

A Comprehensive Thematic Analysis of Work Motivation Among IT Professionals in the United Kingdom

Dr Md Rifad Chowdhury

University of Brighton, Brighton and Hove
United Kingdom

Mr Anant Sharma Karra

University of Brighton
Brighton, UK

karraanant315@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of workplace motivation on IT employees in the UK through a qualitative research approach. Recognizing that motivated employees are critical to organizational success, the research explores various factors influencing motivation, such as financial rewards, recognition, and workplace environment. The study aims to identify the advantages of motivation for IT employees, its effect on productivity and performance, and strategies for improving workplace motivation. Primary data was collected from interviewing IT employees across different UK firms. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in the data, leading to the development of four key themes that address the research objectives. Findings reveal that workplace motivation significantly enhances employee productivity and performance in the UK IT sector. The validity of these findings was supported by existing literature. The study concludes with recommendations for improving workplace motivation, such as ensuring fair pay, fostering workplace ethics, and promoting transparency. Future research could benefit from investigating these dynamics further.

Keywords: *Work motivation, thematic analysis, motivational strategies, semi-structured interviews, job performance, productivity.*

Introduction

Workplace motivation plays a pivotal role in directing employees towards achieving organizational goals and objectives, making it an essential aspect of modern business management. According to Shahzadi et al. (2014), workplace motivation can be defined as the driving force that propels employees to engage with their tasks, demonstrating creativity, energy, and commitment in the pursuit of organizational objectives. As organizations increasingly prioritize the optimization of their financial and human resources, the significance of workplace motivation has become a central concern for managers and leaders alike. In today's competitive environment, managers must prioritize motivating employees to foster a productive and dynamic workforce. This emphasis on motivation is particularly important, as employees who are engaged and motivated tend to perform better, contribute to organizational success, and drive innovation and creativity. Conversely, a lack of motivation can hinder productivity and performance, ultimately undermining the organization's long-term success (Ganta, 2014).

Research indicates that workplace motivation has a direct impact on employee productivity and performance, and thus on the overall success of the organization. As Ganta (2014) points out, motivated employees put forth their best efforts, effectively executing their responsibilities

and contributing to the achievement of organizational objectives. On the other hand, employees who lack motivation often display minimal effort and disengagement, which not only affects their performance but also diminishes the productivity of the organization as a whole (Chowdhury & Nawaz, 2018). Consequently, the ability to motivate employees has become a critical challenge for leaders and managers in organizations, particularly in today's competitive business environment.

A recent survey conducted in 2018, which involved 2,000 UK employees, highlights the pressing nature of this issue. According to Smail (2018), 73% of the surveyed employees expressed a desire for their employers to make greater efforts to motivate them at work. These employees reported that their primary sources of motivation stemmed from factors such as salary, good working relationships, and a sense of purpose. However, those classified as highly motivated cited job satisfaction, respect, and purpose as the most important motivational factors. This suggests that while compensation remains important, non-financial aspects of work such as relationships, respect, and purpose are crucial to sustaining high levels of motivation in the workplace.

The lack of motivation among employees in the UK has become a growing concern, with some studies suggesting that this issue has reached a critical point. Anhal (2022) notes that employee resignation in the UK has risen sharply, with decreasing motivation being one of the primary contributing factors. Prolonged periods of low motivation have led to increased turnover rates, as employees seek better opportunities elsewhere. This has created a significant challenge for HR professionals and leaders in the UK, who must now find ways to rekindle employee motivation to retain top talent and ensure continued organizational success. The implications of this trend extend beyond individual organizations, as the wider UK economy may also be impacted by declining employee engagement and increasing rates of turnover.

Main Focus of the Article

Given the growing importance of workplace motivation and its potential consequences for organizations, it is crucial to explore how different motivational strategies can influence employee performance and productivity. Employees are widely regarded as the most important assets of any organization, as they are instrumental in achieving organizational goals (Ganta, 2014). Therefore, understanding what motivates employees and how to enhance their motivation through various strategies is critical for organizational success. This research aims to delve into the various factors that influence workplace motivation, shedding light on how different methods can be used to create a motivated workforce.

This study will contribute to both the theoretical and practical understanding of workplace motivation. Theoretically, it will review a wide range of academic articles on workplace motivation, contributing to the existing body of literature. This will help to expand the theoretical knowledge of the researcher and offer valuable insights into how different motivational factors impact employee performance and productivity. On a practical level, the study will examine selected IT firms in the UK, exploring the employee motivation strategies they have implemented and evaluating their effectiveness in driving productivity and performance. By providing real-world examples, this research aims to guide future organizational leaders and managers in developing effective motivational strategies that enhance employee engagement, foster workplace satisfaction, and ultimately improve organizational outcomes (Chowdhury & Nawaz, 2018).

Literature Review

Motivation is not a one-size-fits-all phenomenon; it varies across individuals, as employees are driven by different factors. While financial compensation serves as a motivating factor for some

employees, others may be motivated by non-financial rewards such as recognition, respect, and a sense of purpose (Shahzadi et al., 2014). The multifaceted nature of motivation suggests that organizational leaders must adopt a holistic approach, incorporating diverse strategies to meet the unique motivational needs of their workforce. This understanding is especially crucial for human resources (HR) professionals and leaders who aim to improve workplace morale, enhance job satisfaction, and ensure high levels of employee engagement (Chowdhury & Nawaz, 2018).

Various scholarly and academic articles have been reviewed related to the topic of workplace motivation and its impact on employees. For this purpose, different sub-topics have been included, which include importance of workplace motivation, factors affecting employee motivation, various motivational theories, impact of motivation on employees and organisations and strategies for improving workplace motivation. Here, motivational theories like Maslow's theory of hierarchical needs, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and McClelland's Three Needs theory have been discussed. In addition, gaps in these existing literature review have also been identified for continuing with the rest of the research.

According to Rožman, Treven and Čančer (2017), organisations need to understand what motivates employees and enhances their job satisfaction because it helps in improving their productivity and performance to ensure their success. This makes it essential for the firms in designing jobs to reduce stress at the workplace while increasing motivation and satisfaction of employees. On the contrary, Riak and Bill (2022) have pointed out that motivation refers to the level of creativity, energy and commitment of the workers brought into their jobs. It is essential to motivate employees through different means so that they put forth their necessary efforts and actions for accomplishing work-related activities. Moreover, Varma (2017) has argued that motivation acts as an important stimulation for directing human behaviour. Thus, ensuring proper motivation through increased job satisfaction encourages employees in putting their efforts for achieving organisational goals and objectives.

Motivational Theories

Maslow's Theory of Hierarchical Needs

As shown in the below Figure 1, Maslow's hierarchy theory comprises of five types of needs based on hierarchy. These include physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualisation needs (Trivedi and Mehta, 2019).

Physiological needs refer to basic needs of food, water, clothing, shelter and others required for sustaining human life (Trivedi and Mehta, 2019). Safety or security needs include employment opportunities, resources, family, health, property and morality for protection against potential fear. Social needs include belongingness, love, friendship, family and other interpersonal relationships as humans are social beings (Altmurat, Muhai and Saporow, 2021). Esteem needs involve respect from others, appreciation, power and prestigious position. Lastly, self-actualisation needs involve utilising maximum potentials, individual growth, morality, creativity, acceptance, problem-solving and other intellectual needs. Thus, these needs are fulfilled based on their positions or hierarchical levels in the pyramid.

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory

According to Chiat and Panatik (2019), Herzberg's two-factor theory provides the difference between motivation and hygiene factors present at the workplace. This theory describes motivation factors as intrinsic to the job required for improving job satisfaction while hygiene factors as extrinsic to the job essential for reducing job dissatisfaction.

As pointed out by Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl and Maude (2017), motivating factors are essential for resulting in positive attitudes of employees towards the job by satisfying their need for growth or self-actualisation. Figure 2 represents different motivators like advancement,

work itself, growth possibility, responsibility, recognition and achievement. On the other hand, hygiene factors are related to conditions surrounding the job or workplace and their absence can lead to dissatisfaction (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl and Maude, 2017). These factors include interpersonal relationships, working conditions, company policies and administration, supervision and salary.

McClelland's Three Needs Theory

McClelland's theory provides three human motivators, which focus on the needs for achievement, power and affiliation (Acquah, et al., 2021). Based on this theory, the need for achievement refers to the desire of independently mastering ideas, people, tasks and objectives for enhancing self-esteem by using own talent and capabilities (Acquah, et al., 2021). Need for power involves the desire to control own or other's work by exercising authority, leading people and succeeding in their ideas. It also includes the need for gaining personal status and prestige for controlling and influencing others. Need for affiliation determines the desire for love, relatedness and belongingness through friendships, social groups and other interpersonal relations (Acquah, et al., 2021). This need revolves around the desire for being liked and being popular in groups and preference towards undertaking team activities.

Leading factors in Work Motivational Research

Le et al. (2021) identify multiple factors influencing employee motivation, which can be categorized into human-related factors, external factors, and work-related factors. Human-related factors include personal attitude, benefits, experience, goals, and abilities. External factors encompass human resource policies and organizational culture. Work-related factors include salary, job stability, autonomy, responsibility, task discrepancy, the attractiveness of work, and task complexity. Additionally, other key motivators in the workplace include work nature, outcomes, conditions, opportunities for training and promotion, as well as relationships with colleagues and superiors.

Makki and Abid (2017) further classify workplace motivators into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation fosters high-quality performance and creativity, stemming from the inherent enjoyment of work activities. In contrast, extrinsic motivation drives employee participation through rewards such as monetary compensation, reputation, and performance-contingent benefits. According to Ndudi, Kifordu, and Egede (2023), intrinsic motivation arises from the inherent satisfaction employees gain from engaging in activities they find interesting. This motivation emerges through feelings of accomplishment, recognition, and self-esteem. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation stems from external rewards, including pay, retirement benefits, accolades, healthcare plans, and the respect and admiration of others. In essence, intrinsic motivation is internally driven, while extrinsic motivation is tied to external incentives.

Singh (2016) suggests that intrinsic motivators primarily involve the psychological satisfaction employees derive from performing meaningful work and achieving improved performance, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Conversely, extrinsic motivators, such as salary, benefits, bonuses, promotions, job security, and advancement opportunities, also contribute significantly to job satisfaction. Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, therefore, play a crucial role in bolstering employee motivation in the workplace.

Authors/ Sources	Data Collected
Dyvik (2023)	Impactful work, career advancement opportunities, compensation aligned with performance, autonomy and flexible work arrangements are significant for ensuring job satisfaction amongst employees. Such increased job satisfaction further helps in enhancing productivity of employees at the workplace.
Sime (2019)	Engaged employees often produce improved business results. High engaged employees form strong bonds with their peers, become intrinsically motivated and have job satisfaction, which encourage them to enhance their productivity and performance at the workplace
Ramaswami (2022)	Some of the popular solutions for workplace motivation include personalised benefits, flexible work arrangements, extra pay and perks and inviting office spaces. Besides, building positive workplace culture through open communication, building trust and being respectful further helps in improving employee performance. Increased focus on developing strategies for increasing workplace motivation helps in encouraging employees to remain satisfied with their jobs and display improved performance, which indicates higher productivity. This shows that workplace motivation generates significant impact on employee productivity in the firms
Bankole, Ashibogwu and McDubus (2018)	Various tools such as equal treatment, better remuneration, reducing feeling of insecurity and redundancy can help in making employees feel happy about their jobs, which ultimately increases their productivity in the organisation.
Sabir (2017)	Managers should focus on making employees feel appreciated and rewarded at work for enhancing their performance and productivity. Here, allowing employees to speak up and increasing their pay, position and involvement in decision-making activities can be ensured to increase their motivation at the workplace. These different ways of motivating employees become beneficial in promoting entire productivity of the organisation.
Bawa (2017)	Various monetary and non-financial factors help in increasing employee motivation. These include pay, recognition and challenging jobs. Such increased motivation helps in keeping employees happy and satisfied with their jobs and work environment, which, in turn, enhances their productivity and performance at the workplace.

Organizational and Global Challenges on Work Motivation

According to Okine et al. (2021), organisations provide employees with adequate motivation to inspire greater effort, enhance productivity, and achieve improved organisational outcomes. This encouragement increases workforce effectiveness, underscoring the critical role motivation plays in boosting employee performance. Motivation drives human capital into action, leading to higher levels of employee output (Okine et al., 2021). Consequently, it is crucial for organisations to maintain a motivated workforce to achieve better performance, improve efficiency, and reduce costs.

Conversely, Frastika and Franksiska (2021) argue that workplace motivation serves as a form of encouragement provided by employers to elevate employee morale. Highly motivated employees tend to perform better and engage more actively in fulfilling organisational

objectives. This is largely because motivation fosters feelings of being valued, respected, and cared for, which, in turn, enhances employees' commitment to giving back through increased effort and productivity (Frastika & Franksiska, 2021). Thus, workplace motivation significantly contributes to enhanced employee performance within organisations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unique challenges to workplace motivation, particularly among healthcare workers. Turgay, Bulut, and Seze (2023) identify several factors influencing motivation during the pandemic, including self-confidence, social security through retirement and insurance benefits, positive workplace environments, trust, responsibility, working conditions, job complexity, reputation, interpersonal relationships, and fair distribution of duties and working hours. These factors highlight the diverse range of managerial, individual, and occupational characteristics that influence motivation during critical periods.

Haque (2023) suggests that organisations prioritising their relationships with employees during the pandemic can mitigate negative impacts on motivation. By enhancing employees' skills, abilities, and knowledge, employers can help workers remain focused and productive, thereby reinforcing motivation. This approach can result in positive outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions, provided employees receive adequate support during challenging times. Adjustments to work conditions, such as remote working, social distancing, and flexible work hours, have also contributed to sustaining motivation and improving job performance during the pandemic.

Similarly, the Brexit movement has generated significant physical, interactional, and psychological threats to expatriates, which have negatively affected their motivation and behaviour. According to Dickmann, Parry, and Chudzikowski (2023), this movement created a hostile working environment for foreign careerists, leading to physical, psychological, institutional, and interactional challenges. These hostilities diminished motivation among foreign workers, thereby reducing their productivity and increasing turnover intentions, ultimately impacting organisational performance.

Workplace motivation is an essential component of organizational success (Chowdhury, 2023). Through this research, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the advantages and impacts of workplace motivation, offering valuable insights for both academic scholarship and real-world business practice. By exploring the various factors that drive employee motivation and examining how organizations can effectively harness these factors, this study will help to address the pressing challenge of maintaining a motivated and productive workforce.

Method

Research methodology has explained what the researcher did and in what ways through evaluating validity and reliability of the research. It has provided various methods and techniques used for collecting, measuring, analysing and interpreting data related to the selected research topic (Chowdhury, 2023). Research study can be qualitative, quantitative or mixed in nature. Here, qualitative research method has been chosen over quantitative method as it focuses on better understanding thoughts, feelings, experiences and perceptions of human beings (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). It undertakes a subjective approach towards research, which helps in providing detailed insights about the research problem being investigated. This would not have been possible by carrying out quantitative research through statistical, mathematical or computational techniques.

Qualitative research has been applied for acquiring in-depth insights about employees' perceptions of workplace motivation in the IT firms of UK. Such insights have helped in understanding how various factors enhance their motivation, which ultimately results in their improved productivity and performance. This qualitative research has also identified current problems in workplace motivation strategies from employees' opinions, thoughts and

experiences. Interpretivism research philosophy will be used for understanding the subjective reality and socially constructive meanings associated with workplace motivation and its impact on the employees from their thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Furthermore, inductive research approach will be used for acquiring specific information from some selected IT firms in the UK to explore different intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors and their impact on the employees. These specific data will be used for making recommendations about the impact of workplace motivation on employee productivity and performance in general. Besides, exploratory research design will be used for determining various motivating factors present in the selected IT firms in the UK for understanding their consequent impact on the employees. Here, qualitative research will be conducted for gathering data about various motivation strategies used in those selected firms. It will be collected from employees working in different UK companies through interview method. Lastly, these data will be analysed with the help of thematic analysis method by identifying similar patterns to develop and review themes.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophies play a critical role in shaping the approach and methodology of a study. Key philosophies include positivism, pragmatism, realism, interpretivism, and post-modernism (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Positivism, which emphasizes a scientific approach to establishing causal relationships, is not suitable for this study. Similarly, realism, with its focus on social constructions and historical causal explanations, and post-modernism, which analyses power relations, do not align with the research objectives. Pragmatism, which centers on the researcher's doubts and beliefs, also does not fit the scope of this study (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

Instead, interpretivism is the most appropriate philosophy for this research. It is well-suited for exploring the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of human participants, providing a deeper understanding of workplace motivation from the employees' perspectives. This philosophy enables a nuanced investigation into how employees in IT firms in the UK experience and remain motivated through various strategies implemented by their organizations (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2022). Interpretivism supports an in-depth analysis by focusing on subjective experiences and variations across different data sources. However, it typically involves studying a limited sample size, which can pose challenges in generalizing findings across a broader population (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2022). Despite this limitation, interpretivism has been chosen for its ability to provide detailed insights into employees' thoughts and feelings regarding motivation strategies.

Research Approach

There are two primary research approaches: inductive and deductive. The deductive approach, which starts with general observations and moves towards specific conclusions through hypothesis testing, is not suitable for this study (Kostere & Kostere, 2021). This is because the current research focuses specifically on IT employees in the UK, making the inductive approach more appropriate. The inductive approach employs a bottom-up methodology, starting from specific observations to develop broader generalizations about the impact of workplace motivation on employees. It also facilitates the extraction of detailed meanings from collected data by identifying recurring patterns.

The inductive approach has been utilized to gain insights into workplace motivation strategies within IT firms in the UK. It has enabled the identification of patterns related to the impact of these strategies on employees. This specific data has been instrumental in forming a broader understanding of how workplace motivation affects employees generally (Kostere & Kostere, 2021). However, it is important to note that while the inductive approach provides detailed insights into employees within the specific context of UK IT firms, its findings are based on a

smaller sample size. Consequently, these insights may not be readily applicable to other firms or broader employee populations.

Research Design

Various research designs are available, including descriptive, exploratory, experimental, explanatory, and correlational. An explanatory design is not applicable in this context as it primarily focuses on elucidating the causes and consequences of a research problem (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Experimental research is also unsuitable because it involves examining cause-and-effect relationships through quantitative methods. Similarly, correlational design, which measures the degree of relationship between variables, and descriptive design, which merely describes the research problem, do not align with the objectives of this study. Instead, an exploratory design has been selected for this research. Exploratory design is well-suited for investigating the various motivating factors affecting employees in IT firms in the UK. It involves qualitative and primary research methods, allowing for a deeper exploration of the subject (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Exploratory research has facilitated the investigation of the advantages of workplace motivation and the factors driving employee motivation in UK IT firms. This approach has been instrumental in understanding how these motivating factors influence employee productivity and performance. While exploratory research provides valuable qualitative data, it may lead to judgmental and biased interpretations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). To mitigate this, information from existing scholarly articles and published documents has been utilized to validate the findings.

Data Collection Method

The researcher has collected data from primary source like employees of IT firms in UK through semi-structured interview. This data helped in providing actual insights about factors affecting employee motivation at the workplaces like IT firms in the UK. Primary data has been gathered from IT employees in UK about factors impacting their workplace motivation through interview method. Their responses have also been audio-recorded with their proper consent and consideration. Gathering primary data has led to a considerable amount of time and resources being spent for selecting sample participants, acquiring their informed consent and conducting the entire interview process (Rudestam and Newton, 2014). However, collecting only secondary data would have led to inaccurate or irrelevant information.

Sampling

In this current research study, 8 employees have been involved in the interview process. They have been selected through convenience sampling based on their availability, geographical distance, easy accessibility and willingness to participate in the research (Rudestam and Newton, 2014). Participants are contacted with the help of e-mails. A consent form is attached in the e-mail where every detail about the interview session has been included. The consent form is sent to people who are currently residing in UK. Once, they sign and agree to the form, then the interview session is conducted. A semi-structured interview is done with 8 participants. Inclusion criteria of participants are their work experiences in IT field, age between 25-50 years and employees who are working only in UK. Moreover, employees who are not working in the IT department are excluded.

Data Analysis

The data collected through eight semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, a widely used method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Chowdhury, 2023). Thematic analysis offers a flexible yet rigorous

approach to qualitative research, enabling the researcher to delve deeply into the content of the interviews to uncover meaningful insights (Nowell et al., 2017). The thematic analysis followed the six-step framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Familiarization with the data: First, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, allowing for a thorough immersion in the data. The researcher actively engaged with the transcriptions, reading and re-reading the texts to gain a deep understanding of the participants' perspectives.

Generating initial codes: In the second step, initial codes were generated through open coding, where segments of data were labelled based on meaningful characteristics or ideas.

Searching for themes: Coding was data-driven, allowing the data to inform the codes rather than imposing predefined categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The third step involved collating the codes into potential themes. These themes were then reviewed and refined in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set to ensure that they accurately captured the essence of the data. During this phase, some themes were merged, split, or discarded to ensure they were coherent and distinct.

Defining and naming themes: Once the themes were finalized, they were clearly defined and named. This process involved articulating the core essence of each theme and determining how they related to the overall research question.

Producing the report: In the final step, the themes were written up in the form of a narrative that provides a comprehensive, compelling account of the data. This report included illustrative quotes from the participants to substantiate the findings and provide a rich, nuanced understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the thematic analysis, the process adhered to the criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced by the researcher's prolonged engagement with the data and the use of peer debriefing. Reflexivity was also employed throughout the research process to maintain awareness of potential biases and ensure a transparent analysis (Finlay, 2002).

In summary, the thematic analysis provided a robust framework for interpreting the qualitative data, enabling the identification of patterns and insights that contribute to understanding the phenomena under study.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to strict ethical guidelines throughout the research process. All original authors of referenced works have been appropriately acknowledged through proper citation. Data has been retained only for the duration necessary to complete the research, in line with ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the interview process at any time. No physical or psychological harm was inflicted on participants during the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were rigorously maintained by securely aggregating participants' names and data files.

Data Analysis and Findings

In this chapter, qualitative data about workplace motivation of employees in IT firms of UK have been collected from different sources. Primary data have been collected from eight employees working across different IT firms through open-ended interview questions. Furthermore, secondary data has been collected from different journal articles for finding out the impact of workplace motivation on employee productivity, which has not been identified from interview responses of sample participants. Both these primary and secondary data have been analysed through thematic analysis method by identifying similar patterns, generating

initial codes and developing and reviewing themes. Lastly, these themes have been compared with existing literature review for addressing the research questions.

Generation of Initial Codes

The objective of this part of the research study is to understand the underlying patterns of the collected data to generate initial codes.

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Data gathered</i>	<i>Generation of initial codes</i>
<i>P1</i>	The respondent suggests that recognition from peers and their managers; collaboration with team members motivates employee positively. These respondents also expect flexibility in work arrangements that can further keep them motivated. However, biasness among employees within the workplace acts as demotivating factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition • Collaborative team • Flexibility in work arrangements
<i>P2</i>	The respondent suggests that career growth opportunities , collaborative work environment , and strong connection with peers positively motivates employee within the workplace. However, micromanagement acts as demotivating factors. The respondent also desires to embrace change in the workplace with collaborative team effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career growth opportunities • Collaborative work environment • Strong relationship with peers. • Lack of support from managers. • Micromanagement
<i>P3</i>	The respondent suggests that supportive team and job flexibility motivates employee within the workplace. The response also suggests that motivating factors can be divided in to two different parts. They are internal and external factors. Employees focus on ensuring well-being of their loved ones . This external factor motivates them to work. On the other hand, workplace ethics and principles create a positive and inclusive work environment. This is an internal motivating factor. Moreover, this respondent also expects career development in future. Such expectations can keep them motivated in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive team environment • Job flexibility • Ensuring Well-being of loved ones • Workplace ethics • Career development opportunities
<i>P4</i>	The respondent suggests that career growth opportunities help employees to work with efforts. Moreover, a work environment that foster innovation and empower employees to share their opinions and thoughts act as motivating factor. However, biasness within the workplace, bossy people at work, workplace politics and micromanagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career growth opportunities • An innovative work environment • Sharing thoughts and opinions • Biasness • Bossy people

	and unhealthy work culture can act as demotivating factor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micromanagement and unhealthy work culture • Workplace politics
P5	The respondent suggests that a collaborative work environment and professionalism among employees within the workplace makes things enjoyable and easier at work. However, according to viewpoint of the respondent challenging work environment and effective communication can act as motivating factors. The respondent also expects limited work pressure, no overtime in the future. These factors can help them to stay motivated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative work environment • Professionalism • Challenging work environment • Effective communication • Limited work pressure • No overtime
P6	The respondent suggests that work culture is important to keep employee motivated. Moreover, the person expects progressive and collaborative work environment and salary increase soon. A well-established communication can motivate workers within the workplace. However, there are constantly demotivating their peers within the workplace. Such micromanagement and unhealthy work culture can become a demotivating factor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive work environment • Work culture • Salary increase • Well-established communication • Micromanagement and unhealthy work culture
P7	The respondent suggests that collaborative work environment where team puts effort to solve problems collectively keep employees motivated. Moreover, personal, and professional growth, work-life balance and incentives are few factors that are expected by the respondent. Fulfilment of such expectations can help them to stay motivated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative work environment • Personal and professional growth • Work-life balance • Collectively solving problem
P8	This respondent has 10 years of experiences in the IT industry. According to the viewpoint of this respondent workplace flexibility , help employees to stay motivated. Moreover, the respondent also expects to apply their learning in the coming years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace flexibility • Apply learning for future job accomplishments

Searching for themes

Initial codes were then reviewed and refined in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set to ensure that they accurately captured the essence of the data.

Participants	Current enjoyable things at work	Factors affecting employee motivation	Future expectations of employees
P1	The respondent enjoys recognition from their peers and managers. Moreover, support from supervision is also enjoyed within the workplace.	The respondent thinks that supportive workplace and collaboration with team members are positive factors that motivates employee within the workplace. However, partiality within the workplace and biasness can have negative impact on their employees.	The respondent expects holidays and workplace flexibility that can further keep them motivated.
P2	The respondent is strongly connected with his peers, and I feel growth of an individual in the workplace is enjoyable.	The respondent suggests that work environment, type of work, people with whom a person is working acts as positive internal factors that further motivates an employee. Moreover, there are managers who rarely focuses on the productivity and outcome of employees. They always embark on monitoring employees at office, instead of providing them job flexibility. These are demotivating factors. Moreover, micromanagement within the workplace also acts as demotivating factors.	The respondent expects to involve in teamwork. Moreover, the ability to embrace change can also motivate them to work effectively.
P3	The respondent thinks that a supportive team ensures job flexibility. This further help makes the workplace enjoyable.	The respondent has highlighted external and internal motivating factors. There are employees who work for the well-being of their family. These are external motivating factors. On the other hand, workplace	The respondent expects to focus on work that adds value to their career. They expect recognition from their work.

		<p>policies and ethics at work are internal motivating factors. In a positive work environment, employees can also share their opinions and thoughts. These are positive factors that motivate employees within the workplace. Finally, the professional growth of an employee is also an important motivating factor. Moreover, employee growth within the workplace also acts as important motivating factors.</p>	
P4	<p>This respondent thinks that proper growth opportunities within the workplace makes the workplace enjoyable.</p>	<p>A supportive manager is important within a workplace. Moreover, a workplace that foster innovation and creativity and help employees to share their opinions and thoughts create a positive work environment. On the contrary, biasness within the workplace, bossy people, micromanagement and workplace politics can act as negative factors and can demotivate employees.</p>	NA
P5	<p>The respondent thinks that collaborative work environment and professionalism is enjoyed at workplace.</p>	<p>This respondent gets motivated when the work environment is challenging. Moreover, effective communication also acts as motivating factors for them.</p>	<p>The respondent demands good work culture and principles, limited work pressures, no extra hours of working. This will keep the person motivated in the long-term.</p>
P6	<p>This respondent thinks that the work culture is the most enjoyable</p>		<p>The respondent expects to switch their job in future if there is an increase in their salary, a progressive work</p>

	think at their workplace.		environment, and a workplace that follows ethical principles. Finally, workplace communication can also help employees to stay motivated in the future
P7	This respondent thinks that constant collaboration with team members and finding out solutions to problems with collaborative effort, makes workplace enjoyable.		The respondent expects incentives, work-life balance and personal and professional growth in the coming years. These factors can keep them motivated.
P8	The respondent who has worked for 10 years in the IT industry finds work arrangement flexibility is the most enjoyable thing at workplace.		The respondent expects to apply their learning in their new job and avoid learning new things.

Findings

Theme 1: Flexible work arrangements, increased pay, career development opportunities collaborative work environment motivate employees

Flexible work arrangements like hybrid mode of working, flexible working hours, work from home facilities can help employees to maintain a work-life balance. There are managers who often focus on monitoring employees in the workplace, instead of waiting for the outcome. This can create distress among employees and they can often feel dissatisfied. However, flexible work arrangements can empower employees to complete their work without any interruption. This can also improve workplace productivity. Secondly, employees within the workplace always look for career development opportunities. Formal training with corporate leaders, corporate seminars and workshops can enhance networking skills of employees and help them to identify career development opportunities. Moreover, employee upskilling program can also help them to update their skills and identify growth possibilities. Along with career development opportunities, a collaborative work environment also helps in strengthening the relationship between employees and their managers. They can collectively work, solve problems, and foster innovation in the workplace. Finally, compensations as per employee productivity are also a significant part of a positive and healthy work environment. These factors ensure employee well-being and motivate them to perform effectively. This theme validates the second research question.

Theme 2: Job satisfaction among empowered employees increase productivity

In this competitive and dynamic business environment, increase in productivity within the workplace is important to for survival of the business. The contribution of employees is directly

correlated with increased productivity. Therefore, job satisfaction among employees is necessary. Empowered employees who can share their decisions, thoughts, opinions and feedback with their peers and managers are highly satisfied. A collaborative and challenging workplace also enhance their job satisfaction. This is how job satisfaction among employees are responsible for increasing the workplace productivity.

Theme 3: Micromanagement and unhealthy workplace culture demotivates employees

Micromanagement within the workplace can demotivate employees. There are managers who should focus on controlling, supporting, and empowering their employees. They should help employees to solve workplace problems. This can create a healthy environment. However, there are managers who often shows lack of interest in the work of employees. They fail to solve problems of employees and create a conflicting situation. Such conflicting situations can also have negative impact on the emotional well-being of employees. Moreover, there are workplaces where high level of politics is encountered by workplace members. Employees are often boycotted due to politics and they can often feel lonely and isolated. This can create psychological distress among employees and can have devastating impact on their workplace productivity. Due to lack of work ethics, employees fail to respect and support each other. This creates an unhealthy work environment and demotivates employee. Employees often feel dissatisfied in such work scenario. This can further have an impact on their workplace productivity. Therefore, the third research question is validated with the help of this theme.

Theme 4: Personal and professional growth and workplace ethics are future expectations of employees

Employees who are working for a longer time also develops significant expectations. They desire to encounter personal and professional growth. Professional growth includes learning new skills, improving professional relationships, developing leadership qualities, and increasing confidence. These aspects can help an employee to grow efficiently. Moreover, workplace ethics like integrity, honesty, inclusiveness, accountability are necessary. These ethics help employees to show respect to each other. Moreover, it also helps in enhancing discipline in the workplace. Workplace ethics also promote teamwork. They help employees to work collaboratively and accomplish work within a stipulated time-period. It is the responsibility of the organisational leaders to develop strategies that ensure a healthy work environment and reduce workplace politics. Therefore, this theme validates the final research question.

Discussion

In this discussion section, the reviewed themes and data findings have been compared with existing literature to assess the validity of the findings. Regarding the first theme, several motivating factors were identified from the interviews, including flexible work arrangements, increased pay, career development opportunities, a collaborative work environment, and recognition and appreciation. These findings align with the literature. For instance, Ndudi, Kifordu, and Egede (2023) identified intrinsic motivation factors such as recognition and feelings of accomplishment, while extrinsic factors included pay, awards, and respect. Similarly, Singh (2016) validated the role of extrinsic factors, such as salary, benefits, bonuses, advancement opportunities, and promotions, in enhancing job satisfaction and motivation. Furthermore, Zoellner and Sulikova (2022) confirmed the role of flexible work arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic, which supports the findings from the interviews. These validations confirm the first theme, addressing the second research question: identifying the factors that enhance workplace motivation in UK IT firms.

The second theme revealed that empowered employees exhibit higher job satisfaction, which motivates them to perform better. This is consistent with the findings of Okine et al. (2021),

who emphasized that workplace motivation enhances employee productivity by engaging and inspiring them to go above and beyond. Similarly, Frastika and Franksiska (2021) validated the theme by demonstrating that highly motivated employees are more productive and committed to achieving organizational goals, as they feel respected and valued. Haque (2023) further supported this theme by highlighting that job satisfaction, fuelled by investment in skills and personal development, enhances employee focus and productivity. These findings confirm the positive impact of workplace motivation on employee productivity, addressing the third research question.

Primary data also revealed various demotivating factors, such as micromanagement, workplace politics, lack of appreciation, demotivating feedback, partiality, layoffs, pay cuts, excessive workloads, and a regressive workplace culture. Micromanagement and a negative workplace environment emerged as recurring patterns. These findings align with Dickmann, Parry, and Chudzikowski (2023), who discussed how the Brexit movement created hostile work environments, which undermined motivation and decreased productivity. Similarly, Turgay, Bulut, and Seze (2023) emphasized the importance of fostering a positive workplace environment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, to sustain motivation. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, discussed by Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, and Maude (2017), also supports this theme, as it highlights that poor hygiene factors, such as inadequate interpersonal relationships, poor working conditions, and insufficient salaries, often lead to employee dissatisfaction (Chowdhury, 2023). These findings confirm the need to address workplace demotivation factors in UK IT firms.

The final theme identified that employees expect personal and professional growth, as well as ethical workplace practices, from their employers. These expectations align with Trivedi and Mehta (2019), who highlighted the importance of fulfilling self-actualization and esteem needs as outlined in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Furthermore, Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, and Maude (2017) emphasized that growth opportunities serve as key motivating factors, while appropriate working conditions and company policies act as crucial hygiene factors. These findings validate the final theme, addressing the fourth research question.

This research offers a foundation for future studies on employee motivation across various industries, such as fashion, retail, and manufacturing. Expanding the sample size could further enrich the findings. Additionally, future research could explore employee motivation across different countries, providing insight into global trends (Chowdhury, 2023). Quantitative analysis techniques could also be employed to establish a numerical relationship between employee motivation and productivity.

Conclusion

This research study aimed to explore the impact of workplace motivation on IT employees in the UK, with particular attention to the diverse factors that influence employee growth, development, and productivity. Through an in-depth analysis of eight semi-structured interviews, the study has provided valuable insights into the role of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in shaping the professional experiences of IT employees.

The findings confirm that workplace motivation is multifaceted, with employees driven by a combination of internal satisfaction and external rewards. Intrinsic factors such as the ability to accomplish tasks effectively and derive meaning from work play a significant role in keeping employees engaged. Conversely, extrinsic factors like fair compensation, career development opportunities, and flexible work arrangements are equally important in maintaining motivation. In particular, the growing demand for hybrid working models underscores a shift in employee expectations, reflecting the need for a more adaptable, balanced work-life environment.

The study also highlights the critical importance of a healthy work environment in fostering motivation. When employees feel empowered, valued, and respected, their job satisfaction

increases, leading to enhanced productivity. Managers play a pivotal role in creating such environments by encouraging open communication and recognizing employee contributions. This aspect of workplace culture aligns with the study's second and third research objectives, which emphasized the necessity of creating supportive spaces for employee growth and empowerment.

On the contrary, the research has also identified several demotivating factors that can hinder employee productivity. Workplace challenges such as micromanagement, excessive workloads, layoffs, and pay cuts have been shown to have a profoundly negative impact on employee morale. The study further illustrates how external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit have exacerbated these challenges, leading to declines in workplace conditions, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction across the UK's IT sector.

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