

## **Effect of Motivational Strategies on Sales Force Performance of Nigerian Bottling Company PLC, Aba-Abia State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *The study focused on the effect of motivational strategies on sales force performance of Nigerian Bottling Company plc, Aba, Abia state, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine the effect of Goal-setting on sales growth of Nigerian Bottling company plc, Aba, Abia state and ascertain the effect of empowerment on competitive advantage of Nigerian Bottling company plc, Aba, Abia state. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study was 370 management and administrative staff of Nigerian Bottling company plc. A sample size of 192 (one hundred and ninety-two) was drawn from the population using Taro yamane statistical formula. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested with Simple Linear Regression model.. The major findings in the study showed that there is a significant effect of goal-setting on sales growth of the industrial firm and there is also a significant effect of empowerment on competitive advantage of the industrial firm respectively. Hence, we concluded that clarifying the role expectations for salespeople by individualizing achievement plans and providing a continuous flow of helpful information are important. We, therefore, recommended that Nigerian Bottling Company plc should embark on constant evaluation and reevaluation of their motivational policies*

*and strategies so as to be in conformity with the changing nature of the marketing environment to serve customers more effectively and efficiently; Training programmes should be organized regularly for implementers of motivational strategies to enable them understand the needs and wants of customers so as to learn those orientations for satisfying them more efficiently and profitably, among others.*

**Key words:** motivation, motivational strategy, sales force performance, goal-setting and empowerment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a complex phenomenon that is often analyzed in terms of different components and stages. Components are aspects that different motivational states have in common. Often-discussed components are direction, intensity, and persistence. Stages or phases are temporal parts of how motivation unfolds over time, like the initial goal-setting stage in contrast to the following goal-striving stage. A closely related issue concerns the different types of mental phenomena that are responsible for motivation, like desires, beliefs, and rational deliberation. Some theorists hold that a desire to do something is an essential part of all motivational states. This view is based on the idea that the desire to do something justifies the effort to engage in this activity. However, this view is not generally accepted and it has been suggested that at least in some cases, actions are motivated by other mental phenomena, like beliefs or rational deliberation. For example, a person may be motivated to undergo a painful root canal treatment because they conclude that it is a necessary thing to do even though they do not actively desire it. Motivation is sometimes discussed in terms of three main components (Kleinginna, 2020): direction, intensity, and persistence. Direction refers to the goal people choose. It is the objective in which they decide to invest their energy. For example, if one roommate decides to go to the movies while the other visits a party, they both have motivation but their motivational states differ in regard to the direction they pursue. The pursued objective often forms part of a hierarchy of means-end relationships. This implies that several steps or lower-level goals may have to be fulfilled to reach a higher-level goal. For example, to achieve the higher-level goal of writing a complete article, one needs to realize different lower-level goals, like writing different sections of the article. Some goals are specific, like reducing one's weight by 3 kg, while others are non-specific, like losing as much weight as possible. Specific goals often affect motivation and performance positively by making it easier to plan and track progress. The goal belongs to the individual's motivational reason and explains why they favor an action and engage in it. Motivational reasons contrast with normative reasons, which are facts that determine what should be done or why a course of action is objectively good. Motivational reasons can be in tune with normative reasons but this is not always the case. For example, if a cake is poisoned then this is a normative reason for the host not to offer it to their

guests. But if they are not aware of the poison then politeness may be their motivating reason to offer it. The intensity of motivation corresponds to how much energy someone is willing to invest into a particular task. For instance, two athletes engaging in the same drill have the same direction but differ concerning the motivational intensity if one gives their best while the other only puts in minimal effort. Some theorists use the term "effort" rather than "intensity" for this component. The strength of a motivational state also affects whether it is translated into action. One theory states that different motivational states compete with each other and that only the behavior with the highest net force of motivation is put into action. However, it is controversial whether this is always true. For example, it has been suggested that in cases of rational deliberation, it may be possible to act against one's strongest motive. Another problem is that this view may lead to a form of determinism that denies the existence of free will. Persistence is the long-term component of motivation and refers to how long an individual engages in an activity. A high level of motivational persistence manifests itself in a sustained dedication over time. The motivational persistence in relation to the chosen goal contrasts with flexibility on the level of the means: individuals may adjust their approach and try different strategies on the level of the means to reach a pursued end. This way, individuals can adapt to changes in the physical and social environment that affect the effectiveness of previously chosen means. The components of motivation can be understood in analogy to the allocation of limited resources: direction, intensity, and persistence determine where to allocate energy, how much of it, and for how long. For effective action, it is usually relevant to have the right form of motivation on all three levels: to pursue an appropriate goal with the required intensity and persistence.

The process of motivation is commonly divided into two stages (Laasch, 2021) : goal-setting and goal-striving. Goal-setting is the phase in which the direction of motivation is determined. It involves considering the reasons for and against different courses of action and then committing oneself to a goal one aims to achieve. The goal-setting process by itself does not ensure that the plan is carried out. This happens in the goal-striving stage, in which the individual tries to implement the plan. It starts with the initiation of the action and includes putting in effort and trying different strategies to succeed. Various difficulties can arise in this phase. The individual has to muster the initiative to get started with the goal-directed behavior and stay committed even when faced with obstacles without giving in to distractions. They also need to ensure that the chosen means are effective and that they do not overexert themselves. Goal-setting and goal-striving are usually understood as distinct stages but they can be intertwined in various ways. Depending on the performance during the striving phase, the individual may adjust their goal. For example, if the performance is worse than expected, they may lower their goals. This can go hand in hand with adjusting the effort invested in the activity. Emotional states affect how goals are set and which goals are prioritized. Positive emotions are associated with optimism about the value of a goal and create a tendency to seek positive outcomes. Negative emotions are associated with a more pessimistic outlook and tend to lead to the avoidance of bad outcomes.



Figure 1: Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation.

Source; Jenkins, P.H. (2021). *Understanding Mental Health and Mental Illness: An Exploration of the Past, Present, and Future*. Routledge. ISBN 978-0-429-80327-7. Retrieved 25 September 2024.

Intrinsic motivation arises from internal factors, like enjoying an activity (Kotesky, 2019) while Extrinsic motivation is based on external factors, like rewards obtained by completing an activity (Lamb, Henry and Ryan, 2020). The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is based on the source or origin of the motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual and is driven by internal factors, like enjoyment, curiosity, or a sense of fulfillment. It occurs when people pursue an activity for its own sake. It can be due to affective factors, when the person engages in the behavior because it feels good, or cognitive factors, when they see it as something good or meaningful. An example of intrinsic motivation is a person who plays basketball during lunch break only because they enjoy it. Extrinsic motivation arises from external factors, such as rewards, punishments, or recognition from others. This occurs when people engage in an activity because they are interested in the effects or the outcome of the activity rather than in the activity itself. For instance, if a student does their homework because they are afraid of being punished by their parents then extrinsic motivation is responsible. Intrinsic motivation is often more highly regarded than extrinsic motivation. It is associated with genuine passion, creativity, a sense of purpose, and personal autonomy. It also tends to come with stronger commitment and persistence. Intrinsic motivation is a key factor in cognitive, social, and physical development. The degree of intrinsic motivation is affected by various conditions, including a sense of autonomy and positive feedback from others. In the field of education, intrinsic motivation tends to result in high-quality learning. However, there are also certain advantages to extrinsic motivation: it can provide people with motivation to engage in useful or necessary tasks which they do not naturally find interesting or enjoyable. Some theorists understand the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as a spectrum rather than a clear dichotomy. This is linked to the idea that the more autonomous an activity is, the more it is associated with intrinsic motivation. A behavior can be motivated only by intrinsic motives, only by extrinsic motives, or by a combination of both. In the latter case,

there are both internal and external reasons why the person engages in the behavior. If both are present, they may work against each other. For example, the presence of a strong extrinsic motivation, like a high monetary reward, can decrease intrinsic motivation. Because of this, the individual may be less likely to further engage in the activity if it does not result in an external reward anymore. However, this is not always the case and under the right circumstances, the combined effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation leads to higher performance

### **Objectives of the Study.**

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of motivational strategies on sales force performance of Nigeria Bottling Company plc, Aba, Abia state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to :

- i).ascertain the effect of Goal Setting on Sales Growth of Nigeria Bottling Company plc, Aba- Abia state.
- ii).determine the effect of empowerment on competitive advantage of Nigeria Bottling Company plc, Aba- Abia state.

The research questions raised to guide the conduct of this study are:

- i).What is the effect of Goal Setting on Sales Growth of Nigeria Bottling Company plc, Aba- Abia state?
- ii).What is the effect of empowerment on competitive advantage of Nigeria Bottling Company plc, Aba- Abia state?

The research hypotheses formulated in the null form for the study are:

- i) .There is no significant effect of Goal Setting on Sales Growth of Nigeria Bottling Company plc, Aba- Abia state.
- ii). There is no sidnificant effect of empowerment on competitive advantage of Nigeria Bottling Company plc, Aba- Abia state.

### **Conceptual Frameworks.**

#### **Motivational Strategy**

Motivational strategies are techniques used to inspire and encourage individuals to take action, stay committed and achieve their goals (Jenkins, 2021). These strategies can be applied in various contexts, such as in the work place, education or personal development. Effective motivational strategies help boost morale, increase productivity, and improve overall satisfaction.

## Goal-Setting

Goal-setting is the phase in which the direction of motivation is determined. It involves considering the reasons for and against different courses of action and then committing oneself to a goal one aims to achieve. The goal-setting process by itself does not ensure that the plan is carried out. This happens in the goal-striving stage, in which the individual tries to implement the plan. It starts with the initiation of the action and includes putting in effort and trying different strategies to succeed (Hinkson, 2019). Various difficulties can arise in this phase. The individual has to muster the initiative to get started with the goal-directed behavior and stay committed even when faced with obstacles without giving in to distractions. They also need to ensure that the chosen means are effective and that they do not overexert themselves. Goal-setting theory holds that having clearly defined goals is one of the key factors of motivation (Hinkson, 2019). It states that effective goals are specific and challenging. A goal is specific if it involves a clear objective, such as a quantifiable target one intends to reach rather than just trying to do one's best. A goal is challenging if it is achievable but hard to reach. Two additional factors identified by goal-setting theorists are goal commitment and self-efficacy. Commitment is a person's dedication to achieving a goal and includes an unwillingness to abandon or change the goal when meeting resistance. To have self-efficacy means to believe in oneself and in one's ability to succeed. This belief can help people persevere through obstacles and remain motivated to reach challenging goals. Smart goals are a framework for setting clear, structured and achievable objectives. The acronym "SMART" stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (Ehmke, 2020): This approach helps individuals and organizations create well designed goals that are easier to track and more likely to be accomplished.

1. **Specific:** Goals should be clear and detailed, answering the questions: who, what, when, where, and why. It narrows the focus and eliminates the vagueness. For example; increase sales revenue is vague, while increase sales revenue of product X by 15% in the next quarter is specific.
2. **Measurable:** The goal must have concrete criteria that allows progress to be tracked and success to be measured. It often involves using numbers or milestones. for example, "gain 200 new customers within six months can be measured by tracking customer acquisition.
3. **Achievable:** Goals should be realistic and attainable given available resources, time and constraints. While it is important to challenge yourself, the goal should still be possible. For example, "increase production by 50% may not be achievable in a short time, but increase production by 10% within three months" might be.
4. **Relevant:** The goal should align with broader objectives or long-term aspirations. It needs to be relevant to what you or the organization wants to achieve. For example, "improve social media engagement" is relevant if building an online presence is key business objective.



5. Time bound: A deadline or time frame should be set to create urgency and focus. Without a clear timeline, there is no sense of priority or accountability. For example, “Launch the new website by December 31<sup>st</sup> sets a clear deadline.

By following the SMARTY frame work, goals are more focused, actionable and trackable, increasing the likelihood of success.

### **Empowerment**

Empowerment refers to the process of giving individuals or groups the confidence, authority and resources to take control of their own decisions, actions and outcomes (Jenkins,2021). It involves enabling people to develop the skills, knowledge and autonomy necessary to make choices that improves their lives or performances in a particular context. In the work place for example, empowerment leads to higher job satisfaction, as employees feel valued and capable of contributing meaningful to organizational goals. Empowerment can also have profound impact in social contexts, promoting self-sufficiency and positive change in communities or marginalized groups..

The key aspects of empowerment include (Tsai,2020):

1. Skill Development - Providing opportunities for individuals to enhance their capabilities through training, mentoring or education, thereby increasing their courage and confidence.
2. Access to Resources – Ensuring that people have the tools, information and support necessary to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
3. Accountability – Empowerment also involves holding individuals accountable for their decisions and actions, fostering a sense of responsibility.
4. Inclusion and participation –Ensuring that individuals have a voice in decision making process and feel valued as contributors to the overall goals.
5. Motivation and inspiration – Empowering environments often foster motivation by showing trust and encouraging innovation, creativity and initiative.
6. Confidence building – Encouraging self-confidence by reinforcing that individuals have the ability and skills to succeed.
7. Authority and Autonomy – Allowing individuals to take ownership of their tasks or responsibilities, giving them the freedom to make decisions and without constant supervision.

### **Sales force Performance**

Sales force performance refers to how effectively the sales force platform operates for a business, including aspects such as speed, reliability, scalability and overall system efficiency (Iyer,2020). Performance can impact user experience, productivity, and business outcomes. Sales force

provides specific features to enhance performance like caching for components, asynchronous processing options and performance –enhancing integrations.

The key factors that influence sales force performance are (Adeoti, 2020):

1. Data Volume; Large amounts of data, especially if not managed properly, can slow down the system. Optimizing data storage and implementing proper archiving strategies can improve performance.
2. Customization; Sales force is highly customizable, but too many customizations e.g, excessive use of Apex triggers, visualforce pages, or complex automations can negatively impact performance if not optimized.
3. Network latency; Sales force is a cloud-based platform, so network speed and latency between the user’s location and salesforce data centers can affect performance.
4. Record Sharing and Security settings; Complex sharing rules and data security settings, e.g ., role hierarchies, sharing rules, can increase processing time for data visibility.
5. Governor Limits; Sales force has certain governor limits, e.g, execution time, database query limits, to prevent any single process from monopolizing resources. Poorly optimized code can hit these limits and degrade performance.
6. Browser Performance; Sales force runs in a browser, so browser performance, cache settings and extensions can affect how quickly pages load. Sales force recommends using modern browsers with adequate hardware resources.

Akinbinu (2021) stated that sales force performance can be improved by using caching strategies where appropriate, minimizing the use of synchronous processes, utilizing sales force performance tools, e.g., event monitoring and sales force optimizer and regularly reviewing cleaning up data and metadata, e.g., unused custom fields, workflows.

### **Competitive Advantage**

Competitive advantage evolves from the comparative advantage theory by the classical economist, David Ricardo, which was centred on primary production of assets. Michael Porter developed the concept of cost leadership with focus on cost leadership and differentiation in product (Wikipedia, 2019). Porter (2003) defined “competitive advantage as superior differentiation and/or lower costs by comparison with the marginal (breakeven) competitor in the product market”. A firm is seen to have a competitive advantage over its competitors if it creates more economic value than the marginal competitors in its product market. Competitive advantage simply means having an edge over the competition (Ehmke, 2020). by offering customers great value, whether through lower prices or by providing additional benefits and service that justifies similar or possibly higher prices”. Thus, “a firm is said to have competitive advantage when it is engaging in activities that increase its efficiency or effectiveness in ways that competing firms are not, regardless of whether those other firms are in a particular firm’s industry”. According to Porter (2003), there are four major components that are needed in order to maintain competitive advantage in firms. They are; the ability to respond as an organization; the ability to compete at a low cost; having an effective



supply chain management; and the ability to differentiate and innovate products as needed. Porter (2003) proposed cost leadership, differentiation and niche strategies as strategies to be adopted to have a competitive advantage over rivals. Tsai (2020) further added nine more strategies for competitive advantage, thus, growth strategy; alliance strategy; innovation strategy; operational effectiveness strategy; customer-orientation strategy; time strategy; lock in customers or suppliers' strategy; and increased switching costs strategy. These will translate into higher margins, higher returns and superior performance...For a firm to create a competitive advantage its resources should be used in the most appropriate manner to achieve the organization's mission. Ehmke (2020) supported by stating that a firm can gain a competitive advantage over its rivals either by having sufficient lower cost structures in an industry or creating a unique image in minds of customers that the firm or its products are superior to those of its competitors. Smith and Prieto (2019), Mugendar and Mugendar(2019) argued that firms must use and renew their tangible and intangible resources and capabilities to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. To build competitive advantage, strategic managers ought to understand the needs of the market (customers) and devise a strategy that will make use of available resources to set the business apart from the competition.

### **Sales Growth**

Sales growth refers to the increase in sales revenue of a business over a specific period, such as a quarter or a year. It is a key performance indicator (KPI) that helps businesses measure how well their sales strategies are performing and how much the business is expanding. Sales growth is typically expressed as a percentage and can be calculated using the following formula:  $\text{Sales Growth} = (\text{current period sales} - \text{previous period sales}) / \text{previous period sales} * 100$  (Akinbinu, 2021; UNCTAD, 2015). Sales growth provides a clear picture of a company's ability to generate revenue over time and it is crucial for long-term success. Sales growth is of great value to most firms and it is a key dimension used to measure marketing performance. Sales growth in business firms is of widespread interest in economics and business research, but the drivers of such growth remain a source of debate (Albaladejo 2020).. Sales growth targets play a major role in the perceptions of top managers (Lai, 2020). Sales growth is an important indicator of a firm's health and ability to sustain its business. Iyer (2020) reported that planning systems generally begin with sales targets. An emphasis on sales growth also provides a useful and visible benchmark to motivate managers.. Sales growth as a key element of business growth is important; hence selling of products/services is one of the two ways to increase firm profits (Narver & Slater, 2020). Sales growth enables one to know the general health of the business; it aids in identifying if one is meeting ones target. With sales growth it will be evident to investors that the business is successful. Factors that influence sales growth range from; promotion, internal motivation, retaining of talented employees, implicit opportunities for investments in new technologies, and equipment in the production process (Potter and Watts, 2020). They further said sales growth ought to be measured within the context of industry conditions and trends as well as local, regional and national economies

## Theoretical Review.

Theories of motivation are frameworks or sets of principles that aim to explain motivational phenomena. They seek to understand how motivation arises and what causes and effects it has as well as the goals that commonly motivate people. This way, they provide explanations of why an individual engages in one behavior rather than another, how much effort they invest, and how long they continue to strive toward a given goal. Important debates in the academic literature concern to what extent motivation is innate or based on genetically determined instincts rather than learned through previous experience. A closely related issue is whether motivational processes are mechanistic and run automatically or have a more complex nature involving cognitive processes and active decision-making. Another discussion revolves around the topic of whether the primary sources of motivation are internal needs rather than external goals. A common distinction among theories of motivation is between content theories and process theories (Hinkson, 2019). Content theories attempt to identify and describe the internal factors that motivate people, such as different types of needs, drives, and desires. They examine which goals motivate people. Influential content theories are Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory, and David McClelland's learned needs theory. Process theories discuss the cognitive, emotional, and decision-making processes that underlie human motivation. They examine how people select goals and the means to achieve them. Major process theories are expectancy theory, equity theory, goal-setting theory, self-determination theory, and reinforcement theory. Another way to classify theories of motivation focuses on the role of inborn physiological processes in contrast to cognitive processes and distinguishes between biological, psychological, and biopsychosocial theories.



Figure 2; Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Source; Kleinginna, P. R. (2020). "A categorized list of motivation definitions, with a suggestion for a consensual definition". *Motivation and Emotion*. 5 (3): 263–291. doi:10.1007/BF00993889. ISSN 0146-7239. S2CID 145248582.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often visualized as a pyramid in which the more basic needs at the bottom form the foundation for higher needs. Maslow holds that humans have different kinds of needs and that those needs are responsible for motivation. According to him, they form a hierarchy of needs that is composed of lower and higher needs. Lower needs belong to the physiological level and are characterized as *deficiency* needs since they indicate some form of lack. Examples are the desire for food, water, and shelter. Higher needs belong to the psychological level and are associated with the potential to grow as a person. Examples are self-esteem in the form of a positive self-image and personal development by actualizing one's unique talents and abilities. Two key principles of Maslow's theory are the *progression principle* and the *deficit principle*. They state that lower needs have to be fulfilled before higher needs become activated. This means that higher needs, like esteem and self-actualization, are unable to provide full motivation while lower needs, like food and shelter, remain unfulfilled. An influential extension of Maslow's hierarchy of needs was proposed by Clayton Alderfer in the form of his ERG theory. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory also analyzes motivation in terms of lower and higher needs. Herzberg applies it specifically to the workplace and distinguishes between lower-level hygiene factors and higher-level motivators. Hygiene factors are associated with the work environment and conditions. Examples include company policies, supervision, salary, and job security. They are essential to prevent job dissatisfaction and associated negative behavior, such as frequent absence or decreased effort. Motivators are more directly related to work itself. They include the nature of the work and the associated responsibility as well as recognition and personal and professional growth opportunities. They are responsible for job satisfaction as well as increased commitment and creativity. This theory implies, for example, that increasing salary and job security may not be sufficient to fully motivate workers if their higher needs are not met.

McClelland's learned needs theory states that individuals have three primary needs: affiliation, power, and achievement. The need for affiliation is a desire to form social connections with others. The need for power is a longing to exert control over one's surroundings and wield influence over others. The need for achievement relates to a yearning to establish ambitious objectives and to receive positive feedback on one's performance. McClelland holds that these needs are present in everyone but that their exact form, strength, and expression is shaped by cultural influences and the individual's experiences. For example, affiliation-oriented individuals are primarily motivated by establishing and maintaining social relations while achievement-oriented individuals are inclined to set challenging goals and strive for personal excellence. More emphasis on the need of affiliation tends to be given in collectivist cultures in contrast to a focus on the need of achievement in individualist cultures.

### **Major process theories**

Expectancy theory states that whether a person is motivated to perform a certain behavior depends on the expected results of this behavior: the more positive the expected results are, the higher the motivation to engage in that behavior. Expectancy theorists understand the expected results in

terms of three factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy concerns the relation between effort and performance. If the expectancy of a behavior is high then the person believes that their efforts will likely result in successful performance. Instrumentality concerns the relation between performance and outcomes. If the instrumentality of a performance is high then the person believes that it will likely result in the intended outcomes. Valence is the degree to which the outcomes are attractive to the person. These three components affect each other in a multiplicative way, meaning that high motivation is only present if all of them are high. In this case, the person believes it likely that they perform well, that the performance leads to the expected result, and that the result as a high value.

Equity theory sees fairness as a key aspect of motivation. According to it, people are interested in the proportion between effort and reward: they judge how much energy one has to invest and how good the outcome is. Equity theory states that individuals assess fairness by comparing their own ratio of effort and reward to the ratio of others. A key idea of equity theory is that people are motivated to reduce perceived inequity. This is especially the case if they feel that they receive less rewards than others. For example, if an employee has the impression that they work longer than their co-workers while receiving the same salary, this may motivate them to ask for a raise.

Goal-setting theory holds that having clearly defined goals is one of the key factors of motivation. It states that effective goals are specific and challenging. A goal is specific if it involves a clear objective, such as a quantifiable target one intends to reach rather than just trying to do one's best. A goal is challenging if it is achievable but hard to reach. Two additional factors identified by goal-setting theorists are goal commitment and self-efficacy. Commitment is a person's dedication to achieving a goal and includes an unwillingness to abandon or change the goal when meeting resistance. To have self-efficacy means to believe in oneself and in one's ability to succeed. This belief can help people persevere through obstacles and remain motivated to reach challenging goals.

According to self-determination theory, the main factors influencing motivation are autonomy, competence and connection. People act autonomously if they decide themselves what to do rather than following orders. This tends to increase motivation since humans usually prefer to act in accordance with their wishes, values, and goals without being coerced by external forces. If a person is competent at a certain task then they tend to feel good about the work itself and its results. Lack of competence can decrease motivation by leading to frustration if one's efforts fail to succeed. Connection is another factor identified by self-determination theorists and concerns the social environment. Motivation tends to be reinforced for activities in which a person can positively relate to others, receives approval, and can reach out for help.

Reinforcement theory is based on behaviorism and explains motivation in relation to positive and negative outcomes of previous behavior. It uses the principle of operant conditioning, which states

that behavior followed by positive consequences is more likely to be repeated, while behavior followed by negative consequences is less likely to be repeated. This theory predicts, for example, that if an aggressive behavior of a child is rewarded then this will reinforce the child's motivation for aggressive behavior in the future.

### **Motivator-Hygiene Theory**

Herzberg's classic research studies found two types of factors associated with the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of employees. Sources of satisfaction are called motivators because they are necessary to stimulate individuals to superior efforts. They relate to the nature or content of the job itself and include responsibility, achievement, recognition, and opportunities for growth and advancement. Sources of dissatisfaction are called hygiene factors because they are necessary to keep employee performance from dropping or becoming unhealthy. They comprise the environment, include salary, company policies and administration, supervision, and working conditions. According to Herzberg's theories, to improve productivity, sales managers must maintain hygiene factors (pleasant work environment) while providing motivators (job enrichment) for the sales force. Here are some examples of job enrichment:

- Give salespeople a complete natural unit of work responsibility and accountability (e.g. specific customer category assignments in a designated area).
- Grant greater authority and job freedom to the salespeople in accomplishing assignments (e.g., let salespeople schedule their time in their own unique way as long as organizational goals are met).
- Introduce salespeople to new and more difficult tasks and to challenges not previously handled (e.g., opening new accounts, selling a new product category, or being assigned a large national account).
- Assign salespeople specific or specialized tasks enabling them to become experts (e.g., training new salespeople on "how to close a sale").
- Send periodic reports and communications directly to the salesperson instead of forwarding everything via the sales supervisor. (Of course, the supervisor must be informed about what information the salespeople are receiving)

### **Achievement Theory**

Research by McClelland and his associates confirmed that some people have higher achievement needs than others; they labeled such persons "achievement oriented". Children who are given greater responsibilities and trusted from youth to do things on their own are more likely to have achievement-oriented profiles. Achievement oriented people readily accept individual responsibility, seek challenging tasks, and are willing to take risks doing asks that may serve as stepping stones to future rewards. These individuals receive more satisfaction from accomplishing goals and more frustration from failure or unfinished tasks than the average person. Any achievement-related step on the "success path" may include rewards (positive incentives) or threats (negative incentives). A path is contingent if the individual feels that immediate success is

required in order to have the opportunity to continue toward further successes and that immediate failure causes loss of the opportunity to continue on the path. If immediate success or failure has no effect on the opportunity to continue on the path toward future success or failure, the path is non contingent. Sales managers need to identify the achievement-motivated salespeople and then give them personal responsibility for solving definable problems or achieving certain goals. Frequent, specific feedback is also essential so that these sales-people can know whether they are successful or not. Managers may have to temper negative feedback because achievement-motivated people may resign if they feel that they are going to be unsuccessful. Finally, competition among such salespeople can become cut-throat and damaging to the organization unless carefully monitored and controlled. Contrasted with these achievement-oriented individuals, affiliative people are not as competitive nor are they as anxious about uncompleted tasks; they require only general feedback regarding goal achievement. Affiliative types like to work in groups and want to be accepted by others. They are less self-centered, usually help bind the group together, and are less able to tolerate traveling jobs involving long periods of solitude. Although salespeople generally exhibit traits of both task achievement and group affiliation, it is up to the sales manager to learn the dominant needs of individual salespeople in order to devise specific strategies for motivating them.

### **Inequity theory**

According to the inequity theory of motivation, people compare their relative work contributions and rewards with those of other individuals in similar situations. As “positive-thinking” minister and author Robert Schuller says: “Many people hear through their peers, not their ears”. Inequity is experienced when a person feels either underrewarded or overrewarded for his or her contribution relative to that of others. The stronger the feeling of inequity, the stronger the drive to reduce tension. Although individuals may respond in unique ways to inequity, most people who feel underpaid or underrewarded, relative to others making similar contributions, tend to decrease their work efforts: 98 people who feel overpaid tend to increase their efforts. People may also reduce their inequity tensions by distorting their perceptions of their rewards and contributions versus those of others. Finally, individuals may leave a perceived inequitable situation by quitting the job or changing the comparison group. According to inequity theory, it is important that sales managers learn how individual sales representatives feel about the equity of their contributions and rewards compared with those of others. If inequity is perceived by some of the salespeople, the sales manager needs to correct the situation if inequity really does exist or help the salespeople reduce tensions by altering their perceptions of the comparison group’s relative contributions and rewards.

### **Role clarity Model**

Donnelly and Ivancevich contend that one of the most important needs of salespeople is role clarity, or a concept of exactly what their job entails. Because salespeople often lack sufficient job knowledge, must deal across departmental boundaries, and are challenged by complex problems



requiring innovative solutions, precisely defined goals and clear role expectations can be motivational. Empirical research with salespeople correlates increased role clarity with greater job interest, more opportunity for job innovation, less work tension, more job satisfaction, and a lower propensity to leave. Salespeople usually want and need more information about what is expected of them and how they will be evaluated. Clearly written job descriptions and management-by-objectives (MBO) conferences that set precise goals (mutually agreed upon by the salesperson and sales manager) can have important motivational effects and stimulate job satisfaction. Clarifying the role expectations for salespeople by individualizing achievement plants and providing a continuous flow of helpful information will consume significant amounts of sales management time. But this seems to be one of the least complicated, least expensive, and surest ways of obtaining higher sales force productivity.

### **Theory Adoption.**

The study adopted the Motivator-Hygiene Theory. According to Herzberg's theories, to improve productivity, sales managers must maintain hygiene factors (pleasant work environment) while providing motivators (job enrichment) for the sales force. Here are some examples of job enrichment:

- Give salespeople a complete natural unit of work responsibility and accountability (e.g. specific customer category assignments in a designated area).
- Grant greater authority and job freedom to the salespeople in accomplishing assignments (e.g., let salespeople schedule their time in their own unique way as long as organizational goals are met).
- Introduce salespeople to new and more difficult tasks and to challenges not previously handled (e.g., opening new accounts, selling a new product category, or being assigned a large national account).
- Assign salespeople specific or specialized tasks enabling them to become experts (e.g., training new salespeople on "how to close a sale").
- Send periodic reports and communications directly to the salesperson instead of forwarding everything via the sales supervisor. (of course, the supervisor must be informed about what information the salespeople are receiving).

### **Empirical Reviews**

Laashi (2021) studied the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction of employees of Guinness Nigeria plc, PortHarcourt. The sample size of the study was 155 staff of the company. The sampling technique adopted for the study was the proportional stratified sampling technique and the data analysis used was the pearson product moment correlation analysis.

**Finding:** The result of the analysis showed that relationships exist between work environment and job satisfaction of the company's employees. The result reported a correlation coefficient value of

0.624 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05% of significance. Thus, the correlation coefficient value is high which signified a positive significance relationship between work environment and job satisfaction of the company's workers.

Ehmke (2020) carried out a study on the effect of recognition on workers commitment in Nigerian Bottling company plc, Makurdi, Benue state. The study made use of a sample size of 135 management staff of the company. A systematic sampling technique was used and data collected for the study was analyzed using an inferential tool of simple linear regression analysis..

**Finding:** The result of data analysis showed a positive and significant effect of recognition on workers commitment in Nigerian Bottling company plc, Makurdi, Benue state. The regression model showed a correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.736 and a coefficient determination ( $r^2$ ) value of 0.541 (or 54%). This signified that 54% of the variations in workers commitment can be explained or accounted for by variations in company's recognition of her workers. Thus, there is a significant and linear relationship between company's recognition and workers commitment in Nigerian Bottling company plc, Makurdi, Benue state.

## METHODOLOGY

Survey Research Design was used for the study. This is helpful in obtaining the perception of respondents on the subject of motivational strategy and sales force performance. The reason is that survey design is one in which the researcher does not aim at manipulating or controlling any of the variables under investigation. The survey design is also one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The survey design specifies how such data will be collected and analyzed. The primary population of the study consists of Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) plc, Aba, Abia State. The target population consists of the management and administrative staff, totalling 370 employees in the following departments / Units of NBC plc : sales (70), marketing (145), Admin./ Personnel (115), Logistics (35), PR/Commercial (5). (Company Resource Centre, 2024). The sample size of 192 was drawn from the population of the study using Taro Yamani sample size determination method :

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n = sample

N = population

1 = constant

E = margin of tolerable error

Thus:  $n = 370 / 1 + 370 (0.05 \times 0.05)$

$n = 370 / 1 + 370 (0.0025)$

$n = 370 / 1 + 0.925$

$n = 370 / 1.925 = 192.$

Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. This is considered suitable for selecting sample of sales, marketing, warehousing, logistics and public relations / commercials staff in the company for the purpose of harnessing their experiences and understanding of motivational strategy and sales force performance of the firm. Data for the study were obtained from two sources namely: Primary and secondary data. Primary data- information generated by the researcher on the variables of interest in the study were generated through questionnaire administration to the respondents. Secondary data ( information gathered from already existing sources) on the other hand, were generated from data bases, annual reports of companies, among others. The instrument used in the generation and collection of data for the study was the structured questionnaire. This aids easy collection of data and proper coordination of responses for analysis. A five likert scales ranging from 5 for STRONGLY AGREE (SA) to 1 for UNDECIDED (UN) was adopted for the questionnaire options. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents through the help of three (2) experienced enumerators. The respondents were allowed two weeks to fill the questionnaire before they were collected by the researcher / enumerators. The content validity of the instrument was ascertained by a questionnaire review panel that did objective assessment of the questions and ensured their relevance to the issues at stake and coverage of the entire study. In establishing the reliability estimate, 5% of the sample size was used. The research instrument was administered to the same group of individual on two different occasions separated by time interval. An interval of between 7-14 days was used. The two sets of scores from the two occasions (test/retest method used) were correlated using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient which was calculated and used to adjudge the reliability of the instrument. The value of the correlation coefficient obtained was 0.7 which confirmed the instrument reliable and acceptable (Nworgu, 2006).

In the other hand, the result of the pilot test carried out in Benue State (North-Central Zone) which was not part of the sample of the study was calculated using Cronback's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) technique and the reliability index of 0.94 was obtained for use in the conduct of the main study because in Cronback Alpha reliability analysis, the closer the Cronback Alpha to 0.1, the higher the interval consistency reliability. Data generated for the study were analyzed using both Descriptive and Inferential statistics. Descriptive tools used are tables, percentages and frequencies while inferential tool used was Simple Linear Regression for the stated hypotheses. All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance.

### **Model Specification**

The Regression model was derived using Competitive advantage (CA) and Sales growth (SG) as Sales force Performance (SFP) proxies (Dependent Variables); and Motivational Strategies (MS) (Independent variables) were proxies by Empowerment (EMP) and Goal-Setting (GS). The Regression model employed to estimate the effect of motivational strategies on the sales force performance of Nigerian Bottling Company plc in Aba, Abia state, Nigeria is thus expressed in this study as:

$$Y = a + bx \dots\dots\dots \text{Regression Equation}$$

Where:

Y = Dependent variable (Sales force performance)

a = constant

b = coefficient

x = Independent variable (Motivational strategies)

Using Regression model as stated above :

CA =  $\alpha + \beta_1 \text{EMP} + e$  ..... equation 1

SA =  $\alpha + \beta_2 \text{GS} + e$  ..... equation 2

Where:

$\beta$  = Coefficient of the independent variables

$\alpha$  = Intercept

$\mu$  = Error terms

### Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1.

HO1: Goal-Setting do not have significant effect on sales growth of Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba, Abia state.

HA1: Goal-Setting do have significant effect on sales growth of Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba, Abia state.

Table 4.1 Regression on the effect of Goal-setting on sales growth of Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba, Abia state.

Model	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value
Constant	1.735	0.336	7.351
Goal-Setting	0.702	0.297	3.235**
F-statistic	35.210		
R	0.646		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.417		
N	385		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Note: \*\* Regression significant at 5% probability level

Table 4.1 shows the effect of Goal-setting on sales growth of Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba, Abia State. From the simple regression analysis table, goal-setting was found to be statistically significant at 5% and with a positive figure. This implies that an increase in clear goal-setting will result to an increase in sales growth of Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba. . The R square is the proportion or percentage of the variation (or variance) in one variable that is due to or predicted by the other variable. Therefore, the R square value of 0.417 shows that 42% of the variation in sales growth of firm in Aba, Nigeria was accounted for by clear goal-setting.. Similarly, the f-ratio value of 35.210 indicates that the model specification was correct while significant at 5%.. This assertion is at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that goal-setting do not have any significant effect on sales growth of firm in Aba, Nigeria is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. It can be concluded that clear goal-setting do have significant effect on sales growth of firm in Aba, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2.

HO2: Empowerment do not have significant effect on competitive advantage of Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba, Abia state

HA2: Empowerment do have significant effect on competitive advantage of Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba, Abia state.

Table 4.2 Regression on the effect of Empowerment on competitive advantage Nigerian Bottling Company, Aba, Abia state.

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Model	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value
Constant	1.635	0.236	7.251
Empowerment	0.802	0.217	3.335**
F-statistic	36.230		
R	0.746		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.556		
N	385		

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Source: Field Survey, 2024

Note: \*\* Regression significant at 5% probability level

Table 4.2 shows the effect of empowerment on competitive advantage Nigerian Bottling company, Aba. From the simple regression analysis table, empowerment was found to be statistically significant at 5% and with a positive figure. This implies that an increase in empowerment will result to an increase in competitive advantage of firm in Aba, Nigeria. The R square is the

proportion or percentage of the variation (or variance) in one variable that is due to or predicted by the other variable. Therefore, the R square value of 0.556 shows that 56% of the variation in competitive advantage of firms in South East Nigeria was accounted for by empowerment. Similarly, the f-ratio value of 36.230 indicates that the model specification was correct while significant at 5%.. This assertion is at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that empowerment do not have any significant effect on competitive advantage of firm in Aba, Nigeria is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. It can be concluded that empowerment do have significant effect on competitive advantage of Nigerian Bottling company, Aba.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Hypothesis 1 of this study states that there is no significant effect of goal-setting on sales growth of Nigerian Bottling company, Aba, Abia state.. The result of the analysis of this hypothesis showed a regression coefficient value of 0.648 and coefficient of determination value of 0.417. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.417 indicates that 42% of variations in sales growth in the company can be explained by goal-setting. The remaining 58% can be explained by other related factors not noted in the regression model. This implies that there is an evidence of existence of significant effect and linear relationship between goal-setting and sales growth in the studied company. This result agrees with the study of Iyer (2020) which reported that planning systems generally begin with sales targets and an emphasis on sales growth also provides a useful and visible benchmark to motivate managers.

Hypothesis 2 of this study states that there is no significant effect of empowerment on competitive advantage of Nigerian Bottling company plc, Aba Abia state. The analysis of this hypothesis revealed a regression coefficient value of 0.746 and coefficient of determination value of 0.556. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.556 indicates that 56% of variations in competitive advantage in the studied company can be explained by empowerment. The remaining 44% can be explained by other related factors not noted in the regression model. This implies that there is an evidence of existence of significant effect and linear relationship between empowerment and competitive advantage in the studied company. This study is supported by Ehmke's (2020) assertion that a firm can gain a competitive advantage over its rivals either by having sufficient lower cost structures in an industry or creating a unique image in minds of customers that the firm or its products are superior to those of its competitors.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The summary of the major findings of the study were

- 1 Goal-setting has significant effect on the sales growth of Nigerian Bottling company plc, Aba, Abia state.



- 2 Empowerment has significant effect on the competitive advantage of Nigerian Bottling company plc, Aba, Abia state.

## CONCLUSION

In view of the findings from data analysis, the study concludes that motivational strategy is a determinant of Salesforce performance. The results of this study, which is as a result of the data collected based on the experiences of the Nigerian Bottling Company plc, is a reflection of the prevailing environment under which the firm has been operating and also a support for the underlying assumption role clarity model. Clarifying the role expectations for salespeople by individualizing achievement plans and providing a continuous flow of helpful information will consume significant amounts of sales management time. But this seems to be one of the least complicated, least expensive, and surest ways of obtaining higher sales force productivity.

### Recommendations:

Based on the findings from the study, we make the following recommendations that:

1. Nigerian Bottling Company plc should embark on constant evaluation and reevaluation of their motivational policies and strategies so as to be in conformity with the changing nature of the marketing environment which will help in serving customers more effectively and efficiently.
2. Training programmes should be organized regularly for implementers of motivational strategies to enable them understand the needs and wants of customers so as to learn those orientations for satisfying them more efficiently and profitably.
3. Management staff of Nigerian Bottling Company should keep to the principle of marketing concept which requires that products and other marketing mix elements are tailored to meet the needs of consumers.
4. Management staff of the bottling firm should regularly monitor and manage their SWOT analytical tool to always:
  - i. identify their strengths and put them to maximum use.
  - ii. identify their weaknesses and know how to overcome and manage them.
  - iii. identify their opportunities and know how to exploit them maximally and
  - iv. identify their threats and known how to avoid them or manage their negative consequence for those that cannot be avoided in today's competitive business environment.

### *Implications of Findings*

Findings of the study are expected to have implications for management practices of bottling manufacturing firms, the bottling manufacturing industry, the government and the society at large. The significant influence of motivational strategy on salesforce performance will require management of bottling manufacturing firms to adopt integrated and multiple motivational strategies that can make products available to different market segments. Results of the study provided direction for management of bottling manufacturing firms with respect to which

motivational strategy to adopt in order to improve on salesforce performance as well as where and how to direct available resources.

### **Contributions To Knowledge**

The study contributed to knowledge by providing better understanding of what constitute the dimensions of motivational strategy and salesforce performance in the bottling manufacturing sector. The study also addressed gaps identified in existing literature with respect to the effects of motivational strategy on salesforce performance in the bottling manufacturing sector, which provided additional contributions to knowledge both conceptually and empirically. Empirically, the results derived after test of hypotheses indicated that motivational strategy had significant influence on salesforce performance of Nigerian Bottling company plc.Aba. Therefore, motivational strategy was a positive and significant predictor of salesforce performance. Finally, this study helps scholars and members of the academia, as well as students in improving on the existing literature on motivational strategies and salesforce performance.

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