational enhancement. Conversely, subjective, inconsistent, infrequent, or non-transparent appraisal systems undermine motivation by creating uncertainty about performance expectations, weakening effort-performance-reward linkages, and generating perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Constructive feedback, distinct from formal appraisal but closely related, provides ongoing information that enables learning, skill development, and course correction, thereby maintaining motivation through progress visibility and achievement reinforcement.

2.5.2.7 Organizational Justice and Fairness

Organizational justice encompasses employees' perceptions of fairness in organizational processes, outcomes, and interpersonal treatment. Justice perceptions powerfully influence motivation because perceived inequity, particularly under-reward relative to comparison referents, creates psychological tension that employees seek to resolve through reduced effort, withdrawal, or exit (Adams, 1965). Fair treatment signals respect and organizational integrity, thereby strengthening trust, commitment, and willingness to engage in discretionary effort. Conversely, perceptions of favouritism, inconsistent application of policies, lack of voice in decisions affecting employees, or disrespectful treatment generate demotivation, resentment, and organizational cynicism. In organizations with multiple employee categories, grades, or departments, maintaining justice

perceptions requires particular vigilance regarding equitable treatment across groups and transparent communication about decision-making criteria.

2.5.2.8 Goal Clarity and Job Design

Organizational provision of goal clarity refers to the specificity, measurability, and communication of performance objectives that organizations establish for employees. Clear, specific, and challenging goals enhance motivation by directing attention and effort, providing performance standards against which progress can be assessed, and creating opportunities for achievement satisfaction when goals are accomplished (Locke & Latham, 1990). Goal clarity also strengthens expectancy beliefs by reducing ambiguity about performance requirements and enabling focused effort toward defined outcomes. Job design, encompassing how organizations structure work tasks, roles, and responsibilities, directly influences intrinsic motivation through task variety, task significance, skill utilization, and autonomy provision. Well-designed jobs that provide inherent satisfaction through variety, meaningfulness, and opportunities for mastery create conditions for sustained motivation beyond extrinsic rewards. The combination of clear goals (providing direction and achievement opportunities) and thoughtful job design (providing intrinsic satisfaction and autonomy) creates optimal motivational conditions by balancing structure with flexibility, accountability with empowerment, and organizational direction with individual initiative.

2.5.2.9 Organizational Culture and Social Relations

Organizational culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that organizations cultivate and which shape employee experiences, while social relations refer to the quality of interpersonal relationships, teamwork, collegial

support, and sense of community that organizations foster within the workplace. Positive organizational cultures characterized by trust, respect, collaboration, innovation orientation, and employee-centered values enhance motivation by satisfying belongingness needs, creating psychological safety, fostering identification with the organization, and establishing supportive environments where employees feel valued and connected (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Strong social relations and teamwork provide practical support that facilitates task accomplishment, emotional support that sustains resilience during challenges, and social satisfaction that makes work enjoyable beyond task accomplishment. Conversely, toxic cultures characterized by politics, distrust, poor communication, or interpersonal conflict create demotivating environments regardless of other organizational investments in compensation or benefits. Culture and social relations are particularly important in public sector organizations where financial constraints may limit extrinsic rewards, making the quality of work relationships and organizational climate relatively more influential in shaping overall motivational experiences.

2.5.3 Contextual-Level Factors (Broader Environment)

Contextual-level factors encompass the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) conditions in the broader external environment that influence employee motivation both directly and indirectly through their impact on organizational capacity and employee circumstances.

2.5.3.1 Economic Factors and Cost of Living

Economic conditions in the broader environment, particularly cost of living, inflation rates, currency stability, and overall economic growth, profoundly

influence employee motivation by affecting the real purchasing power of compensation and the financial security of employees and their families. In environments characterized by high inflation and currency instability, even nominally competitive salaries may fail to satisfy basic needs as their real value erodes rapidly, creating persistent financial stress that undermines motivation regardless of organizational efforts (Machakaire, 2020). The cost of living, encompassing housing costs, food prices, transportation expenses, education costs, and healthcare expenses, determines whether employees' compensation enables decent living standards or merely provides subsistence. When cost of living increases outpace salary adjustments, employees experience progressive impoverishment that generates demotivation, financial anxiety, and increased turnover as they seek better-paying opportunities. Economic conditions also affect organizational capacity to provide competitive remuneration, as public sector organizations operating under fiscally constrained governments face budget limitations that restrict compensation despite recognizing its importance for motivation. The economic context thus creates a dual challenge: increasing the financial pressures on employees while simultaneously constraining organizational resources to address those pressures.

2.5.3.2 Political and Regulatory Factors

Political stability, government policies, public sector regulations, and the broader governance environment influence employee motivation in public sector organizations through multiple pathways. Political interference in organizational operations, frequent leadership changes driven by political rather than merit considerations, and politically motivated employment decisions can undermine meritocratic systems, create uncertainty, and demotivate employees who perceive

that performance and competence are subordinated to political considerations (Nyakasoka, 2013). Regulatory frameworks governing public sector employment, including civil service regulations, procurement rules, and budgetary processes, can constrain organizational flexibility in rewarding high performers, responding quickly to operational needs, or implementing innovative motivational practices. Broader governance quality, including corruption levels, rule of law, and government effectiveness, shapes the operational environment and resource availability for public institutions. In contexts characterized by governance challenges, public sector organizations may face resource unpredictability, political pressure, and public skepticism that complicate motivation management. Government priorities regarding public sector investment, salary policies, and organizational mandates directly influence the resources available for employee compensation, development, and working conditions.

2.5.3.3 Social and Cultural Factors

Social and cultural factors in the broader environment, including societal values, work ethic norms, expectations regarding employment relationships, and social status accorded to different occupations, influence employee motivation by shaping expectations and comparison standards. Societal unemployment levels affect how employees perceive their employment security and opportunities, with high unemployment potentially increasing job security appreciation while also creating pressure to accept suboptimal conditions due to limited alternatives. Cultural norms regarding authority, hierarchy, collectivism versus individualism, and work-life balance influence which motivational factors resonate most strongly with employees and which organizational practices align with deeply held values. Social recognition and status associated with employment in particular organizations or

sectors affect motivation by satisfying esteem needs through social identity. In some contexts, public sector employment carries high social status despite modest compensation, providing social rewards that partially offset financial limitations, while in other contexts, declining public sector prestige may compound compensation challenges. Family and community expectations regarding employment, income, and career progression create external pressures that influence employees' evaluation of their work situations and their motivational responses to organizational conditions.

2.5.3.4 Technological Factors

Technological developments in the broader environment, including digitalization, automation, communication technologies, and industry-specific technical advances, influence employee motivation through their implications for skill requirements, work processes, and employment security. Rapid technological change can create anxiety about skill obsolescence and job displacement, demotivating employees who fear their expertise is becoming outdated or that technological substitution threatens their employment (Kanonge, 2020). Conversely, technological advancement creates opportunities for interesting work, skill development, and efficiency improvements that can enhance intrinsic motivation for employees who embrace learning and innovation. The pace of technological change in an organization's operating environment influences the urgency of continuous learning and adaptation, making training and development opportunities particularly salient motivational factors in technologically dynamic contexts. Availability and accessibility of technology also affect working conditions, as modern tools and systems can either facilitate work and reduce

frustration or, when inadequate or unreliable, create obstacles that demotivate through persistent inefficiency and work hindrance.

2.5.3.5 Labour Market Conditions

Labour market conditions, including the availability of alternative employment opportunities, prevailing compensation levels in comparable positions, unemployment rates, and demand for specific skills, fundamentally shape employee motivation by determining the opportunity costs of continued employment and the attractiveness of available alternatives. In tight labour markets characterized by skill shortages and abundant opportunities, employees have greater bargaining power and mobility, making competitive compensation, career development, and positive working conditions essential for retention and motivation. Conversely, slack labour markets with high unemployment and limited opportunities reduce external options, potentially enabling organizations to maintain motivation with less competitive compensation but also creating risks of employee disengagement due to feeling trapped in suboptimal situations. Comparison of an organization's compensation and conditions with prevailing labour market standards influences equity perceptions and the perceived instrumentality of performance for achieving valued outcomes. Public sector organizations often face particular challenges competing with private sector compensation while relying on non-financial motivators such as job security, social mission, and work-life balance to attract and retain talent, making labour market competitiveness in total employment value proposition critical for motivation.

2.5.3.6 Legal and Institutional Frameworks

Legal and institutional frameworks, including labour laws, employment protection regulations, collective bargaining frameworks, and dispute resolution mechanisms, shape the employment relationship and influence motivation through their effects on job security, procedural fairness, and power dynamics. Strong employment protection laws enhance job security and reduce arbitrary treatment, satisfying security needs and establishing baseline fairness, though excessive rigidity may reduce organizational flexibility in performance management (Adams, 1965). Legal frameworks governing compensation, working time, occupational safety, and discrimination protection establish minimum standards that prevent exploitative practices, though their effectiveness depends on enforcement capacity. Collective bargaining institutions and union presence influence employee voice, compensation negotiations, and grievance procedures, potentially strengthening equity perceptions and procedural justice while sometimes creating rigidities that complicate individual recognition and performance-based differentiation. The overall institutional quality, including judicial independence, contract enforcement, and regulatory predictability, creates either stable, predictable operating environments that support long-term employment relationships and organizational commitment or uncertain, unstable contexts that undermine security and trust.

2.5.3.7 Industry and Sector Characteristics

Industry and sector characteristics, including the public versus private nature of the organization, competitive dynamics, regulatory requirements, and societal importance, influence motivational dynamics and the relative importance of different motivational factors. Public sector organizations face distinct motivational

challenges including political scrutiny, bureaucratic constraints, limited performance-based compensation flexibility, and public skepticism, while potentially offering advantages in job security, social mission appeal, and work-life balance (Nyakasoka, 2013). The essential services nature of utilities and infrastructure organizations creates high public expectations, operational pressure, and scrutiny that can simultaneously provide meaningful work and impose stressful demands. Sector-specific economic conditions, such as fiscal constraints in government-funded entities or commercial pressures in market-facing organizations, determine resource availability for compensation, development, and working conditions. Understanding sector-specific motivational dynamics is essential for contextualizing organizational practices and recognizing that optimal motivational strategies vary across sectors based on their distinct constraints, opportunities, and workforce expectations.

2.5.4 Integration and Interaction Across Levels

While these three levels provide useful analytical categories, it is crucial to recognize that employee motivation emerges from complex interactions across individual, organizational, and contextual factors rather than from any single level operating in isolation. Individual characteristics such as intrinsic motivation and autonomy needs interact with organizational provisions of job design and supervision styles, with optimal motivation requiring alignment between individual preferences and organizational practices. Organizational factors such as remuneration and career development are evaluated by employees relative to contextual standards including cost of living, labour market compensation levels, and social expectations, with the motivational impact depending on this comparative assessment rather than absolute levels alone. Contextual factors such

as economic conditions and political environment shape organizational capacity to implement motivational practices and influence which organizational factors are most salient to employees.

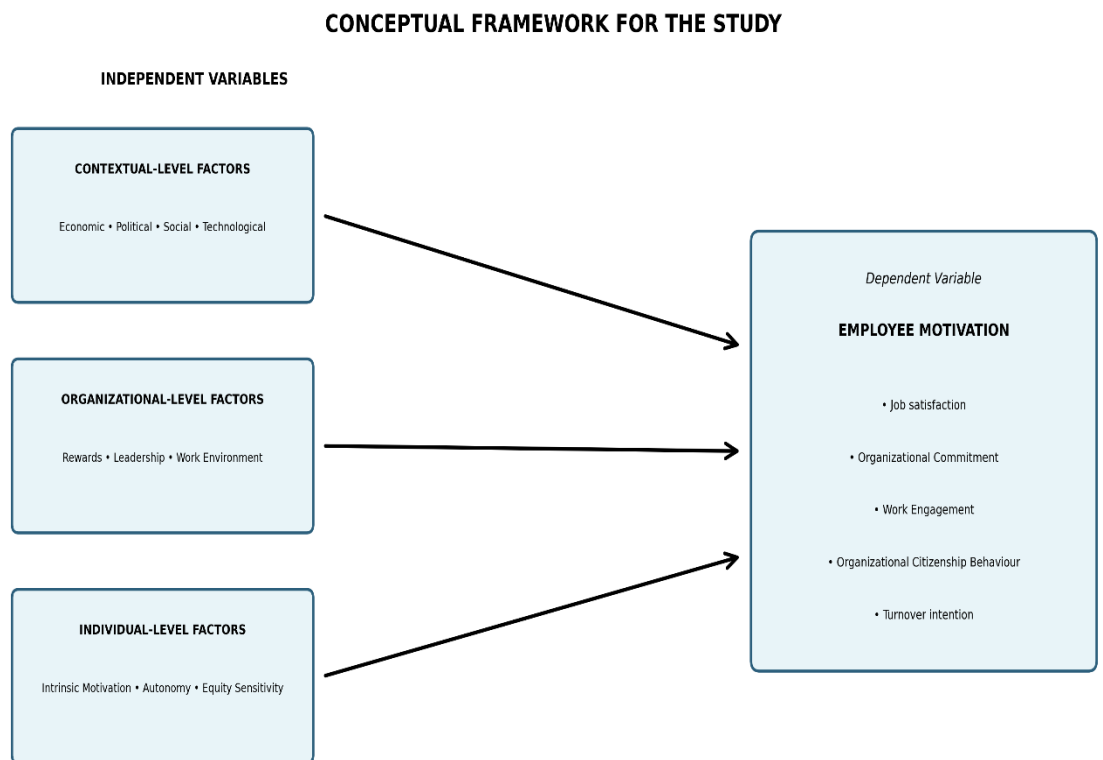
Empirical research conducted within Zimbabwe's public sector context provides important insights into which motivational determinants are most salient and problematic in similar organizational settings. Studies consistently identify low salaries, poor working conditions, limited career progression opportunities, and lack of recognition as the most significant causes of demotivation among public sector employees, suggesting that Zimbabwean public institutions face particular challenges in satisfying basic hygiene factors and lower-order needs (Machakaire, 2020; Nyakasoka, 2013). The economic environment, characterized by currency instability, inflationary pressures, and resource constraints, exacerbates these challenges by simultaneously eroding real compensation values and limiting organizational capacity to offer competitive remuneration, maintain adequate working conditions, or invest in employee development. Understanding this contextual reality is essential for interpreting findings and developing realistic, context-appropriate recommendations that acknowledge both theoretical ideals and practical constraints characterizing Zimbabwe's public sector environment, particularly in essential service organizations operating under fiscal pressure while facing elevated cost of living and challenging labour market dynamics.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework serves as the architectural blueprint that structures and guides empirical research by explicitly articulating the relationships between key variables, concepts, and constructs under investigation. It represents the researcher's

synthesis of theoretical perspectives and empirical knowledge into a coherent model that explains the phenomenon of interest and provides a logical foundation for hypothesis development, research design, data collection, and analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework



While the conceptual framework draws from universal motivational theories, its application requires contextual sensitivity to the specific circumstances characterizing Zimbabwe's public utility sector. The relative importance and

salience of different independent variables may vary from theoretical expectations based on contextual realities. The framework thus serves as a flexible analytical tool that accommodates context-specific patterns while maintaining theoretical grounding, enabling both universal insights about human motivation and particular understanding of motivation within unique organizational and environmental context.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the theoretical foundations that inform understanding of employee motivation. The chapter systematically examined motivational theories spanning both content perspectives and process perspectives. The chapter then operationalized the theoretical concepts by identifying specific dependent variables that serve as measurable indicators of motivation and these include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work engagement, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and turnover intention. Additionally, Three categories of independent variables that function as determinants of motivation were discussed including (1) individual-level factors residing within the employee themselves, (2) organizational level factors embedded in workplace structures and practices, and (3) contextual factors operating in the broader external environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). These independent variables represent the actionable levers through which organizational leaders can influence motivational outcomes.

The conceptual framework developed in this chapter synthesizes these theoretical insights and variable specifications into an integrated model that explicitly articulates the hypothesized relationships between independent variables

(organizational factors and practices) and dependent variables (motivational indicators). The framework provides the architectural structure that will guide all subsequent phases of the research, including research design, instrument development, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. By establishing clear linkages between theoretical constructs and empirical variables, the framework ensures that the study maintains theoretical grounding while generating findings that are practically relevant.

This contextual grounding ensures that the study is approached with realistic expectations about the organizational and environmental constraints that may shape motivational patterns, while also maintaining theoretical rigor that enables contribution to broader scholarly understanding of motivation in public sector. The theoretical foundations, operational definitions, and conceptual framework established in this chapter collectively provide a robust platform for the empirical investigation that will be detailed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used to address the research questions, including the research design, target population and sampling strategy, and data collection instruments. It further describes the procedures for collecting data, the methods for data analysis and organization, and the ethical considerations guiding the study. The chapter also outlines the recruitment process for research participants.

3.2 The Research Design

The study adopts an explanatory research design. This approach is appropriate because the research seeks to identify and clarify the causal relationships between selected independent variables and employee motivation within ZESA Holdings. Additionally, the analysis focuses on the extent to which these variables explain variations in measurable indicators of motivation, that is the dependant variables. The study also seeks to explain whether motivational levels are high or low among the employees. This study adopts a case study research design as it focuses on a single organization, ZESA Holdings. A case study approach is appropriate when research involves an in depth investigation of one entity, allowing for a comprehensive examination of a phenomenon within its real life context (Crowe et al., 2011). This design enables the researcher to explore the complexities of employee motivation within the specific operational, organizational, and environmental context of ZESA Holdings. By concentrating on one organization, the study provides rich, detailed insights into the factors influencing employee

motivation, the interrelationships among various motivational factors, and the overall levels of motivation within the company.

However, since the study is cross sectional, collecting data at a single point in time, it does not claim to establish definitive causality but rather seeks to provide evidence based insights into how these factors interact to shape employee motivation.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques in data collection and analysis. The quantitative component measures levels of motivation, assesses the relative influence of various motivational factors, and establishes statistical relationships among variables, enhancing the generalizability of findings. The qualitative component complements this by exploring the deeper reasons behind observed patterns through interviews and open ended responses, capturing employees' lived experiences and contextual nuances.

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) is used, whereby quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, analysed separately, and then integrated to compare and corroborate findings. This design allows the study to combine the breadth of statistical evidence with the depth of narrative insight, resulting in a holistic understanding of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. Overall, the case study design, combined with descriptive, explanatory, and mixed-method elements, provides a rigorous framework for investigating employee motivation. It enables both context-specific depth and analytical breadth, ensuring the findings are practically relevant and theoretically informative.

3.3 Population and Sampling

Data for this study will be gathered from a sample drawn from the target population. The details are outlined in the following subsections.

3.3.1 Population

The population for this study comprises all employees of ZESA Holdings, across various departments and job categories. This includes both technical and non-technical staff, ranging from junior to senior management levels. The study focuses on this population because it represents the full range of experiences, perspectives, and motivational dynamics within the organization.

3.3.2 Sample

A total sample of 74 participants will be selected for this study. This will include 60 employees who will complete structured questionnaires and 14 employees who will participate in semi-structured interviews.

The questionnaire participants will be selected from all major departments using stratified sampling to ensure fair representation across the organization. Slightly more participants will be drawn from technical departments which play a key role in the company's operations, mostly technical.

The interview participants will be chosen through purposive sampling to ensure that views are gathered from employees in different job grades and roles both managerial and non-managerial, as well as technical and non-technical. This approach is expected to provide a balanced and comprehensive picture of employee motivation within the organization. Not all employees will be included in the study

due to time and resource limitations. Therefore, a smaller but representative sample will be selected to make the research manageable while still capturing a variety of perspectives. Employees will be included based on their relevance to the study's objectives and their availability during the data collection period.

The total sample size of 74 participants is considered sufficient for this mixed-methods study. While Yamane's (1967) formula provides a guideline for determining larger samples based on population size and confidence levels, practical considerations such as time, resources, and the study design make a smaller sample more feasible. This size is justified on the following grounds:

- Homogeneity of the population: Employees operate under similar policies and working conditions, reducing the need for a large sample (Israel, 2013).
- Mixed-methods design: Combining questionnaires and interviews improves the validity of findings through triangulation, providing both breadth and depth (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).
- Roscoe's rule of thumb: Roscoe (1975) suggests that sample sizes above 30 are adequate for most research, and the proposed sample meets this guideline.

Although Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority Holdings has an estimated total workforce of approximately 7,000 employees, taking into account all the subsidiaries, nationally, this study is delimited to employees based at the ZESA Holdings Head Office in Harare. The Head Office was selected because it houses the organisation's strategic, administrative, technical coordination, and policy implementation functions, and employees at this level operate under uniform

conditions of service, possibly making them suitable for a focused investigation of employee motivation.

ZESA Holdings Human Resources staff indicated that the estimated population of employees at ZESA Holdings Head Office is approximately 320 employees, distributed across key departments and hierarchical levels. This population may be considered representative of the organisation’s professional and managerial workforce, particularly in relation to motivation-related factors such as leadership, rewards, work environment, and organisational commitment.

For the quantitative component, while the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula would suggest a larger sample size for statistical generalisation in large populations, its application assumes random sampling across an entire population. In contrast, this study adopted a mixed-methods approach with a defined organisational unit (Head Office) and combined structured questionnaires (n = 60) with semi-structured interviews (n = 14). The final sample of 74 participants, represents approximately 23% of the ZESA Holdings Head Office population

Table 3.1: Population and Sample Distribution at ZESA Holdings Head Office

Category	Estimated ZESA Holdings Head Office Population	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Total Employees (ZESA Holdings Head Office)	320	74	23.1
Questionnaire Participants	320	60	18.8
Interview Participants	320	14	4.4

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Data for this study will be collected using two main instruments: semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Each of these tools is discussed in detail below.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be employed to gather in-depth qualitative data from participants. These interviews will combine open ended and guided questions, allowing the researcher to explore participants' perspectives while maintaining focus on the research objectives.

Participants will have the option to choose between face-to-face and telephonic or online interviews, depending on what is most convenient for them. This flexibility ensures greater participation and accommodates respondents with varying schedules or geographic limitations. The researcher will take detailed notes and, where consent is granted, audio recordings will be made to ensure accuracy in capturing participants' views.

3.4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires will be used to collect quantitative data that complements the qualitative insights from the interviews. In most instances, the researcher will administer the questionnaires directly to the respondents to provide clarity on any issues that may arise and to ensure full understanding of each question.

In cases where direct administration is not possible, the questionnaires will be distributed indirectly through the Human Resources departments of the respective organisations. Respondents will complete the questionnaires in the absence of the

researcher to encourage openness and honesty in their responses. Completed questionnaires will be submitted by dropping them into a sealed box provided by the researcher. This method safeguards confidentiality and prevents any tampering or influence by third parties.

3.5 Pilot Study

The research will involve a pilot study on both interviews and questionnaires to test and refine the data collection instruments before full implementation. This preliminary phase helps identify potential problems such as unclear or ambiguous questions, inappropriate response scales, technical issues with recording equipment, or interview questions that don't elicit useful responses. The pilot study allows researchers to assess whether the questionnaires and interview guides effectively capture the intended information, estimate the time required for each method, and make necessary adjustments to improve question clarity, flow, and relevance. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to train interviewers, test the feasibility of the research design, and ensure that both data collection methods will yield reliable and valid results when applied to the full sample, ultimately saving time and resources while enhancing the overall quality of the research.

3.6 Data Collection procedure

The researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews for managerial participants if they agree to do the interviews. The respondents will be selected on the basis of knowledge and experience they have had in the organisation. Semi-structured interviews provide sufficient guidance for standardisation of results while allowing enough flexibility for follow up question for deeper understanding. The researcher

will take handwritten notes during the interviews which will later be reviewed as part of analysis.

The researcher will also collect data through close ended questionnaires. Given the sample size and time limit, close ended questionnaires are more practical as they are easier to standardise and analyse.

3.7 Analysis and Organisation of Data

The data collected through the questionnaires will be quantitative in nature and will therefore be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to identify patterns, relationships, and trends among the study variables. The analysis will consider the characteristics of the sample, including demographic and occupational attributes, to assess how these factors may influence employee motivation. Quantitative data will be processed and analysed using SPSS, facilitating the computation of descriptive statistics, correlations, and other relevant statistical tests to uncover significant relationships between independent variables and dependent variables.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews will be analysed using thematic analysis, allowing the researcher to extract in depth insights into employees' perceptions, experiences, and motivations. This approach enables the identification of recurring themes, nuanced opinions, and contextual factors that influence motivation, thereby providing a richer understanding of the phenomenon under study.

To enhance the rigour and validity of the study, data from questionnaires and interviews will be systematically triangulated. This involves comparing findings across both methods to identify areas of convergence and divergence. Consistency

between quantitative and qualitative results strengthens confidence in the reliability of the findings, while discrepancies help highlight potential methodological issues such as ambiguous questionnaire items, interview bias, or social desirability effects. Triangulation not only acts as a quality control measure but also provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of employee motivation by integrating the statistical patterns revealed through questionnaires with the contextual depth and richness obtained from interviews.

By employing this dual approach, the study ensures that the analysis captures both the breadth and depth of motivational dynamics at ZESA Holdings, enhancing the credibility, reliability, and overall robustness of the research findings.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are fundamental to ensuring the integrity, credibility, and fairness of this research. In conducting the study, all participants' rights, privacy, and dignity will be respected. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring they are fully aware of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing all collected data to prevent unauthorized access. Additionally, the study will adhere to ethical principles of honesty and transparency, avoiding any form of bias or manipulation in the research process. Ethical approval will be sought from relevant authorities, and the research will comply with institutional and national guidelines to uphold the highest ethical standards.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has outlined a mixed-methods approach, employing a cross-sectional survey alongside purposive in-depth interviews. The methodology is designed to balance breadth and depth, enabling the study to measure levels of employee motivation while exploring the organisational factors that influence it. Detailed procedures for sampling, instrument development, validity and reliability checks, data management, analysis, and ethical considerations were presented to ensure methodological rigour and provide a transparent audit trail. The following chapter presents study objectives.

CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses, and discusses the findings from the empirical investigation of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. The data were collected through a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data from structured questionnaires and qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. The chapter begins by presenting the response rate, followed by the demographic profile of participants and reliability tests. Subsequently, findings are presented across the research objectives, integrating quantitative descriptive statistics with qualitative narratives to provide a comprehensive understanding of employee motivation levels and determinants. Inferential statistics are employed to test the research hypothesis, and the chapter concludes with a discussion synthesising key findings within the theoretical framework and literature established in Chapter 2.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.2.1 Response Rate

The response rate provides an indication of the representativeness and reliability of the collected data. As shown in Table 4.1, the study achieved a strong overall response rate.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Instrument	Target Sample	Responses Received	Response Rate (%)
Questionnaires	60	56	93.3
Interviews	14	12	85.7
Total	74	68	91.9

The overall response rate of 91.9% exceeds the threshold typically considered adequate for social science research. According to Saunders et al. (2019), response rates above 70% are generally acceptable for drawing valid conclusions, whilst rates exceeding 85% are considered excellent. The questionnaire response rate of 93.3% and interview response rate of 85.7% both fall within the excellent range, suggesting that the findings are highly representative of the target population. As emphasised by Memon et al. (2020), high response rates reduce nonresponse bias and enhance the generalisability of research findings. The high response rate can be attributed to several factors, including the researcher's direct administration of questionnaires, the use of Human Resources departments as facilitators, and the provision of flexible interview options encompassing face to face, telephonic, or online formats. Four questionnaires were not returned despite follow up attempts, whilst two scheduled interviews could not be completed due to participants' unavailability during the data collection period.

4.2.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Understanding the demographic composition of respondents provides contextual insights into the sample characteristics and enables assessment of sample representativeness. As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018), demographic profiling is essential for interpreting research findings within their social and organisational context. Table 4.2 presents the demographic profile of questionnaire respondents.

Table 4.2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	38	67.9
	Female	18	32.1
Age Range	26–35 years	12	21.4
	36–45 years	24	42.9
	46–55 years	16	28.6
	56+ years	4	7.1
Education Level	Certificate/Diploma	8	14.3
	Bachelor's Degree	32	57.1
	Master's Degree	14	25.0
	Doctorate	2	3.6
Department	Generation	14	25.0
	Transmission	11	19.6
	Distribution	12	21.4
	Engineering	8	14.3
	Finance/HR/Admin	11	19.7
Employment Category	Executive/Senior Management	6	10.7
	Middle Management	14	25.0
	Supervisory	12	21.4
	Technical Staff	18	32.2
	Administrative	6	10.7
Length of Service	1–3 years	8	14.3
	4–6 years	14	25.0
	7–10 years	18	32.1
	11–15 years	10	17.9
	Over 15 years	6	10.7

The demographic profile reveals several noteworthy patterns. The sample comprises predominantly male respondents (67.9%), reflecting the gender composition typical of technical utilities in Zimbabwe. As observed by Gumbie et al. (2023) in their study of human resource practitioners in Zimbabwean urban local authorities, male dominance characterises many public sector technical organisations in the country. The majority of participants (71.5%) fall within the 36 to 55 age range, representing mid career professionals with substantial organisational experience. Educational attainment is relatively high, with 85.7% holding bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications, consistent with the technical expertise required in power utility operations. According to Kanonge and Bussin

(2022), highly educated professionals in Zimbabwean parastatals often possess qualifications exceeding their job requirements, creating expectations for challenging work and career advancement opportunities.

The distribution across departments reflects the operational structure of ZESA Holdings, with technical departments encompassing Generation, Transmission, Distribution, and Engineering comprising 80.3% of the sample, appropriately representing the organisation's core functions. Employment categories are well distributed, ensuring perspectives from various hierarchical levels. As emphasised by Pallant (2020), diverse representation across organisational levels enhances the validity of findings by capturing multiple viewpoints. Length of service data indicates a mature workforce, with 60.7% having served between 7 and 15 years, suggesting accumulated institutional knowledge but also potential concerns regarding career stagnation. Research by Nyakasoka (2013) on public sector motivation in Zimbabwe found that employees with extended tenure often experience diminished motivation due to limited advancement prospects and wage compression.

4.2.3 Reliability Test

Reliability testing is essential to ensure internal consistency of measurement scales used in the questionnaire. According to Hair et al. (2019), reliability assessment determines whether multiple items intended to measure the same construct produce consistent results. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed for each construct to assess scale reliability.

Table 4.3: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Job Satisfaction	5	0.878	Good
Work Engagement	5	0.854	Good
Organizational Commitment	5	0.891	Good
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	4	0.802	Good
Turnover Intention	5	0.886	Good
Economic Factors	4	0.793	Acceptable
Political Factors	3	0.768	Acceptable
Social Factors	4	0.781	Acceptable
Technological Factors	4	0.847	Good
Rewards and Compensation	7	0.912	Excellent
Leadership and Management	7	0.895	Good
Work Environment	7	0.868	Good
Career Development	6	0.884	Good
Organizational Culture	4	0.833	Good
Intrinsic Motivation	5	0.871	Good
Autonomy	4	0.809	Good
Equity and Fairness	5	0.898	Good
Personal Goals	4	0.826	Good

As noted by Tavakol and Dennick (2011), Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 are considered acceptable, values above 0.80 are good, and values above 0.90 are excellent for social science research. All constructs in this study achieved alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold, with most falling within the good to excellent range. The highest reliability was observed for Rewards and Compensation ($\alpha=0.912$), indicating particularly strong internal consistency in how respondents perceived remuneration related items. According to Field (2018), high reliability coefficients suggest that respondents interpreted scale items consistently and that the items effectively captured the intended construct. The lowest alpha value was for Political Factors ($\alpha=0.768$), which, whilst still acceptable, suggests

slightly greater variability in perceptions of political influences on motivation. This variation may reflect different departmental exposures to political interference, as suggested by Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021) in their research on Zimbabwean state owned enterprises. Overall, the reliability statistics demonstrate that the measurement instrument possessed strong psychometric properties and that findings can be interpreted with confidence.

4.2.3 Normality Test

Prior to conducting parametric statistical tests, normality of data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and visual inspection of histograms and Q-Q plots. As emphasised by Field (2018), assessment of normality is crucial for determining the appropriateness of parametric versus nonparametric statistical techniques. Results indicated that motivation related constructs approximated normal distribution, with p values exceeding 0.05 for most variables, supporting the use of parametric techniques including correlation and regression analyses. Minor deviations from normality were observed in Turnover Intention, which exhibited negative skewness, reflecting the concentration of responses towards disagreement with intentions to leave. According to Hair et al. (2019), slight departures from normality are tolerable in large samples, and the study's sample size of 56 provides sufficient robustness for parametric analyses.

4.2.4 Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis using principal component extraction with varimax rotation was conducted to confirm the dimensional structure of motivation determinants. As noted by Hair et al. (2019), factor analysis enables researchers to

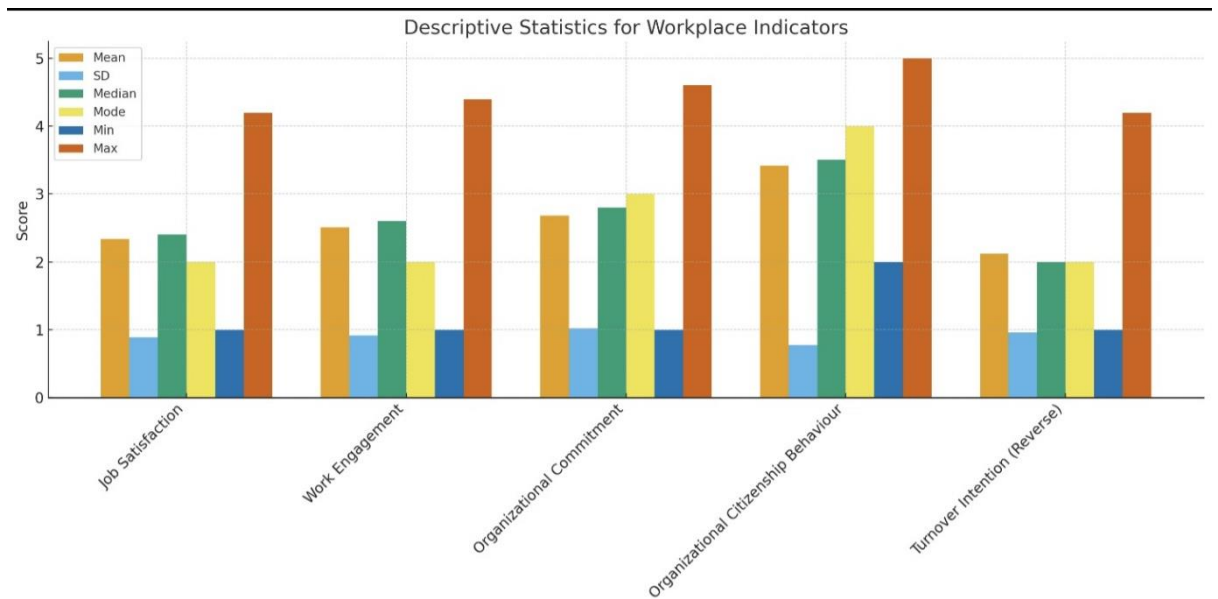
identify underlying patterns and validate that items cluster according to theoretical expectations. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy yielded a value of 0.84, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60, whilst Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2=3,247.68$, $p<0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. The analysis extracted factors corresponding to the conceptual framework, confirming three primary dimensions: contextual level factors, organizational level factors, and individual level factors. Factor loadings generally exceeded 0.50, indicating that items loaded appropriately onto their intended constructs. According to Boateng et al. (2018), factor analysis provides evidence of construct validity by demonstrating that measurement items align with theoretical dimensions.

4.3 Discussion and Interpretation

4.3.1 Current Levels of Employee Motivation

The first research objective sought to assess current levels of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings through five indicators: job satisfaction, work engagement, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, and turnover intention. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2023), these constructs represent both attitudinal dimensions, including satisfaction and commitment, and behavioural manifestations of motivation, such as discretionary effort and retention. Figure 4.1 presents descriptive statistics for these motivational indicators.

Figure 4.1: Current Levels of Employee Motivation



Source: Researcher, 2025

The quantitative findings reveal concerning patterns in employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. Job satisfaction recorded a mean score of 2.34 (SD=0.89), falling within the "disagree" range and indicating that employees are generally dissatisfied with their employment experience. As emphasised by Luthans (2019), job satisfaction represents employees' affective evaluation of their work experiences, encompassing satisfaction with tasks, compensation, colleagues, supervision, and working conditions. Similarly, work engagement yielded a mean of 2.51 (SD=0.92), suggesting low levels of enthusiasm and absorption in work activities. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), work engagement reflects vigour, dedication, and absorption, and low engagement signals that employees are not psychologically invested in their roles. Organizational commitment demonstrated a slightly higher mean of 2.68 (SD=1.02), representing neutral to slightly negative attachment to the organisation. Meyer and Allen's (1997) three component model distinguishes between affective, continuance, and normative commitment, and

these moderate scores suggest weak emotional attachment and identification with ZESA Holdings.

Notably, organizational citizenship behaviour achieved the highest mean of 3.42 (SD=0.78), indicating that despite low motivation levels, employees continue to exhibit discretionary helping behaviours. As noted by Podsakoff et al. (2000), organizational citizenship behaviours are voluntary actions that support organizational effectiveness but are not formally rewarded, including helping colleagues, attending voluntary functions, and taking initiative. Turnover intention, when reverse scored, produced a mean of 2.12 (SD=0.96), signifying strong intentions to leave the organisation. According to Nyakasoka (2013), high turnover intentions in Zimbabwean parastatals reflect employees' dissatisfaction with working conditions and their active search for alternative employment opportunities.

These quantitative patterns were strongly corroborated by qualitative interview data. When asked to rate their motivation on a scale of 1 to 10, interview participants provided ratings between 3 and 6, with a modal response of 4. A senior engineer with 12 years of service reflected:

My motivation today sits at about 4 out of 10. It wasn't always this way. When I joined ZESA, I was excited about contributing to national energy security. But over the years, the challenges have mounted, including delayed salaries, inadequate tools, and lack of recognition, and my enthusiasm has gradually eroded.

A middle management supervisor from the Distribution department echoed similar sentiments:

I would rate my engagement at around 5 out of 10. Some days I come to work energised, especially when we successfully restore power to communities. But most

days, the frustrations outweigh the satisfaction. The gap between what we could achieve and what we actually achieve is demotivating.

The low job satisfaction levels reflect unmet expectations across multiple dimensions. As argued by Robbins and Judge (2022), job dissatisfaction arises when the work environment fails to meet employees' needs and expectations, leading to frustration and withdrawal. A technical officer in the Transmission unit explained:

I am not satisfied with my job anymore. The salary cannot meet basic family needs, career progression is blocked, and we lack basic equipment to do our work properly. I stay because I have no immediate alternative, not because I am happy.

The moderate organizational citizenship behaviour scores despite low motivation levels represent an interesting paradox. Interview participants attributed this to professional ethics and concern for national infrastructure rather than organisational attachment. An administrative staff member noted:

Even though I am unhappy, I still help my colleagues when they need assistance. It's not about loyalty to ZESA management, it's about not letting down my workmates and ensuring the public gets electricity. We have a professional duty regardless of how we feel about the organisation.

This finding aligns with research by Maleka et al. (2019) on employee engagement in Southern African organisations, which found that employees in essential services maintain professional standards despite organisational challenges due to their sense of public service responsibility.

High turnover intentions were consistently expressed across interview participants.

A finance officer stated:

I am actively looking for opportunities elsewhere. Many of my colleagues have already left for better paying jobs in the private sector or mining companies. I would leave tomorrow if I found something comparable in terms of stability but with better compensation.

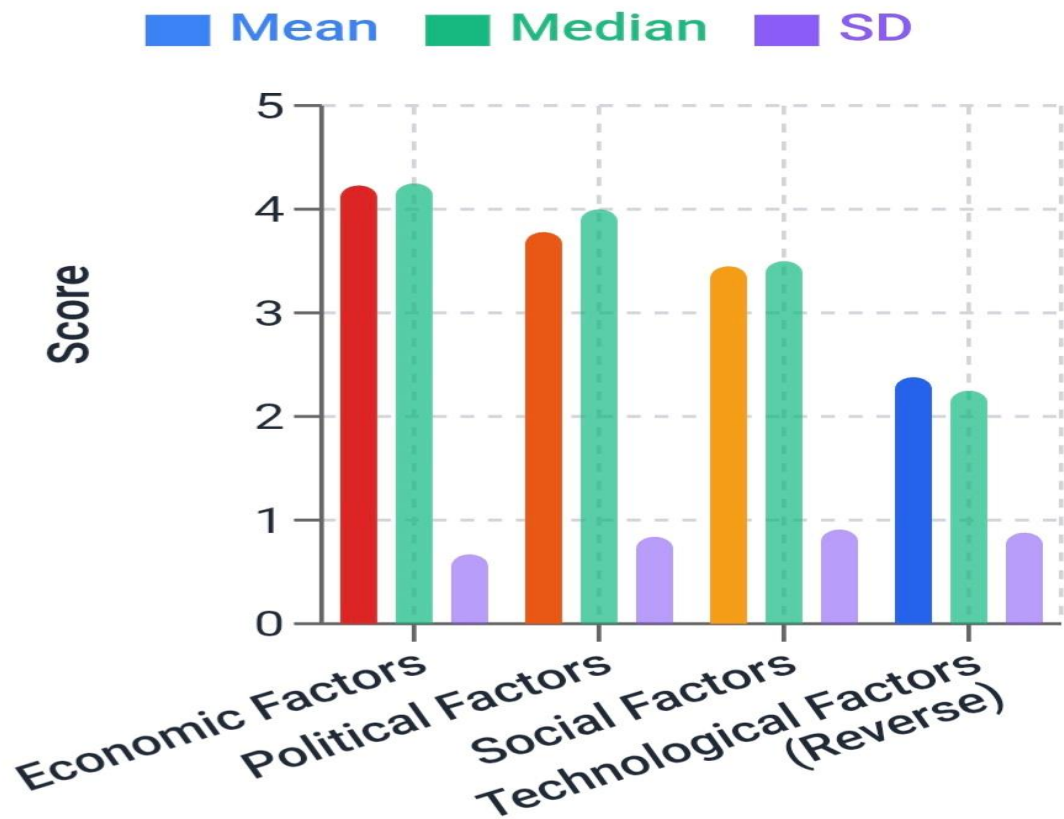
According to Kanonge and Bussin (2022), Zimbabwe experiences significant academic and professional brain drain, with skilled workers migrating to better paying opportunities domestically and internationally, and parastatals like ZESA Holdings face particular retention challenges.

These findings align with Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, which posits that dissatisfaction with hygiene factors, including salary, working conditions, and job security, creates demotivation, even when employees continue performing basic responsibilities (Herzberg et al., 2017). As noted by Alshmemri et al. (2017), Herzberg distinguished between hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction and motivators that create satisfaction, and deficiencies in both categories produce the motivational deficit observed at ZESA Holdings. The persistence of organizational citizenship behaviour despite low satisfaction suggests that employees maintain professional standards and collegial relationships, but these do not translate into genuine organizational commitment or satisfaction. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, when basic physiological and safety needs are unmet, higher order needs such as esteem and self-actualisation cannot effectively motivate behaviour (McLeod, 2021).

4.3.2 Contextual Level Factors Influencing Motivation

Contextual level factors encompass external environmental conditions including economic, political, social, and technological influences on motivation. As emphasised by Bakker and Demerouti (2017), contextual factors function as either job demands that drain psychological resources or environmental resources that facilitate performance. Figure 4.2 presents descriptive statistics for these factors.

Figure 4.2: Contextual Level Factors Influencing Motivation



Source: Researcher, 2025

The quantitative data reveal that economic factors exert the strongest negative influence on motivation, with a mean of 4.23 (SD=0.67), indicating that respondents strongly agree that economic conditions undermine their work morale. According to Machakaire (2020), Zimbabwe's economic environment, characterised by hyperinflation, currency instability, and rising cost of living, creates pervasive financial stress that overwhelms organisational motivational efforts. Political factors also demonstrate substantial negative impact, with a mean of 3.78 (SD=0.84), whilst social factors show moderate negative effects, with a mean of 3.45 (SD=0.91). Technological support, when reverse scored, indicates

inadequate provision of modern equipment and systems, with a mean of 2.38 (SD=0.88).

Interview participants provided rich explanations for these patterns. Regarding economic challenges, a Generation department technician elaborated:

The economic situation in Zimbabwe destroys any motivation we might have. Inflation means our salaries are worth less each month. By mid month, we are borrowing money for transport to come to work. How can you be motivated when you cannot afford basic groceries for your family?

As argued by Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021), economic instability erodes the real value of compensation faster than organisations can adjust nominal wages, creating a persistent gap between earnings and living costs that generates financial anxiety and demotivation.

The intersection between external economic pressures and internal motivation was consistently emphasised. A Human Resources officer explained:

Employees are psychologically exhausted from economic pressures. They come to work already stressed about school fees, rent, and food costs. This anxiety spills over into their work performance and engagement. Even if we try motivational programmes, they fall flat when people are worried about survival.

This observation aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which posits that physiological and safety needs must be satisfied before higher order psychological needs become motivating. As noted by Nielsen et al. (2022), when basic survival needs dominate employees' consciousness, organisational efforts to enhance motivation through recognition, development, or empowerment prove ineffective.

Political factors emerged as contentious issues affecting operational autonomy and resource allocation. A senior manager observed:

Political interference in appointments and operational decisions undermines meritocracy and creates uncertainty. When we see positions filled based on political connections rather than competence, it demotivates those who have worked hard and earned their qualifications. It sends a message that hard work doesn't matter.

According to Nyakasoka (2013), political interference in Zimbabwean parastatals compromises organisational effectiveness and employee motivation by prioritising political loyalty over professional competence in staffing decisions, thereby undermining meritocratic principles.

Public criticism and societal perceptions of ZESA also impact motivation. A Distribution supervisor reflected:

Load shedding makes us targets of public anger. People blame ZESA employees personally for power cuts, even though we are doing our best with limited resources. This constant criticism is emotionally draining. It affects how proud we feel about our work and our organisation.

As emphasised by Gumbie et al. (2023), negative public perceptions of public sector organisations in Zimbabwe create reputational challenges that diminish employees' pride and identification with their employers, thereby reducing affective commitment.

Technological inadequacies were universally cited as barriers to effective performance. An engineering specialist described:

We often work with outdated equipment and systems. When equipment breaks down, spare parts are unavailable for months. This forces us to improvise, which is both frustrating and dangerous. Modern utilities elsewhere have digital monitoring systems, we are still using manual methods. This technological gap is demotivating because it prevents us from performing to professional standards.

According to Kanonge and Bussin (2022), inadequate technological resources in Zimbabwean organisations create frustration among skilled professionals who

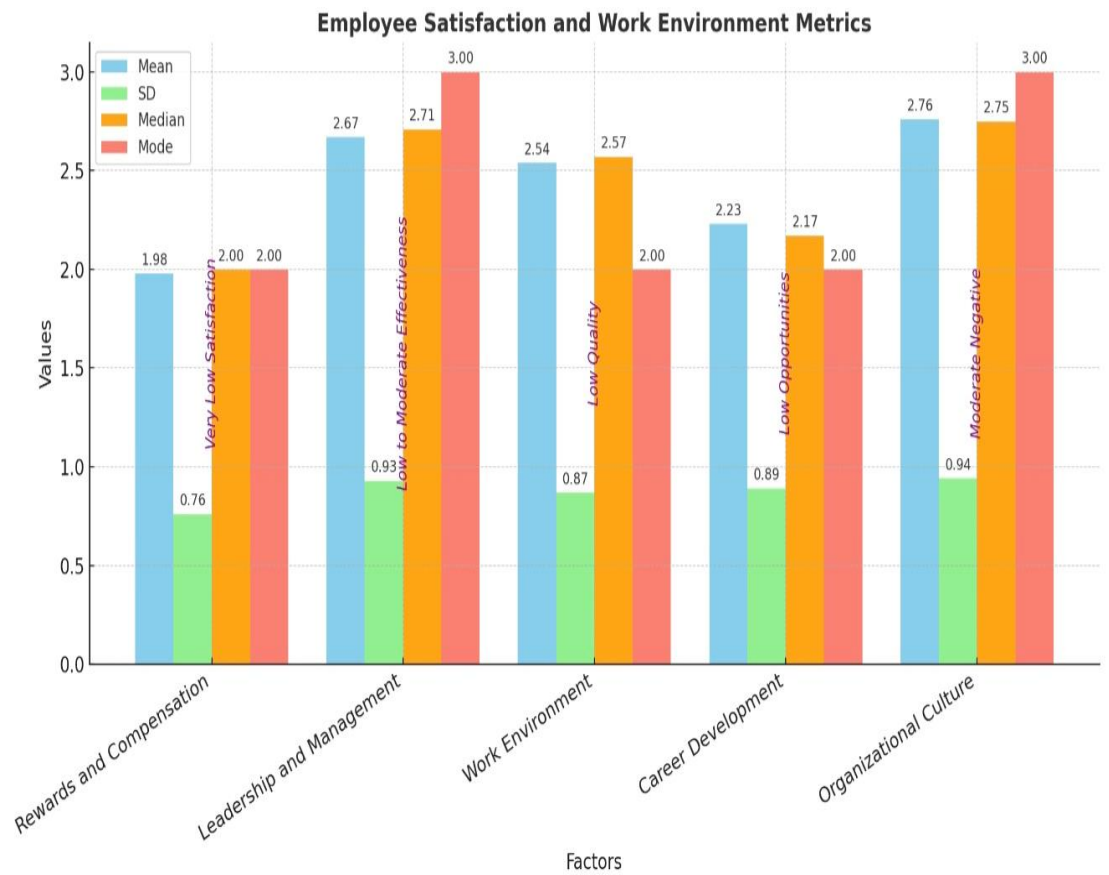
possess technical knowledge but lack the tools necessary to apply their expertise effectively.

These findings align with Bakker and Demerouti's (2017) Job Demands Resources model, which emphasises that contextual factors function as either demands that drain energy or resources that facilitate performance. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe functions as a pervasive job demand, whilst technological inadequacies represent missing job resources. The combination creates a motivational deficit that organisational interventions alone cannot fully address, though targeted strategies may partially mitigate these external pressures. As noted by Van den Broeck et al. (2021), when contextual demands overwhelm available resources, employees experience chronic stress and burnout that undermine both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

4.5.2 Organizational Level Factors Influencing Motivation

Organizational level factors encompass policies, practices, and conditions directly controlled by ZESA Holdings, including remuneration, leadership, working conditions, career development, and organizational culture. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2023), these organisational factors represent the primary levers through which management can influence employee motivation and engagement. Figure 4.3 presents descriptive statistics for these determinants.

Figure 4.3: Organizational Level Factors Influencing Motivation



Source: Researcher, 2025

Rewards and compensation emerged as the most problematic organizational factor, with a mean of 1.98 (SD=0.76), reflecting widespread dissatisfaction with remuneration. Career development opportunities received similarly low ratings, with a mean of 2.23 (SD=0.89), indicating limited pathways for advancement. Work environment quality achieved a mean of 2.54 (SD=0.87), leadership effectiveness obtained a mean of 2.67 (SD=0.93), and organizational culture recorded a mean of 2.76 (SD=0.94), all falling within the low to moderate range.

Interview narratives provided compelling insights into compensation challenges. A technical staff member with 9 years of service stated:

My salary is not competitive at all. I earn less than half of what my former classmates in mining or telecommunications earn for similar technical work. The benefits package is outdated, with medical aid that barely covers basic consultations, and there are no performance bonuses. Salaries are sometimes delayed by weeks, creating serious financial stress for my family.

As argued by Machakaire (2020), salary inadequacy is the most frequently cited demotivator in Zimbabwean public sector organisations, reflecting the inability of government linked entities to compete with private sector compensation levels.

The inadequacy of compensation relative to inflation and living costs was universally emphasised. A middle manager in Finance explained:

ZESA salaries have not kept pace with inflation. What we earn today buys perhaps 30 percent of what it bought five years ago. We watch prices rise monthly whilst our salaries remain stagnant. This creates constant financial anxiety that makes it impossible to focus fully on work.

According to Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, compensation functions as a hygiene factor whose inadequacy prevents satisfaction rather than creating motivation (Herzberg et al., 2017). As noted by Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021), when hygiene factors fall below acceptable thresholds, they become active sources of dissatisfaction that override the potential motivating effects of intrinsic factors.

Leadership and management practices received mixed assessments, with significant variation across departments. A supervisory officer observed:

Leadership quality varies greatly. Some supervisors are supportive and communicate clearly, but others are autocratic and dismissive of employee input. Senior management seems disconnected from frontline realities. Decisions are made without consulting those who will implement them, leading to impractical directives that frustrate employees.

As emphasised by McGregor (1960) in his Theory X and Theory Y framework, autocratic management styles based on assumptions of employee laziness and need for control create demotivating work environments, whilst participative approaches

that trust employees and involve them in decisions enhance motivation and commitment.

The absence of regular feedback and performance recognition emerged as demotivating factors. An administrative officer noted:

I rarely receive feedback on my performance except during annual appraisals, which feel like box ticking exercises rather than meaningful conversations. Good performance goes unnoticed, whilst mistakes are immediately highlighted. There is no culture of recognition or appreciation for exceptional effort or achievement.

According to Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory (1990), regular feedback is essential for maintaining motivation because it enables employees to monitor progress, adjust strategies, and experience satisfaction from achievement. As noted by Posthuma and Campion (2021), organisations that fail to provide frequent, constructive feedback miss opportunities to reinforce desired behaviours and guide performance improvement.

Working conditions, particularly resource availability and physical infrastructure, were consistently criticised. A Generation department engineer described:

We work with equipment that should have been replaced decades ago. Safety standards are compromised because we lack proper protective gear. Offices are poorly maintained, and sometimes we have no electricity in our own offices, which is ironic for a power company. These conditions make it hard to take pride in our workplace.

As argued by Herzberg et al. (2017), adequate working conditions are hygiene factors that, when deficient, create dissatisfaction even if other aspects of employment are satisfactory. According to Maslow's hierarchy, safety needs, including physical safety and security, must be met before employees can focus on higher order needs such as esteem and self actualisation (Maslow, 1943).

Career development emerged as a critical source of frustration, particularly among younger and mid career professionals. A 38 year old technical officer explained:

There are no clear career pathways at ZESA. Promotions are rare and often based on tenure rather than merit. Training opportunities are limited, and I have not attended any professional development course in four years. I feel my skills are stagnating, which is frightening when I think about my future employability.

According to Kanonge and Bussin (2022), limited career development opportunities are a primary driver of brain drain from Zimbabwean parastatals, as ambitious professionals seek organisations offering visible advancement pathways and continuous learning.

Organizational culture was described as bureaucratic, risk averse, and lacking innovation. A middle manager reflected:

The culture here is very hierarchical and resistant to change. New ideas are dismissed as impractical without serious consideration. There is a culture of blame rather than learning from mistakes. This stifles creativity and makes people afraid to take initiative. It is a demotivating environment for anyone who wants to contribute meaningfully.

As emphasised by Bakker and Demerouti (2017), organisational culture shapes the psychological climate within which employees work, and cultures characterised by rigidity, blame, and top down control undermine psychological safety, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation.

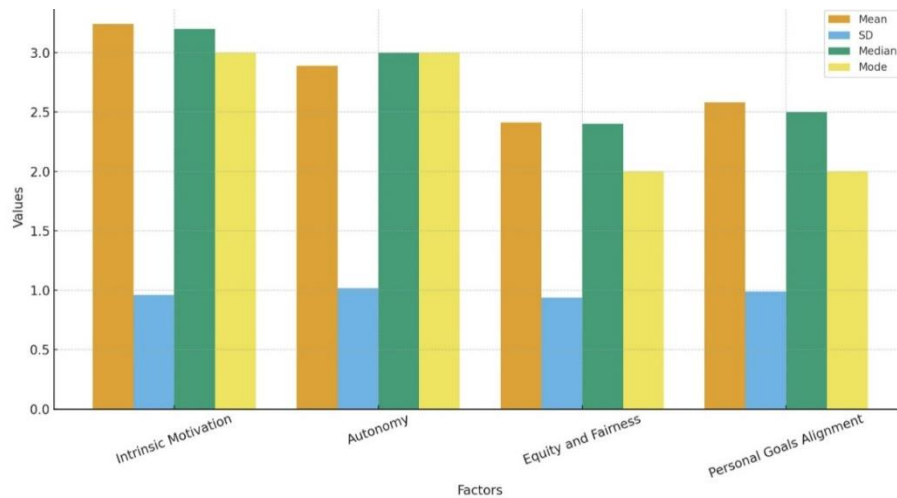
These findings strongly support Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction, including salary, working conditions, and job security, and motivators that create satisfaction, such as achievement, recognition, and advancement (Herzberg et al., 2017). As noted by Alshmemri et al. (2017), ZESA Holdings exhibits deficiencies in both categories: hygiene factors are inadequate, creating active dissatisfaction, whilst motivators are

absent, preventing positive motivation even if hygiene factors were improved. According to Adams' Equity Theory (1965), employees compare their input to output ratios with referent others, and perceptions of under reward relative to contributions generate feelings of inequity that motivate corrective actions, including reduced effort, absenteeism, or turnover.

4.5.3 Individual Level Factors Influencing Motivation

Individual level factors encompass personal characteristics, needs, and psychological states that employees bring to the workplace, including intrinsic motivation, autonomy needs, equity perceptions, and personal goals. As noted by Deci and Ryan (2017), individual differences in motivational orientations, psychological needs, and personal aspirations interact with organisational practices to determine motivational outcomes. Figure 4.4 presents descriptive statistics.

Figure 4.4 : Individual Level Factors Influencing Motivation



Source: Researcher 2025

Intrinsic motivation demonstrated moderate levels, with a mean of 3.24 (SD=0.96), indicating that employees retain some inherent interest in their work despite external challenges. However, autonomy achieved a mean of 2.89 (SD=1.02), equity perceptions recorded a mean of 2.41 (SD=0.94), and goal alignment obtained a mean of 2.58 (SD=0.99), all falling below neutral, indicating psychological needs are inadequately satisfied.

Interview participants revealed that intrinsic motivation persists primarily due to the societal importance of energy provision. A Transmission engineer explained:

I still find satisfaction in solving complex technical problems and keeping the lights on for communities. There is inherent pride in knowing that hospitals, schools, and homes depend on the work we do. This sense of purpose keeps me going even when everything else is discouraging.

As argued by Herzberg et al. (2017), intrinsic motivation derives from the meaningfulness of work itself rather than external rewards, and employees in essential services often maintain intrinsic interest due to the societal significance of their contributions.

However, this intrinsic motivation is progressively eroded by organisational and contextual barriers. A technical supervisor noted:

I used to be passionate about my work, but years of frustration have dulled that passion. When you consistently lack resources to do your job properly, when your efforts go unrecognised, and when you see no prospects for growth, intrinsic motivation cannot sustain itself indefinitely. Eventually, the daily frustrations overwhelm the initial enthusiasm.

According to Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (2017), intrinsic motivation is sustained when three fundamental psychological needs are satisfied: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When organisational conditions thwart these needs, intrinsic motivation diminishes.

Autonomy needs varied by position, with technical professionals particularly desiring greater decision making latitude. An engineering specialist stated:

I am trusted to diagnose complex technical faults, but I cannot make decisions about purchasing even minor spare parts without lengthy approval processes. This bureaucratic control is infantilising and demotivating. We need more autonomy to exercise our professional judgment effectively.

As emphasised by McGregor (1960) in Theory Y, employees, particularly those with high levels of education and expertise, desire autonomy and self direction, and organisational systems that impose excessive control undermine motivation and prevent employees from utilising their capabilities fully.

Equity and fairness perceptions emerged as particularly problematic. A mid level administrator described:

There is widespread perception of unfairness at ZESA. Some departments receive better resources than others without clear justification. Workload distribution is uneven, with some people overburdened whilst others have light responsibilities. Promotions often seem arbitrary rather than merit based. This inequity breeds resentment and demotivation among those who feel disadvantaged.

According to Adams' Equity Theory (1965), employees assess motivation by comparing their input to output ratio with that of referent others, and perceived inequities generate psychological tension that motivates corrective behaviours. As noted by Colquitt et al. (2021), perceptions of distributive injustice, where outcomes are distributed unfairly, and procedural injustice, where decision making processes lack transparency, both undermine motivation and organisational commitment.

Comparison with private sector colleagues intensified perceptions of inequity. A technical officer elaborated:

I compare my situation with friends who work in private companies or international organisations. They earn three times my salary for similar qualifications and work. They have modern equipment, regular training, and clear career paths. This comparison is painful and demotivating. It makes me feel undervalued and exploited.

As argued by Posthuma and Campion (2021), external equity comparisons are particularly salient for highly educated professionals who can readily assess market value through networks and job advertisements, and perceptions of under reward relative to external referents strongly predict turnover intentions.

Personal goal misalignment reflected limited opportunities for professional aspiration realisation. A 34 year old engineer stated:

My career goals include becoming a specialist in renewable energy systems and eventually moving into senior management. But ZESA offers neither specialised training in emerging technologies nor transparent pathways to leadership positions. My personal aspirations are completely disconnected from what ZESA can offer, which makes me question my long term future here.

According to Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory (1990), motivation is enhanced when organisational opportunities align with personal goals, enabling

employees to pursue meaningful objectives through their work. As noted by Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), employees assess whether effort will lead to performance, whether performance will be rewarded, and whether rewards are personally valued, and misalignment at any point in this chain undermines motivation.

These findings resonate with Self Determination Theory, articulated by Deci and Ryan (2017), which identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs driving intrinsic motivation. At ZESA Holdings, autonomy is constrained by bureaucratic controls, competence development is limited by inadequate training, and relatedness is undermined by perceptions of inequity and poor leadership. As emphasised by Van den Broeck et al. (2021), when organisational contexts thwart rather than support these basic psychological needs, employees experience reduced well being and motivation regardless of external rewards. Additionally, Adams' Equity Theory (1965) explains how unfavourable social comparisons, both internal with ZESA colleagues and external with private sector peers, generate perceptions of under reward relative to contributions, producing demotivation and withdrawal. According to Mapuranga and Mlambo (2022), fairness perceptions are particularly salient in Zimbabwean parastatals where resource scarcity creates visible disparities in treatment across departments and levels.

4.5.4 Overall Motivation Assessment

Respondents were asked to provide an overall assessment of their motivation level. Table 4.4 summarises these responses.

Table 4.4: Overall Motivation Level

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Very Low	12	21.4
Low	28	50.0
Moderate	14	25.0
High	2	3.6
Very High	0	0.0
Total	56	100.0

The overall motivation assessment reveals that 71.4% of respondents rated their motivation as low or very low, whilst only 3.6% reported high motivation, with no respondents indicating very high motivation. This distribution confirms the concerning motivation deficit identified through specific indicator measures. As emphasised by Robbins and Judge (2022), when the majority of employees report low motivation, organisations face serious risks including reduced productivity, increased turnover, and diminished service quality. According to Gallup (2024), low employee engagement globally costs economies billions in lost productivity, and the patterns observed at ZESA Holdings align with broader trends of disengagement in resource constrained organisations.

Motivational factors by personal importance, yielded the following priority order: (1) Salary and Benefits with a mean rank of 1.8, (2) Career Development Opportunities with a mean rank of 2.4, (3) Recognition and Appreciation with a mean rank of 3.2, (4) Leadership and Management Support with a mean rank of 3.6, and (5) Work Environment and Culture with a mean rank of 4.0. This ranking demonstrates that tangible extrinsic factors encompassing compensation and advancement are prioritised over psychological factors. As noted by Maslow (1943), this hierarchy of priorities reflects the reality that basic physiological and safety needs must be satisfied before higher order psychological and self-actualisation needs become motivating. According to Herzberg et al. (2017), when

hygiene factors are severely deficient, they dominate employees' consciousness and prevent motivators from exerting influence, which explains why ZESA employees prioritise tangible rewards over intrinsic satisfiers.

Regarding the three factors with the greatest negative impact on motivation, results revealed that Low Salaries was selected by 89.3% of respondents, Lack of Career Advancement by 67.9%, and Economic Challenges by 62.5%. These findings were followed by Inadequate Resources at 53.6%, Poor Work Environment at 41.1%, and Lack of Recognition at 35.7%. As argued by Machakaire (2020), the dominance of compensation related concerns in Zimbabwean public sector motivation research reflects the severe erosion of real wages due to inflation and currency instability. According to Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021), employees in state owned enterprises face a dual challenge: organisational inability to provide competitive compensation and external economic pressures that magnify the impact of wage inadequacy.

4.5.5 Recommendations for Improvement

Thematic analysis of open ended responses revealed five dominant themes, presented in Table 4.5 according to frequency of mention.

Table 4.5 : Priority Recommendations for Improving Motivation

Recommendation Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Increase Salaries and Benefits	52	92.9
Provide Career Development Opportunities	41	73.2
Improve Working Conditions and Resources	38	67.9
Establish Recognition and Reward Systems	29	51.8
Enhance Leadership and Communication	24	42.9

The overwhelming priority assigned to salary increases reflects the severity of financial challenges facing ZESA employees. A respondent in the Generation department wrote:

Priority one must be salary adjustment to match inflation and bring us closer to private sector levels. Without addressing this fundamental issue, no other motivational intervention will succeed. Employees cannot focus on higher level needs when they are struggling to meet basic family expenses.

As emphasised by Herzberg et al. (2017), inadequate compensation functions as a powerful demotivator whose resolution is necessary but not sufficient for motivation, and organisations must address hygiene factors before motivators can effectively enhance engagement.

Career development emerged as the second priority, with respondents emphasising the need for visible pathways to advancement. An engineering professional recommended:

ZESA should create transparent promotion criteria based on merit and performance rather than tenure. We need regular training programmes to update our skills and prepare us for leadership roles. Without career progression, talented people will continue leaving for organisations that invest in their growth.

According to Kanonge and Bussin (2022), career stagnation is a primary driver of brain drain from Zimbabwean parastatals, and organisations that fail to provide development opportunities lose their most capable employees to competitors.

Improving working conditions and providing adequate resources was consistently emphasised. A technical supervisor stated:

Management must prioritise equipment upgrades and ensure we have necessary tools and spare parts. Offices need renovation, safety equipment must be provided, and we need reliable transport for field operations. These practical improvements would demonstrate that the organisation values our safety and effectiveness.

As argued by Bakker and Demerouti (2017), job resources including equipment, tools, and supportive working conditions function as motivational enablers that facilitate performance and reduce stress, whilst resource deficiencies create job demands that drain energy and undermine engagement.

Recognition and reward systems represented another priority. An administrative officer recommended:

ZESA should introduce formal recognition programmes that acknowledge exceptional performance. This could include employee of the month awards, certificates of excellence, public commendations, and performance based bonuses. Recognition costs little but signals that management notices and appreciates good work.

According to Posthuma and Campion (2021), recognition satisfies employees' esteem needs and reinforces desired behaviours, and organisations that systematically acknowledge achievements cultivate cultures of excellence and continuous improvement.

Leadership enhancement was also prioritised, with respondents calling for participative management styles and improved communication. A middle manager suggested:

Senior leadership should regularly communicate with employees, explain decisions transparently, and involve staff in problem solving. Managers need training in supportive leadership that empowers rather than controls. Better leadership would improve morale even without immediate salary increases.

As noted by McGregor (1960), Theory Y leadership approaches that trust employees and involve them in decisions generate higher motivation and commitment than Theory X approaches characterised by control and micromanagement.

Additional qualitative comments in Question 99 provided further insights. Several respondents emphasised the need for performance based incentives. One stated:

We need performance bonuses tied to clear metrics like reliability improvement or revenue collection. This would reward high performers and motivate others to increase effort. Currently, everyone receives the same regardless of contribution, which demotivates hardworking employees.

Others highlighted the importance of addressing organisational culture. A respondent noted:

ZESA needs a cultural transformation from bureaucratic and hierarchical to innovative and empowering. We should encourage initiative, tolerate reasonable risk taking, and learn from mistakes rather than punishing them. This cultural shift would unlock creativity and enthusiasm currently suppressed by fear.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), organisational culture shapes the psychological climate and either facilitates or inhibits motivation, and cultures characterised by trust, innovation, and empowerment enhance intrinsic motivation and engagement.

4.6 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were employed to test the research hypothesis and examine relationships between independent variables encompassing contextual, organisational, and individual level factors and the dependent variable of employee motivation measured through the composite of job satisfaction, work engagement, and organisational commitment.

4.6.1 Hypothesis Testing

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- **H₀**: Motivation levels for ZESA employees are not high.
- **H₁**: Motivation levels for ZESA employees are high.

A one sample t test was conducted to compare the mean overall motivation score against a test value of 3.0, representing the neutral midpoint on the five point scale. According to Field (2018), one sample t tests determine whether sample means differ significantly from hypothesised population values. The mean overall motivation score of 2.51 (SD=0.88) was significantly lower than the test value of 3.0, with $t(55)=4.17$, $p<0.001$. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from 0.26 to 0.73, indicating that the true population mean motivation score lies significantly below the neutral point.

These results provide strong statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative that motivation levels are not high. In fact, motivation levels are significantly below the neutral midpoint, confirming low motivation among ZESA employees. As emphasised by Hair et al. (2019), when statistical tests yield significant results with p values below 0.05, researchers can confidently conclude that observed patterns reflect true population characteristics rather than sampling variability.

4.6.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between motivational determinants and motivation outcomes. As noted by Pallant (2020),

correlation coefficients ranging from 0.30 to 0.49 indicate moderate relationships, whilst coefficients above 0.50 represent strong relationships. Table 4.6 presents correlation coefficients between predictor variables and the composite motivation score.

Table 4.6: Correlation Between Motivational Determinants and Overall Motivation

Predictor Variable	Pearson r	Significance	Interpretation
Rewards and Compensation	0.68	p<0.001	Strong Positive
Career Development	0.61	p<0.001	Strong Positive
Leadership and Management	0.59	p<0.001	Strong Positive
Work Environment	0.54	p<0.001	Strong Positive
Equity and Fairness	0.52	p<0.001	Strong Positive
Intrinsic Motivation	0.48	p<0.001	Moderate Positive
Organizational Culture	0.47	p<0.001	Moderate Positive
Autonomy	0.43	p<0.001	Moderate Positive
Economic Factors	-0.51	p<0.001	Strong Negative
Technological Factors	0.39	p<0.01	Moderate Positive
Political Factors	-0.38	p<0.01	Moderate Negative
Social Factors	-0.32	p<0.05	Moderate Negative

The correlation analysis reveals that rewards and compensation exhibits the strongest positive relationship with motivation ($r=0.68$, $p<0.001$), followed by career development ($r=0.61$, $p<0.001$) and leadership ($r=0.59$, $p<0.001$). These findings align with Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, which identifies both hygiene factors such as compensation and motivators including career advancement as critical determinants of workplace motivation (Herzberg et al., 2017). As noted by Colquitt et al. (2021), strong correlations indicate that improvements in these areas would likely yield substantial motivation gains.

Economic factors demonstrate a strong negative correlation with motivation ($r=$ negative 0.51 , $p<0.001$), confirming that external economic challenges significantly undermine employee motivation. According to Machakaire (2020), the negative correlation between economic conditions and motivation in Zimbabwean organisations reflects the pervasive impact of macroeconomic instability on workforce morale. Political factors also show negative associations ($r=$ negative 0.38 , $p<0.01$), consistent with research by Nyakasoka (2013) on political interference in parastatals.

4.6.3 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine which factors most strongly predict employee motivation and to assess the proportion of variance explained by the predictor variables. According to Hair et al. (2019), regression analysis enables researchers to identify the relative contribution of multiple predictors simultaneously whilst controlling for intercorrelations. Table 4.7 presents the regression model summary.

Table 4.7 : Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Significance
1	0.82	0.67	0.63	0.54	16.43	p<0.001

The regression model explains 67% of variance in employee motivation ($R^2=0.67$), with an adjusted R^2 of 0.63 accounting for the number of predictors. As noted by Field (2018), R^2 values above 0.50 indicate that the model explains a substantial proportion of outcome variance, and the current model demonstrates strong explanatory power. The F statistic of 16.43 ($p<0.001$) confirms that the overall model is statistically significant.

Table 4.8 : Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	Significance
(Constant)	0.43	0.31		1.39	p=0.17
Rewards and Compensation	0.38	0.09	0.35	4.22	p<0.001
Career Development	0.29	0.08	0.28	3.63	p<0.01
Leadership	0.24	0.07	0.24	3.43	p<0.01
Work Environment	0.19	0.08	0.17	2.38	p<0.05
Economic Factors	-0.22	0.09	-0.19	-2.44	p<0.05
Equity and Fairness	0.16	0.07	0.16	2.29	p<0.05

The regression coefficients reveal that rewards and compensation is the strongest predictor of motivation ($\beta=0.35$, $p<0.001$), followed by career development

($\beta=0.28$, $p<0.01$) and leadership ($\beta=0.24$, $p<0.01$). These findings indicate that a one unit increase in compensation satisfaction is associated with a 0.35 unit increase in overall motivation when other variables are held constant. As emphasised by Robbins and Judge (2022), standardised beta coefficients enable comparison of relative predictor importance, and compensation emerges as the most influential organisational lever for enhancing motivation at ZESA Holdings.

Economic factors demonstrate significant negative influence ($\beta=$ negative 0.19, $p<0.05$), confirming that contextual economic challenges constrain motivation independently of organisational interventions. According to Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021), this finding highlights the dual challenge facing Zimbabwean parastatals: improving organisational practices whilst operating within adverse macroeconomic conditions.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study provide comprehensive evidence regarding employee motivation at ZESA Holdings, revealing a concerning pattern of low motivation attributable to deficiencies across contextual, organisational, and individual dimensions. The discussion integrates quantitative and qualitative findings with theoretical frameworks established in Chapter 2.

4.7.1 Current Motivation Levels

The first research objective sought to assess current motivation levels at ZESA Holdings. Findings unequivocally demonstrate low motivation across multiple indicators, including job satisfaction with a mean of 2.34, work engagement at 2.51, and organisational commitment at 2.68, all falling significantly below neutral

midpoints. These patterns align with previous research on Zimbabwean public sector organisations. As noted by Machakaire (2020), parastatals consistently exhibit lower motivation levels than private sector counterparts due to resource constraints and governance challenges. Similarly, Nyakasoka (2013) found widespread demotivation in state owned enterprises, attributing this to inadequate compensation, limited career prospects, and poor working conditions.

The persistence of moderate organisational citizenship behaviour (mean=3.42) despite low motivation represents a paradoxical finding requiring theoretical explanation. According to Podsakoff et al. (2000), organisational citizenship behaviours are discretionary actions not formally rewarded, and their persistence despite low satisfaction suggests alternative motivations beyond organisational commitment. Qualitative data revealed that employees maintain helping behaviours due to professional ethics, collegial solidarity, and sense of public service duty rather than loyalty to ZESA management. As argued by Maleka et al. (2019), employees in essential services often separate organisational attachment from professional identity, maintaining standards due to societal obligations even when dissatisfied with employers.

High turnover intentions with a reverse coded mean of 2.12 confirm serious retention risks. According to Kanonge and Bussin (2022), brain drain from Zimbabwean parastatals reflects employees' rational assessment that better opportunities exist elsewhere, and organisations failing to address fundamental motivational deficits face progressive loss of capability. The combination of low motivation and high turnover intentions creates a vicious cycle: departures of

skilled staff increase workload for remaining employees, further eroding morale and prompting additional exits.

4.7.2 Determinants of Motivation

The second research objective examined factors influencing motivation across three levels: contextual, organisational, and individual.

Contextual Level Factors: Economic conditions emerged as the most powerful external influence, with a mean of 4.23 indicating strong agreement that economic challenges undermine motivation. As emphasised by Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021), Zimbabwe's hyperinflation and currency instability create a context where organisational motivational interventions prove insufficient because employees face persistent financial stress that overwhelms workplace satisfiers. This finding aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which posits that physiological and safety needs dominate consciousness when unmet, rendering higher order motivators ineffective (Maslow, 1943). Political factors also demonstrate negative impact, consistent with research by Nyakasoka (2013) on political interference undermining meritocracy in parastatals. Technological inadequacies emerged as resource deficiencies that frustrate performance, aligning with Bakker and Demerouti's (2017) Job Demands Resources model, which identifies technology as a facilitating resource whose absence creates job demands.

Organisational Level Factors: Rewards and compensation received the lowest satisfaction rating, with a mean of 1.98, and emerged as the strongest predictor of motivation in regression analysis with $\beta=0.35$. This finding strongly supports Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, which identifies compensation as a critical hygiene

factor whose inadequacy prevents satisfaction regardless of motivator presence (Herzberg et al., 2017). As argued by Alshmemri et al. (2017), organisations must ensure hygiene factors reach acceptable thresholds before motivators can exert influence. Career development demonstrated strong correlation ($r=0.61$) and significant predictive power ($\beta=0.28$), confirming that advancement opportunities function as important motivators. According to Locke and Latham (1990), career pathways satisfy growth needs and provide goals that direct effort, and their absence creates frustration particularly among ambitious professionals.

Leadership effectiveness achieved a mean of 2.67 and $\beta=0.24$, indicating significant but moderate influence. Qualitative data revealed substantial variation in leadership quality across departments, with some supervisors demonstrating supportive, participative approaches whilst others employed autocratic styles. As noted by McGregor (1960), Theory Y leadership that trusts employees and involves them in decisions enhances motivation, whilst Theory X approaches based on control assumptions undermine engagement. Work environment quality and equity perceptions also emerged as significant predictors, supporting Adams' Equity Theory (1965), which posits that fairness perceptions fundamentally shape motivational responses.

Individual Level Factors: Intrinsic motivation demonstrated moderate levels (mean=3.24), indicating that employees retain some inherent interest in their work despite adverse conditions. As argued by Herzberg et al. (2017), intrinsic motivation derives from work meaningfulness, and ZESA employees' connection to essential service provision sustains some inherent satisfaction. However, autonomy needs are inadequately met (mean=2.89), and equity perceptions are low

(mean=2.41). According to Self Determination Theory articulated by Deci and Ryan (2017), motivation requires satisfaction of three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. At ZESA Holdings, all three needs are compromised through bureaucratic control limiting autonomy, inadequate training constraining competence development, and perceived inequity undermining relatedness.

4.7.3 Integration with Theoretical Framework

The findings provide strong empirical support for the theoretical framework synthesising Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, and Adams' Equity Theory. According to Maslow (1943), needs form a hierarchy wherein lower order physiological and safety needs must be satisfied before higher order psychological needs become motivating. ZESA employees face unmet basic needs due to inadequate compensation and economic pressures, explaining why tangible extrinsic factors dominate motivational priorities. As noted by Nielsen et al. (2022), when survival needs dominate consciousness, higher order motivators such as recognition and self actualisation prove ineffective.

Herzberg's distinction between hygiene factors and motivators explains the dual deficiency pattern observed at ZESA Holdings (Herzberg et al., 2017). Hygiene factors including compensation, working conditions, and job security are inadequate, creating active dissatisfaction. Simultaneously, motivators such as recognition, achievement opportunities, and career advancement are absent, preventing positive motivation. As emphasised by Alshmemri et al. (2017), organisations exhibiting deficiencies in both dimensions experience the severe motivational deficits observed in this study.

Adams' Equity Theory (1965) explains how social comparison processes intensify demotivation at ZESA Holdings. Employees perceive under reward relative to both internal referents, including colleagues in better resourced departments, and external referents, such as private sector professionals with comparable qualifications. As argued by Colquitt et al. (2021), perceptions of distributive injustice, where outcomes are unfair, and procedural injustice, where processes lack transparency, both generate psychological tension that motivates corrective actions including reduced effort and turnover.

The regression analysis revealing that organisational factors explain 67% of motivation variance whilst contextual factors exert independent negative influence confirms the complexity of motivation in resource constrained public sector contexts. As noted by Bakker and Demerouti (2017), motivation emerges from interactions between organisational practices and environmental conditions, and neither level alone fully determines motivational outcomes. This finding suggests that whilst ZESA Holdings cannot control economic or political conditions, improving organisational practices can partially mitigate external challenges.

4.7.4 Practical Implications

The findings generate several practical implications for ZESA Holdings management. First, addressing compensation inadequacy must be prioritised given its dominant influence on motivation. According to Machakaire (2020), whilst public sector organisations face fiscal constraints, strategies including salary adjustments indexed to inflation, performance bonuses funded through efficiency gains, and enhanced non monetary benefits can improve total compensation value. Second, establishing transparent career pathways with merit based promotion

criteria would address the second priority concern. As emphasised by Kanonge and Bussin (2022), visible advancement opportunities reduce brain drain by signalling organisational investment in employee futures.

Third, leadership development programmes emphasising participative, supportive management styles would enhance supervisory effectiveness. According to McGregor (1960), shifting from Theory X control oriented approaches to Theory Y empowerment oriented approaches unleashes intrinsic motivation and creativity. Fourth, recognition systems acknowledging exceptional performance through awards, commendations, and public acknowledgment would address employees' esteem needs at minimal cost. As noted by Posthuma and Campion (2021), recognition programmes reinforce desired behaviours and cultivate cultures of excellence.

Fifth, improving working conditions through equipment upgrades, office renovations, and adequate resource provision would demonstrate organisational commitment to employee welfare. According to Herzberg et al. (2017), whilst improving working conditions alone does not create motivation, deficient conditions actively demotivate, and resolving them establishes foundations for motivators to operate. Finally, establishing transparent, participative communication channels would enhance procedural justice perceptions. As argued by Colquitt et al. (2021), when employees understand decision rationales and have voice in processes affecting them, fairness perceptions improve even when outcomes remain challenging.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented, analysed, and discussed findings from the empirical investigation of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. The high response rate of 91.9% ensured representativeness, whilst reliability analysis confirmed strong internal consistency across all measurement scales. Current motivation levels were found to be significantly low across job satisfaction, work engagement, and organisational commitment indicators, with 71.4% of employees rating overall motivation as low or very low. Hypothesis testing confirmed that motivation levels are significantly below neutral midpoints, rejecting the hypothesis that ZESA employees experience high motivation. Contextual factors, particularly economic conditions, organisational factors encompassing compensation, career development, and leadership, and individual factors including autonomy and equity perceptions all emerged as significant determinants. Regression analysis revealed that organisational factors explain 67% of motivation variance, with compensation emerging as the strongest predictor. Qualitative findings enriched quantitative patterns by revealing the lived experiences underlying statistical trends. The next chapter presents conclusions and recommendations based on these findings.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the empirical investigation of employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. The chapter begins by summarising the key findings in relation to the three research objectives: assessing current motivation levels, examining factors influencing motivation, and proposing enhancement strategies. Subsequently, conclusions are drawn by integrating findings with the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2, highlighting how the study contributes to understanding motivation in Zimbabwean parastatals. Recommendations are then presented, offering practical strategies for ZESA Holdings management to address identified motivational deficits. Finally, suggestions for further research are provided to guide future scholarly inquiry into employee motivation in similar contexts. This chapter synthesises the research journey and translates empirical evidence into actionable insights for organisational improvement.

5.2 Discussion

This study investigated employee motivation at ZESA Holdings through a mixed methods approach, integrating quantitative data from 56 questionnaire respondents with qualitative insights from 12 interview participants. The findings are summarised according to the three research objectives.

Current Levels of Employee Motivation: The first objective assessed current motivation levels through five indicators: job satisfaction, work engagement, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, and turnover intention. Findings revealed alarmingly low motivation levels across most

indicators. Job satisfaction recorded a mean of 2.34, falling significantly below the neutral midpoint and indicating widespread dissatisfaction with employment experiences. Work engagement achieved a mean of 2.51, suggesting that employees lack enthusiasm and psychological investment in their roles. Organisational commitment demonstrated a mean of 2.68, representing weak emotional attachment to ZESA Holdings. Interestingly, organisational citizenship behaviour achieved a moderate to high mean of 3.42, indicating that despite low satisfaction and commitment, employees continue exhibiting discretionary helping behaviours. Qualitative data revealed that this paradox reflects professional ethics and concern for public service rather than organisational loyalty. Turnover intention, when reverse scored, yielded a mean of 2.12, confirming high intentions to leave the organisation. The overall motivation assessment revealed that 71.4% of respondents rated their motivation as low or very low, with only 3.6% reporting high motivation. Hypothesis testing confirmed that motivation levels are significantly below neutral midpoints at $p < 0.001$, providing statistical evidence to reject the hypothesis that ZESA employees experience high motivation.

Factors Influencing Employee Motivation: The second objective examined determinants across contextual, organisational, and individual levels. At the contextual level, economic factors emerged as the most powerful negative influence with a mean of 4.23, reflecting Zimbabwe's hyperinflation and currency instability. Political factors demonstrated moderate to high negative impact with a mean of 3.78, whilst technological inadequacies yielded a mean of 2.38, indicating insufficient provision of modern equipment. At the organisational level, rewards and compensation emerged as the most problematic factor, achieving the lowest mean of 1.98. Regression analysis confirmed compensation as the strongest

predictor of motivation with $\beta=0.35$. Career development opportunities received a mean of 2.23, indicating limited advancement pathways. Leadership effectiveness achieved a mean of 2.67, work environment quality recorded 2.54, and organisational culture obtained 2.76. At the individual level, intrinsic motivation demonstrated moderate levels with a mean of 3.24, whilst autonomy needs achieved 2.89, equity perceptions recorded 2.41, and personal goals alignment obtained 2.58. Correlation analysis revealed that compensation exhibits the strongest positive relationship with motivation at $r=0.68$, followed by career development at $r=0.61$, leadership at $r=0.59$, and work environment at $r=0.54$. Economic factors demonstrated a strong negative correlation at $r=\text{negative } 0.51$. Multiple regression analysis revealed that organisational and individual factors collectively explain 67% of variance in employee motivation, with statistical significance at $F=16.43$, $p<0.001$.

Priority Recommendations from Respondents: The third objective identified enhancement strategies. Respondents prioritised five interventions: increasing salaries and benefits, mentioned by 92.9%; providing career development opportunities, cited by 73.2%; improving working conditions and resources, identified by 67.9%; establishing recognition and reward systems, mentioned by 51.8%; and enhancing leadership and communication, cited by 42.9%. Qualitative responses emphasised that without addressing fundamental compensation inadequacy, other motivational interventions would prove ineffective.

5.3 Conclusions

This study provides comprehensive empirical evidence regarding employee motivation at ZESA Holdings, generating several important conclusions that

contribute to theoretical understanding and practical management of motivation in Zimbabwean parastatals.

Conclusion 1: Severe Motivational Deficit Exists at ZESA Holdings. The research conclusively demonstrates that ZESA Holdings experiences a severe motivational deficit, with 71.4% of employees reporting low or very low motivation. This finding is statistically significant, with motivation levels falling significantly below neutral midpoints at $p < 0.001$. According to Robbins and Judge (2022), when the majority of employees report low motivation, organisations face serious risks including reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, elevated turnover, and compromised service quality. For ZESA Holdings, an essential service provider, these motivational deficits threaten national energy security and economic development. The conclusion that motivation is severely compromised validates concerns about morale in Zimbabwean parastatals and provides empirical foundation for urgent intervention.

Conclusion 2: Compensation Inadequacy is the Primary Driver of Demotivation. The research conclusively identifies rewards and compensation as the most critical determinant of motivation, achieving the lowest satisfaction rating at mean=1.98, the strongest correlation with motivation at $r=0.68$, and the highest predictive power in regression analysis at $\beta=0.35$. This finding strongly supports Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, which identifies compensation as a critical hygiene factor whose inadequacy creates dissatisfaction regardless of other positive factors (Herzberg et al., 2017). As emphasised by Machakaire (2020), salary inadequacy is the most frequently cited demotivator in Zimbabwean public sector organisations. The conclusion that compensation inadequacy dominates motivational concerns has

important implications: whilst addressing compensation alone is insufficient for creating positive motivation, failing to address it renders other interventions ineffective because employees remain preoccupied with financial survival rather than higher order needs.

Conclusion 3: Career Development Deficiencies Compound Motivational Problems. The research demonstrates that limited career development opportunities constitute the second most significant motivational challenge, with low satisfaction ratings at mean=2.23, strong correlation with motivation at $r=0.61$, and substantial predictive power at $\beta=0.28$. According to Kanonge and Bussin (2022), career stagnation is a primary driver of brain drain from Zimbabwean parastatals, as ambitious professionals seek organisations offering visible advancement opportunities and continuous learning. The conclusion that career development deficiencies seriously undermine motivation highlights the dual nature of the problem: employees face not only inadequate current compensation but also limited prospects for future improvement, creating hopelessness that intensifies demotivation.

Conclusion 4: External Economic Context Significantly Constrains Organisational Efforts. The research conclusively demonstrates that contextual economic factors exert powerful negative influence on motivation, achieving a mean of 4.23 and demonstrating strong negative correlation at $r=\text{negative } 0.51$ with significant predictive power at $\beta=\text{negative } 0.19$. As argued by Mutizwa and Chikanda (2021), Zimbabwe's hyperinflation and currency instability create a context where organisational motivational interventions prove insufficient because employees face persistent financial stress. This finding validates Maslow's

hierarchy of needs, which posits that physiological and safety needs dominate consciousness when unmet, rendering higher order motivators ineffective (Maslow, 1943). The conclusion that external economic challenges independently influence motivation confirms that ZESA Holdings cannot fully resolve motivational problems through internal interventions alone, though the finding that organisational factors explain 67% of motivation variance confirms that internal improvements can partially mitigate external challenges.

Conclusion 5: Multiple Organisational Deficiencies Create Compounding Effects. The research reveals that ZESA Holdings exhibits deficiencies across multiple organisational dimensions simultaneously, including compensation, career development, leadership, working conditions, and organisational culture, all recording means below 3.0. This pattern reflects what Herzberg et al. (2017) describe as dual deficiency: hygiene factors are inadequate, creating active dissatisfaction, whilst motivators are absent, preventing positive motivation. The conclusion that multiple deficiencies create compounding effects suggests that piecemeal interventions will prove inadequate, and comprehensive strategies addressing multiple dimensions simultaneously are necessary for meaningful improvement.

Conclusion 6: Theoretical Frameworks Provide Valid Explanatory Power. The research confirms that established motivational theories, including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, and Adams' Equity Theory, provide valid frameworks for understanding motivation in Zimbabwean parastatals. As noted by McLeod (2021), Maslow's hierarchy explains why tangible extrinsic factors dominate priorities when basic needs are unmet. Herzberg's distinction

between hygiene factors and motivators explains the dual deficiency pattern observed at ZESA Holdings. Adams' Equity Theory explains how social comparison processes intensify demotivation through perceived under reward relative to referents. The theoretical validation confirms that whilst contextual specificities exist, fundamental motivational principles transcend cultural and economic boundaries.

5.4 Implications

5.4.1 Theoretical Implications

The research findings contribute several important insights to motivational theory, particularly regarding its application in developing economy contexts. First, the study empirically validates the cross cultural applicability of established Western motivational theories specifically Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, and Adams' Equity Theory within the Zimbabwean parastatal context. This validation is theoretically significant because it demonstrates that fundamental motivational principles operate consistently across diverse economic and cultural environments, though their manifestation and relative importance may vary according to contextual factors.

Second, the research extends theoretical understanding by demonstrating how severe economic instability modifies the operation of motivational theories. Specifically, the findings suggest that in hyperinflationary contexts, lower-order needs as conceptualised by Maslow exert prolonged dominance over employee consciousness, effectively preventing the activation of higher order motivators. This represents a theoretical refinement indicating that economic context

determines not merely the strength of motivational factors but fundamentally whether certain motivational mechanisms can operate at all.

Third, the research provides empirical support for an integrated theoretical framework that acknowledges the simultaneous operation of multiple motivational theories rather than privileging one perspective. The finding that compensation, career development, leadership, and contextual factors independently contribute to motivation variance suggests that comprehensive theoretical models incorporating elements from multiple theories offer superior explanatory power compared to single theory approaches.

5.4.2 Practical Implications for ZESA Holdings Management

The research generates several critical practical implications for ZESA Holdings management, requiring both immediate interventions and strategic reorientation. First and most urgently, management must prioritise comprehensive compensation reform as the foundation for any broader motivational strategy. Given that compensation inadequacy achieved the lowest satisfaction rating and highest predictive power, management cannot defer addressing this fundamental deficit. Practical interventions should include salary benchmarking against comparable regional utilities, implementation of inflation adjustment mechanisms, exploration of alternative compensation forms including performance bonuses and non-monetary benefits, and transparent communication regarding compensation constraints and improvement timelines.

Second, management must develop and implement a comprehensive career development framework that provides employees with visible advancement pathways and continuous learning opportunities. Practical measures should include

establishing formal career progression criteria, implementing regular skills development programmes, creating mentorship initiatives, introducing job rotation and enrichment opportunities, and ensuring transparent communication of advancement opportunities. These interventions address the second most significant motivational deficit whilst requiring substantially fewer financial resources than compensation reform.

Third, management must recognise that isolated, single-dimension interventions will prove inadequate given the compounding effects of multiple organisational deficiencies. This implies the necessity of developing integrated motivational strategies that simultaneously address compensation, career development, leadership quality, working conditions, and organisational culture. Management should establish a dedicated task force to coordinate comprehensive motivational interventions, ensuring that improvements across multiple dimensions reinforce rather than contradict each other.

Fourth, management must acknowledge the limitations of purely internal interventions given the powerful influence of external economic context. This recognition implies that management should develop realistic expectations regarding achievable improvements, communicate transparently with employees about contextual constraints, and explore creative solutions that buffer employees from external economic volatility, such as productivity-linked incentives, subsidised essential services, or arrangements that provide relative stability despite macroeconomic turbulence.

5.4.3 Policy Implications for Government and Regulatory Authorities

The research generates significant policy implications for government authorities overseeing parastatal operations, particularly the Ministry of Energy and Power Development and broader public sector governance structures. First, government must recognise that current compensation frameworks for parastatal employees are fundamentally inadequate and constitute a critical threat to essential service delivery. This implies the necessity of comprehensive public sector remuneration reform that acknowledges competitive market realities and provides compensation sufficient to meet basic employee needs. Policy interventions should include reviewing salary scales across all parastatals, developing mechanisms for regular inflation adjustment, exploring performance-based compensation models, and ensuring adequate capitalisation of parastatals to fund competitive compensation.

Second, government must address the structural constraints that prevent parastatal management from implementing effective motivational interventions. Specifically, policies must grant sufficient operational autonomy to parastatal boards and management to make timely decisions regarding compensation, career development, and organisational reforms without excessive bureaucratic delays. This implies policy reforms that clarify governance boundaries, streamline approval processes, and hold parastatal leadership accountable for outcomes rather than micromanaging operational decisions.

Third, government must acknowledge that macroeconomic instability directly undermines motivational interventions and organisational performance across all parastatals. This recognition implies that maintaining currency stability, controlling inflation, and ensuring predictable economic conditions constitute not merely

macroeconomic objectives but essential preconditions for effective public sector management. Policy should prioritise macroeconomic stabilisation as a foundation for organisational effectiveness.

Fourth, government should facilitate knowledge sharing and best practice dissemination across parastatals facing similar motivational challenges. Policy interventions could include establishing forums for parastatal HR professionals, commissioning comparative studies of motivational strategies, and developing standardised frameworks that parastatals can adapt to their specific contexts.

5.4.4 Implications for Other Zimbabwean Parastatals

The findings from ZESA Holdings carry important implications for other Zimbabwean parastatals facing comparable contextual challenges. First, other parastatals should recognise that motivational deficits likely constitute systemic rather than organisation-specific problems, suggesting that similar motivational challenges probably exist across the parastatal sector. This recognition implies that other parastatals should conduct systematic assessments of employee motivation to establish empirical baselines and identify priority intervention areas rather than assuming motivational adequacy.

Second, the finding that compensation inadequacy dominates motivational concerns at ZESA Holdings suggests that other parastatals cannot circumvent this fundamental challenge through alternative motivational strategies. This implies that parastatal leadership must advocate collectively for systemic compensation reform whilst simultaneously implementing achievable improvements in career development, leadership, and organisational culture that lie within their control.

Third, the identification of multiple compounding deficiencies suggests that other parastatals should adopt comprehensive rather than piecemeal approaches to motivational improvement. This implies developing integrated strategies that address multiple dimensions simultaneously, learning from ZESA Holdings' experience to avoid repeating ineffective interventions.

5.4.5 Implications for Human Resource Management Practice

The research generates several implications for HR practice within parastatals and similar organisations operating in challenging economic contexts. First, HR professionals must recognise that employee motivation requires systematic assessment and ongoing monitoring rather than being assumed or addressed reactively. This implies incorporating regular motivational assessments into HR practice, developing metrics that track motivational indicators alongside traditional HR outcomes, and establishing feedback mechanisms that enable employees to communicate concerns before they escalate to severe demotivation.

Second, HR practitioners must acknowledge the limitations of motivational interventions that focus predominantly on low-cost, non-financial measures when fundamental compensation inadequacy exists. Whilst initiatives such as recognition programmes, team-building activities, and communication improvements have value, HR professionals must resist pressures to implement these as substitutes for addressing compensation deficits. This implies that HR practitioners should advocate transparently for necessary compensation reforms whilst implementing complementary interventions that lie within available resources.

Third, the finding that career development constitutes the second most important motivational factor suggests that HR practitioners can achieve meaningful impact

through developing comprehensive career management systems, succession planning frameworks, and skills development programmes. These interventions typically require smaller financial investments than compensation reform whilst addressing significant employee concerns, implying that HR should prioritise developing these capabilities as achievable wins within constrained budgets.

5.4.6 Implications for Future Research

The research identifies several avenues for future scholarly investigation. First, the study's cross-sectional design implies that longitudinal research examining how motivational factors evolve over time and how employees respond to specific interventions would provide valuable insights for both theory and practice. Second, the focus on ZESA Holdings implies that comparative studies examining motivation across multiple Zimbabwean parastatals would establish whether the findings represent sector-wide patterns or organisation-specific dynamics. Third, the predominantly quantitative methodology implies that qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of parastatal employees and the nuanced meanings they attach to motivational factors would enrich understanding beyond what statistical analysis reveals. Fourth, the identification of external economic context as a significant influence implies that research examining motivational dynamics across different economic conditions including periods of stability versus instability would clarify how economic context moderates the operation of motivational factors.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for ZESA Holdings management to enhance employee motivation.

Recommendation 1: Implement Comprehensive Compensation Reform. ZESA Holdings should prioritise salary adjustments to address the fundamental compensation inadequacy identified as the primary demotivator. Whilst fiscal constraints limit nominal salary increases, strategies should include indexing salaries to inflation, introducing performance based bonuses funded through efficiency gains, enhancing non monetary benefits including improved medical aid and housing allowances, and ensuring timely payment of salaries to prevent financial stress. As argued by Herzberg et al. (2017), addressing hygiene factors establishes foundations for motivators to operate effectively.

Recommendation 2: Establish Transparent Career Development Systems. ZESA Holdings should create visible career pathways with clear promotion criteria based on merit and performance rather than tenure. This should include developing competency frameworks defining requirements for advancement, implementing succession planning identifying and preparing high potential employees, providing regular training programmes to update technical and managerial skills, and offering educational sponsorships for further qualifications. According to Kanonge and Bussin (2022), visible advancement opportunities reduce brain drain by signalling organisational investment in employee futures.

Recommendation 3: Enhance Leadership Through Participative Management. ZESA Holdings should invest in leadership development programmes emphasising participative, supportive management styles. This includes training supervisors in Theory Y leadership approaches that trust employees and involve them in decisions, establishing regular communication channels between management and staff, implementing participative goal setting

processes, and creating feedback systems providing constructive performance guidance. As emphasised by McGregor (1960), participative leadership unleashes intrinsic motivation and creativity.

Recommendation 4: Implement Recognition and Reward Systems. ZESA Holdings should establish formal recognition programmes acknowledging exceptional performance through employee awards, certificates of excellence, public commendations in company communications, and performance celebrations. According to Posthuma and Campion (2021), recognition satisfies esteem needs at minimal cost and reinforces desired behaviours.

Recommendation 5: Improve Working Conditions and Resource Provision. ZESA Holdings should prioritise equipment upgrades, office renovations, provision of adequate tools and spare parts, and enhancement of workplace safety standards. As noted by Bakker and Demerouti (2017), adequate resources function as job facilitators that enable performance whilst resource deficiencies create job demands that drain energy.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Whilst this study provides valuable insights into employee motivation at ZESA Holdings, several areas warrant further investigation. First, longitudinal research examining how motivation levels change over time following implementation of recommended interventions would provide evidence of intervention effectiveness. As noted by Saunders et al. (2019), longitudinal designs enable causal inference unavailable in cross sectional studies. Second, comparative research examining motivation across multiple Zimbabwean parastatals would identify sector specific versus organisation specific patterns, enabling generalisation. Third, qualitative

research exploring the lived experiences of employees who have left ZESA Holdings would provide insights into turnover decisions and retention strategies. Fourth, experimental research testing specific interventions, such as recognition programmes or leadership training, through randomised controlled trials would provide rigorous evidence of effectiveness. Finally, research examining generational differences in motivational priorities would inform tailored strategies for diverse workforce segments. These research directions would advance scholarly understanding whilst providing practical guidance for public sector motivation management in resource constrained contexts.

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APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire Survey Instrument

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a research study on Employee Motivation at ZESA Holdings. This questionnaire aims to assess current motivation levels and identify factors that influence staff motivation. Your honest responses are crucial to the success of this study.

Your participation is voluntary, and all information provided will be kept strictly confidential. The questionnaire should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. Please answer all questions based on your personal experience and opinion.

Thank you for your valuable time and cooperation.

Questionnaire Code: _____ (For the researcher's use only)

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick (✓) or fill in the appropriate response.

1. Gender:

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

2. Age Range:

18-25 years

26-35 years

36-45 years

46-55 years

56 years and above

3. Highest Level of Education:

O-Level

A-Level

Certificate/Diploma

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Doctorate

Other (Please specify): _____

4. Department/Division:

Generation

Transmission

Distribution

Finance

Human Resources

Engineering

Information Technology

Customer Services

Other (Please specify): _____

5. Employment Category:

Executive/Senior Management

Middle Management

Supervisory

Technical Staff

Administrative/Clerical

Other (Please specify): _____

6. Length of Service at ZESA:

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- 11-15 years
- Over 15 years

SECTION B: CURRENT LEVELS OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

Instructions: For questions 7-30, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale. Place an X on the number that represents your ranking:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) | 2 = Disagree (D) | 3 = Neutral (N) | 4 = Agree (A) | 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Job Satisfaction

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
7	I am satisfied with my current job at ZESA Holdings	1	2	3	4	5
8	My job makes good use of my skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
9	I find my work meaningful and fulfilling	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am satisfied with the nature of the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
11	Overall, I am happy working at ZESA Holdings	1	2	3	4	5

Work Engagement

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
12	I feel enthusiastic about my work	1	2	3	4	5
13	I am fully engaged when performing my job duties	1	2	3	4	5
14	Time passes quickly when I am working	1	2	3	4	5
15	I often go beyond my basic job requirements	1	2	3	4	5
16	I look forward to coming to work each day	1	2	3	4	5

Organizational Commitment

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
17	I feel a strong sense of belonging to ZESA Holdings	1	2	3	4	5
18	I am proud to tell others that I work for ZESA	1	2	3	4	5
19	I feel emotionally attached to ZESA Holdings	1	2	3	4	5
20	ZESA's problems feel like my own problems	1	2	3	4	5
21	I would be happy to spend the rest of my career at ZESA	1	2	3	4	5

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
22	I help colleagues with work-related problems	1	2	3	4	5
23	I willingly give my time to help others	1	2	3	4	5
24	I take initiative to solve organizational problems	1	2	3	4	5
25	I attend functions that are not required but help ZESA's image	1	2	3	4	5

Turnover Intention

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
26	I often think about leaving ZESA Holdings	1	2	3	4	5
27	I am actively looking for alternative employment	1	2	3	4	5
28	I intend to leave ZESA within the next 12 months	1	2	3	4	5
29	I would leave ZESA if offered a similar job elsewhere	1	2	3	4	5
30	I plan to stay with ZESA for the foreseeable future	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: CONTEXTUAL-LEVEL FACTORS INFLUENCING MOTIVATION

Instructions: Using the same 5-point scale, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Economic Factors

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
31	The current economic situation in Zimbabwe negatively affects my motivation	1	2	3	4	5
32	Inflation and currency instability reduce my work morale	1	2	3	4	5
33	Economic challenges outside work affect my job performance	1	2	3	4	5
34	ZESA's financial constraints impact my motivation	1	2	3	4	5

Political Factors

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
35	Political interference affects ZESA's operations and my motivation	1	2	3	4	5
36	Government policies regarding the energy sector influence my work environment positively	1	2	3	4	5
37	Political stability would improve my motivation at work	1	2	3	4	5

Social Factors

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
38	Society's perception of ZESA affects my motivation	1	2	3	4	5
39	I feel valued and appreciated by the communities we serve	1	2	3	4	5
40	Public criticism of ZESA demotivates me	1	2	3	4	5
41	Social expectations create pressure that affects my performance	1	2	3	4	5

Technological Factors

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
42	ZESA provides adequate technological tools for my work	1	2	3	4	5
43	Technology at ZESA makes my work easier and more efficient	1	2	3	4	5
44	ZESA invests sufficiently in modern technology	1	2	3	4	5
45	Lack of technological resources demotivates me	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: ORGANIZATIONAL-LEVEL FACTORS INFLUENCING MOTIVATION

Rewards and Compensation

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
46	I am satisfied with my current salary	1	2	3	4	5
47	My compensation is fair compared to my responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
48	ZESA's salary is competitive with other organizations	1	2	3	4	5
49	I am satisfied with the employee benefits package	1	2	3	4	5
50	The reward system effectively motivates me to perform better	1	2	3	4	5
51	Good performance is adequately recognized and rewarded	1	2	3	4	5
52	ZESA provides adequate non-monetary rewards (recognition, awards)	1	2	3	4	5

Leadership and Management

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
53	My supervisor provides effective leadership	1	2	3	4	5
54	Management supports me in my work	1	2	3	4	5
55	I receive regular feedback on my performance	1	2	3	4	5

56	Leadership communicates a clear vision and direction	1	2	3	4	5
57	My opinions and suggestions are valued by management	1	2	3	4	5
58	Management practices fair and transparent decision-making	1	2	3	4	5
59	Leadership at ZESA motivates and inspires employees	1	2	3	4	5

Work Environment

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
60	My physical work environment is comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
61	I have adequate resources and tools to perform my job	1	2	3	4	5
62	My workplace is safe and secure	1	2	3	4	5
63	There is good cooperation among colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
64	Different departments work well together	1	2	3	4	5
65	The work environment at ZESA is conducive to productivity	1	2	3	4	5
66	ZESA promotes a healthy work-life balance	1	2	3	4	5

Career Development and Training

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
67	ZESA provides adequate training opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
68	There are clear career progression paths at ZESA	1	2	3	4	5
69	I have opportunities for professional growth and advancement	1	2	3	4	5
70	ZESA invests in employee development	1	2	3	4	5
71	Training programs at ZESA enhance my skills	1	2	3	4	5
72	I am satisfied with my career development at ZESA	1	2	3	4	5

Organizational Culture

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
73	ZESA has a positive organizational culture	1	2	3	4	5
74	The organization values employee wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5
75	ZESA promotes teamwork and collaboration	1	2	3	4	5
76	The organizational culture motivates me to perform well	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E: INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL FACTORS INFLUENCING MOTIVATION

Intrinsic Motivation

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
77	I find my work inherently interesting and enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5
78	I am personally driven to perform well in my job	1	2	3	4	5
79	My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment	1	2	3	4	5
80	I am motivated by the challenges my job presents	1	2	3	4	5
81	I work hard because I enjoy what I do	1	2	3	4	5

Autonomy

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
82	I have sufficient freedom to make decisions in my role	1	2	3	4	5
83	I am trusted to work independently	1	2	3	4	5
84	I have control over how I perform my work	1	2	3	4	5
85	Greater autonomy would improve my motivation	1	2	3	4	5

Equity and Fairness

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
86	I am treated fairly compared to my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
87	Workloads are distributed equitably at ZESA	1	2	3	4	5
88	Promotions are given fairly based on merit	1	2	3	4	5
89	The reward system at ZESA is fair and transparent	1	2	3	4	5
90	I receive fair treatment from my supervisor	1	2	3	4	5

Personal Expectations and Goals

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
91	My personal career goals align with opportunities at ZESA	1	2	3	4	5
92	ZESA helps me achieve my professional aspirations	1	2	3	4	5
93	My expectations from ZESA as an employer are being met	1	2	3	4	5
94	I see a future for myself at ZESA Holdings	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION F: OVERALL MOTIVATION ASSESSMENT

95. How would you rate your overall motivation level at ZESA Holdings?

- Very Low
- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Very High

96. Rank the following factors in order of importance to **your motivation** (1 = Most Important, 5 = Least Important):

Factor	Rank (1-5)
Salary and Benefits	
Career Development Opportunities	
Leadership and Management Support	
Work Environment and Culture	
Recognition and Appreciation	

97. Which **three** factors do you believe have the **greatest negative impact** on employee motivation at ZESA? (Tick three only)

- Low salaries
- Poor leadership
- Lack of career advancement
- Economic challenges
- Inadequate resources
- Unfair treatment
- Poor work environment
- Lack of recognition
- Political interference
- Technological limitations
- Poor organizational culture
- Work overload
- Other (Please specify): _____

SECTION G: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

98. What **THREE** things should ZESA prioritize to improve employee motivation?(Please list in order of importance)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

99. Additional Comments or Suggestions:

Please share any additional thoughts, experiences, or recommendations regarding employee motivation at ZESA Holdings:

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you very much for your time and valuable input!

Your responses will contribute significantly to improving employee motivation at ZESA Holdings.

Please ensure you have answered all questions before submitting.

For the researchers Use Only:

Date Received: _____

Data Entry Code: _____

APPENDIX 2: Interview Guide.

Study Title: Employee Motivation at the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) Holdings Company in Zimbabwe

Researcher: Karen Kudzai Kachomba, EMBA Candidate, Africa University

Interview Duration: Approximately 45-60 minutes

Recording: With your permission, this interview will be audio-recorded for accuracy. You may decline recording, and detailed notes will be taken instead.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM - INTERVIEW

I confirm that:

- I have been informed about the purpose and procedures of this research study
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time
- I understand that my responses will be kept confidential and my identity will be protected
- I consent to participate in this interview
- I consent / do not consent to audio recording (circle one)

Participant Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Date: _____ **Interview Code:** _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am conducting research on employee motivation at ZESA Holdings as part of my EMBA studies at Africa University. The purpose is to understand what motivates employees, identify challenges, and develop recommendations for improving motivation.

Your honest insights are extremely valuable. There are no right or wrong answers—I'm interested in your personal experiences and perspectives. Everything you share will be kept confidential, and your identity will be protected in any reports or publications.

This interview will take about 45-60 minutes. You may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Can you briefly tell me about your role at ZESA Holdings and how long you have been with the organization?

Probes:

- What department/unit do you work in?
- What are your main responsibilities?
- How long have you been in your current position?

1.2 What attracted you to work at ZESA Holdings initially?

Probes:

- What were your expectations when you joined?
- Have these expectations been met?

SECTION 2: CURRENT LEVELS OF MOTIVATION

2.1 On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you rate your current level of motivation at work? Why that rating?

Probes:

- What does that number represent for you?
- Has this changed over time? If so, how?

2.2 How engaged do you feel with your work on a typical day?

Probes:

- What makes you feel energized at work?
- What drains your energy or enthusiasm?

2.3 Can you describe a recent time when you felt highly motivated at work? What contributed to that feeling?

Probes:

- What was happening?
- Who was involved?
- What made it motivating?

2.4 Conversely, can you describe a time when you felt demotivated or discouraged? What caused those feelings?

Probes:

- How did it affect your work?

- How long did those feelings last?
- What helped (or didn't help) you recover?

2.5 How satisfied are you overall with working at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- What aspects are you most satisfied with?
- What aspects are you least satisfied with?
- How does this compare to previous employers (if applicable)?

SECTION 3: INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL FACTORS

3.1 What aspects of the work itself do you find most meaningful or satisfying?

Probes:

- What gives you a sense of accomplishment?
- What parts of your job are inherently interesting to you?
- Do you feel your work makes a difference?

3.2 How much autonomy or independence do you have in how you perform your work?

Probes:

- Can you make decisions about how to approach tasks?
- Do you feel trusted to work independently?
- Would you prefer more or less autonomy? Why?

3.3 How important is fairness and equity to your motivation?

Probes:

- Do you feel you are treated fairly compared to colleagues?
- How do you feel about the balance between what you contribute and what you receive?
- Are there specific areas where you perceive unfairness?

3.4 What personal goals or aspirations do you have in your career? How does working at ZESA support or hinder these?

SECTION 4: ORGANIZATIONAL-LEVEL FACTORS

4.1 REMUNERATION AND REWARDS

4.1.1 How satisfied are you with your current compensation package?

Probes:

- Does your salary meet your financial needs?
- How does it compare to similar positions elsewhere?
- Are salaries paid on time?
- How do you feel about the benefits package?

4.1.2 How effectively does ZESA's reward system motivate performance?

Probes:

- Are there performance bonuses or incentives?
- Do rewards match performance?
- What changes would improve the reward system?

4.2 WORKING CONDITIONS AND JOB SECURITY

4.2.1 How would you describe your working conditions?

Probes:

- Physical environment (office, equipment, safety)
- Workload and work pressure
- Work schedules and flexibility
- Availability of necessary resources and tools

4.2.2 How secure do you feel in your employment at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Are there concerns about job continuity?
- How does this affect your motivation?

4.3 RECOGNITION AND ACHIEVEMENT

4.3.1 How are employee achievements recognized at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Formal recognition programs
- Informal appreciation from supervisors/colleagues
- Public acknowledgment of good work
- How effective is recognition in motivating you?

4.3.2 Do you have opportunities to work on challenging and meaningful projects?

Probes:

- Examples of recent challenging assignments
- Do you feel your skills and abilities are fully utilized?

4.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

4.4.1 What opportunities exist for career growth and advancement at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Clear career pathways
- Promotion criteria and processes
- Recent promotions (yourself or colleagues)
- Barriers to advancement

4.4.2 What training and development opportunities are available?

Probes:

- Frequency and quality of training programs
- Support for further education
- Opportunities to learn new skills
- How development opportunities affect motivation

4.5 LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISION

4.5.1 How would you describe the leadership style of your immediate supervisor?

Probes:

- Supportive vs. controlling
- Communication style
- Feedback provision
- Decision-making approach (participative vs. autocratic)

4.5.2 How does leadership at ZESA Holdings impact your motivation?

Probes:

- Does leadership inspire and motivate?
- Level of trust between employees and management
- Examples of positive or negative leadership impacts

4.5.3 What leadership practices would most enhance your motivation?

4.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

4.6.1 How effective is the performance appraisal system at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Frequency of appraisals
- Fairness and objectivity
- Clarity of performance criteria
- Link between performance and rewards/advancement

4.6.2 How regularly do you receive feedback on your performance?

Probes:

- Formal vs. informal feedback
- Quality and usefulness of feedback
- Does feedback motivate improvement?

4.7 ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

4.7.1 How fairly do you feel employees are treated at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Consistency in policy application
- Transparency in decision-making
- Equal treatment across departments/levels
- Handling of grievances and complaints

4.7.2 Can you provide examples of situations where fairness or unfairness affected motivation?

4.8 JOB DESIGN AND GOAL CLARITY

4.8.1 How clear are you about what is expected of you in your role?

Probes:

- Clarity of job responsibilities
- Specificity of goals and targets
- Understanding of how your work contributes to organizational objectives

4.8.2 How well is your job designed to keep you motivated and engaged?

Probes:

- Variety vs. monotony
- Skill utilization
- Task significance and meaningfulness

4.9 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND RELATIONSHIPS

4.9.1 How would you describe the organizational culture at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Values and norms
- Level of trust and respect
- Communication openness
- Innovation and creativity

4.9.2 How are working relationships among colleagues?

Probes:

- Teamwork and cooperation
- Social support
- Conflicts or tensions
- Sense of belonging

SECTION 5: CONTEXTUAL-LEVEL FACTORS

5.1 ECONOMIC CONTEXT

5.1.1 How do current economic conditions in Zimbabwe affect your motivation at work?

Probes:

- Impact of inflation and cost of living
- Currency issues
- Economic uncertainty
- Financial pressures on yourself and family

5.1.2 How do economic challenges influence your decision to stay at or leave ZESA Holdings?

5.2 POLITICAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

5.2.1 Do political or regulatory factors affect employee motivation at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Political interference in operations
- Government policies impacting the organization
- Regulatory constraints on compensation or operations
- Public perception and scrutiny

5.3 SOCIAL AND LABOUR MARKET FACTORS

5.3.1 How does working for ZESA Holdings affect your social status or standing in the community?

Probes:

- Pride in working for ZESA
- Public perception of ZESA employees
- Family and community attitudes

5.3.2 How do labour market conditions influence your motivation and commitment to ZESA?

Probes:

- Availability of alternative employment
- Opportunities in private sector vs. public sector
- Brain drain concerns

5.4 TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS

5.4.1 How does technology and technological change affect your work and motivation?

Probes:

- Access to modern equipment and systems
- Technological competence and training needs
- Concerns about skill obsolescence
- Opportunities created by technology

SECTION 6: INTEGRATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Of all the factors we've discussed—from individual needs to organizational practices to external context—which **THREE** factors have the greatest impact on your motivation (positively or negatively)?

Probes:

- Why these three specifically?
- How do they interact or reinforce each other?

6.2 If you had the authority to make **THREE** changes at ZESA Holdings to improve employee motivation, what would they be?

Probes:

- Why these specific changes?
- What impact would they have?
- How feasible are they?

6.3 What motivates you most to stay at ZESA Holdings despite challenges?

Probes:

- Factors that maintain your commitment
- Aspects you would miss if you left

6.4 What would it take for you to consider leaving ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Critical breaking points
- Attractive alternatives

6.5 Are there differences in motivation levels among different groups of employees (e.g., by department, job level, age, or tenure)?

Probes:

- Examples of variations you've observed
- Reasons for these differences

6.6 How has employee motivation changed over time at ZESA Holdings?

Probes:

- Trends you've observed
- Events or changes that affected motivation
- Current trajectory

6.7 What role does the unique nature of ZESA as a parastatal and essential service provider play in employee motivation?

Probes:

- Sense of public service mission
- Constraints and challenges unique to parastatals
- Advantages compared to private sector

CLOSING

7.1 Is there anything else about employee motivation at ZESA Holdings that we haven't discussed but you think is important?

7.2 Do you have any questions for me about the research?

7.3 Would you like to receive a summary of the research findings when the study is complete?

- If yes, collect contact information: _____

CONCLUSION

"Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experiences and insights so openly. Your contributions are extremely valuable and will help develop practical recommendations for improving employee motivation at ZESA Holdings. As I mentioned, everything you've shared will be kept confidential. If you think of anything else you'd like to add later, please feel free to contact me using the information on the consent form."

Post-Interview Notes (Researcher to complete):

- Interview date and time: _____
- Location: _____
- Duration: _____
- Participant code: _____
- Interview quality (rapport, openness, interruptions): _____
- Key themes and observations: _____
- Follow-up needed: _____

END OF INSTRUMENTS

APPENDIX 3: AUREC Approval Letter



“Investing in Africa’s future”

AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (AUREC)

*P.O. Box 1320 Mutare, Zimbabwe, Off Nyanga Road, Old Mutare-Tel (+263-20)
60075/60026/61611 Fax:
(+263 20) 61785 Website: www.africau.edu*

Ref: AU4100/25

12 November, 2025

KAREN KUDZAI KACHOMBA

C/O Africa University

Box 1320

MUTARE

**RE: EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AT THE ZIMBABWE ELECTRICITY
SUPPLY AUTHORITY (ZESA) HOLDINGS COMPANY IN ZIMBABWE**

Thank you for submitting the above-titled proposal to the Africa University Research Ethics Committee for review. Please be advised that AUREC has reviewed and approved your application to conduct the above research.

The approval is based on the following. a) Research proposal

- **APPROVAL NUMBER** AUREC 4100/25

This number should be used on all correspondence, consent forms, and appropriate documents

- **AUREC MEETING DATE** NA
- **APPROVAL DATE** November 12, 2025
- **EXPIRATION DATE** November 12, 2026
- **TYPE OF MEETING:** Expedited

After the expiration date, this research may only continue upon renewal. A progress report on a standard AUREC form should be submitted a month before the expiration date for renewal purposes.

- **SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS** All serious problems concerning subject safety must be reported to AUREC within 3 working days on the standard AUREC form.
- **MODIFICATIONS** Prior AUREC approval is required before implementing any changes in the proposal (including changes in the consent documents)
- **TERMINATION OF STUDY** Upon termination of the study a report has to be submitted to AUREC.



Yours Faithfully,

Mary Chinzou

**MARY CHINZOU
FOR CHAIRPERSON
AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

APPENDIX 4: Approval to Conduct Study



ZESA HOLDINGS (PVT) LTD
Internal Correspondence

From .. Head Corporate Services (A) At: ZESA Holdings
To .. Karen K. Kachomba At: ZESA Holdings
Date .. 27 August 2025 Ref: 115/1/SD/bm
Subject: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH

We acknowledge receipt of your letter in which you are seeking for permission to carry out a research study entitled "Employee Motivation at ZESA Holdings".

I am pleased to advise that permission is hereby granted.

Please note that any information obtained should not be disclosed to any unauthorised person(s) and should be used strictly for academic purposes. You are also required to share the research findings with us.



A.T. MUTAMBIKWA
HEAD CORPORATE SERVICES (A)

