

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Strategies to improve the level of employee motivation in the fast food outlets in Cape Town, South Africa

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**Motivation increases the level of performances of employees and also increases their commitment in the workplace. This implies that motivating workers is very important. The fast food workers are unique and have their individual needs, potentials, values and goals. Job satisfaction leads to job motivation. Therefore, when workers are satisfied, they tend to be motivated to work. The study points out the strategies that could be used to improve the level of motivation of the fast food workers and also discusses the causes of low employee motivation within the organization. This will also assist the management of the fast food industries in improving the performances of their employees. A case study approach was used for the survey because only the fast food industries were involved. Information was obtained from both the operational workers, administration, cashiers and the managers. A total of 200 closed-ended questionnaires and open-ended semi-interview questions were distributed and 123 employees responded which gave a response rate of 62.5%. Research proved that the rate of personal growth of the employee's in their workplace was not satisfactory with a rate of 56.1% respondents. Also, the flexible time plan was not satisfactory to the workers because they were being given a flexible time sometimes especially when their workplace is very busy. In addition, the employee's were not given the privilege of making decision in their workplace especially in the areas that concerns them. However, the researcher recommended that the fast food workers should be empowered in different ways, to give them opportunities to share their views. Also, the skills should be developed through coaching and feedback system. The study includes only the fast food workers that have at least six (6) months experience. This is to obtain a reliable and valid result.**

**Keywords:** Motivation, work environment, working conditions, employee performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, recognition, promotion.

## INTRODUCTION

People management is an important aspect of any organization, and this includes the fast food industry. A well managed fast food industry will normally consider

employees rather than financial capital as the core foundation of the business, which also contributes to the industry's development (Morato, 2008). Therefore, in order to ensure achievement of the industry's goals, the fast food industry should create an atmosphere of commitment and cooperation for its employees through policies that facilitate employee motivation and satisfaction. Satisfaction of human resources is closely linked to highly motivated employees. Motivated employees normally perform better, which result in greater productivity and lower labour turnover rates. Moreover, highly motivated employees strive to produce at the highest

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**Abbreviations:** QWL, Qualities of work life; FASA, franchise association of South Africa; NSDSFSA, national strategy for the development and support of franchising in South Africa; BNA, bureau of national affairs; HR, human resource.

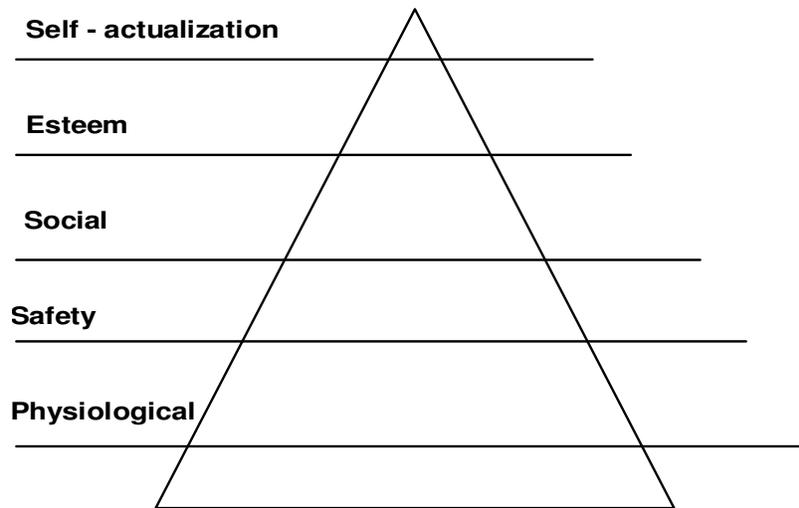


Figure 1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

possible level and exert greater effort than employees who are not motivated (Schultz et al., 2003). When motivating factors such as challenging jobs, responsibility and so on are inherent in a job, satisfaction is perceived as possible and work-directed energy is aroused and this leads to motivation (Bloisi et al., 2007). The importance of employee motivation should be emphasised within the fast food industry. Some ways to improve motivation in the fast food industry include good remuneration, effective training and skills development, a proper recognition and reward system, and employee growth prospects (Schultz et al., 2003).

Employees' motivation is one aspect of a human resource management development strategy. Champion-Hughes (2001, cited in Morato, 2008) states that a holistic approach should be used to improve certain qualities of work life (QWL) such as fringe benefits, better employment conditions, and career development to support facilitation of motivation, which is directed towards achieving the organization's goal (Ukandu and Ukpere, 2011).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee motivation is a process, which accounts for an individual's intensity, direction and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal (Robbins et al., 2007). Therefore, intensity relates to how hard a person tries, while direction is the channel through, which a job is performed. Persistence is a measure of how long persons can maintain their effort (Robbins et al., 2007). Through employee motivation, an organization can achieve a competitive advantage through higher productivity and improved customer service (Stone, 2005). Consequently, when employee motivation is downgraded, the

organization will be at risk in relation to finances and other strategic objectives. Hence, employee motivation regulates the behaviour of employees and enables them to achieve the desired goals of an organization. Therefore, motivation is the psychological process that provides behaviour, purpose and direction. It is also defined as an internal force, which is based on an individual's conscious and unconscious needs that drive him/her to achieve a goal (Robbins, 1993) indeed; it is an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need (Higgins, 1994, cited in Lindner, 1998).

## Motivation theories

When discussing motivation, some theories cannot be ignored, since they explain why people act the way that they do and why others refrain from doing certain things (Swanepoel et al., 2003). Regarding this research, theories of motivation will be explored in relation to work motivation in the fast food industry, namely Maslow's hierarchy (Figure 1) of needs and Herzberg's theory.

## Maslow's theory

Maslow proposed a theory, which he called the needs hierarchy. These needs are physiological, safety, social fulfillment, satisfaction of the ego and self-actualization. People always have needs, and as soon as one need is satisfied, another need takes its place (Nel et al., 2004). From Figure 1, Maslow stated that individuals move up the steps of a hierarchy and in order to be motivated, one should know, which level of hierarchy that person is currently on and focus as on satisfying those needs first (Robbins et al., 2007). Maslow distinguished between

higher and lower order needs, hence, phy-siological and safety are grouped as lower order needs while social, esteem and self-actualization are referred to as higher order needs. According to Maslow, when the lower order needs, namely physiological and safety, are substantially satisfied, the next need becomes dominant (Robbins et al., 2007). Therefore, in order to motivate someone, a person should understand what level of the hierarchy that particular person is currently on and focus on satisfying those needs within the particular level. Accordingly, higher order needs can be satisfied internally while lower order needs are satisfied externally. Incentives such as pay, union contracts and tenure are examples of lower order needs. Hence, if basic needs or lower order needs are not met, efforts to satisfy higher order needs will be postponed, according to Maslow's perspective (Prasad, 2003).

### Herzberg's theory

Herzberg investigated the question: "what do people want from their jobs?" (Swanepoel et al., 2003). There are different variables that can make people feel either good or bad about their jobs. These factors were indicated by Herzberg, which he called the two-factor theory of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors include advancement, recognition, responsibility and achievement, while extrinsic factors comprises of status, security, company policy, administration, remuneration, supervision and interpersonal relations, which are referred to by Herzberg as "hygiene" factors. These latter factors do not motivate employees, although they should be present in the workplace to placard employees. Employees are motivated by internal values rather than external values. Hence, motivation should be internally generated through those intrinsic factors, which are known as "motivators". Among many organizations that need to motivate their employees is the fast food industry (Ukandu and Ukpere, 2011).

### Fast food industries in South Africa

Fast food industries started as a franchise in South Africa under the canopy of the Franchise Association of South Africa (FASA). FASA was established in 1979 and operates as a non-profit, self-funding organisation (National Strategy for the Development and Support of Franchising in South Africa) (NSDSFSA). Its main aim is to promote and maintain ethical franchising in South Africa. This organisation consists of two memberships, namely franchisors and affiliates, which are service providers to franchisors and franchisees (FASA, 2000). The FASA is universally accepted as one of the most successful business formats in South Africa. They ensure that all members follow internationally accepted franchise

business principles, and serve the needs of the public and the franchise community (FASA, 2009). FASA has about 209 members, which comprise 170 franchisors and 39 affiliates (Sibeko and Tambani, 2000). They also have a self-regulatory measure, which every member of the franchisor should meet. These include.

- i. FASA members are subject to FASA's code of ethics and business practice; and
- ii. FASA assists its members with a dispute resolution by providing a mediation service.

Fast food and restaurant industries, under the canopy of the FASA, include the following: Barcelos Flamed Chicken, Chicken Licken, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's South Africa, King Pie and Wimpy Restaurants, to mention but a few. An observer declared that there is a need to enhance career development and job characteristics of the fast food employees in order to increase the level of motivation among employees (Ukandu and Ukpere, 2011).

### Motivation and the work environment

Motivation of employees in the fast food industry is affected by the environment in which they work (Smithers and Walker, 2000). Research conducted proved that workers' environments do affect their level of motivation, for instance, long hours of work, non recognition for work done and colleagues' aggressive management style. In order to motivate employees to perform their best, there is a need to provide a work environment that provides achievement, recognition, meaningful work, advancement and growth (Musselwhite, 2007). Some of these variables that affected employees' level of motivation in the workplace are discussed subsequently.

### Working conditions

Fast food workers need enough resources such as time, money and equipment to be able to do their work effectively. However, resources are scarce, which means that decisions should be made to distribute them fairly. The needs and goals of the industry should be prioritized. The physical layout of the work environment such as neatness, organization, convenience, attractiveness and stimulus (noise, air, hazards and so on) should not threaten the well-being of employees (Nel et al., 2004). (Ester, 1986; cited in Royle and Towers, 2002) states that public humiliation; unsafe working conditions and total lack of respect and dignity are amongst reasons why fast food employees are not happy. Most jobs at fast food outlets have reflected abusive working relationships, poor working conditions, reduced wages, long working hours and less participation in the decision making of the

organisation, especially in areas that concern workers (Ukpere, 2007). Almost all the aspects of fast food work are highly standardized and rigorously monitored (Royle, 2004). Their methods of work produce identical products and their standards and productivity are broken down into the smallest steps. Work in the fast food industry is computerised, which reduces work movements and hence speed up production. Employees' skills are depleted and their work becomes intensive with machinery making decisions for them. Lights and buzzers tell workers when to fry or bake. Furthermore, workers learn a routinized job in a day with no previous experience and the minimum of training (Royle, 2004), which results in monotony.

Furthermore, employees in the fast food industry tend to quit after a short term (Thoms et al., 2004). This is because they make poor earnings and work in less than satisfactory conditions. He further stated that their hours of work are long, shifts unpredictable and promotions are as scarce as water in a desert. There are times when workers want to join a union to negotiate with the company in which they work, but are not allowed to do so because the fast food industry works under a policy of anti-union, which means that they do not allow their employees to join unions. If any employee joins the union he/she may be sacked and management will not attribute the sacking to joining of a trade union (Harikripahai, 2007). Another factor is the workforce, which consists of 75% of youths under the age of 21 years (Steinberg and Greenberger, 1986; Harikripahai, 2007). This encourages the industry to have no legal basis for paying minimum wages to its workers. A witness mentioned that the workers were not given sick leave and if any staff member is sick, his/her schedule will be rewritten.

### **Working hours**

Managements at fast food outlets have created an environment, which looks like a family, while on the other hand, it is an environment filled with intimidation and fear (Reischman, 2003). Employees are pushed to their physical limits with long hours of work, and are not given enough breaks. In addition, their wages barely meet the minimum requirement. A reason for this is that most employees have a low standard of education and some of them are immigrants and high school students (Reischman, 2003). The working hours speculated by the federal fair labour standard act is at least forty hours a week and employees who work overtime should be paid additionally for this. Fast food employees work long hours for low pay (Schlosser, 1998). Furthermore, fast food assistants who work sixty hours a week earn a lower hourly wage than some of their crew members (ibid). Fast food managers receive promotions, while most assistant managers never receive promotions. Employees in the fast food industry prefer work hours that are compatible

with their activities outside of work, thus a huge popularity of flexi-time and part-time work (Brown et al., 1992). Their schedules should give them freedom to integrate their jobs with the rest of their lives; however, shift work is typically disliked because it usually interferes with their off-the-job routine (Reiter, 1986).

### **Pay and benefits**

A low minimum wage has long been a critical issue of the fast food industry's business plan (Schlosser, 1998). In view of this, they also import workers from other countries to work for low wages (Reischman, 2003). According to Streeten (2001, cited in Ukpere, 2007), outsourcing is a cause of the decline in the demand for wages of semi-skilled and unskilled labour. Their employees are treated poorly especially in the area of pay, which results in the fact that an average worker that wants to make a living by supporting his or her family, cannot do so with the average pay or minimum wage that is given to him or her (Harikripahai, 2007). He further states that instead of the fast food industry increasing their employees' wages, they will prefer to hire other people who are willing to work for that amount or even less. This mistreatment does not only include poor hourly wages, but the denial of the right to join a union (Schlosser, 2003). Workers assume that picking strawberries is far better than cooking French fries and jobs, which are filled with people who are young and unskilled. The extreme standardization of work in the fast food industry justifies low wages and benefits (Leidner, 1993, cited in Royle and Towers, 2002). Inexperienced people who are capable of doing the work easily accept low paid jobs because they do not have a choice. This also causes low motivation and high labour turnover, since workers' needs cannot be met with low paid jobs in the fast food industry (Leidner, 1993). Benefits in the fast food industry are almost non-existent. Other organizations provide benefits to their workers such as medical insurance and paid vacations. But the fast food industry does not. Also, the work and life balance of the employee is not feasible, since they have a lowly, erratic and unpredictable work schedule that must be planned around, and if they do not comply with this unfair treatment, they will be asked to quit and their position will be filled by another person (Williams and Hazer, 1986, Harikripahai, 2007).

### **Recognition**

An employee's performance can be recognized through promotion. Employee recognition consists of personal attention, expressing interest, promotion, pay, approval and appreciation for a job well done (Robbins, 2003). Generally, in the workplace, recognition is considered as the most powerful tool for employee motivation (Robbins,

2003). Fast food workers want to be recognized. They want to know that their superiors appreciate their work in the industry. Most of the fast food industries value 'people principles' and 'social responsibility'. People principles refer to the relationship between management, the workers and the treatment of workers (Harikripahai, 2007). According to an observer, the fast food industry holds five basic ideas: Respect and Recognition, Values and Leadership, Pay, Learning and Developmental Growth, and Resources. He adds that four of these five are questionable because management regards workers as passive people who can be employed to work for a certain period of time and duped with a false sense of employment security and individuality.

### Promotion

Promotion is the reassignment of an employee to a higher-level job (Grobler et al., 2006). Promotion means more responsibility. Employees want promotion to be given fairly. Fairness means promotion for the most qualified workers, although few employees who are competent may not have good managerial skills, or training that will enable them manage people. In the first paragraph of working hours, it was stated that fast food managers receive promotion while most assistant managers never receive promotion. Strober (1990) points out that race and gender affect employees' promotion on the ground of human capital theory. This contends that variation in upward mobility is largely attributed to differences in the quantity and quality of the educational opportunities. The most obvious aspect is the discrimination that exists between race and gender in promotion decisions. This discrimination, he states manifests by slowing the promotion rates of the minority or by creating barriers to upward mobility.

Employee promotions in the fast food industry are considered as vital both to the industry and their employees. Promotions provide direct economic and psychological reinforcement for employees and in determining, which employee should be selected for the promotion exercise; job performance is a key factor (Sheridan et al., 1997). 'Promotion may be an employee's reward for good performance, that is, positive appraisal, which leads to employee motivation' (Louis, 2009). La Motta (1995) defines job performance as the result of motivation and ability. Ability includes training, education, equipment and simplicity of task. Despite all these factors, an employee may still not perform well on the job if there is no motivation. Motivation not only influences performance, but performance, if followed by rewards, can influence motivation (La Motta, 1995). In some South African fast food outlets, research has shown that management makes false promises of job promotion that never occurs. This could be as a result of the downsizing of the industry or the inability of management to pay workers when

promoted (Inglis, 2010). Smart and talented employees tend to give up and look for employment elsewhere (Inglis, 2011). Management of fast food outlets, including the South African fast food outlets, sometimes promote their workers without proper training and experience to become supervisors. This demoralizes staff because these supervisors are then incompetent and cannot perform in the post given to them.

### Employee performance

It was stated earlier that jobs in the fast food industry are highly routinized and capital intensive, which results in employees living their job. Reduced work output, increased accidents, absenteeism, employee turnover and poor employee performances are examples of detrimental employee behaviour that have a significant effect on profitability (Spector, 2003, cited in Lo and Lamm, 2005).

About sixty two percent of first-time employees in the fast food industry usually engage in theft and misconduct in their workplace such as giving away goods, falsely claiming to be sick, stealing, damaging the organizations' property, or work while intoxicated during their first nine months of employment (Reischman, 2003). Turnover is high for non-management fast food employees at three hundred percent per year, and vacancies are reported to be eighty one percent (Bureau of National Affairs (BNA), 1985, cited in Reischman, 2003). It is the amount of training that is provided to fast food employees that enhances their performance rather than the quality or quantity of education achieved prior to employment (Sheridan et al., 1997). As mentioned previously, employee job performance is a result of motivation and ability. Motivation influences performance, but performance, if followed by rewards, can influence motivation. Since the subject of motivation has become increasingly important in the fast food industry recently, there is need for total quality management and a flatter management structure, which will initiate an employee reward management system. Deeprose (1994) postulates that effective reward management can help the management of a fast food outlet to achieve their business objectives by attracting and retaining competent workers.

### Management and supervision

Abuse by managements of fast food outlets have come into the public interest increasingly because of increased awareness and workers are no longer tolerating it. Abusive scenarios such as unclear performance goals, strange human resource (HR) practices, deadly teams and unannounced relocation, have become the order-of-the-day (Inglis, 2010). Managements at fast food outlets do not create an environment that will allow them to

exchange ideas and participate with the workforce. They also do not implement co-determination and participation of workers in decision making, especially regarding issues concerning the fast food industry (Butod, 2009). He further states that co-determination and participation can increase workers commitment, job satisfaction and motivation and reduce resistance to change. It will also improve communication and consultation between management and employees (Butod, 2009). Some fast food management training material suggests that failure to provide adequate communication, correct management styles, adequate praise and recognition, adequate staffing levels and correct handling of holiday entitlements and pay details, are the major reasons why workers are becoming resistant to management power (Royle, 2000). Regimentation and standardization of the fast food industry have given managers authority over their employees, which means that management determines the way every task should be done and imposes rules on pace, output, quality and techniques of production (Leidner, 1993). Management has not been taking the feelings and emotions of their workers to heart. The workers are not given responsibilities in their workplaces to make them feel as part of the company (Ukpere, 2007).

Furthermore, some fast food employees have demonstrated dissatisfaction with their work assignments and the degree to which they are utilized within their workplace. In addition, managers change their shift patterns, while working night shifts is a big concern for female workers. This is assumed to be affecting their primary family responsibilities. Furthermore, it can lead to stress, anxiety and depression, which affect their psychology (Michailids and E-ali Elwkai, 2003). This is one of the major dysfunctional aspects of the fast food industry. Research has further been conducted to prove the reliability of this information.

### **Need for the study**

This research was done to enable the fast food industry management implement practices that will increase job satisfaction in order to enhance employee motivation. It is needful to help direct the fast food managers on how to achieve a high employee performance and higher levels of productivity. The study also guides the fast food managers on how to stimulate their workers and bring about change in their job performances.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of this research is to find out the various strategies on how employees can be motivated in their workplace especially in the fast food industry. This study was conducted using fast food outlets within Cape Town metropolis. This study also investigated the causes of low

employee motivation such as poor working conditions, poor managerial services and supervision, poor pay and others.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: SAMPLE AND RESEARCH PROCESS**

The aim of this study is to derive a motivation strategy for the fast food outlets within Cape Town. A case study approach was used for this research because it was dealing with a specific organization which is the fast food outlets in Cape Town. The research methods used were the qualitative and quantitative methods (Triangulation). This was to know the opinion of the fast food employees in the area of motivation. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and only 123 employees responded and were used for the analysis. Furthermore, a pilot study was conducted with few staff members and managers of the fast food industry from different outlets and corrections made before distributing it to the others. This is to allow reliability and validity. Also, open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were administered face-to-face to the senior and store managers of the different fast food outlets to know their opinion in the area of employee motivation, while a closed-ended questionnaire was distributed to the other staff members. As mentioned previously, the total population sampled was 200. The selected sample composed of all the staff members that have at least six (6) months of work experience within the fast food industry. This is to enable the researcher obtain reliable information. A report was made on the level of motivation of the workers. A high ethical standard was maintained as far as the information is concerned.

### **Data analysis**

To ascertain the motivation level of the fast food workers, the researcher posed some questions and statements. In analysing the data obtained, content analysis was used. Information from other sources was also incorporated into the analysis for validity and reliability. The responses received from the questionnaires are given as follows:

The growth rate of the fast food workers and how it has affected their motivation level was assessed. Emanating from the interviews, it was evident that some fast food workers work in poor working conditions and environment. Many interviewees maintained that they were not satisfied with the layout of their workplace. It was clear that the employees' personal growth was not a major concern to their managers; however, employees are expected to carry out their jobs effectively. Few interviewees noted that they do not have enough personal growth in their workplace which is discouraging them from working with the fast food outlet. As indicated in Table 1, the rate of personal growth among staff members was not impressive. A total of 56.1% (25.2% plus 30.9%) of respondents noted that they were not satisfied with the rate of their personal growth within the fast food industry. From the result, one can conclude that the personal growth of the fast food workers is not satisfying. The questionnaires revealed that the fast food employees were not having flexible time in their workplace. Employees in the fast food industry prefer work hours that are compatible with their activities outside of work, thus a huge popularity of flexi-time and part-time work. The rationale for the question was to determine whether or not flexible time is convenient for the fast food workers, and to find out if they are satisfied with their flexible time plan (Table 2). Of the 123 respondents, 7.3% are highly satisfied, which means that they are highly satisfied with the flexible time plan at their workplace and 19.5% are satisfied, which totals 26.8% (7.3% plus 19.5%). A total of 5.7% are neutral. However, 31.7% are not very satisfied, while 33.3% are not

**Table 1.** The rate of my personal growth in my workplace is?

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Highly satisfying	10	8.1	8.3	8.3
	Satisfying	24	19.5	20.0	28.3
	Neutral	17	13.8	14.2	42.5
	Not very satisfying	31	25.2	25.8	68.3
	Not satisfying at all	38	30.9	31.7	100.0
	Total	120	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.4		
Total		123	100.0		

(n=123).

**Table 2.** Flexible time plan at my workplace is?

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Highly satisfying	9	7.3	7.5	7.5
	Satisfying	24	19.5	20.0	27.5
	Neutral	7	5.7	5.8	33.3
	Not very satisfying	39	31.7	32.5	65.8
	Not satisfying at all	41	33.3	34.2	100.0
	Total	120	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.4		
Total		123	100.0		

(n=123).

**Table 3.** What is your level of satisfaction regarding decision making in your workplace?

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Highly satisfying	9	7.3	7.5	7.5
	Satisfying	21	17.1	17.5	25.0
	Neutral	24	19.5	20.0	45.0
	Not very satisfying	42	34.1	35.0	80.0
	Not satisfying at all	24	19.5	20.0	100.0
	Total	120	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.4		
Total		123	100.0		

(n=123).

satisfied at all, totalling 65% (31.7% plus 33.3%). Also, 70.7% (34.1% plus 36.6%) of respondents stated that they were not satisfied with overtime duty at their workplace (Table 2). The data that was analyzed confirmed that fast food employees are not satisfied with the flexi-time plan at their workplace.

The rationale for this question is to ascertain whether the fast food employees are really satisfied with decision making in their organization and whether they are allowed to participate in the decision making of the organization. Findings from the data analysis disclosed that workers are not encouraged to participate in the decision making of most outlets and are also not recognized for good performances. During the interviews, several respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with decision making in their workplace. They added that they were not given freedom to provide

input with regard to the organization's objectives and standards. However, the data collected are given subsequently. Table 3 points out that 7.3% of respondents are highly satisfied with decision making in the organization, and 17.1% said that they are satisfied, totalling 24.4% (7.3% plus 17.1%). A total of 19.5% of respondents are neutral regarding the question, while 34.1% of respondents said that they were not very satisfied and 19.5% were not satisfied at all, totalling 53.6% (34.1% plus 19.5%). The rationale for this question is for the researcher to know if the fast food employees are given freedom to make input with regard to objectives and standards of the industry.

The interviewees maintained that they were not given freedom to provide input with regard to the organization's objectives and standards. Again, some respondents maintained that their job

**Table 4.** Do employees have freedom to make input with regard to objectives and standards?

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	35	28.5	29.2	29.2
	No	85	69.1	70.8	100.0
	Total	120	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	2.4		
Total		123	100.0		

(n=123).

execution was not made challenging by their supervisors. The data analysis, as illustrated in Table 4, indicates that 69.1% of respondents have not been given the freedom to provide input with regard to the organization's objectives and standards. Table 4 showed that 61.8% of respondents stated that their job execution is not made challenging by their supervisors. As previously mentioned, some interview questions were posed to the store managers, senior managers, and ex-staff to obtain information on the motivation level of the fast food workers. Content analysis was used in analyzing the interview questions. The following are some interview questions and responses obtained from the store managers and senior managers:

#### **Do you think your employees are motivated enough in your workplace?**

Two managers noted that employees are motivated because of the type of work that they produce and of course they do not have a choice because they need the job. In addition, one interviewee noted that workers are sometimes motivated if a goal is set for them or a reward is provided to them. Other managers said that workers are not motivated because there is no training given to them, while promises of recognition are made, but not delivered, and hence not enough recognition is practiced. Furthermore, most employees have no passion for their job because they feel that there is a lot of negativity and unfairness amongst them.

#### **What is your view about the performance of your staff members?**

The managers revealed that staff performances were poor because they did not receive any formal training. They also lack self confidence and self respect. An interviewee stated that sometimes staff performance is good and sometimes it is not. Another two managers stated that staff performance is good with no reason or further explanation provided.

#### **Do you think that employee motivation can improve the staff performance?**

All interviewees reported that employee motivation can improve staff performance because it will make them stress-free at work; the workers will feel more empowered, and have more confidence and self respect. They will also feel more proud about their job provided that they receive proper training in order to perform above expectation; employee motivation enables staff to improve their performance by yielding good results and by lifting their self esteem. Furthermore, employee motivation will help them to

achieve organizational goals in a better manner. The following are some interview questions for the ex-staff and their responses. This is to find out their reasons for their leaving the fast food industry and to know if their reasons were related to their level of motivation.

#### **Were you motivated at the fast food outlets?**

Four ex-staff members said that they were not motivated because there was nothing to motivate them, except the fact that it was a production company, which focused on business. Moreso, the salary was too little and the shifts were long (24 h), while they also felt that they were treated poorly. In addition, the work was too much and managers were rude to their workers and unfriendly. No transportation was available to and from work for late shifts, and they were abused, because they worked as cleaners instead of what they applied for. Lastly, they felt that they were just a number doing duties, and could hence not be motivated under such conditions. However, three (3) ex-staff members stated that they were motivated because one said that she was promoted even though it was after six (6) years, while another said that she enjoyed working with people, and learned new ideas. The last said that he was always given an opportunity to prove himself and to learn new skills.

#### **What was your reason for leaving the fast food industry?**

The ex-staff members had different reasons for leaving. The first two said that the business closed down so they had to leave; another said that the working hours were too long and travelling was too costly, hence she could not afford it any longer and resigned to look for a better opportunity. The next two said that they were going back to varsity and another noted that they had a better job opportunity elsewhere with more pay. Different reasons were given, but this shows that they were not motivated enough to enable them to stay at the fast food outlet.

#### **In your opinion, do you think that being motivated at your workplace would have made you to stay longer?**

They all noted that if they had been motivated at their workplace they would have stayed longer for the following reasons: if their salary was increased and transportation was made available for them to and from work. They also said that a friendly attitude with less work would have made them stay longer as well. Moreover, one said that she likes the fast food industry and so being motivated would have made her to stay longer and another said that if he could see potential that would challenge him, then he would have stayed longer. Lastly, the other two said that there was no need for motivation, since the outlet had closed down.

### **Strategies that could improve the motivation level of the fast food employees**

Emanating from the interviews conducted with the staff members, it was revealed that the employees do not have enough time for their families and other personal responsibilities. Therefore, in an effort to improve the work life of the employees, the management needs to recognize this balance in order to help improve the employees work life. The following are factors that could contribute to the improvement of the employee's work life.

#### **Training and development**

It is appalling to note that the fast food employees are not given proper training. Investigations revealed that employees have not been performing well because of improper training. From the data analysis, it was revealed that 56.1% (25.2% plus 30.9%) respondents were not satisfied with their personal growth with regard to their job descriptions at the fast food outlets. Most respondents also noted that their job execution is not made challenging by their supervisors. Three interviewees maintained that training workers will help them to improve their general performances and also motivate them to work harder and better.

#### **Reduced workload**

It was deduced from the interviews with staff members that there is work stress in the fast food industry, and too much pressure and heavy workloads. It is clear that employees' workloads should be reduced to prevent low employee motivation and to improve the work life of employees. Results from the interviews showed that employees do not have flexible work time and working hours were too long, hence they do not have enough time to spend with their families. Moreover, the pay is little, compared to the work that they do. It is important to know that workers are eligible for flexible time and less hours of work, which would allow them to have time with their families and their personal life.

#### **Incentive programmes**

The study has revealed that workers were not properly remunerated. Moreover, bonuses and fringe benefits were not given to them. Employees stated that they were not recognized for good performances. Results from Table 4.15 revealed that 63.4% (30.9% plus 32.5%) of respondents disagreed that they had a bonus plan in their organization. Table 4.19 also noted that 69.1% (32.5% plus 36.6%) of respondents reported that there is no health plan for employees. Increasing workers' pay, introducing a benefit plan and recognizing employees' performance, should be important aspects of improving employees' standard of living and work life.

#### **Retention strategy**

It was derived from the interviews with store managers that there is a high staff turnover and absenteeism at fast food outlets, which participated in the survey. An interviewee mentioned that some workers that were absent complained of low motivation. Another interviewee maintained that some staff members who resigned did so because they had not received what they had expected from the company. A store manager also said that some workers who left the organization complained of job dissatisfaction and a lack of transportation to work. The researcher was not able to obtain data from employees who had resigned. Findings from the data analysis disclosed that the quality of supervision at fast food outlets were not

satisfactory. Additionally, the workers' salary is not competitive. Moreover, they are not involved in the decision making of the outlet and are also not recognized for good performances. Most interviewees noted that their jobs are too stressful and that their workloads are too big, hence they do not have personal fulfillment in their jobs. Results from Table 4 disclosed that 86.2% of respondents agreed that they were experienced stress related to their work. It is necessary to note that a reduced workload and recognition of employees' performance and contribution would keep them in the industry. More than that, promotion of staff members and flexible time of work will attract talented candidates, which will boost the profile of staff members.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

It can be said that the fast food employees are not motivated to work from the analysis in the foregoing. In the first instance, the rate of their personal growth in their work-place is not satisfying. Table 1 shows 56.1% respondents who were not highly satisfied or satisfied with their rate of personal growth in the organization. More so, it was stated from the respondents that their flexible time plan is not encouraging. In spite of this, their level of satisfaction with the decision making in their workplace is low. Respondents also claimed that they do not have freedom to make inputs with regards to the objectives and standards of the organization.

The interviews with the store managers and the ex-staff also revealed that the fast food workers are not motivated at work. This has been clearly stated from the interviews. Some interviewees noted that one of the reasons why the workers are not motivated is that there is no training given to them; rather there are promises of recognition which is not always delivered. Also, few managers noted that most of the employees have no passion in the job because they feel that there is a lot of negativity and unfairness amongst them. However, the interviewees view the performance of the staff as poor because of lack of formal training.

Again, they noted that some of the workers lack self confidence and self respect. Ex-staff members revealed that they were not motivated at work because the salary was too little and the shifts were long (24 h) and they also felt that they were treated poorly. In addition, the work was too much and managers were rude to their workers and unfriendly. No transportation was available to and from work for late shifts, and they were being abused and so they resigned to look for a better opportunity. Moreover, the ex-staff members revealed that being motivated in the fast food industry would have made them to stay back. Lastly, they added that if there were potentials and challenges in the industry, they would have stayed back.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study was conducted only with the fast food outlets

in Cape Town. The intention is to develop a motivation strategy that could improve the level of motivation of the workers. It has also highlighted the need for further research on job satisfaction of the fast food employees to measure the level of satisfaction of the workers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Despite the good qualities of food provided from the fast food outlets, there are weaknesses with the way the management deal with their employees, which have adversely affected the state of motivation of the workers. Employee motivation is essential to achieve the business goals of the fast food outlets in Cape Town and South Africa in general. If the workers are satisfied with their working conditions, they tend to perform well and customers are also happy. The researcher has recommended strategies that could improve the level of motivation of the workers within the fast food outlets in Cape Town as follows:

### **Fast food employees should be empowered and given some degree of autonomy in the execution of their job.**

It is evident that when employees are empowered, they tend to work harder and faster. They are found to be loyal to their employers and they also enjoy their jobs more. It is imperative to empower employees by making them feel that the company has a high regard for them, and that they are the reason for the organisation's success. Fast food workers should be empowered in different ways, namely they should be given opportunities to share their views in terms of making suggestions. Moreover, their suggestions should not be taken for granted, but should be used to solve problems in the organisation. The management should be able to communicate with their workers in a clear and understandable manner. Managers should be able to know the abilities of their employees and assign them tasks that will allow them to enjoy the freedom of doing their work. Fast food employees' skills should be developed through a coaching and feedback system. A good degree of autonomy should indeed be given to fast food workers. In other words, they should be permitted to give their opinions on how a particular job should be performed. Substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to schedule work and determine procedures that should be taken to do the job will increase levels of motivation for fast food employees. Greater autonomy will give workers a sense of accomplishment in the workplace, as they begin to take charge of directing their jobs. Contrary to popular belief, workers also enjoy taking responsibilities, especially when they are asked to stand in for their managers, in cases of absenteeism. This has an accelerator

effect on motivating workers to hope that one day they may as well become managers/leaders in the organisation, and hence their levels of motivation will positively be affected.

### **Workers should be involved in the organisation's decision making**

It is important to involve both managers and employees in joint decision making on a regular basis. Employees should be empowered through decision making for the organisation, especially in areas in which they excel. There is a need for managers to mark out how much decision making authority will be assigned to employees to prevent competition. Workers should be empowered to compile schedules for their vacation because they may have a better idea of how it will work. Managers should consult employees before any decision is reached. This will help to prevent overlooking solutions that may appear obvious to front-line employees but unfamiliar to higher-level managers. This will also help managers to make decisions since they may not have enough information to make a quality decision without the employee's input. Moreover, managers should involve their employees in decision making in order to make an effective decision. Despite this, employees should be allowed to participate in planning their personal career paths as this will render a sense of ownership, and thereby increase their levels of motivation at work.

### **Workers should be recognised for their contribution towards organisational success**

Every employee wants to be recognized and appreciated for good performance. Fast food managers should always recognize and appreciate the efforts of their workers. Monetary reward is important, but recognition and appreciation is critical for industrial harmony. Therefore, managers may recognize their workers by announcing their good performance in staff meetings or by mentioning the good performers within the workplace. It is also best practice to send emails to all staff or publish staff members' contributions and achievements in the company's newsletter or notice board. This will motivate employees to do more for the organisation. Employees should be recognized by giving them time off. Many workers like to spend more time with their friends and families and will appreciate if they are given time off at least for a day in recognition of their good performance. They will come back to work feeling refreshed and grateful for the recognition. Recognizing employees for good performance and contributions in the organization should enhance employee motivation. Fast food managers should also recognize their employees by providing monetary incentives. This will not only motivate the

beneficiary, but will also motivate other workers to do their best. Additionally, they should recognize their employees by issuing a personal note to the worker for outstanding performance. Managers can as organize team events for their employees such as a lunch, party or outing so that the team can enjoy themselves together, which builds team spirit, which ultimately increases levels of motivation amongst workers.

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