

Aspiration for Job Role: A Motivational Perspective from Bangladesh Civil Service

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Abstract

This research investigates the motivational elements that affect job satisfaction and role preferences among members of the Bangladesh Administrative Service (BAS). By utilizing established motivational frameworks—namely Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Job Characteristics Model (JCM)—the study analyzes the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and various demographic and professional factors, including tenure, educational background and personal interests, in shaping the career paths of public sector employees. Based on a survey responded by 100 BAS officials, the results reveal a significant inclination towards job assignments that correspond with their academic qualifications (53%) and personal interests (35%). Intrinsic motivators, such as autonomy, task significance and intellectual satisfaction, are identified as primary sources of motivation. A substantial portion of the participants, who are predominantly experienced and well-educated (80% holding master’s degrees and 20% possessing PhDs), emphasize the importance of roles that promote self-actualization, competence and meaningful contributions to the nation’s development. The findings underscore the essential function of job design in boosting employee motivation. By aligning job roles with employees’ educational backgrounds and career aspirations, organizations can enhance engagement and satisfaction, which is consistent with Herzberg’s focus on intrinsic motivators rather than hygiene factors. Additionally, the JCM highlights the significance of autonomy, task significance and skill variety in maintaining motivation. Public administration organizations are advised to prioritize role alignment, intellectual engagement and avenues for self-actualization within their job design frameworks. By focusing on these motivational factors, organizations can improve employee performance, foster commitment and enhance overall effectiveness, thereby cultivating a motivated and content workforce. This study enhances the comprehension of motivation in public sector management, providing practical recommendations to improve job satisfaction and organizational efficiency.

Keywords: Motivation, Public Sector, civil service, job satisfaction, public administration

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1. Introduction

To have a committed and high-performing workforce, it is crucial to emphasize the motivational factors and it is more important in the case of Public Administration. Though intrinsic and extrinsic both type of motivating factors influences the career goals, there is insufficiency of knowledge about the nature of interaction of the factors particularly with different features, such as tenure of service or expertise. This study pursues to deal with this gap by identifying the major issues that push for job satisfaction and choice for future roles. It particularly tries to explore the relationship with the factors such as alignment with personal interests, academic and professional expertise and overall motivation of public sector employees. By examining this relationship, the research aims to provide important insights that can guide the public sector agencies to improve job design which leads to enhanced employee engagement.

Considering personnel choice in organization is vital for ensuring substantial levels of motivation and performance. He recent study on 100 civil servants of the Bangladesh Administrative Service (BAS), a premier executive body involved in both policy formulation and implementation, emphasized key factors impacting their job preferences and motivational influences. This article examines the study results using recognized motivational theories, offering insights into how employee preferences are related with psychological ideas and how organizations can develop job outlines for improving motivation.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine and assess the motivational factors that shape employee preferences in the public sector. By scrutinizing several demographic and professional features, the study seeks to identify key motivating factors that impact job satisfaction and performance. The specific objectives include: (1) examining preferences for specific roles and the reasoning behind them; (2) scrutinizing how intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affect employees' views of desirable positions; and (3) providing actionable recommendations for public sector organizations to boost employee engagement by aligning job roles with individual aspirations. This inclusive approach aims to expand the insights of motivation in the public sector, ultimately promoting more effective and satisfied human resources.

3. Theoretical Perspectives

To have a comprehensive idea about motivation in public sector management, we can rely on some major theories such as the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Self-Determination Theory and the Job Characteristics Model (Oldham and Hackman, 2010). Maslow claimed that expert and knowledgeable personnel emphasize self-actualization, actively looking roles that are challenging and fall in line with their personal objectives. Herzberg's theory emphasized the significance of intrinsic motivating factors, such as meaningful work and recognition, which are more effective than extrinsic recognition such as career progression or job security in stimulating job satisfaction. Additionally, autonomy, competence and relatedness have been identified as crucial factors for improving intrinsic motivation by the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985). According to the Job Characteristics Model (Oldham and Hackman, 2010) job design can be instrumental for enhancing motivation. They emphasized "significance, autonomy and skill variety" as crucial factors in public sector management. The triangulation of the mentioned theories indicates that organizations can increase job satisfaction and overall efficiency by generating roles that encourage logical engagement,

freedom of decision-making and opportunities for effective contributions beyond organizations. This framework integrates four major theories to analyse motivation in public sector management:

Table: 1

Theory	Key Factors	Application in Public Sector
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Self-actualization	Designing roles that align with employees' personal growth and aspirations.
Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory	Meaningful work, recognition	Prioritizing intrinsic rewards over extrinsic incentives for job satisfaction.
Self-Determination Theory	Autonomy, competence, relatedness	Encouraging decision-making freedom, skill development and team cohesion.
Job Characteristics Model	Significance, autonomy, skill variety	Structuring jobs to enhance engagement and effectiveness.

Source: Author constructed, 2024

4. Methodology

The data in this research was collected using survey technique. The sample size was 100 and selected from members of BAS. The study adopted a purposive sampling method, particularly emphasizing officials with at least five years of service.

The BAS has been established to render their service to at both formulation and implementation levels of public policy. The initial position of this service is Assistant Secretary and the officials can assume the position of Secretary at the last stage of their career. They also have experience of working in various departments and corporations.

The study scrutinized several factors such as gender, tenure of service, educational background, preference for positions and motivational implication. It employs both open-ended and multiple-choice questions to enable both quantitative and qualitative analyses. This article utilizes theories such as "Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Job Characteristics Model (JCM)" to examine and analyze the results. Moreover, recent academic knowledge has also been employed to examine the findings to offer insights into the practical implications of these results.

5. Finding and Analysis:

The findings have shown a few hematic categories. Therefore, the result has been examined and analyzed applying Thematic Analysis technique and discussed comparing main theories related to motivation.

Table: 2

Question: Tenure of Service	
Answer Choices	Responses
0-5 year	0.00%
6-10 years	8.00%
11-15 years	32.00%
16- 20 years	48.00%
More than 20 years	12.00%
TOTAL	100

Source: Author constructed, 2024

The study suggests that the participants in the survey are highly experienced as 48% of respondents have work experience between 16 to 20 years.

Table: 3

Question: Educational Qualification	
Answer Choices	Responses
PhD	20.00%
Master's	80.00%
Other (please specify)	0.00%
TOTAL	100

Source: Author constructed, 2024

The educational background indicated that the respondents are well educated, 80% of the officials have a master's degree and 20% with a PhD. The study identified major features which have significant impact on the motivation of public sector employees, with responses emphasizing tenure, educational qualifications, posting preferences and the perceived lucrateness of job postings. 53% of respondents think that placement in line with the academic background is desirable. Alongside, 35% preferred placement aligning their areas of interest. Besides, 53% claimed that postings relevant to their academic qualifications are lucrative, while 35% opt for positions related to their interests and 12% emphasized career progression scope.

Table :4

Question: What is Lucrative Posting?	
Answer Choices	Responses
Posting with ample opportunity for foreign tour	0.00%
Posting in line with your academic background	53.00%
Posting in your area of interest	35.00%
Posting in a place where your opportunity for promotion is likely to be more secured	12.00%
Posting with available logistical support	0.00%
No one above	0.00%
Other (please specify)	0.00%
Total	100

Source: Author constructed, 2024

5.1 Self-actualization and intellectual contentment

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) posited that once basic physiological and safety needs are met, higher-level needs like esteem and self-actualization become significant. For seasoned civil servants, self-actualization often emerges as a primary motivator, given their job security and their pursuit of recognition and meaningful contributions. In the realm of public administration, research shows that civil servants prefer roles that align with their academic qualifications, reflecting their aspirations for “competence” and “self-actualization.” This aligns with Grant’s (2008) assertion that at certain points in their careers, employees prioritize not just job security but also roles that allow them to leverage their intellectual capabilities. Recent studies further support the notion that individuals in the later stages of their careers increasingly focus on personal and professional development (Gore & Cross, 2020). The research indicated that those holding advanced degrees, such as PhDs (20%) and master’s degrees (80%), actively seek positions that enable them to apply their expertise, underscoring the importance of self-actualization and intellectual fulfillment (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976).

5.2 Preferences for Future Role: Autonomy and Task Significance

Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan in 1985) emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence and relatedness as key psychological needs that drive intrinsic motivation. Survey results support these ideas, showing that 53% of employees prefer job positions that match their academic qualifications, while 35% lean towards those that align with their personal interests, highlighting a strong preference for autonomy and competence.

The concept of “autonomy” is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in enhancing job satisfaction among employees. Research by Gagné and Deci in 2005 underscores the tendency of employees to gravitate towards roles that empower them to make decisions regarding the application of their skills and knowledge. This notion of autonomy is not merely a preference; it is a fundamental aspect of what

makes work fulfilling and engaging. The findings of Oldham and Hackman in 2010 further reinforce this idea through their Job Characteristics Model (JCM), which articulates how autonomy serves as a key driver of employee motivation and satisfaction.

In the context of public administration, roles that grant decision-making authority and enable employees to manage significant projects are particularly effective in meeting the autonomy needs of public servants. These professionals, often equipped with advanced degrees and specialized training, are more likely to seek positions that not only allow decision-making but also provide a sense of intellectual independence. Survey data supports this trend, indicating that public servants value roles where they can exercise their judgment and expertise.

Moreover, the importance of “relatedness” emerges as another critical dimension of job satisfaction. Employees often prefer collaborative roles that allow them to engage in meaningful initiatives at the national or policy level. This preference reflects a desire to align their personal values with the overarching goals of their organization. Baard, Deci and Ryan’s research in 2004 highlights that intrinsic motivation flourishes when employees feel a connection to the broader mission of their organization. When public servants see their work as contributing to significant societal outcomes, their sense of relatedness enhances their overall job satisfaction and commitment to their roles.

In summary, the interplay between autonomy and relatedness is vital in shaping job satisfaction among public servants. By fostering environments that promote decision-making authority and collaborative engagement in meaningful projects, organizations can enhance employee motivation and fulfillment. This alignment not only benefits the individuals involved but also contributes to the effectiveness and success of public administration.

5.3 Enhancing Motivation through Job Design

Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristics Model (JCM) (1976) provides a detailed framework for understanding how job design affects employee motivation. Key elements like task significance, autonomy and skill variety are identified as crucial factors that boost motivation among workers. Research shows that people are especially attracted to jobs that align with their educational backgrounds or personal interests, highlighting the importance of both skill variety and task significance in driving motivation.

In public administration, especially in policy and governance roles, employees often deal with issues of national significance. This heightened task significance supports the JCM’s claim that when individuals find their work meaningful, their engagement and motivation tend to rise (Grant, 2008). Hackman and Oldham (2010) emphasize that jobs offering significant task importance, diverse skills and autonomy are more likely to foster intrinsic motivation and overall job satisfaction.

The preference for roles that align with one’s skills also ties into the idea of “task significance,” a vital aspect of the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Employees are more motivated when they feel their work makes a meaningful difference. For example, the interest expressed by individuals in areas like finance, energy policy, or governance reflects a desire for roles where their efforts can directly shape national policies, helping them appreciate the significance of their contributions (Grant & Berg, 2011).

Recent studies support these conclusions. Research shows that job characteristics, such as autonomy

and the importance of tasks, are positively linked to both job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). Jobs in public administration often involve complex problem-solving and policy development, providing significant opportunities for meaningful work, which can be a powerful motivator for employees driven by the desire to serve the public good (Oldham & Fried, 2016).

5.4 Motivators are Important as opposed to Hygiene Factors

The relationship between “motivators” and “hygiene factors,” as articulated in Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), offers profound insight into the dynamics of job satisfaction and employee engagement, particularly as reflected in recent survey results. Herzberg’s theory posits that motivator—such as achievement, recognition and the nature of the work—are critical elements that enhance job satisfaction and foster a sense of fulfillment among employees. In contrast, hygiene factors, which include salary, job security and working conditions, primarily function to prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily contribute to a higher level of job satisfaction.

The survey findings highlight this distinction clearly, revealing that a substantial 88% of participants expressed a preference for job postings that align with their academic interests and areas of expertise. This overwhelming inclination towards roles that resonate with their intrinsic motivators, particularly the nature of the work and the opportunity for intellectual engagement—underscores the importance of these factors in the workplace. In stark contrast, extrinsic factors such as promotion opportunities attracted the attention of only 12% of respondents, indicating that employees are more motivated by the intrinsic rewards of their work rather than external incentives.

This trend aligns with Herzberg’s assertion that intrinsic motivators are essential for achieving genuine job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966). The emphasis on meaningful work and personal fulfillment suggests that employees are increasingly seeking roles that allow them to engage deeply in their tasks and contribute meaningfully to their fields. This perspective is further supported by recent studies conducted by Okan and Akyüz (2015), which reinforce the idea that intrinsic factors—such as opportunities for personal development and a sense of achievement—are particularly critical to job satisfaction in knowledge-intensive sectors like public administration.

Herzberg’s framework effectively elucidates why employees in these fields prioritize meaningful work over external rewards. They are driven by a desire for fulfillment that comes from engaging in positions that offer substantial intellectual challenges or opportunities for policy-making contributions. This intrinsic motivation not only enhances their job satisfaction but also fosters a deeper commitment to their roles, ultimately benefiting both the employees and the organizations they serve. As such, understanding the interplay between motivators and hygiene factors is essential for organizations aiming to cultivate a motivated and satisfied workforce, particularly in environments where intellectual engagement and personal growth are paramount.

5.5 Aligning Job Roles with Educational Backgrounds

The survey underscored the significance of educational alignment, revealing that 36% of participants expressed a preference for positions that correspond with their academic qualifications. This observation highlights the necessity of addressing the “esteem needs” identified in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow, esteem needs encompass the intrinsic human aspiration for

acknowledgment and respect for one's accomplishments, which is particularly relevant for individuals who have invested significant time and resources into obtaining advanced degrees. Wahba and Bridwell (1976) further characterize esteem needs as the desire for self-esteem and the esteem of others, emphasizing that individuals seek validation and recognition for their skills and achievements. This concept is especially pertinent for those with advanced degrees, as they often possess specialized knowledge and expertise that they wish to see acknowledged in their professional roles.

Moreover, this notion is closely associated with Herzberg's (1966) theory of job enrichment, which posits that positions that effectively leverage an individual's skills and knowledge contribute to enhanced job satisfaction. Herzberg's theory suggests that when employees are engaged in work that aligns with their capabilities and educational background, they are more likely to experience a sense of fulfillment and motivation. Employees possessing specialized expertise, such as those with doctoral degrees in fields like economics or engineering, are particularly inclined to experience motivation when they can meaningfully apply their knowledge in their roles. This alignment not only fosters a sense of competence but also reinforces their professional identity and self-worth.

Conversely, a disconnection between job duties and educational credentials can lead to significant dissatisfaction among employees. When individuals find themselves in positions that do not utilize their skills or align with their academic qualifications, their needs for recognition and self-actualization remain unfulfilled. This misalignment can result in feelings of frustration and disengagement, as employees may perceive their contributions as undervalued or overlooked. As Herzberg et al. (1959) noted, the absence of opportunities for achievement and recognition can diminish job satisfaction and motivation, ultimately impacting overall organizational performance. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to recognize the importance of educational alignment and to create roles that not only match employees' qualifications but also provide avenues for growth, recognition and fulfillment of their esteem needs. By doing so, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, retention and productivity, fostering a more engaged and motivated workforce.

5.6 Prosocial Motivation and Task Significance

Prosocial motivation, which can be defined as the aspiration to positively influence the lives of others, plays a crucial role in shaping the job preferences and career choices of individuals within the realm of public administration. This motivation is particularly salient in fields where the impact of one's work is directly felt by the community, such as in health care, finance and governance. Research conducted by Grant (2008) highlights that employees who perceive their efforts as having a significant and positive effect on others tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction. This sense of engagement is not merely a byproduct of the work environment; rather, it is deeply rooted in the employees' belief that their contributions can lead to meaningful improvements in public welfare.

In the context of public administration, professionals often find their motivation intertwined with a commitment to serve the public good. For instance, those working in health care may be driven by the desire to improve patient outcomes, while individuals in governance may be motivated by the aspiration to create policies that enhance societal well-being. This intrinsic motivation is further supported by the findings of Grant and Berg (2011), which suggest that the alignment of personal values with professional responsibilities fosters a deeper sense of purpose among employees in public service roles.

The concept of “task significance,” as articulated within the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), further emphasizes the importance of prosocial motivation in the workplace. Task significance refers to the degree to which a job has a substantial impact on the lives of others and it is a critical factor in determining job satisfaction and performance. When employees recognize the broader implications of their roles—understanding that their work contributes to the well-being of individuals and communities—they are more likely to pursue excellence in their tasks. This recognition not only enhances their job performance but also reinforces their commitment to their work.

Positions within public administration that carry significant responsibility for policy execution or national planning are particularly effective in fulfilling employees’ quest for meaningful work. Such roles often require individuals to engage with complex societal issues, allowing them to see the direct consequences of their efforts. This connection between their work and its impact on the public fosters a sense of accountability and pride, which in turn enhances both intrinsic motivation and prosocial motivation.

In summary, prosocial motivation is a fundamental driver of job preferences among individuals in public administration. The desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others not only shapes their career choices but also influences their engagement and performance in their roles. By recognizing the significance of their work and its potential to effect.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the study underscore the importance of intrinsic motivators—specifically autonomy, competence and a sense of purpose—in driving employee motivation within the realm of public administration. These motivators are essential for fostering an environment where employees feel empowered and engaged in their work. Autonomy allows individuals to have control over their tasks and decision-making processes, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and a stronger commitment to their roles. Competence, on the other hand, refers to the employees’ perception of their skills and abilities, which can be enhanced through opportunities for training and development. A sense of purpose connects employees to the larger mission of the organization, making their work feel meaningful and impactful.

By applying significant motivational theories, such as Self-Determination Theory and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, it becomes clear that effective job design is paramount. Jobs that are intellectually engaging and aligned with both personal and professional objectives not only maintain motivation but also enhance overall job satisfaction. When employees find their work challenging yet achievable and when they can see how their contributions align with their values and goals, they are more likely to remain motivated and committed to their roles.

Considering these insights, organizations within public administration should prioritize the creation of roles that empower employees through autonomy, encourage the utilization of diverse skills and assign meaningful responsibilities. This strategic approach to job design can lead to sustained engagement and improved performance among employees. Furthermore, by fostering an environment that values security and stability, organizations can create a foundation that supports not only the well-being of their employees but also their intellectual and professional development.

Ultimately, investing in intrinsic motivators and effective job design is not merely a means to enhance employee satisfaction; it is a strategic imperative for public administration organizations aiming

to achieve their goals and serve the public effectively. By cultivating a motivated workforce, these organizations can ensure that their employees are not only productive but also passionate about their work, leading to better outcomes for the communities they serve.

6.1 Practical Implications

The study provides with some insights which can be applied for restructuring Human Resources Management policies.

- a. Job Design Strategies: It is recommended to assign tasks that match employees' competencies and aspirations.
- b. Recognition Systems: Focus on intrinsic motivators such as professional growth and achievement can be instrumental.
- c. Autonomy & Decision-Making: It is important to empower employees with greater control over their work.
- d. Workplace Culture: Fostering collaboration and a sense of belonging is crucial to boost intrinsic motivation.

A well-designed motivational strategy in public sector management, based on the triangulation of these theories, can lead to higher job satisfaction, improved efficiency and a more engaged workforce.

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