



National  
College *of*  
Ireland

## **How does motivation affect employee performance?**

**Niamh Atkinson**

Masters of Arts in Human Resource Management

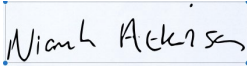
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**Name:** Niamh Atkinson

**Signature of Researcher:** 

**Student Number:** 20100833

**Degree for which thesis is submitted:** Masters of Arts in Human Resource Management (CIPD)

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Participant Consent forms

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## **Abstract**

This study aim was to explore how motivation can affect employee performance. Motivation can be both a positive and negative factor in the workplace. This study examines factors that are associated with motivation, such as benefits, approaches, the manager's role and employee turnover rates.

The participants who took part in this study were employees from two different type of organisations; a creche setting and a business organisation. The employees were asked questions on motivation in their workplace and how important they felt motivation was for their own work. The interviews used open-ended questions, that allowed a good flow of conversation to happen.

A lot of valuable information was gathered from the interviews. One of the main findings in this study is that all employees interviewed highlighted the importance of positive motivation and stated they personally would struggle to stay long term in a workplace where they felt unmotivated. Thus, highlighting how poor motivation can result in organisations having high employee turnover rates.

Overall, this research gathered a lot of strong opinions on the matter of motivation and examined the importance it has on employees and their performance.

## **Chapter 1- Introduction**

This research focuses on the topic of motivation. Employee motivation and its impact on performance is highly relevant in the workplace of today. Furthermore, as it is not a common research topic, it is an interesting subject to investigate and study. “Motivation is the difference between action and inaction. It is the difference between thinking about doing something and getting it done. It is the difference between average and excellent performance. Without motivation, there is nothing.” (Furnham and MacRae, 2017).

This research took a comparative approach, examining how motivation works in different organisations with different outlooks and career options, by comparing employee experiences from two different types of organisations. The researcher selected creche settings as one of their organisation types to examine due to the fact they have personal experience in this workplace environment and understood the motivation challenges in this setting. This was then compared with a more traditional office-based setting.

### **1.1-Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to examine how motivation affects employee performance. In this study participants were all employees of either a creche or a traditional business organisation, to gain perspective on the differences between the two organisations when it comes to motivation. Engaging with employees allowed the researcher in this study to gain employee perspective on motivation and to get their opinion on how motivation affects their own performance in the workplace.

The research evaluated different elements of motivation, to gain a full perspective on the topic. Elements such as benefits, approaches and motivational theories have been discussed. Another element that this research explored was the impact of demotivation to assess if there is a link between demotivation and staff turnover. “Demotivated employees are more likely to leave their current organization to find a more motivating job.” (Furnham and MacRae, 2017).



## **1.2- Summary of Chapters:**

Chapter two consists of the literature review. Various literature and studies published on the topic of motivation are discussed. This chapter also explores motivational theory, primarily Maslow's hierarchy of needs, to give a better understanding of the theory of motivation in the workplace.

Chapter three is the methodology chapter. This chapter evaluates the method that was used in this research. This chapter also identifies different methods of research and instruments that can be used in this type of study. The data gathered and analysed will be discussed in this chapter and the ethical considerations used throughout this research will also be discussed.

Chapter four addresses the aims and objectives of this research. This chapter sets out the specific research aims and objectives and also lists the questions that this research sought to answer.

Chapter five consists of findings and discussion. This chapter discusses the findings of this research established through interviewing the participants. This chapter evaluates the employee's perspectives on how motivation has affected them in their workplace, and if they think motivation is an important factor in the workplace.

Chapter six presents the conclusion. The conclusion discusses a summary of the research process and insights gained. Recommendations for further research on this topic are also presented. The conclusion also addresses any limitations this research had to overcome.

## **Chapter 2- Literature Review**

### **2.1- Introduction**

Literature reviews are a critical aspect in any research. A literature review allows the reader and the researcher to have a more complete understanding of the research topic and why the topic was chosen. “A review of the literature is important because without it you will not acquire an understanding of your topic, know what has already been done on it, understand how it has been researched or grasp what the key issues are that need addressing.”(Hart, 2018).

This research will evaluate the topic of motivation and employee performance as this topic is very relevant today across different types of organisations. “Motivation is an extremely important and complicated topic.” (Mak and Sockel, 2001).

Motivation affects both employees and employers. Different organisations will use different motivation methods in the workplace. This research will explore if motivation and how it is applied affect employee’s performance in the workforce.

When evaluating the topic of motivation for this research project, there were a number of areas of interest to consider. These areas include motivational approaches and associated benefits, different motivational theories such as Maslow’s theory of hierarchy and effects of the different types of motivation. Investigating these aspects will give a greater understanding of the topic of motivation and provide some insights to the background of this research and the reasoning to why the topic of motivation in the workplace was chosen.

### **2.2- Motivational benefits**

The importance of motivation in organisations will be considered and the benefits of motivation and different factors will also be discussed. Understanding motivation in the workplace is important as it impacts employee performance at work. “Motivation level within the workplace have a direct impact on employee performance.” (Ganta, 2014). Motivation significantly impacts employee performance and organisations with highly motivated employees will exhibit a culture of higher commitment and performance by employees who will be more satisfied in their work. Positive motivation can also improve

how employees feel about their current positions in workplace. “Most employees need motivation to feel good about their jobs and perform optimally.” (Ganta, 2014).

One benefit of motivation is productivity. Employees that work in a highly positive motivated workforce are more likely to work at their highest performance ability. “Workers who are motivated and excited about their jobs carry out their responsibilities to the best of their ability and production numbers increase as a result.” (Ganta, 2014). Employees who are highly rewarded in work will also deliver high productivity in the workplace. “The degree of reward influences the quality and quantity of work, and in turn productivity.” (Hang et al, 1995). Productivity can improve when employees are motivated and passionate about the work they do. The rewards given do not always have to be external (extrinsic) rewards, many employees will receive internal (intrinsic) rewards that motivate them throughout their careers. But maintaining motivation does play a critical role in the level of productivity in the workforce.

Another benefit of a motivated workforce is the retention of staff. Employees that work in a very positive workplace, where they are highly motivated to perform at their best, will have a higher sense of job satisfaction and are more likely to stay at their current workplace. “Job satisfaction has traditionally been defined as a positive emotional state reflecting affective attitude or response towards the job situation.” (Mak and Sockel, 2001). Employers play a central role in the progress of their staff, providing support and creating motivational programmes to help create a healthy place to work. Research shows that employer support does have an impact on motivation and employee performance. “Babin and Boles found that perception of supervisory support could increase satisfaction and motivation, reducing stress and improving job performance.” (Mak and Sockel, 2001).

Retention of staff is important for any organisation. An organisation with a low turnover rate is perceived as a ‘good place to work’. Employee satisfaction will be high and will have a positive impact on the retention of staff. Staff that are happy and enthusiastic about their work and are in a positive motivated working environment are more likely to stay and grow an attachment to their workplace and employer. Staff will develop relationships and become comfortable in the workplace. “According to Myer and Allen (1991), employees, whose experiences meet their expectations and if their organisations satisfy their basic

needs, tend to develop stronger affective attachments to their organisations than do those employees whose experiences are less satisfying.”(Van Dyk and Coetzee, 2012).

While motivation is a mainly positive attitude and outlook to have in the workplace with many benefits such as retention of staff, there are issues an organisation must also be aware of. Workplaces where staff members are happy, motivated and supported are much more likely to keep the same staff for long periods of time. This lack of recruitment could lead to organisations missing out on talented pools of young individuals seeking to join the workforce. Finding talent is very important in any organisation to bring in new ideas and challenge the ‘way we do things here’. “Talent matters, because its high value and scarcity and the difficulty of replacing it-create huge opportunities when companies get things right.” (Keller and Meaney, 2017). Not having the capacity to hire new people for positions has the risk that an organisation could miss out on new talent. Thus, it is very important for employers to challenge and train their existing staff to develop their skills and talents. This allows the organisation to create their own talent, ultimately ensuring they can be competitive in the marketplace.

The last benefit mentioned is the attraction of new staff. When an organisation has a reputation of good pay, good hours, training available and a positive workplace, it can be perceived as a ‘good place to work’ by new potential employees. The reputation a company has will influence the interest of new potential employees to join the company. Companies that have a very strong reputation will have more applicants applying to their company than others. Research shows that companies with a reputation for factors such as better pay, more training, advancements within the organisation and companies who are socially responsible, especially today in the world of climate change and the green agenda, are more popular with applicants looking for new employment. “A study by Zhang and Gowan (2012) affirmed that socially responsible companies are more attractive to potential employees than less socially responsible companies.” (Taylor, Doherty and McGraw, 2015)

These studies done show how companies can be more attractive to potential employees. A highly motivated workforce that receive support from senior staff are factors that add to a company’s reputation. “In a 2013 study into employee engagement, commissioned by Randstad, the second largest HR services and staffing company in the world, it was found

that company reputation and culture are significant factors in attracting new employees.” (Taylor, Doherty and McGraw, 2015)

### **2.3- Motivational approaches**

There are different approaches to motivation that can be used within the organisation such as fear, incentive and personal growth. Employers and managers use these approaches to impact motivation, however it is important they establish the best approach that works for them that will result in motivated staff. “Managers usually try influence employee motivation, with both positive and negative results, in one of three ways: by using fear, incentives, and occasionally, the opportunity for personal growth.” (Bruce and Pepitone, 1998).

All these approaches can be used in an organisation to motivate staff. Some of these approaches such as using fear are not positive from an employee perspective and can leave them feeling threatened or unsure of how they are valued. “Fear is the motivation that, if you don’t do something or don’t have something, bad can or will happen and you will be worse off than you are now.” (Lawrence, 2008). This is a negative approach to motivate staff that can arise when a company needs to make cutbacks, and will involve people, unfortunately losing their job. “When workers are motivated by fear, they’re not as much trying to achieve something as they’re trying to avoid losing their jobs. This approach to motivation might work temporarily, and it can speak an increase in organizational productivity.” (Bruce and Pepitone, 1998).

This approach can be seen today as the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted global business due to lockdowns resulting in less business activity. Due to Covid-19, many businesses risk being shut down and are cutting back on employee numbers and a lot of staff are highly motivated to work to their full potential, as they fear losing their job. Also, since Covid-19 has emerged, a lot of companies have gone from working at the business location to working remotely from home. Potentially, this model can require less employees resulting in job losses.

The opportunity of personal growth is a great pull factor and motivational approach. Where there is the opportunity for personal growth available in a workplace with the potential to be promoted up the chain of command, staff members are motivated to work harder. Staff

members will focus more on the quality and delivery of work and will be motivated to work at their full potential, for the opportunity to be promoted. “Promotion opportunity refers to the degree where employees perceive the opportunities of their statuses are officially being granted to move upwards within their organizational hierarchy.” (Kian and Yusoff, 2015).

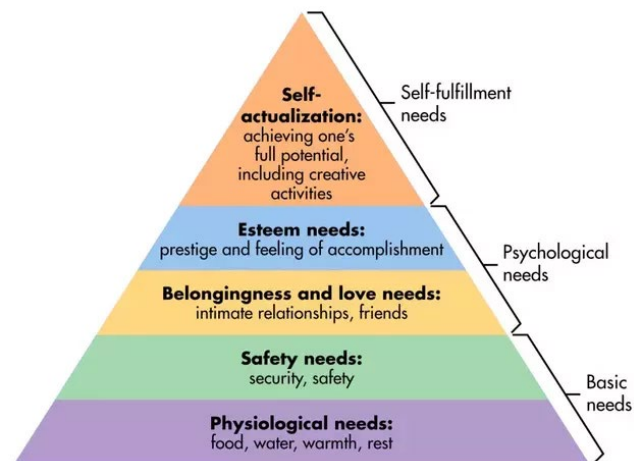
Opportunities for promotion can be a very positive motivational factor that can drive staff to work harder and motivate them to take the initiative in their work. However, this can also be a disadvantage if advancement is not realised, as when staff begin their new careers, they start with the hope they will be promoted within the organisation. “They often start their job with special hopes and expectations for reaching the highest level in the organization and advancement, power, reaching the highest responsibilities and rewards are very important for most of them.” (Azodi et al, 2016)

When staff are highly motivated and trying hard to get a promotion, but then fail to do so, it can become extremely un motivating. Staff that fail to reach their goals after working hard and being motivated to succeed can ultimately be negatively impacted and lose motivation with a knock-on negative impact on them and their work. Staff then become demotivated in the workplace and their productivity and satisfaction can decline. Staff can begin to ‘burnout’ when demotivated in work as they lose their commitment to their work and become increasingly dissatisfied. This can be seen in research conducted by Khamrina, Tourani and Mohammadi in a study they conducted ‘the effect of dimensions of social capital on career burnout’ in female nurses. This study examined burnout in nurses and how these can be countered. “Results showed that female nurses of this hospital had high career burnout and social capital was effective on them in some components. Therefore, it seems that some efforts should be done in order to increase and promote dimensions of social capital in personnel of hospitals that are of the most important serving organizations.” (Azodi et al, 2016).

#### **2.4- Maslow’s Hierarchy Theory:**

Maslow’s Hierarchy theory is a very well-known theory on the concept of motivation developed by Abraham Maslow. “The theory can help organizations design programs to motivate their employees, retain employee loyalty, reduce turnover, recruit quality individuals and ultimately increase productivity and net income.” (Sadri and Bowen,

2011). This theory, created by Maslow, is based on the belief that humans would be motivated by their needs and desires. “He presented these needs as a hierarchy which people progress up, satisfying one need before moving on to the next” (Knowledge and Simms, 2005). The researcher chose to focus on Maslow’s theory because it is very broad base and has many applications in different areas.



Maslow believed that humans have five needs arranged in hierarchy of strength and influence. These five needs included self-actualisation, esteem, love and acceptance, safety and physiological. Maslow’s theory is central to motivation as it states humans are motivated to achieve their needs. “Maslow (1943-1954) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others.” (McLeod, 2018).

Self-actualisation is a key factor in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It involves developing an individual’s full potential. Maslow claims that individuals have a need to grow and develop. “The growth of self-actualization (Maslow, 1962) refers to the need for personal growth and discovery that is present throughout a person’s life. For Maslow, a person is always ‘becoming’ and never remains static in these terms” (McLeod, 2018). Self-actualisation is a positive factor that motivates people to reach their full potential in both work life and personal life. Maslow does claim that only a small percentage of people reach self-actualisation. “Self-actualisation merely involves achieving one’s potential. Thus, someone can be silly, wasteful, vain and impolite, and still self-actualize. Less than two percent of the population achieve self-actualization.”(McLeod, 2018).

Self-actualization in the workplace involves motivating staff to perform well, earning the respect from others including colleagues and managers, while developing their key skills to reach their full potential in their work. “The positive interaction of organizational culture and human resource management would result in self-esteem and self-actualization. This is manifested through the employees’ performance which show cases the strength and reliability of their organization in the face of competitors.” (Jerome, 2013).

The next basic need in Maslow’s hierarchy is self-esteem. Self-esteem is an important factor in motivational theory. Self-esteem needs are important to the individual. This need involves having self-respect and earning respect from others. “All people in our society have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others.” (Maslow, 1981). Self-esteem can be seen in the workplace where the individual builds respectful relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

Maslow has split this need into two categories. The first category involving esteem for ourselves, this includes factors such as independence, dignity and achievements. The second category involves respect gained from other individuals. So, self-esteem needs can come from both within and from relationships with others. “Maslow classified into two categories: (i) esteem for oneself and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others.” (McLeod, 2018).

Self-esteem once achieved can lead to positive attributes for the individual, such as new confidence, capability and feel they have worth and are valued and needed in the world. This can be linked to self-esteem in the workplace as staff can gain confidence and with high self-esteem staff will feel they are needed and valued by their colleagues and employer. “Satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world.” (Maslow, 1981).

Self-esteem can be a beneficial need when achieved but if self-esteem is missing it can also have a negative effect on the individual. When there is a lack of self-esteem, it can lead to negative feelings such as feeling weak, being undermined and being inferior to others. This can have a negative effect on the individual’s mindset. Also, in a workplace



when a staff member has a lack of self-esteem it can make them feel inadequate to others and they will not perform at their full potential. “But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends.” (Maslow, 1981).

So, when working in the workforce and trying to promote motivation and productivity, it is important to make sure staff have self-esteem and feel needed, valued and wanted in work.

The next need in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is love and acceptance or also called belongingness. This need focuses more on the social needs of the individual. This need includes factors like socialisation and companionship. “the need to be accepted by others. In a work context, to be accepted by colleagues and superiors.” (Knowledge and Simms, 2005). This need shows the importance of relationships with others. This need for socialisation and relationships will motivate behaviour in the individual. This need is very important as individuals need socialisation and want good relationships both in work and in personal life. “The desire to be affiliated with others in a meaningful way.” (Carducci, 2009).

Examples of love and belongingness include relationships between friends and family, being a trusted part of a group, a team member. This can be described as experiencing “trust, and acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love.” (Mcleod, 2018). This is demonstrated in this research as motivation in the workplace comes with having good relationships in work, for example, for the individuals taking part in this research that work in a creche, a lot of trust is needed between parents and the practitioners to care and look after their children.

Maslow was concerned that individuals that lack belongingness and have not met this need will suffer in all aspects of life and states the importance of this need for an individual’s socialisation and wellbeing. Research shows what the lack of love and belongingness can do to the individual, “There is considerable research to suggest that a reduced need for belonging is associated with a number of negative psychological and physical consequences such as anxiety, depression and mental health.” (Caducci, 2009)

Security need is the next step in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Safety needs are the second highest need on Maslow's hierarchy following physiological needs. "According to Maslow, these are the needs for safety or higher level of needs becomes important as motivator. According to Maslow, these are the needs for safety or security." (Ozguner and Ozguner, 2014). Security needs are important for the individual to feel safe from danger. In the workplace security could include safe environments to work, financial security and benefits. "In an organization, these needs may be satisfied by job security, benefit programs including insurance and retirement plans and safe and healthy working conditions." (Ozguner and Ozguner, 2014).

Security and feeling secure is important for the individual to be able to have a clear mind and not feel overwhelmed or stressed. In the workplace, when individuals feel unsafe and uneasy it will affect productivity and their ability to perform at their highest standard. "Without feeling safe and secure, our ability to cooperate as a cohort and achieve creativity is restricted. Thus, such an understanding leads to the conclusion that security should be an important focus within an organization, allowing employees to be as efficient as possible." (Smith and Brooks, 2013).

When individuals feel secure in the workplace, job performance would be higher. This can be seen in this research. Comparing different organisations and how each organisation is motivated shows how important security can be in the workplace. For example, financial security is more likely a feature of employees in business organisations than employees working in creches. A lot of individuals in creches can work long stressful days will no real promotion opportunities and they do not have financial security. This can push people to leave this sector and find more secure work elsewhere highlighting the gaps between creche organisations and the traditional business world.

Lastly, we come to the biggest need for individuals; physiological. This need is the most important as it includes all needs that individuals require to survive such as oxygen, food and water. "include homeostasis such as the satisfaction of hunger and thirst, the need for oxygen and to maintain temperature regulation. Also include sleep, sensory pleasure, activity etc." (Knowledge and Simms, 2005). Maslow claimed physiological are the most important needs that individuals must have in order for body and mind to work. "If these needs are not satisfied the human body cannot function optimally. Maslow considered

physiological needs the most important as all other needs become secondary until these needs are met.” (Mcleod, 2018).

According to Maslow, no individual can move up the pyramid of hierarchy of needs unless all needs for physiology is met. “Before any further growth can take place, this very basic need has to be met. This is what Maslow addresses as a physiological need.” (Poston, 2009). Physiological needs can be linked with the workplace through the need to survive. This is represented by the salary and other payments. People depend on earning enough money at work to pay for the essential items such as food, heating and pay bills for housing. It would be hard to motivate someone to stay at work who is not making enough money to provide the basic requirements for their families. “If someone doesn’t get paid enough to put food on the table for his or her family, he or she isn’t going to care too much about a ‘good job’ sticker.” (Ganta, 2014).

Where the amount earned is insufficient for employees to live a basic life it will be practically impossible to create a motivated workplace. If employees are not being paid well, they will try work harder for better pay, but if those needs are not met, they will eventually be unmotivated in work and won’t try as hard in work, or just leave the workforce and join a different organisation.

Overall, Maslow’s hierarchy theory of needs is still relevant today when evaluating the topic of workplace motivation and understanding how these needs are met can help employers motivate staff. Appreciation of Maslow’s theory gives a deeper understanding of motivation as a topic.

### **2.5: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation:**

The two main types of motivation are known as intrinsic and extrinsic. Evaluating and understanding the differences between the two types of motivation will assist in this research, especially when conducting interviews on different organisations and which type of motivation their employers and place of work provide their staff.

Intrinsic motivation is when individuals can motivate themselves internally, for example an employee working hard at their job just so they feel satisfied and accomplished with a job well done, not looking for any further reward in return for their hard work. When an

individual truly cares about their work and is passionate about their job, they are more willing to work without being offered rewards in return. “Intrinsic motivation is most commonly defined as ‘doing something for its own sake’, as when a child plays baseball for no reason other than because that is what he wants to do.” (Reiss, 2012).

Intrinsic motivation is a rewarding motivation. Individuals who can motivate themselves without expecting a reward will have a higher sense of job satisfaction than those who expect rewards and benefits for their efforts. Intrinsic motivation helps individuals to feel more confident and have a sense of self-worth. “Intrinsic motivations aim to satisfy psychological needs directly in terms of relationships, autonomy, competence, self-acceptance, affiliation, and a sense of community or health.” (Taberero and Hernandez, 2011).

Intrinsic motivation works best when the individual has a great interest in their work. When individuals have a love and passion for their work it is much easier for them to motivate themselves to work at their best, for example teachers and people that work with children. These individuals may not get paid very well and not gain many rewards in their work, but they have a genuine passion to work and teach with children. They simply motivate themselves to work hard and work for the children without being rewarded materially. “People are intrinsically motivated for some activities and not others, and not everyone is intrinsically motivated for any particular task. Because intrinsic motivation exists in the nexus between a person and a task, some authors have defined intrinsic motivation in terms of the task being interesting while others have defined it in terms of the satisfactions a person gains from intrinsically motivated task engagement.” (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Individuals can be intrinsically motivated in everyday life outside of work. Many individuals take part in different activities and receive no reward in return but the satisfaction of taking part and spending the time completing the task. “Many activities are intrinsically motivated. People spend large amounts of time solving puzzles, painting pictures, and engaging in other play activities for which there is no external reward.” (Deci, 2012). Another form of intrinsic motivation is volunteering where people who give freely of their time for no material benefit can gain significant satisfaction and personal reward from their efforts.

Extrinsic motivation is very different from intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation arises from being motivated by external factors instead of feeling the internal satisfaction derived from intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation can be motivated by factors such as pay, rewards, competing in sports etc. “Extrinsic motivation refers to performance of behaviour that is fundamentally contingent upon the attainment of an outcome that is separable from the action itself.” (Legault, 2016). Extrinsic motivation can be very effective in the workplace and push employees to perform at the best of their ability in exchange for a reward for all their hard work.

This can be very beneficial and deliver high productivity. Employees will push themselves and motivate themselves to work harder and work to the best of their ability if they gain a reward for their hard work. When employers use extrinsic motivation excessively, staff will not motivate themselves to work hard, they will rely on rewards, and pay to work harder thus lowering intrinsic motivation in the workplace. “Initial studies found that if an individual engaged freely in an activity (out of interest) and was subsequently offered an external reward such as money or points for engaging in that activity, then intrinsic motivation toward the activity declined.” (Legault, 2016).

This research will examine different types of motivations that can be used in different organisations. For example, individuals working in a business organisation, will have more external factors to motivate them during work such as pay raise, promotion and new job opportunities within the organisation. While individuals working in a creche, are more likely to be motivated through the intrinsic approach because they love their job and will work to the best of their ability for the children. Understanding these types of motivation can be very useful and insightful when conducting this research on employee performance and assist in evaluating how both types can be used to motivate employees.

## **2.6: Conclusion:**

To conclude, this chapter discussed the benefits and importance of motivation in the workplace, Maslow’s hierarchy theory of needs and intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation. This review gave a good insight into the topic of motivation as it applies to this research.

It is widely accepted that motivation does effect employee performance, but this research examines how and what types of motivation works for the two types of organisation considered in this research

While there are other factors that could be considered to have an impact on motivating or demotivating employees in the workplace, they are beyond the scope of this research. This research will evaluate the importance of motivation as a concept to employees in creche and business organisations.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1- Introduction**

The literature review presented and discussed many areas such as the benefits of motivation and discussed Maslow's hierarchy theory of needs and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This methodology chapter will discuss the research design and which method was chosen for this research and why. The research strategy, participants chosen, and limitations will be discussed. This chapter is central to the research as it provides information on how data was collected and why a certain type of method was chosen.

### **3.2- Research Paradigm**

Establishing the paradigm is very important for the research conducted. Paradigm has been described as a "set of beliefs about the way in which particular problems exist and a set of agreements on how such problems can be investigated." (Mukherji and Albon, 2015). A paradigm can be described in different ways. Paradigm can be a way of thinking that can impact the research topic and the way we evaluate it. "Hughes describes a paradigm as a way of seeing the world that 'frames a research topic' and which influences the way that we think about the topic" (Mukherji and Albon, 2015).

Paradigms are important to research as they involve different beliefs that influence how the research should be conducted. A paradigm can influence decisions in the research process such as which methods and type of methodology should be used in the research. A research paradigm consists of three different elements, nature of knowledge, a methodology and criteria of validity. Methodology consist of choosing what to investigate and decide how research will be conducted. A paradigm eases the hard choice of what to study. It assists the researcher to make decisions on their research and how they want to conduct their own research.

### **3.3- Research Methods.**

There are three main types of research methods applied when conducting research. These are the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.

The qualitative approach consists of evaluating non-numerical information provided by participants. One of the most common methods of research used in the qualitative approach is evaluating focussed interview and surveys. The quantitative approach focuses on mostly on relationships between variables and will be more numerically based. “In a nutshell, qualitative research seeks to discover new knowledge by retaining complexities as they exist in natural settings, whereas quantitative research seeks to discover new knowledge by simplifying complexities in settings that tend to be more contrived.” (O’Dwyer and Bernauer, 2013).

The quantitative approach is also a very common in research and can be a very efficient way of collecting data. “An approach to research highly reliant on quantified data (numerical data as well as concepts we code with numbers). Often tied to a set of assumptions related to realism, empiricism and positivism.” (O’leary, 2017). A quantitative approach can be highly effective as it relies on numbers and statistics, quantitative focuses on theory testing and understands the importance of the hypothesis. “The term ‘quantitative research’ means more than just research which uses quantitative or numerical data. It refers to a whole way of thinking, or an approach, which involves a collection or cluster of methods, as well as data in numerical form.” (Punch, 2013).

A qualitative approach is very different to a quantitative approach. “An approach to research highly reliant on qualitative data (words, images, experiences and observations that are not quantified). Often tied to a set of assumptions related to relativism, social constructionism and subjectivism.” (O’leary, 2017). This is a non-numerical approach and uses methods such as interviews and surveys. This approach allows participants to voice their opinion and express themselves during the interviews. Instead of being a statistic for agreeing or disagreeing to a research topic, participants that take part in a qualitative approach can share their own thoughts and opinions on the research they are taking part in. This gives participants a voice in the research process. “Qualitative researchers have been trained to privilege this voice, to ‘free’ the authentic voice from whatever restrains it from coming into being, from relating the self.” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2008).

Lastly there is the mixed method approach. This approach is becoming more popular among researchers when gathering data. The mixed method incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods. “Incorporating quantitative and qualitative paradigms,



approaches, concepts, methods and/or techniques in a single study” (O’leary, 2017). Mixed method combines features of both the qualitative and quantitative methods and can therefore be more expansive. There can be less limitations with the mixed method approach. “This means that mixed methods research can allow for methodological diversity, complementarity of approaches and both inductive and deductive reasoning. Researchers can work to creatively develop question-driven approaches, no longer limited by paradigm.” (O’leary, 2017).

Although there are many advantages to adopting the mixed method approach as it has features from the qualitative and quantitative methods, every method can come with challenges. “There are definitely traditionalists out there who argue that the assumptions underlying quantitative and qualitative traditions do not allow for mixed approach. The paradigms are at cross-purposes and cannot work in concert.” (O’leary, 2017). Also, using two such different methods can be confusing and make the research process more difficult. “You are likely to have limits on what you can achieve, so you will need to be mindful of over ambitious design and the possibility that you are trying to do two projects instead of one.” (O’leary, 2017).

### **3.4- Research Design**

This research used the qualitative approach. This research used interview questions to gather data on the topic of motivation. “Interviews can occur at any phase of a qualitative project and can serve a variety of purposes. They can be done with individuals or with groups.” (File, Mueller, Wisneski and Stremmel, 2017). Interviews were an effective method to use for collecting data for this particular research. Interviews allowed the participants to share their opinions and thoughts on the topic of the research. Asking questions to establish people’s opinion on the research topic gave real insight into what people actually think about the study it also gave the participants the opportunity to voice their opinions on the matter.

Semi-structured interviews are a type of interview used in research to gain different perspectives from the participants. “Semi-structured interviews are based on written questions or topics for discussion. They allow for a good deal of exploration but minimise the risk of straying away from the central purpose of the investigation.” (Willan, 2017). Semi-structured interviews can be an easier method than structured interviews where there

is less scope to expand on any given issue. Having semi-structured interviews involves a lot more freedom during the interview and has a better flow of conversation. “Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews can make better use of knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee; as well, the interviewer has a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant the process itself, rather than hiding behind a pre-set interview guide.” (Leavy, 2014).

This research used semi-structured interviews as its main method of investigation as the topic of motivation is a very personal and subjective subject. Using interviews allowed the participants to share their thoughts and opinions on motivation and to be open about their experiences in the workplace. All interviews conducted were done on an anonymous basis, allowing participants to be more open when answering questions about themselves and when expressing opinions on motivation in their workplace.

### **3.5- Participants Sample:**

The sampling method used in this research is purposive sampling. This type of sampling involves the researcher choosing participants for their research, it is less random. “Purposive sampling is where a researcher deliberately chooses to sample particular settings or children to study” (Roberts-Holmes, 2011). This research participants were chosen based on where they worked. This research interviewed creche staff workers and staff who worked in a business setting. This study focused on the how staff in each setting was motivated given the difference between creche settings and business settings.

This research chose participants from two very different types of organisation to highlight the difference on how they motivate their staff and how employees find different ways to motivate themselves. This research chose a creche setting as the researcher has a background working in a creche and has some experience working in a more traditional business setting and knew firsthand the differences between these settings. This research interviewed 5 participants who gave their honest opinions on how they are motivated and if they are motivated easily in their specific work setting.

All participants were given consent forms before conducting the interviews and each knew they could stop the interview at any time. All participants were willing to do the interview

and enjoyed sharing their experience and thoughts on the topic. Using interviews allowed the participants to be involved in the research and to use their voice and share their opinions.

### **3.6- Data Analysis:**

The data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Using qualitative approaches is different from quantitative as described above, in that the data collected will be evaluated differently as qualitative approach is a non-numerical approach. “Statistics rely on the reduction of meaning to numbers. And when meanings are intricate and complex (which is often the case), reduction can be incredibly difficult. There can be a loss of ‘richness’ associated with the process.” (O’leary, 2017).

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews can be analyzed and evaluated by comparing the information gathered from the two different organisation settings. The data collected comes directly from the participants and contains their own words and thoughts. So, the data is unique and different. It is not quantitative data, but individuals own opinions and thoughts being used to make points and argument for this research. The data collected from the interviews were transcribed so that the research reflects the participants word for word. The purpose of using interviews is to find new information and establish different point of views from the participants. Also, using interviews can produce new themes and new arguments for this research to evaluate.

### **3.7- Ethical Consideration**

When conducting research involving human participants, ethical consideration is important. As this study used all adult participation, it was essential that all participants understood what they were agreeing to take part in and how confidentiality was being used in this research. “Issues of anonymity and confidentiality are key considerations in ethical research practice and, in common with informed consent, are concepts that underpin professional research guidelines for social scientists.” (Wiles, 2012).

Confidentiality is very important when conducting research. Participants need to have a sense of security when taking part in any research and be assured that personal information they share will not be disclosed to others without their permission. Also, participants are not identified in the research process unless they want to be identified. “In the research

context, confidentiality is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed and that the identity of research participants will be protected through various processes designed to anonymise them, unless they specifically chose to be identified.” (Wiles, 2012). Participants should be aware what is asked of them and how the information they shared will be kept safe during the research process. Participants should be given an information sheet along with a consent form to be signed before taking part in the study. Participants sign consent forms giving the researcher consent to use any information they have shared during the interviews.

All participants who take part in this research, understand that their identity will be kept unknown to the readers. Keeping the participants anonymous is important for ethical considerations. “Anonymity of research participants is a central feature of ethical research practice which is written into the various guidelines to which social researchers work. Additionally, the Data Protection Act (1998) provides the legal framework for anonymization of data.” (Wiles, 2012). Keeping participants identity anonymous allows them to be more open when conducting the interviews. Participants are willing to share more details about where they work and how they feel about the topic when they know that they can’t be identified. Some participants might have negative things to say about their workplace or colleagues and may be nervous of potential repercussions that would follow their comments if their identity was known to others. Giving participants anonymity, gives them courage to be open and share their honest thoughts and opinions, even if they are negative.

Another major ethical consideration is participants information being stored. Information on participants should be stored securely and not be given out to anyone. Participants should feel confident in taking part in the study and have a sense of security that their information will not be shared.

### **3.8- Limitations:**

There were some limitations to this study. One limitation was impact of Covid-19 restrictions. The presence of Covid-19 and the current lockdown situation in Ireland, meant that no interviews could be conducted face to face. Covid-19 meant relying on data collecting via technology, using apps such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams to conduct

interviews. The lack of face to face meant it was more difficult to conduct the interviews. Not being in the room with the participants made it more difficult to have a natural flow of conversation and you are unable to fully engage and read their body language during the interviews.

Due to Covid-19 all interactions have been online, even this year of college has been all conducted online. This was a difficult situation for students who have not been to the college. Also, trying to conduct research with lecturers online and not seeing lecturers and supervisors in person is not ideal. Time management was also a limitation. With the time of conducting interviews, a lot of people found a time to be present for zoom calls very difficult especially participants who worked in a business setting as they had meetings held online via zoom calls during the day.

Motivation in the workplace is a very relevant topic and has a lot of potential for research. One of the limitations is the lack of previous research done on motivation comparing business settings. This research topic was extremely interesting to study, and to evaluate the different aspects of motivation and how it applies to individuals and different organisations, but it was limited in the amount of research that has been done on this topic.

### **3.9- Conclusion:**

This chapter reflects on how this research was designed and carried out, which research method was chosen and the reason why it was chosen. A semi-structured interview approach was adopted where employees were interviewed to gain data for the comparative analysis between two different organisations. This research succeeded using interviews as a way of collecting relevant data with the limitations this research faced. Having the limitations of Covid-19 made this research difficult to conduct, compared to research done in the past. It gave the researcher a new perspective on how to work around these limitations with technology becoming a great enabler that allowed the interviews to take place over Zoom.

The next chapter will focus on the findings from the interviews conducted and the themes and opinions that emerged. Overall, this research focused on a qualitative approach as it was thought that it was best suited for this research, that sought to establish the thoughts and opinions from participants on the topic of motivation and employee performance.

## **Chapter 4- Research Aims and Research Question**

### **4.1- Research Aims**

The literature review above evaluated the topic of motivation and assisted in the development of the research question, ‘How does motivation affect employee performance?’

The aim of this study was to evaluate how motivation can affect employee performance. While it is known that motivation does affect employee performance, this study evaluated two very different types of organisation to evaluate how they use motivation for their employees and compared the differences. The main objective was to evaluate different motivational methods, and to examine what type of motivation organisations may use or prefer.

The following objectives were examined for this research:

- Define and explore the topic of motivation
- Examining motivational approaches
- Exploring motivation in different organisations
- Explore the benefits of motivation and how it is implemented in the workplace
- Evaluate managers and organisation role in motivation in the workplace.

### **4.2- Research Questions:**

The research question chosen was: *How does motivation affect employee performance?*

Some questions that were considered throughout this study are as follows.

1. Do managers make a difference in the promoting of motivation in the workplace?
2. How do different organisations motivate staff, is there any similarities or differences?
3. Does motivation have an impact on staff turnover?
4. Are there any theories surrounding motivation?
5. What is the best method to gather data for this topic?

The actual questions used in the interview are included in Appendix C. This research was looking for richness in the responses from the interviewees. An example of one of the interview questions are as follows. *How does your workplace or employer motivate you?* This question opened the conversation during the interviews on employer's role in motivation in the workplace.

## **Chapter 5 – Findings and Discussion**

### **5.1- Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the findings from the interviews conducted. The aim of this research was to find out how motivation affects employee performance. This chapter will discuss the findings and themes that arose from the interviews and correspond with the themes discussed in the literature review chapter.

This research used semi-structured interviews as discussed in the previous chapter. “Semi-structured use of a flexible structure. Interviews can start with a defined questioning plan but will shift in order to follow the natural flow of conversations.” (O’leary, 2017). This research used two different organisation settings to see how different organisations motivate their staff and how the staff feel about motivation in their workplace. The benefit of using semi-structured interviews, is discovering new data unexpectedly. “The advantage is being able to come away with all the data you intended but also interesting and unexpected data that emerges.” (O’leary, 2017).

By analysing the data gathered, different themes emerged. These themes include the manager’s role, types of motivation, turnover rates in the workplace and motivation in different organisations.

### **5.2- Manager’s role**

This is a theme that appeared in the interviews. Participants shared if their managers motivate them and what they would do if they were in a manager position. This research considered two different organisations, that have very different positions, to evaluate motivation and test how similar and different it is approached in the organisations.

Managers play a vital role with motivation in the workplace. Managers are responsible for their staff and ensuring that staff are challenged and motivated in their work. “Some employees crave power, others want money. Some employees desire constant praise, others want to be left alone. It’s crucial for managers to figure out what motivates each employee.” (Lauby, 2005). Managers can motivate staff differently, through training, inclusion, pay, and support.



Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states “*our employer motivates us by providing training in many areas so we feel competent in most task that are set before us, they also provide support if and when we need it*” (Participant 3)

Participant 2 (Business organisation employee) states “*The performance management process culminates in a year-end review where each staff member receives a performance rating from ‘not satisfactory’ through to ‘exceptional’. The performance rating a staff member determines the level of salary increase and bonus they receive for that year. This along with improving one’s prospects of being promoted, is the most explicit way my employer motivates staff to perform and deliver.*” (Participant, 2)

The two statements above come from two different participants that took part in this research. The two participants come from two different work organisations, thus their managers motivate them differently, as seen above. Participant 3 works in the childcare sector, and as they state above, they are motivated by training opportunities. Participant 2 comes from a business organisation, thus they are motivated by rewards such as salary increase and bonus. This is an indication on how managers can motivate staff using different techniques to do so.

Some managers do not motivate staff, and it does have an impact on their employee performance. According to Jeffries (1997), A study was conducted that has proven employees would rather have their work efforts recognized with praise than a raise in salary. Staff motivation and ultimately their performance will vary depending on how managers run their business. Some managers do not know how to successfully motivate staff and they can come across as overbearing rather than supportive.

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states “*No motivation was given, management did nothing to motivate staff and would question staff on every task they carried out.*” (Participant 1)

This above statement came from a participant working in a creche. As seen in the above statement the manager of Participant 1 offers no support and can act in an overbearing manner to Participant 1, constantly questioning their actions and reasoning for their work.

This demonstrates how the behaviour of managers can negatively influence staff motivation.

The importance of the managers role in the promotion of motivation in the workplace is emphasised by all participants, who shared their own opinions and experiences based on their workplace giving insight into how motivation works in different organisations and how managers can influence motivation in the workplace, both positively and negatively.

Participant 4 (Business organisation employee) states “*Verbalising how important they and their roles is to the organisation. Letting them know when they have done a good job or have achieved. Understanding their capabilities and allowing them take ownership of their work.*” (Participant 4)

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states “*I would motivate my staff by giving them their own roles and trust my staff to do the task to the best of their ability. I would always be open and approachable, so staff feel comfortable discussing any matter with me. I would also organise staff activity days to help staff work together and communicate with each other.*” (Participant 1)

Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states “*If I was a manager, I would continuously praise my staff and motivate them in continuing their great work by also helping them set goals for further education in the sector.*” (Participant 3)

The above statements came from the participants who shared, how they would motivate staff if they were in a managerial role. How they would motivate staff differently as seen by Participant 1 who also shared how their manager does not motivate their staff at all. These responses emphasise again how important the managers role is to motivation to build trust and a sense of employee worth and belonging within the workplace.

### **5.3- Types of Motivation**

As spoken about in the literature review chapter, there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is internally focussed, being motivated to work for something that can give an individual a real sense of satisfaction. While extrinsic is being motivated with external things such as rewards, bonus and promotions.

Participant 2 (Business organisation employee) states “*The carrot and stick approach to extrinsic motivation in organisations is effective in disincentivising poor performance and rewarding high performance.*” (Participant 2)

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states “*If motivation and staff morale is low, I think extrinsic would work better as staff would not be motivated to the tasks without a reward at the end of it.*” (Participant 1)

As seen above statement extrinsic motivation applies to rewarding high performance with external factors. This research wanted the participants to share their own opinion and experiences to show what people think compared to what theory says. The theory per the literature review demonstrated the positive aspects of extrinsic motivation and showed how it can benefit motivation in the workplace, on the other hand most of the participants in this research though intrinsic motivation is better than extrinsic.

Participant 5 (Creche setting employee) states “*I personally think intrinsic motivation is more effective in the work place because if it is a job you enjoy and want to be in, you will be motivated by doing better and getting praise more than the reward of higher pay*” (Participant 5)

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states “*Intrinsic motivation would work more effective if staff morale and motivation is already high.*” (Participant 1)

Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states “*If a person is only motivated by salaries and bonuses and not by a desire to do better themselves and gain new skills then they will be less effective than someone is motivated by both in my opinion.*” (Participant 3)

Most of the participants who took part in the interviews expressed their opinions and thoughts about the two different types of motivation and most of the participants came to the realisation that more beneficial for employees to have intrinsic motivation. Having employees being motivated through intrinsic motivation leads them to do good work they see as meaningful, which results in higher performance rather than solely using extrinsic

rewards and salary increase as their prime motivator. A lot of participants shared how their current workplace motivates them.

Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states “*My workplace does not use money raises in motivation but use praise and acknowledgement*” (Participant 3)

Participant 4 (Business organisation employee) states “*I believe enjoying and liking what you do is important.*” (Participant 4)

The above statements show how some participants are motivated without money. Participant 3 does not receive salary increase or bonuses as a result of good work but values praise and acknowledgement from their managers and Participant 4 states how important liking your job is for motivation.

If employees are only motivated by external factors such as money and rewards, it will be harder to motivate staff long-term. Employees should be able to motivate themselves to work hard because they enjoy the work they do and be motivated by the workplace environment and by the praise and recognition given, as Participant 3 states. Motivating staff with praise is a good method to use instead of money or rewards and by using praise and acknowledgement staff will feel valued and work relationships will also strengthen.

These are known as soft rewards, whereas money and promotion are hard rewards. “Hard rewards are defined as individual’s expectations of obtaining explicit outcomes (e.g., promotion, financial rewards, reciprocity, and other explicit benefits in the workplace) in return for performing knowledge sharing behaviours, whereas soft rewards are defined as individuals’ expectations of achieving implicit outcomes (e.g., personal reputation and relationships with significant others) in return for performing knowledge sharing behaviours.” (wang and hou, 2015).

#### **5.4- Staff turnover**

One theme that came up in the interviews, was the link between lack of motivation and staff turnover rates. “Turnover rate can briefly describe as how fast employers recruit and lose employees. In addition, it is used to measure the effectiveness of recruitment and is sometimes consider as one of the indicators of organizational performance.” (Aziz et al,

2017). When staff are demotivated in the workplace, it is a possible push factor, pushing staff out of the organisation.

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states *“Motivation affects staff if staff can be respected and motivated somewhere else they will leave their workplace resulting in high staff turnover for example within 5 months the workplace lost 7 staff members”* (Participant 1)

Participant 5 (Creche setting employee) states *“Yes motivation effects staff turnover because if there is no motivation in any sort being given the staff will eventually get bored and feel there is no point in working so hard when there is nothing being shown for it.”* (Participant 5)

Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states *“If staff are not properly motivated, they probably won't work to a sufficient standard and this can lead to both staff and employers being unhappy in the work place which may result in faster staff turnover.”* (Participant 3)

As seen in the above statements, the participants shared that motivation can affect staff turnover rates. If staff are not motivated or challenged, they can look elsewhere for other opportunities to secure jobs that will challenge and motivate them. “Very simply, motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organisational objectives, conditioned by the effort satisfying some individual need, and differs between and within individuals at different times.” (Amos, et al, 2009).

Staff turnover can be high for many different reasons. This research indicates that motivation can be one of the primary reasons. Staff turnover rates can increase from both high motivation and low motivation situations. Highly motivated staff may look elsewhere for opportunities to be promoted if their ambitions are not realised in an organisation and staff with low motivation may not be interested in their work and when staff are unmotivated they are more likely to leave their job to find a more satisfying role. This research wanted to test this, so asked the participants if they were unmotivated in work would they consider leaving. There responses were as follows.

Participant 5 (Creche setting employee) states “*Yes I would find it incredibly hard to stay in a workplace with no motivation as I think the job would then become boring as there is no goals or challenges being made*” (Participant 5)

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states “*Yes I have left my workplace due to not been respected by management and been unmotivated*” (Participant 1)

Participant 4 (Business organisation employee) states “*Personally, I would not stay if I was not motivated. I believe this would have a negative impact on my personal life and health.*” (Participant 4)

Participant 3 states “*Yes, it would be incredibly hard to remain in an unmotivated setting.*” (Participant 3)

The participants shared how they would find it difficult to stay working in an unmotivated setting, proving that motivation can be a factor in staff turnover rates. This research has confirmed that the participants, regardless of the business type, feel that motivation is important in the workplace particularly when considering remaining working for that particular employer. All participants interviewed are employees of two different types of organisation and share common opinions on this matter.-.

### **5.5- Motivation in different organisations**

An unexpected theme that came from this research, was the major difference in motivation in the organisations the participants work in. The two different organisations that were examined were childcare centres such as creches and traditional business organisations. While interviewing the participants a few gaps arose in the difference of motivation in the workplace.

Creche workers are motivated by intrinsic motivation and through praise and acknowledgements, but not extrinsically with money. Creche workers, unlike employees in a traditional business, do not receive bonuses or salary raises as often as the business employees who participate in annual performance schemes. Creche employees are motivated differently to do the work with different soft rewards such as training

opportunities and being valued by parents. When asked if their current positions offer rewards to motivate staff the participants have this to say:

Participant 5 (Creche setting employee) states “*No in my workplace no rewards are given to motivate staff*” (Participant 5)

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states “*No but in my previous workplace we had 2 employee of the months and at the end of the month we had a staff day or night planned to celebrate the employees of the month.*” (Participant 1).

Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states “*Yes, we get evenings out paid for at different points of the year.*” (Participant 3)

As seen above staff members in a creche setting did not often receive money rewards. However, some creches found ways to motivate staff without using bonuses or salary increases. By planning staff nights and creating employee of the month different and interesting ways to promote employee motivation without rewarding with money were employed. But sometimes organisations use no rewards to motivate staff as said above by Participant 5.

The rewards that the participants mentioned while working in the business organisation was different than the creche workers where they were given extrinsic rewards such as salary increases. Business organisations also offer promotion opportunities to employees, create a good positive working environment and a promote a balance workload.

Participant 4 (Business organisation employee) states “*We have a bonus incentive scheme. I don't believe this the main driver of motivation, I believe it's the non-monitory factors such as interesting work, good working conditions, work/life balance and a caring organisation that motivates most employees.*” (Participant 4)

Participant 2 (Business organisation employee) states “*The tangible rewards are in the form of the salary increase and bonus that are determined by a staff member's performance throughout the year. High performers are more likely to be promoted in the organisation*”

*to higher paid roles with additional responsibility. This is also a motivating factor.”*  
(Participant 2)

As seen above there is differences in approach to reward between these two organisations. Creche workers are more motivated with the intrinsic approach rather than motivated financially. While business organisation employees have more financial opportunities, promotions, better pay scale and new training skills. So, the employees who work in the creche are mostly motivated by the love of their job. Working in a creche can be great if you enjoy working with children, and love being creative. Unfortunately, when working in a creche, there is little to no pay rise and promotion is limited as the chain of command is very small. Employees could spend 20-30 years working in a creche as a teacher and have no promotion and receive very little pay rise. This research indicates that creche workers are motivated by a positive creative environment. As stated by Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) *“Motivation helps all of us who work in my setting be creative, be happy with the job we are doing and also helps us set and accomplish goals.”* (Participant 3).

Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states *“Motivation helps all of us who work in my setting be creative, be happy with the job we are doing and also helps us set and accomplish goals as part of a team and individually.”* (Participant 3)

This research has looked a great deal into motivation and managers roles, motivation types etc. But lastly this research wanted to know if the employees could change anything about their workplace regarding motivation, what would it be. This gives a good insight into what organisations could improve regarding motivation.

Participant 1 (Creche setting employee) states *“I think the whole management structure needs to change for staff to be motivated and respected within the workplace. Example manager watches staff on cameras, rings staff in classrooms to tell them what they are doing wrong.”* (Participant 1)

Participant 4 (Business organisation employee) states *“I believe we need to work harder at promoting the overall package and employee proposition that we offer, including all the*



*above mentioned, we may also need to survey current staff to understanding what motivates them and develop programmes to support the findings.” (Participant 4)*

Participant 5 (Creche setting employee) states *“I would make more time for staff appraisals so the staff feel they are appreciated for the work there doing and to give them ideas on how to better the work they are already doing.” (Participant 5)*

Participant 3 (Creche setting employee) states *“The only thing I would change is the frequency with which we get to discuss issues with our manager. The setting I work in can be extremely busy and sometimes there is not enough time to talk to the manager, get advice on issues that have come up and be properly motivated in how to deal with the issues.” (Participant 3)*

Participant 2 (Business organisation employee) states *“Staff are more likely to feel motivated where they feel a sense of ownership, responsibility, and autonomy in terms of the work they deliver and how they deliver it. This can be achieved by creating an organisational culture based on trust and by empowering line managers with the skills and confidence to step back and allow decision making to happen at the lowest appropriate level in the organisation.” (Participant 2)*

Every participant had ideas and opinions on how motivation can be improved in their workplace and what they would do differently to improve motivation. Participant 1 also gave examples on the lack of motivation provided by their manager. Giving employees a voice to share how they view motivation could be improved in the workplace is a great way to evaluate the gaps in the organisation regarding motivation.

## **5.6- Discussion**

This section is to discuss the findings in more detail and the themes that came from the interviews. With all the data gathered above, some strong opinions were forthcoming. Using two different organisations allowed how motivation works in each organisation to be evaluated, highlighting the strong points and the weakness of the motivation methods used in each organisation.

Even though most of the participants believed that intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic, the business organisation employee has more opportunity to be given a salary rise and a bonus, unlike creche employees who are less likely to receive financial rewards. This comes across as unfair, if both employees are working hard and doing their jobs to the best of their ability then creche workers should have the option to be rewarded financially like business employees. As mentioned above, creche employees mostly stay in their jobs long-term because they love their job and love working with children. The job itself is rewarding enough to stay long-term.

This is not always the case. As said above by Participant 1, their creche lost 7 staff members in 5 months. That is a lot of staff members to leave a creche organisation in a small-time frame. This also highlights that there is a gap in the employee motivation provided by the creche organisation resulting in a failure to retain of staff. But as said above, there are others way outside of money that creches have motivated staff. Staff nights and employee of the month are two methods that creche organisations have used successfully. This can improve motivation and employees feeling valued but will also promote and enhance relationships between co-workers and manager-staff relationships. By being creative and using new methods of motivation, staff turnover can be reduced.

Overall, motivation has shown to be important in the workplace by all participants, as they expressed their opinions on motivation and how they would motivate people in the workplace. The aim of this research was to evaluate if motivation can affect employee performance and through the literature review and interviews, it can be seen that motivation does affect employee performance. Motivation can have both a positive or negative affect on the employees, depending on variables such as how the manager motivates staff and what kind of rewards different organisations use to motivate staff. All of these will ultimately affect staff performance.

## **5.7- Conclusion**

This chapter discussed and analysed the data gathered by the interviews in this research. The findings evaluated the evidence obtained around motivation and how it effects employee performance. All participants in this research agreed that motivation is important for employee performance and also expressed how being unmotivated could result in staaff retention issues as most participants shared that they would leave their workplace if they

felt unmotivated. The findings showed how different organisations motivate staff in different ways with different methods. The findings also showed the negative side of managers who don't effectively motivate staff and the consequences of this, such as a low staff morale, poor performance and a high turnover rate, as stated by Participant 1 losing 7 staff members in 5 months.

The interviews were the best approach to gather data for this research. It allowed participants to share their own personal experiences and their own ideas and thoughts on motivation. By providing detailed answers to the questions, interviewees gave insight on their perspective and attitude to motivation and how it impacts their own organisation. The findings did provide an unexpected theme, which surprised the researcher. The difference approach to motivation adopted by different organisations in the same sector. The fact that a lot of creches do not use external rewards such as pay rise or bonuses, was not surprising as it showed the main reason creche workers stay in their jobs so long is due to the love of their job and not being motivated by money. However, by employing novel approaches, such as employee of the month, creches can create a more motivating workplace for staff. This is different from business organisations. Business organisations are not solely motivated by extrinsic factors, but they do receive annual salary reviews that act as one of the key motivational factors.

Overall, the evidence obtained through the interviews and literature review was very compelling and gave the researcher a new perspective on motivation. This evidence does show motivation can affect staff performance. The researcher the topic of motivation in the workplace very interesting to investigate and learn about.

## **Chapter 6- Conclusion:**

### **6.1- Introduction**

The research aim was to evaluate how employees are motivated and if motivation has any impact on employee performance. All participants views on motivation were gathered during the interviews conducted and then analysed within the findings and discussion chapter. The researcher used a comparative study by using two different types of organisations, to compare motivation in different organisations.

### **6.2- Summary**

This research identified many different elements to evaluate on motivation in the literature review chapter. These elements include motivation benefits, approaches and motivational theories. A review of the elements listed above gives helpful insight into the topic of motivation for the purpose of this research.

This research used interviews to gather data from the participants. The interviews were conducted with employees from two types of organisations; creches and traditional business. The data gathered was taken word for word from the participants and their anonymity was ensured. This researcher chose interviews as it was important the perspectives came directly from the participants. This research also wanted an open conversation with the participants where they could share their honest thoughts and opinions on the topic.

The findings chapter found interesting themes that emerged from the interviews. These themes showed the importance of managers, motivation and the consequences from lack of motivation. Overall, this research learned that motivation and the different ways organisations motivate employees does effect employee performance. This research also highlighted the gap in the creche setting when it comes to extrinsic motivation when compared with the financial support that employees would get from a business organisation.

### **6.3- Limitation**

There were some limitations to this study that arose. One of the biggest limitations for a lot of research projects this year, is conducting research through the COVID-19 pandemic. Covid-19 has prevented students going to college and all classes were online. Covid-19 also impacted this research. Due to Covid-19, interviews had to be conducted online via zoom or Microsoft teams. This could result in a limitation as it made interviews less personal, since we could not conduct them in person.

The timing of interviews was also a difficulty found in this research. Participants from a business organisation, found the time to conduct interviews very difficult as they had already a large amount of pre-planned meetings online for their jobs during the day. While participants who worked in a creche were not able to get to a computer to conduct the calls during the work day as they were busy caring for the children.

Due to Covid-19, the use of different organisations was limited. A lot of creche settings business organisations have created new policies around covid-19, especially in creches, when working with young children, thus the amount of creche setting used in the research were limited. Using more organisations in this research would have provided a richer amount of data. This would be interesting for another researcher to expand on in the future.

### **6.4- Recommendations:**

Recommendations that arose from this research are as follows, motivational approaches will influence the staff performance. Participants who work in a creche should be granted more extrinsic and financial rewards than they are now. Business organisation employees are offered more rewards and more job promotion opportunities than creche employees. People can perceive creche employees as less hard working than employees from other organisations and this is reflected in their pay and the lack of pay rise, they receive. This is not the case, they are for the most part owing a job they love.

Another recommendation that has arose is the importance of manager's role in the happiness and motivation in the workplace. Manager's roles can influence staff morale and the attitudes staff can have at work. This came up at the interviews when Participant 1 stated that they have "*I have left my workplace due to not been respected by management and been unmotivated*". This statement made shows how employees can be unhappy and

leave due to how managers treat them. Managers should be open and willing to communicate with staff while creating a good work environment.

A recommendation to improve motivation is to provide specific training for managers. A training course for new managers on how to motivate staff and provide a challenging fun work environment would benefit employee performance. Managers who are highly trained and can motivate employees and provide good working relationships are more likely to have high performing staff with low staff turnover.

Another recommendation would be to investigate different factors that influence high staff turnover. As stated above, motivation can influence turnover rates. A recommendation is for organisations to investigate if their turnover rates are high for their sector and if so find the source of the problem and plan to rectify it. For example as Participant 1 stated above their employment lost 7 staff members in 5 months, this is a high turnover rate and the organisation should investigate why so many staff left in such a short period and if there is any way the organisations could learn for the future not to make similar mistakes.

### **6.5 Awareness of Costs.**

Awareness of cost is important as the recommendations above will impact the organisations financially. As stated above, one of the recommendations is training managers. This will cost the organisations in both time and training cost. It is also important to find the right trainer that will work well with the participants involved. This may not be the cheapest option.

Training courses all cost different amounts. Factors such as the amount of people taking part in the training course will affect the financial cost. While the training can be expensive it should deliver a more motivated workplace and will pay off in the long run. Furthermore, with more managers trained in staff motivation, the turnover rates would drop in the organisations thus costing the organisations less money to advertise and look for new recruits. A rough cost for training course would come to around to 1,385 euro for motivation training and for management training it will cost roughly 3,995 euro. So the organisation must be aware of the costs to make the changes to improve me motivation in their organisation. Depending on location and how many participants are taking part will

determine the price range for training managers in motivation and other management programmes.

Also, if creche organisations begin to motivate staff using external factors such as financial rewards, this will be an added cost to the organisation to take into account. This research has explored employees who work in the creche settings and each have stated how their organisation do not motivate staff using money and external factors. A recommendation is that creche managers should start using external factors to motivate staff, such as a salary rise for hard working staff members or those who complete additional training. This will cost the organisation, but it's more likely to have staff stay in the organisation if they feel they are being fairly rewarded. Most creche workers, many who have degree qualifications, earn just above the minimum wage and are paid about 11 euro an hour. Creche setting should look to offering highly motivated, hardworking staff a pay rise every 1-2 years. This will motivate other staff members to perform and stay in the job thereby bringing staff stability to the organisation and making it a better place for employees as well as the children attending.

#### **6.6-Personal Statement**

I found this research very interesting and learned a lot of new valuable information while conducting it. Motivation and how it applies in different types of organisation is a topic that I have a personal interest in. I always found motivation important to me as I have left jobs in the past due to a lack of motivation in my workplace. This was the reasoning being my research topic selection. I wanted to conduct research on motivation that others can expand on in the future and demonstrate how important motivation is for staff, especially in a creche setting.

I had some setbacks due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Without Covid-19 I would have liked to engage more with the staff and my colleagues in the college on this topic and use more organisations with different backgrounds and interviewed more people face to face. Overall, I am happy with how my research turned out and it helped me gain new skills and insights. I really enjoyed the whole research process, especially as it was on a topic I had a personal interest in. This made the process very interesting and rewarding for me.

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## Appendix A

### Consent to take part in research

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves...[outline briefly in simple terms what participation in your research will involve].
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in...[list all forum in which you plan to use the data from the interview: dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.].
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in [specify location, security arrangements and who has access to data] until [specific relevant period – for students this will be until the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation].
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for [specific relevant period – for students this will be two years from the date of the exam board].
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.



- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Names, degrees, affiliations and contact details of researchers (and academic supervisors when relevant).

Signature of research participant

----- Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

-----Signature of researcher Date

## **Appendix B**

### **Information Sheet:**

You are invited to attend a research study conducted by Niamh Atkinson, who is a masters student at NCI college undergoing her master's thesis research. Brendan Flanagan is the main supervisor of this research study.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because the experience and knowledge you may possess on this topic.

### **Potential benefits:**

There is no promise that you will defiantly benefit from this research study. But by participating in this research will give you an insight to motivation in the workplace and the effect motivation has on employees both positive and negative.

### **Compensation for your participants**

You will not receive any payment or compensation for participating in this research study. There is no cost involved for participating in this study.

### **Confidentiality**

All information that will be collected in this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential. All information must be disclosed with your permission. In this interview no names of participants will be used. Confidentiality is important for this study and all participants will remain anonymous.

Any information collected that can identify anyone individually will not be given to anyone outside this research module. The information collected may be used to benefit publication but none of the information will be used to identify you individually.

### **Participation and Withdrawal:**

You can choose whether or not you want, to be involved in this research study. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

### **Identification of Investigators:**

Niamh Atkinson  
Researcher  
National College of Ireland  
[X20100833@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:X20100833@student.ncirl.ie)

Brendan Flanagan  
Supervisor  
National College of Ireland  
[Brendan.Flanagan@ncirl.ie](mailto:Brendan.Flanagan@ncirl.ie)

### **Rights of Researcher:**

If you have any questions or concerns about being in this study, please contact me Niamh Atkinson at [x20100833@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x20100833@student.ncirl.ie) Alternatively you can contact my Supervisor, Brendan Flanagan at [Brendan.flanagan@ncirl.ie](mailto:Brendan.flanagan@ncirl.ie) . If you have any concerns about your rights in this study please contact the chair of research and ethics committee, National College of Ireland.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Niamh Atkinson

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Questions:**

Q1. Indicate what employment sector you work in?

Q2. Do you think motivation is important for employee performance in the workplace?

Q3. How does your workplace or employer motivate you?

Q4. Does your organisation have any motivational programmes to improve motivation in the workplace?

Q5. Do you think motivation can affect staff turnover rates in the workplace?

Q6. If you were in a manager role how would you motivate your staff in the workplace?

Q7. In your own opinion, would you find it hard to stay at your workplace if you were unmotivated?

Q8. Are rewards used to motivate staff in your workplace?

Q9. Which type of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) do you think is more effective in the workplace and why?

Q10. If you could be change anything in your workplace regarding motivation, what would it be?