

Building Social Motivators on Workers' Cultural Values: Investigating Effects on Creative Performance of Farmers in West Region, Cameroon

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Abstract

People's lifestyle is critical in driving work behaviors, and this draws from social motivators, variables that are inherent in cultural values of workers and capable of spurring creative dispositions, which are incidental to performance. This responds to the uncritical adoption of conventional motivators that often distance reward strategies from employees' felt needs in local contexts. Therefore, this expresses a need for a systematic investigation into indigenous socio-cultural values capable of influencing performance in agricultural ventures. The study was designed to test the link between social motivators and performance of workers in the agricultural sector. A sample of 643 farmers (302 males; 313 females) were recruited using purposive sampling technique from the Programme for the Improvement of Competitiveness of Family Agro pastoral Farm (PCP-ACEFA), in the West Region of Cameroon. An instrument with determined internal reliability ($\alpha=0.724$) was used to gather information while descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysis. Results of the study showed that social belongingness ($\beta=0.392$), social interaction ($\beta=0.380$) and refreshment ($\beta=0.163$) significantly predicted performance of ACEFA farmers. From the analysis it was evident that social motivation was able to account for the variation in the outcome measure and this was an indicator that lifestyle could be creatively used in building incentive packages to promote creativity and innovation at work. The paper suggested novel strategies of identifying and integrating indigenous values into reward schemes in order to promote creative performance of workers in local contexts.

Key Words: Motivators, Creativity, Belongingness, Interaction, Refreshment, Performance

1. Introduction

In a rapidly changing business environment, any enterprise needs to bring forth novel ideas and innovation as competitive edges to performance and in the process, incentive strategies are critical in fostering motivation to creative performance. Motivation is an integral force that drives people to perform certain actions and comprises pull and push forces, which influence certain patterns of behavior among people (Panda, 2020). This is real in dealing with human resources in different sectors of the economy, and even more critical in the agricultural sector with farmers in their organizations. Despite the engagement of psychology in many sectors, it is rather unfortunate that the application of psychology to enhance knowledge and skills in the agricultural sector with farmers is grossly inadequate since it is still considered as a traditional sector with few organized structures. In any organization, contextual motivators of human resources play a crucial role in facilitating performance as a sure means of achieving strategic objectives, and this is applicable to the production and use of knowledge in agricultural ventures. Considering the fact that creative performance is the main source of promoting innovation (Zhou & Shalley, 2008), enhancing motivation factors that will promote creativity of workers incidental to effective performance and productivity is even more critical in agricultural domain. In farming ventures, farmers apply knowledge, skills and generate new solutions to emerging problems, and this expresses a need for building creativity and innovative minds. With creative performance, farmers transform ideas into new products with novel service approaches in order to spur performance and beat competitors while resolving emerging organizational demands (Fomba, 2019).

Although many factors affect creativity such as perception, motivation and commitment, reward strategies have been perceived as capable of facilitating motivation to spur creative activities by creating new products and delivering appropriate services. With the recognition that farmers in local African contexts mostly operate in groups built on community norms and solidarity, the social aspects of motivation, which is commonly known as social motivation becomes critical in agrarian communities. Social motivation tries to account for both impulsive and deliberate action; it is concerned with internal as well as external influences, and looks for the causes of and reasons for behavior as well as the intentions embedded in action (De Charms & Muirl, 1978). There are reasonable motivators essential in spurring creative performance of farmers and should be promoted as a dimension of entrepreneurial management. In this respect, strategies to promote creative performance become a key preoccupation of psychology, which consequently draws in the traditional domain of agricultural psychology with

respect to farmers' motivation and innovative practices. Although creativity is a given cognitive resource fostered by agency, it can also be promoted through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation strategies in local contexts. This had been a continuous challenge to most organizations as they design incentive strategies to improve creativity of workers in the agricultural domain.

Most researchers and practitioners believe that the key to organizational success lies in developing intellectual capital and acquiring a new set of thinking as well as creativity to foster innovation by translating ideas into new results (Roffe, 1999). This is the greatest desire of our time considering that creativity is instrumental in problem-solving and includes all agricultural actors at the grassroot. Smith (2003) advanced that creative ideas are generated not only in people but also in groups of people and this takes place through the interaction of individuals working within group settings. Apart from individual factors, it is evident that external forces could be responsible in inducing creativity in groups of individuals, which are recognized as motivators. With respect to agricultural psychology, farmers need creativity at individual and group levels, and project leaders should create an enabling environment for farmers to engage in creative and innovative exercises. This is the rationale for the present study where group belongingness, social interaction and refreshment are environmental factors and also constitute viable social motivators capable of promoting creativity and innovation in farmers. This concurs with Da Silva, Borlongan-Conway, & Tokunaga, (2010) that in order to effectively manage creativity in the workplace, understanding the factors that predict creative performance is a priority and this requires more investigation on incentive strategies building on the social and cultural realities of the people in the agricultural domain. This is the rationale behind the current study on incentive strategies and creative performance of farmers in a local context in Cameroon.

A case of interest is the Programme for the Improvement of Competitiveness of Family Agropastoral Farm (PCP-ACEFA) in the West region of Cameroon, which have been put in place to facilitate self-help activities that will buttress the lifestyle of farmers in their respective locales. The programme promotes and subsidizes small scale producer organisations to carry out investment projects designed to generate income for their members and build sustainability of the organisations. In order to instill a spirit of self-reliance, autonomy and independence of the farmers, creative performance is encouraged to enable them respond to exigencies. Apart from conventional incentives, social motivation packages that build on the social and cultural realities of the people have been strengthened in group farming business as push factors. In such contexts, social motivators are major factors that influence the level of drive amongst individuals in society and also stand as one of the intrinsic factors that urge people to perform certain activities and achieve their goals (Panda, 2020). During work, farmers interact and function as an extension of community life. They take food and drinks to their farms, sing and even dance during work and this serves as a social-support system and motivator to them. This stands to inspire team members to be creative and share creative ideas among farmers' team and crew members (Suzanna & John, 2020). Building on the cultural values of the people, group belongingness derived from humanistic lifestyle, social interaction and refreshment at work are very much encouraged to stimulate creativity of farmers. The question of interest is whether creative performance depends on the dimensions of social motivators, which are group belongingness, social interactions and refreshment. Although they play other cultural, social and recreational functions to a work group, it possibly stimulates creative performance in the farmers. Value addition in the present case is the shift from conventional motivators to social motivators built on cultural values in-context. Unfortunately, it appears no investigations have been carried out to ascertain the power of social motivation in promoting creativity at work. In this respect, the study submits that motivators are instrumental to the creative performance of farmers working in groups in local contexts with the firm belief that group belongingness, social interaction and refreshment are core predictors of creativity in the performance of farmers. The study will lead to scientific understanding of the place of psychology in creative performance using social motivators in the agricultural section. At the same time it stands to promote the resuscitation and integration of indigenous motivators into mainstream conventional incentive strategies in work psychology.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social motivators: Social motivators have gained grounds as underlying influential of behaviors particularly in communities and activities dominantly driven by social and cultural values with inherent incentive mechanisms capable of shaping expected behaviors. Social motivation is a process that determines how individuals interact as they achieve their needs, wants, and desires (Panda, 2020), and the role of social motivation in producing social behaviors that are incidental to agricultural performance in group businesses are invaluable. It should be borne in mind that social motivators respond to a broad range of social needs. To Geiger & Brick (2023) social motives reflect broad, interrelated categories of drivers of human behaviors in social settings that are derived from basic psychological human needs. The dominant psychological conception of man as having the potentials of adapting to social demands has led us to be more concerned about how to make a worker in the process of production that they cannot be alienated from others (De Charms & Muirl, 1978). Therefore, this culture of inter-dependency is highly considered as a core value and the prevalence is visible in African activity context.

It would be noted that scholars of organizational psychology have made meaningful strides towards understanding the social forces behind work motivation considering that the nature of work has become increasingly social (Grant & Shandell, 2022). Work in teams is valuable and the group members have to think, feel and act appropriately according to task demands, which are often driven by social properties in the name of social motivators and consequently catalyze creative thinking and action in the workers.

There is no doubt that the antecedents of creative performance in different cultural and national workplaces are different due to environmental realities of the enterprise in a given society. For instance, social situational culture model points out that the influence of social situation composed of leaders, colleagues and social networks on individuals, group and organizational creative performance is often moderated by social culture (Aycan, Kanungo, & Sinha, 1999). This implies that there is a need for research to be carried out in the indigenous work setting in order to assess the place of social motivators on workers 'creative ventures. Drawing from the foregoing debates, it is expected that an enabling workplace with social motivators will predict creative performance of worker during group work. It should be noted that the social motivation theory holds that motivation among people originates from the interrelationships of behavioral, biological, and evolutionary forces (Grant & Shandell, 2022). Despite the fact that there are numerous social motivators in different contexts and different situations, the present study has isolated group belongingness, social interaction and refreshment as capable of contributing to creative performance of ACEFA farmers in the West Region of Cameroon.

2.2 Group belongingness: Social belonging has been recognized as a fundamental human need in any society, and workers strive to satisfy them through gregariousness and this has been explained by many motivation theories. According to Peacock, Cowan, Irvine & Williams (2020), a sense of belonging seems to have both psychological and social dimensions for learners, with two defining attributes, which involves the feelings of being accepted, needed, respected, valued and the feelings of fitting in or being connected with the group. In this respect, farmers must be accepted by group members and they should be able to respect and meet up with the demands of the group. Belonging is an accumulation of daily experiences that enable a person to feel safe and bring their full, unique self to work. The social motive to belong reflects individuals' drive to be accepted by others and maintain positive, stable interpersonal relationship (Geiger & Brick, 2023). A sense of belonging is critical within any social group considering that it is the only condition that will enable an individual to respect group norms, have an identity and exercise his/her rights and responsibilities. These are factors that are capable of fostering performance of workers in the workplace and do not exclude creative performance of farmers working in groups. Despite the fact that the motive to belong discourages the expression of nontraditional opinions and behaviors capable of violating social norms or in-group values, the benefits of belonging to a work group is fundamental due to needs satisfaction. This motive can also foster interpersonal cooperation especially in situations where individuals believe that cooperation will help them achieve set goals and this is reflected in the nature and activities of ACEFA farmers. Carr et al (2019) further observed that humans are so fundamentally social that we can even bond with strangers over the very experience of not having anyone with whom to bond. This implies that belongingness is a business strategy and matters because it impacts business performance and employee well-being. Peacock, Cowan, Irvine & Williams (2020) investigated sense of belonging and online education findings showed the importance of sense of belonging to participants and identified three significant themes which were interaction/engagement, the culture of learning, and support. These findings highlighted the importance of the themes in promoting a sense of belonging in meaningful group interactions and interest in group activities. Although this was on learning, it gives an orientation that a sense of belonging can influence positive goal-directed behaviors, and this does not exclude creative performance of farmers. Consequently, the development of a culture of belongingness to a group is critical and stands to promote not only creative performance of members but also enhances a sense of engagement, security, satisfaction and motivation towards strategic business directions.

2.3 Social interaction at work: The concept of social interaction in any occupational setting is not different from any other ordinary social interaction. Patricia Cruz (2018) observed that the key to organizational success is human interactions, since it is a process taking place within mutually shared environments and individuals do not get to select co-workers. This is a moment spent with friends and family members at a given point in time to satisfy some social and psychological demands and it is applicable to workers. Given that an organization's livelihood relies on the social exchanges of its members, it would seem important to explore the complex interactions between individuals and the variables that make up their physical and social environment in the workplace (Cruz, 2018). For instance, extension workers and farmers need to cooperate in order to create a healthy social environment inside the organization of high interactional fairness between all employees. This necessitates the empowerment of the CIGs in indigenous agricultural work settings to help farmers have access and relate with extension workers. Such an environment can be found in several well-known organizations, cordial interactions among people at work also stand as a reward strategy and move workers in business. A farmer may interact with other farmers, with extension officers and in the process gather new ideas on farming (Munshi, 2004). In addition, a farmer may observe his neighbor's activities regarding usage of inputs and production of farm produce and form opinions about particular aspects of farming (Conley and Udiy, 2001).

This is common when farmers are observed learning by observation, and interacting through discussing with other more informed farmers, a process known as learning through word-of-mouth.

Thus, social interactions are important factors and have a bearing on their profitability. Farmers had been observed to learn through experience, and Munshi (2004) argued that in the absence of a local extension agent, a farmer may base his current input decisions on past observations of his neighbors' actions regarding input usage. Farmers' interactional learning from one another is referred to as social learning (Munshi, 2004; Eisenkopf, 2010), a model of social interaction that is influenced by the characteristics and action of an interacting agent. The interactions generate either multiplier or spillover effects. All these social interactions and learning could lead to creative performance of individuals in groups.

Some empirical studies have also been realized in the context of social interaction and work-related behaviors. Ataei, Sadighi, Chiari, & Abbasi (2019) analyzed the social network structures and characteristics of various actors using social network analysis in conservation agriculture. Analysis reported the critical role of social power in network structures and suggested that project management should be organized considering social interactions in the process of implementing conservation agriculture initiatives. It also advocated for interactions among farmer resource persons and farmers themselves as well as various service providers in order to seek information, disseminate knowledge and respond to questions from knowledge seekers. Gathiaka (2010) studied the extent to which social interactions affect production behavior of farmers and returns in smallholder agriculture and the results were significant. Farmers hold strong ties with those with whom they interact and are likely to exchange information and learn from them, and this is likely to influence creative performance of the farmers in agricultural endeavors. Generally, literature suggests that social effects are important in farm inputs demand, and in agricultural production. Group members may have similar family backgrounds and this may drive them to behave in similar ways and the social influence from such similarity is referred to as contextual effect (Manski, 1993). In addition, individual farmers may exhibit similar behavior because of similar individual characteristics or sharing of same group environment, and the social effects associated with such external factors are referred to as correlated effects (Manski, 1993). In one of the recent studies, Deepa, Baber, Shukla, & Khan (2022) investigated the link between lack of social interaction at work and employee work effectiveness and findings suggested that social interaction had a significant positive impact on work effectiveness. The study also found that social interaction is important for both genders, and found no significant difference in the relationship between social interaction and work from home effectiveness for male and female employees. It is evident that the process of interaction has inherent influence mechanisms and this can contribute immensely to the creative performance of workers.

2.4 Social refreshment: The wellbeing of the worker constitutes one of the major components that promote a happy workplace. Therefore, the promotion of physical activity and healthy nutritional behavior at the workplace could be an integrated initiative that improves workers health and enhances business performance (Grimani, Aboagye & Kwak, 2019). This extends to the concept of workplace refreshment, drawn from refreshment in life as a whole. Workplace refreshment refers to any activity that refreshes and recreates, and which is capable of giving positive value to recreation, enjoyment and health and most often promotes work-life balance. In generic terms, refreshment as content implies prepared food or drinks intended for consumption in the workplace such as sausages, sandwiches, popcorn, ice cream and fresh produce. This is commonly referred to as snacks or light refreshment. At the same time heavy refreshment is available and this is often delivered in enterprises during break and here we talk of meals at work. The latter is close to refreshment in African indigenous work settings which is often spiced with heavy meals and drinks. Though sparingly viewed in modern organizations, meals at work are a customary practice in indigenous work setting particularly in Africa where work is accompanied by meals and drinks at work. Food and drinks plus consumption mode are culture bound and values of a given workplace determine the provision of refreshment at work. While it is well known how food can make us physically healthy, it remains unclear how the experience of eating might influence complex cognitive abilities such as creativity (Wang, Barbosa Escobar, Mathiesen, & Alves Da Mota, 2021), and this is very likely with the present focus on workplace refreshment and creative performance. We present the view that, by offering a rich multisensory experience, eating nourishes not only our bodies but also our mental well-being, and with this understanding it stands to contribute to creative activities of any venture or initiative. During group work activities, training, workshops, meetings and seminars, CIG farmers prepare food and drinks for refreshment which normally serves as a source of replenishment of loss energy, motivation and encouragement but may indirectly lead to creative performance at work. Abusage & Kwak (2019) investigated the impact of workplace nutrition and physical activity interventions on employees' productivity, work performance and workability and this yielded statistically significant changes on absenteeism, work performance and productivity. Therefore, it is very likely that refreshment can predict creative performance in the workplace.

2.5 Creative performance: Despite the fact that many orientations had been advanced for the definition of creative performance, it expresses the need for creative competence in order to effectively realize creative work behaviors in work activities (Fomba, 2019).

This implies a new way of doing things or solving work and task-related problems in the process of achieving strategic objectives of any venture and it is imperative to design strategic social rewards schemes to foster creative performance of farmers in local context.

For instance, farmers have a lot of challenges particularly with imported technologies that do not respond well to realities on ground and they need to be creative in their application. While Carr (1994) defined creativity as the generation and use of creative knowledge that it is a key to building sustainable competitive advantages, Penn State Extension (2020), considered it as the cognitive processes, personality traits, and developmental antecedent associated with individual creators. Despite the polarization in the definition of creativity, it should be perceived as the shortest way to search for unconventional wisdom and to produce paradigm-breaking ideas and innovation in problem solving. Smith (2003) further discovered that people largely fit into two categories of creativity, firstly the paradigmatic creative thinking that generates new ideas in small, incremental step, and secondly, the revolutionary creative thinking that opens bold new perspectives. It is interesting that both categories are found in teams and farm crews (Penn State Extension, 2020), and could be used by farmers to surmount many obstacles in group situations given appropriate social motivations. Therefore, farmers need to be motivated in order to deploy versatile skills to handle diverse challenges and creative competence cannot be under rated in the processes. The research of Tambo (2018) in recognizing and rewarding farmers creativity through contest findings suggest that farmers are active experimenters who continuously generate remarkable and locally adapted innovations, which can indirectly contribute to efforts to achieve sustainable agricultural intensification or to make agricultural climate smart. The personnel engaged in innovative work in modern organizations are not limited to industrial enterprises, but also need creative performance in the fields of agricultural technology research and development, creative service industry and so on (Zhenxing, Zanzan, Shuo & Haoyun, 2018). Extending creative performance to problem resolution during critical incidents, Fomba (2019) examined employees' perceptions of creativity rewards and effects on creative motive, competence and feelings of satisfaction in Cameroon. Analysis reported that non-material reward significantly predicted intrinsic creative motive of workers while material reward significantly determined extrinsic creative motive. Wang & Holahan (2017) explained that all innovations depend on creative work, which produces new and useful ideas, and motivating a creative workforce is an important concern for organizations and this is very necessary for farmer organizations no matter the type of rewards that will be drawn from their lifestyle. This requires an organizational culture that values innovation, where there is encouragement for personnel to think differently, take calculated risks, and challenge the status quo (Serrat, 2009). Farmers are risk takers since they create ventures and endowed with some entrepreneurial characteristics, and appropriate reward strategies will go a long way to promote their creative performances. Although creative performance had long been neglected in the area of agricultural psychology, it is understood that farmers think, learn, perceive and form attitude in the process of carryout their activities and they should be rewarded with social motivators to increase the level of creative performance in their businesses.

2.6 Theoretical orientation: Many theories exist in-context, and many have been used to understand and explain social motivators and creative performance. In the present study the Model of Culture Fit (Aycaan et al. 1999) and the componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1983) have been deployed in explaining the relationships of interest. The model of culture fit emanates from the socio-cultural realities of the people, and this implies lifestyle of a group of workers or farmers. The model asserts that the sociocultural environment affects internal work culture and human resource management (HRM) practices (Kanungo & Jaeger, 1990; Mendonca & Kanungo, 1994), and this implies social motivators drawn from the day-to-day life of farmers. Furthermore, the inter-face between societal and work level culture in any organized work setting has largely been neglected, and this has been captured and integrated in the Model of Culture Fit (Kanungo and Jaeger, 1990). In-context, the model upholds that people management at work requires the understanding of both internal and external environments since lifestyle is critical in people management practices. It influences human resource management practices by identifying socio-cultural needs, and transforming them into incentive schemes and this is the case with social motivators. This is the case with group belongingness, interaction and refreshment that are socio-cultural activities drawn from societal realities of the people and transported to work settings as motivators to performance.

The components of creativity model by Amabile (1998) suggest that organizational creativity is fashioned from three components: motivation, expertise and creative thinking. They no doubt require reward strategies to promote these components and culture-fit strategies are more responsive in spurring creativity. In short, Amabile (1983) proposed the componential theory of creativity to describe the creative process and the various influences on the process and its outcomes. This is relevant because farmers have the same cognitive structure and processes in deployment which will lead to creative performance at work. The theory assumes that there exists a continuum from low, ordinary levels of creativity found in everyday life to the highest levels of creativity found in significant inventions, performances, scientific discoveries, and there are degrees of creativity in the work of any single individual. The competitive edge of the Amabile's theory is that it could hold well with people experiencing any realities of the environment, and this is the case with the creative performance of farmers. The theory emphasizes domain relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, intrinsic task motivation and the social environment.

This is the rationale for using the theory in an agrarian context with people in local settings in occupational activities that could be very much explained by the use of the theory. It is therefore evident that both theories are relevant in explaining the link between social motivators and creative performance of farmers in local work settings.

2.7 The question of social motivators and creative performance

The Programme for the Improvement of Competitiveness of Family Agropastoral Farm (PCP-ACEFA) in west Region of Cameroon had been operating for 14 years and despite reports of its perceived responsiveness to the needs of farmers, no systematic study had been realized on the creative problem-solving strategies of the farmers. This inter-alia had been attributed to the nature of incentives administered to them to ensure effective work behavior. It is necessary to advocate that those cognitive operations are not limited only to persons in learning situations or white-collar ventures but also critical to local farmers in the process of realizing their strategic objectives. This stands as a rationale for the present investigation. Although previous studies (Amabile, 1996; Collins & Amabile, 1999) have examined the concept, measurement and put in place training mechanisms for creative performance, there are some gaps in motivating creative performance in local contexts considering that conventional motivators are often used, which at times do not build on the cultural realities of local people. In addition, small organizations at local levels had often been ignored in this analysis and in terms of context; the agricultural sector had often been ignored when it concerns creative performance and incentives as antecedents. It is therefore necessary to explore the agrarian sector since the results of the study will certainly add value to operations and directions for more research. Most studies on creativity had been realized in the educational setting as well as the use of the concept of social motivation, and a few in work and organizational psychology particularly in Cameroon. The present research stands to close the current gap and explore social motivators drawn from cultural realities of the people in the agricultural domain if they are capable of predicting creative performance. The shift from conventional motivators used to spur the behaviors of workers at work is expected to be responsive to the needs of the local workers. It would also be noted that much had been drawn from social psychology, which are the social motivators capable of driving creativity and innovation of farmers. The aim of this article is to investigate whether socio-cultural realities conceptualized as social motivators can influence the creative ability of farmers in terms of generating novel solutions to their problems. Specifically, the study examined the extent to which the dimensions of group belongingness, social interaction and refreshment will significantly affect creative performance of ACEFA farmers. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Ha1. Group belongingness of ACEFA farmers at work will significantly influence their creative performance during their respective group activities.

Ha2. Social interaction of ACEFA farmers at work will significantly influence their creative performance during their respective group activities

Ha3. Social refreshment of ACEFA farmers at work will significantly influence their creative performance during their respective group activities

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

In order to test the relationship between social motivators and creative performance, participants were recruited from the PCP-ACEFA Common Initiative Groups in the West Region, Cameroon.

Participants were recruited from the PCP-ACEFA Common Initiative Groups in the West Region, Cameroon and four accessible Divisional Technical Units of Menoua (162), Noun (150), Mifi/Koung-khi (185) and Nde (138) divisions. Sample constituted 643 farmers (302 males; 313 females) and purposive sampling technique was used since participants were judged as group members experiencing social motivators during their work with ACEFA. They were bonafide members of ACEFA farming groups created or co-opted to benefit from the various packages of their project. Apart from conventional schemes, these farmers have been exposed to social motivation packages, which have strengthened group farming initiatives and stand to enhance their sense of creative problem-solving. Most participants were holders of Ordinary Level Certificate (31.5%), followed by non-graduates (20.0%), Advance Level holders (19.2%), and First school leaving certificate (17.0%). It was also observed that some participants had bachelor's degree (9.8%), Master's degree (2.4%) and Ph.D (0.2%). Among the participants, 59.9% were married, 21.2% single, 12.1 divorced and 6.8% widow(er)s. Out of 900 questionnaires distributed, 643 were returned giving a response completion rate of 71.44%.

3.2 Measures for data collection

With regards to instrumentation, a self-report inventory was used to measure farmers' appreciation of social motivators and creative performance. Measure of group *belongingness* was designed to measure the attachment, sense of engagement that workers had towards their groups, and this was developed from literature (Peacock, Cowan, Irvine & Williams, 2020; Tony, 2022).

The sub-scale had 3 items and assessed sense of belonging, recognition and acceptance as a source of encouragement. Sample questions: “belonging to a common initiative group encourages me” and “Accepting me as a group member is a source of motivation to work.” The sub-scale has an internal reliability coefficient ($\alpha=.672$).

The measure of social interaction was designed to measure the attitudinal and interactional patterns and atmosphere of farmers, and it was developed from literature (De Clercq et al., 2015; Ataei et al., 2019; Munshi, 2004). The sub-scale had 3 items and indices were cooperation, social learning and healthy environment. Sample questions constituted “Access to extension services encourages me” and “Interacting with extension worker is a source of motivation,” with an alpha for the measure ($\alpha=.640$).

The measure for refreshment was designed to measure any activity that refreshes and is capable of giving positive value to recreation, enjoyment, health and bridges work-life balance, and this was developed from literature (Grimani et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021). The measure had 4 items and assessed drinking at work, availability of food and taking drinks to work, with an internal reliability coefficient ($\alpha=.756$).

The sub scale for *creative performance* was designed to measure implicit and explicit behaviors associated with creative performance of farmers and this was drawn from literature (Fomba, 2019; Tambo, 2018). The measure had 10 items ($\alpha=.827$), and measured new achievements, new ideas, new approaches in agriculture, agricultural problem solving, sharing new ideas, practical solutions, implementation of new ideas, innovative activities, creative problem-solving skills and risk taking.

Sample questions: “I come up with new ideas to improve on agricultural activities” and “I take risk to use new skill in agricultural activities.” Some items were deleted to raise alpha level. In sum, the instrument was considered as reliable with an aggregate alpha of 0.724. The variables were measured using 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= agree 4= strongly agree. Permission to carry out the study was requested and authorization granted to the investigator by the authority of PCP-ACEFA. Consent was sought and questionnaires were administered to volunteer group farmers. The inventory was self-administered and farmers were requested to fill them according to their perceptions. Incomplete questionnaires were discarded. Data were entered into SPSS, and descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation and regression were used to estimate the outcome measure.

4. Results of the study

Results relating to social motivators and creative performance of farmers have been analysed and presented on table 1. With regards to the dimension of social motivators, group belongingness was isolated ($M=3.20$; $SD=.706$) as the most prevalence, and followed by feelings of engagement ($M=3.17$; $SD=.739$). For social intersection, the most occurrence was visiting other people ($M=3.23$; $SD=.726$), while refreshment had eating during work ($M=2.74$; $SD=.988$) and availability of food ($M=2.66$; $SD=.1.035$) as the most prevalent factors. As concerns creative performance, new agricultural approaches had the highest mean score ($M=3.32$; $SD=.814$), followed by new ideas for improvement ($M=3.30$; $SD=.724$). This implies that farmers demonstrated highest level of coming up with new agricultural approaches with regards to creative performance at work in the Common Initiative Groups. Again, innovative group activities ($M=3.22$; $SD=.712$) and creative problem-solving ($M=3.22$; $SD=.738$) were the least reported factors with regards to creative performance at work.

Table 1: Descriptive for social motivators and creative performance

<i>Group belongingness</i>	Mean	Std. D	<i>Creative performance</i>	Mean	Std. D
Feelings of encouragement	3.20	.706	New achievement objectives	3.25	.755
Feelings of engagement	3.17	.739	New ideas for improvement	3.30	.724
Access group opportunities	3.11	.760	New agricultural approaches	3.32	.814
<i>Social interaction</i>			Agriculture problem-solving	3.28	.779
Access to interaction	3.12	.786	Sharing new ideas	3.29	.757
Visit to other people	3.23	.726	Practical solutions to problem	3.23	.799
Interaction in extension	3.15	.761	Implementation of new ideas	3.24	.732
<i>Refreshment</i>			Innovative group activities	3.22	.712
Eating during work	2.74	.988	Creative problem-solving	3.22	.738
Availability of food	2.66	1.035			
Drinking during work	2.46	1.024			
Taking drinks to work	2.28	1.016			

The core components of social motivators were computed to determine their inter-relationships, and findings have been presented on table 2.

Table 2: Bivariate correlation analysis, mean and standard deviation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	SD
Group membership (1)	1	.638**	.102*	.396**	-.061	.078	-.091*	-.031	9.49	1.71
Social Interaction (2)	.638**	1	.123**	.380**	-.058	.067	-.090*	-.132**	9.50	1.73
Refreshment (3)	.102*	.123**	1	.163**	-.060	.054	.044	.058	10.16	3.08
Creative Perform.(4)	.396**	.380**	.163**	1	-.079	.128**	-.053	.006	42.42	6.54
Sex (5)	-.061	-.058	-.060	-.079	1	-.044	-.007	-.054	1.538	.643
Age (6)	.078	.067	.054	.128**	-.044	1	-.077	.264**	2.96	.516
Education (7)	-.091*	-.090*	.044	-.053	-.007	-.077	1	-.010	2.89	1.340
Longevity CIG (8)	-.031	-.132**	.058	.006	-.054	.264**	-.010	1	3.16	.940

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to table 2, group membership positively and significantly related with social interaction ($r=.638$, $p<0.0$), creative performance ($r=.396$, $p<0.0$) at 0.01 level 2-tailed, refreshment ($r=.102$, $p<0.0$), and negatively and significantly related with education level ($r=-.091$) at 0.5 level 2-tailed, while relationships with age ($r=.078$, $p>0.0$), was positively insignificant, sex ($r=-.061$, $p<0.0$), and longevity in CIG ($r=-.031$, $p<0.0$) were negatively insignificant. Social interaction positively correlated significantly with refreshment ($r=.123$, $p<0.0$), creative performance ($r=.380$, $p<0.0$), and negatively correlated with education ($r=-.090$, $p<0.0$) and longevity in CIG ($r=-.132$, $p<0.05$), but failed to relate with age ($r=.067$, $p>0.5$) and sex ($r=-.058$, $p<0.00$). Again, refreshment significantly related with creative performance ($r=.163$, $p<0.0$), while relationship with age ($r=.054$), education ($r=.044$), longevity ($r=.058$) was insignificant. Creative performance correlated significantly with age ($r=.128$, $p<0.0$), but failed to relate with longevity ($r=.006$, $p>0.05$), sex ($r=-.079$, $p<0.0$) and education ($r=-.053$, $p<0.0$). Generally, analysis reported low and negative correlation between the indicators and creative performance. Analysis identified creative performance as having the highest mean score ($M=42.42$; $SD = 6.54$), followed by refreshment ($M=10.16$; $SD = 3.08$), social interaction ($M=9.50$; $SD = 1.73$) and group membership ($M=9.49$; $SD= 1.71$).

The hypothesized relationships were tested to estimate the influence of the predictors on the outcome measure, and results of the first hypothesis have been presented on Table3.

Table3: Regressing group membership on creative performance

Predictor	R ²	Unstandardized Beta (B)	SE B	Standardized Beta (β)	t-value	DF2	P
Group membership	0.154	1.535	.155	.392	9.914	541	.000

NB: R²=.0392^a; Adj.152; Sig.F = 0.000; F-value = 98.281; Group membership; $p < 0.05$

According to table 3, group membership significantly predicted creative performance of ACEFA farmers, $\beta=0.392$, $R^2=0.154$; $t=9.914$, $P (=0.000) < 0.05$. Group membership estimated creative performance at 15.4%, with the understanding that a one-unit increase in the level of group membership will lead to a corresponding one-unit increase in the level of creative performance ($b\text{-value}=0.373$). Results have a good fit ($F\text{-value}=32.713$), considering that the change is significantly different from zero. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming the influence of group membership on the creative performance of ACEFA farmers.

Table4: Regressing social interaction on creative performance of farmers

Predictor	R ²	Unstandardized Beta (B)	SE B	Standardized Beta (β)	t-value	DF2	P
Group membership	0.145	1.411	.144	.380	9.825	571	.000

NB: R²=.380^a; Adj .143; Sig F = 0.000; F-value = 96.537; social interaction; $p < 0.05$

The second hypothesis proposed that the social interaction between CIG farmers and ACEFA workers will significantly determine their creative performance, and regression results have been shown in Table 4. Social interaction was reported as a significant predictor of creative performance, ($\beta=.380$, $R^2=.145$; $t (571) =9.825$, $P=.000$), and it was able to explain the variations in the dependent variable at 14.5%. findings suggests that a unit increase in interaction will lead to a corresponding increase in creative performance by 0.144 units, confirming the model as a good fit ($F\text{-value}= 96.537$), and consequently accepting the alternative hypothesis.

Table 5: Regressing refreshment on creative performance of farmers

Predictor	R ²	Unstandardized Beta (B)	SE B	Standardized Beta (β)	t-value	DF2	P
Group refreshment	0.027	.349	.089	.163	3.939	565	.000

NB: R²=.163^a; Adj .025; Sig F = 0.000; F-value = 15.516; refreshment; $p < 0.05$

It was reported that refreshment during work significantly predicted creative performance of ACEFA farmers, $\beta=0.163$, $R^2=0.027$; $t=3.939$, $P (=0.000) < 0.05$. Refreshment estimated creative performance at 2.7%, with the understanding that a one-unit increase in the level of group refreshment will lead to a corresponding one-unit increase in the level of creative performance (b-value=0.089). The model was shown as a good fit (F-value=15.516) considering that the change is significantly different from zero. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming the influence of group refreshment on the creative performance of ACEFA farmers.

5. Discussion

The present study was designed to find out if workplace social motivators drawn from socio-cultural realities of workers have any influence on their creative performance patterns. Precisely, it explored the strength of the core and overall components of social motivators as determinants of creative performance of farmers. Results of group belongingness demonstrated significance influence on creative performance of ACEFA farmers. This conforms Peacock & al. (2020) on team belonging and interest to engage in education, which highlighted the importance of the teams in promoting a sense of belonging to meaningful group interactions and interest in group activities. Although it was on learning, creative performance, it is an indicator that the sense of belonging can influence positive goal-directed behaviors and this does not exclude creative performance of farmers. It was evident that in local context sense of belonging could be instrumental to creativity in problem solving processes with farmers considering that they have activities that are often moderated by challenges.

Social interaction significantly predicted creative performance of farmers in resolving matters relating to strategic group activities. This corroborates with Ataei et al. (2019) on social interaction and work-related behaviors that unveiled the critical role of social power in network structures and implementation strategies in the process of implementing conservation agriculture initiatives. This implies that interactions among farmers could be very resourceful considering that learning will be generated in creative problem solving activities. Results are also supported by Gathiaka (2010) who examined the extent to which social interactions affect production behavior of farmers and returns in small holder agriculture. It is obvious that social interaction promotes exchange of information and this is likely to influence creative performance of the farmers in their agricultural endeavors. In the course of interaction by the farmers, culture-fit solutions are generated to respond to their problems and these are decisions that they could easily support in their groups to enhance productivity.

Analysis confirmed that refreshment during work significantly predicted creative performance of ACEFA farmers. This concurs with results obtained by Grimani, Aboagye & Kwak (2019) on workplace nutrition and physical activity intervention studies that yielded statistically significant changes on work performance, workability and productivity. In the same light, the results of Wang et al., (2021) explained growing body of literature that demonstrated the capacity of human senses in sparking creativity. This is feasible in local context considering that refreshment goes with wine and meals and manifestations by members could delve into creative talks and actions that could be developed and used in problem solving ventures. It follows then that eating as one of the most multisensory activity of all human behaviors, should be a playground for creative thinking linked to group activities. Results are also supported by Fomba (2019) who reported the predictive powers of non-material reward on intrinsic creative motive of workers as material reward significantly determined extrinsic creative motive. It is therefore likely that refreshment as material reward of farmers can spur them into creative performance due to the stimulation of the environment. This implies that environmental factors are capable of advancing creative work activities but results disagreed with Fomba & Fomba (2019) on indigenous incentives, which failed to predict performance of workers but were instead significant with satisfaction. This could be due to the fact that farmers are in traditional context while the concerned organization was structured in a modern organization in a metropolis.

5.1 Implications and conclusion

The study investigated social motivation strategies of employees and creative performance in a local context and the present social motivation strategies were isolated from conventional work settings since the motivators were crafted from the cultural realities of the workers. The study highlighted the critical role of cultural values and it is evident that group belongingness, social interaction and refreshment by farmers in indigenous work settings can influence creative performance, which is a problem-solving activity. While sense of belongingness and social interaction had a commendable effect, refreshment was low. This could be attributed to the fact that refreshment is a recreational facility and closer to the wellbeing of the workers than resolving work related problems.

The findings have several important theoretical and practical implications on work and management of people in their own locale. The Culture-Fit Model (Aycan et al. 1999) has been evidenced as a theory capable of explaining relationships in local context and should be expanded, considering that foreign models cannot completely capture the realities of the local setting. This stems from the perceptions, attitudes and motivations of the workers depending on what needs they have to satisfy with that understanding that needs are culture-bound. This also builds on the premise that the behavior of any work entity is determined to an extent by the cultural values of the wider environment. This is how indigenous social motivators relate to creative performances which generally complement the conventional motivators of ACEFA organization.

Interaction at work is perceived in-context as an extension of community life; workers take food and drinks to their farms, sing and even dance during work processes and this serves as a social and life support system to the farmers. This often induces workers to high inspiration and reflection with regards to problem-solving and motivates team members to be creative and share creative ideas among themselves (Suzanna & John, 2020).

This draws from their humanistic lifestyle in society, which is used at work to stimulate creativity in farmers to search for novel solutions to emerging challenges. This is equally the case with the componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1983) that asserts that the work environment and motivation are capable of influencing creativity. Social motivators encourages workers to bring in new ideas, skills, techniques, attitudes in the course of any project and this is designed to foster competitive edges in the market and this is why the interplay of social motivators and creativity are worthy of investigation.

Despite frantic efforts made to realize the study, there are some limitations that might have moderated the results and expectations of the study. The sample was limited to a region in Cameroon and this may affect the ecological validity and the wider application of the results. Therefore, the extension of the study to farmers in other regions of operation by ACEFA project is critical. A quantitative design was adopted for the study with some structural items and this might have been imposing and some participants unable to express their opinions extensively to have more balanced information about the state of social motivation and creative performance on ground. This expresses the need for qualitative study capable of exploring more opinion and experiences of the participants for triangulation of results. The focus of the study was more on social motivators within a wider application of conventional motivators by the project and there was no comparison between conventional and social motivators to test that which is more significant on creative performance of the farmers. The sector of interest was also limited due to the fact that the project was lodged in the agricultural domain and it would be necessary to expand to other sectors for a more comprehensive opinion, analysis and results. Despite the limitations indicated, the overall quality of the paper has not been affected considering that the study has realized a recommendable study on social motivators and creative performance in an indigenous agricultural work setting with exploitable results.

It has been argued that although individual factors determine creativity, social environmental factors, and particularly organizational factors can influence creativity of workers and this has been shown in the present study. Creativity is indispensable in realizing organizational goals and there is a dire need for workers to be more creative in order to meet the competitive demands of a changing workplace (Fomba, 2019). Despite ongoing debates, there are evidences that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play different roles in activating and energizing varying creative behaviors of employee in-contexts. But considering the constraint of organizational resources, researchers and managers are eager to know which mechanisms are most useful for boosting employee creativity (Liu, 2016). This expresses the need for testing realities with the intention of resuscitating social motivators for necessary integration into mainstream incentive schemes. Interest in research on reward and creativity is gradually gaining grounds and the relationship between social motivators and creative activities of farmers stand to spur more studies with the application of cultural values to motivation strategies. In all, the study had shed more light on the relationship between social motivators and creative performance with the understanding that group membership, social interaction and refreshment, which are socio-cultural activities are important factors capable of contributing to creative action of farmers at work. Consequently the study provides a firm foundation for a deeper understanding of how indigenous motivators – cultural and social values can relate to creativity of workers in the agricultural sector.

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