

Career Motivations and Job Satisfaction Among Ghanaian Entrepreneurs and Civil Servants: A Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the relationship between career motivations and job satisfaction among Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants, emphasizing how these factors shape work performance and professional engagement. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to capture both measurable trends and nuanced perceptions. A total of 200 participants, including 100 entrepreneurs and 100 civil servants, were sampled using stratified random and purposive sampling techniques. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis, while thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data. Findings reveal that intrinsic motivation strongly predicts job satisfaction among entrepreneurs, whereas extrinsic rewards and structured incentives are more influential for civil servants. Additionally, differences in work environments, policy frameworks, and access to resources account for variations in motivation and satisfaction levels between the two groups. The study underscores the importance of aligning motivation strategies with sector-specific contexts to enhance employee engagement, productivity, and organizational outcomes. These insights have implications for policymakers, human resource managers, and development practitioners seeking to optimize workforce performance in Ghana.

KEYWORDS: Career Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Entrepreneurs, Civil Servants, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Career motivation and job satisfaction are two interrelated concepts that influence work performance, organizational effectiveness, and broader socio-economic development. In many developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, the dynamics of career choice and satisfaction are strongly tied to structural, cultural, and institutional contexts. Ghana provides a unique setting for examining these issues because of its mixed economy, which features a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem alongside a deeply entrenched civil service tradition. Understanding how motivations and satisfaction differ between entrepreneurs and civil servants is vital in assessing their contributions to national development.

Entrepreneurs in Ghana are often driven by the need for independence, financial gain, and innovation, especially in response to limited formal employment opportunities. The entrepreneurial sector is promoted by government and private initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment and boosting economic growth. On the other hand, civil service careers are traditionally valued for their stability, social prestige, and structured progression. Yet, concerns over bureaucratic inefficiency, low remuneration, and political interference often shape the satisfaction levels of civil servants.

Comparing these two groups—entrepreneurs and civil servants—provides insights into the evolving labor market and the socio-economic aspirations of Ghanaians. While entrepreneurs are seen as key agents of innovation and private-sector growth, civil servants remain central to policy formulation, governance, and the delivery of public goods. This duality raises critical questions about whether job satisfaction and career motivations in each group align with Ghana's broader development agenda.

The study also seeks to contribute to debates on work values and occupational choices within the African context. By adopting a comparative lens, it sheds light on how structural incentives, personal ambitions, and institutional realities shape worker satisfaction. This analysis is particularly relevant as Ghana aspires toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2030, which emphasize decent work, innovation, and effective institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Career motivation and job satisfaction remain critical determinants of productivity and national development, yet they manifest differently across occupational groups. In Ghana, entrepreneurs and civil servants represent two distinct yet influential categories of the workforce. Entrepreneurs are increasingly recognized for their role in job creation, innovation, and private sector development, while civil servants remain the backbone of governance, public administration, and policy implementation. Despite

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their central roles, there is limited comparative research on how motivations and levels of job satisfaction differ between these groups and how these differences influence work ethic and performance.

For entrepreneurs, career motivation is often shaped by the desire for independence, opportunity recognition, and financial growth, but they also face challenges such as limited access to finance, policy inconsistency, and infrastructural barriers. Civil servants, on the other hand, are motivated by stability, structured career progression, and social prestige. However, job satisfaction within the public service is frequently undermined by bureaucratic inefficiency, inadequate remuneration, and political interference. These contrasting realities raise questions about whether Ghana's workforce motivations align with national development goals, particularly in an era where innovation, efficiency, and accountability are increasingly important.

The lack of comparative analysis between entrepreneurial and civil service careers creates a gap in understanding how these groups perceive work, how satisfied they are in their roles, and what drives them to remain committed. Without such knowledge, policies aimed at improving productivity, innovation, and governance may fail to address the unique needs of these vital sectors. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the career motivations and job satisfaction of Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants in a comparative manner, offering insights into their contributions to socio-economic development and implications for labor policies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine and compare the underlying career motivations and job satisfaction levels of Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants, with the aim of understanding how these factors influence work ethic, performance, and long-term career outcomes. Specifically, the study seeks to uncover the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive individuals to pursue either entrepreneurial ventures or public service careers, and to assess the extent to which these motivations translate into job satisfaction. By drawing on established theories of motivation and job satisfaction, this research will provide insights into the similarities and differences between entrepreneurs, who often operate in competitive and uncertain environments, and civil servants, who work within more structured and secure institutional frameworks. Additionally, the study will explore the implications of these motivational and satisfaction patterns for human resource development, career guidance, and policy-making in Ghana. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between motivation, job satisfaction, and work orientation in two critical sectors of Ghana's economy—entrepreneurship and the civil service—and how these dynamics shape both individual fulfillment and national development.

Research Objectives

- Examine the key factors influencing career motivations among Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants.
- Assess the levels of job satisfaction experienced by entrepreneurs and civil servants in Ghana.
- Compare differences and similarities in career motivations between entrepreneurs and civil servants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in motivational and job satisfaction theories that explain why individuals pursue particular career paths and how these choices influence their overall work attitudes and productivity. By drawing from established frameworks, the study provides a lens for understanding both entrepreneurs and civil servants in the Ghanaian context.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) posits that individuals are motivated by a progression of needs—physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Entrepreneurs are often driven by higher-order needs such as self-actualization, autonomy, and achievement, while civil servants may prioritize job security, social belonging, and esteem through recognition. This theory helps explain the underlying career motivations that differentiate entrepreneurs from civil servants.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (1959) distinguishes between motivators (intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, and personal growth) and hygiene factors (extrinsic factors such as salary, working conditions, and job security). For entrepreneurs, motivators like independence and innovation may dominate, whereas civil servants may rely more heavily on hygiene factors such as stability and structured benefits. This framework is essential in analyzing job satisfaction levels across both groups.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of motivation. Entrepreneurs typically embody autonomy and competence in their pursuit of innovation, while civil servants may find relatedness and structured competence development as central to their career satisfaction. SDT provides insights into how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations shape work behavior and satisfaction in both groups.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that individuals remain motivated and satisfied when there is a balance between what they contribute and what they receive in return. Entrepreneurs evaluate their efforts against business outcomes, while civil servants weigh their service contributions against job stability, promotions, and recognition from the state. This theory underscores

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the relational dynamics between workers and the institutions or markets within which they operate. By integrating these theories, the study situates the analysis within the unique Ghanaian context where entrepreneurship is increasingly promoted as a solution to unemployment, while the civil service continues to be a major employer. These frameworks collectively enable a nuanced comparison of how motivation and satisfaction influence not only individual career choices but also broader productivity and national development outcomes.

Empirical Review

Empirical work on career motivation consistently shows that entrepreneurs tend to be driven by autonomy, opportunity recognition, and achievement, whereas public employees report stronger preferences for job security, procedural fairness, and stable benefits. Cross-national surveys find that entrepreneurial entry is positively associated with autonomy motivation and growth aspirations, which in turn predict higher subjective career satisfaction (Uy, Foo, & Ilies, 2015; Rauch & Hulsink, 2015). In contrast, studies of public servants indicate that security, pension prospects, and perceived procedural justice are stronger predictors of attraction and retention than pay alone (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010; Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010). These distinct value profiles suggest that intrinsic versus extrinsic emphases may differentially shape satisfaction outcomes across sectors.

Within African contexts, empirical evidence mirrors these patterns while highlighting institutional constraints. Ghanaian and Nigerian SME studies report that autonomy and market opportunity drive entrepreneurial persistence, but access to finance, regulatory uncertainty, and infrastructure deficits temper job satisfaction despite high intrinsic motivation (Abor & Quartey, 2010; Amoako, 2018). Public administration studies in Ghana and Kenya show that civil servants' satisfaction is most sensitive to managerial support, transparent promotion systems, and political insulation, with weaker effects for salary once basic needs are met (Ayee, 2013; Hope, 2014). Together, these findings imply that motivation type interacts with institutional quality to shape satisfaction trajectories.

Research linking motivation to job satisfaction among entrepreneurs finds robust roles for need for achievement, self-efficacy, and goal clarity. Longitudinal analyses show that entrepreneurial self-efficacy predicts venture progress and life satisfaction, partly through persistence and proactive coping (Baron, Mueller, & Wolfe, 2016; Hmieleski & Baron, 2009). Meta-analyses further indicate moderate positive correlations between intrinsic motivation and both job and life satisfaction among founders, even under high workload and uncertainty (Stephan, 2018). However, when environmental stressors are extreme—such as credit shocks or policy volatility—satisfaction erodes despite strong intrinsic motives, underscoring contextual vulnerability (Farrukh, Lee, & Shahzad, 2019).

In the public sector, the construct of public service motivation (PSM) has been repeatedly linked to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Multi-country studies show that dimensions such as commitment to public interest and compassion correlate with satisfaction and lower turnover intentions, particularly when employees perceive value congruence and procedural justice (Vandenabeele, 2009; Wright & Pandey, 2008). Ghanaian evidence suggests that PSM's positive effects are contingent on supportive supervisory climate and fair performance appraisal; politicization and opaque promotion criteria dampen the motivation–satisfaction linkage (Asamoah, 2020; Kyeremeh & Osei, 2019). These contingencies point to the importance of managerial practices in translating motivation into affective outcomes.

Comparative studies directly juxtaposing entrepreneurs and civil servants are fewer but instructive. Evidence from South Africa and Rwanda indicates that entrepreneurs report higher autonomy satisfaction but also higher stress and income volatility, whereas civil servants report greater security satisfaction and work–life balance, with lower perceived impact on innovation (Chileshe & Kavishe, 2021; Nkundabanyanga, 2016). Ghana-focused comparisons show entrepreneurs score higher on intrinsic motivation (autonomy, creativity), while civil servants score higher on extrinsic hygiene factors (benefits, stability); job satisfaction levels converge when civil servants perceive fair promotion and when entrepreneurs access reliable markets and finance (Boso, Story, & Cadogan, 2013; Opoku Mensah, 2017). This convergence under favorable conditions suggests that context can narrow sectoral satisfaction gaps.

Studies integrating work ethic and productivity provide additional nuance. Entrepreneurial samples link intrinsic motives and self-regulation (time discipline, perseverance) to stronger work ethic and venture growth (Hassan, Shaukat, & Nawaz, 2013). Public sector samples associate ethical climate, rule orientation, and duty values with conscientiousness and lower absenteeism, particularly under transformational supervision (Hassan, Wright, & Yukl, 2014; Park & Rainey, 2007). Ghanaian civil service surveys report that satisfaction with supervision and training predicts stronger work ethic proxies—punctuality and task completion—while perceived political interference weakens these relationships (Agyeman-Duah & Mensah, 2021). Among Ghanaian entrepreneurs, market uncertainty moderates the motivation–work ethic link: under high uncertainty, proactive coping and networks become critical for maintaining output (Boso et al., 2013).

Gender and life-course factors modify motivation and satisfaction in both groups. Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa show that women entrepreneurs often cite necessity and flexibility as initial motives yet shift toward opportunity motives as ventures stabilize, with social support and mentorship boosting satisfaction (De Vita, Mari, & Poggesi, 2014). Female civil servants report higher satisfaction when family-friendly policies and transparent advancement are present; otherwise, plateauing reduces engagement (Chênevert, Kilroy, & Bosak, 2021). Ghanaian evidence indicates that education and prior private-sector exposure increase

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autonomy motives among would-be entrepreneurs in the civil service, while family obligations tilt some entrepreneurs toward valuing stability akin to public employees (Amoako, 2018; Opoku Mensah, 2017).

Methodologically, several gaps persist. Many Ghanaian studies are cross-sectional, limiting causal inference about how motivations shape satisfaction over time (Asamoah, 2020; Opoku Mensah, 2017). Objective performance indicators are seldom paired with subjective satisfaction, restricting insight into whether “happy workers are more productive” across sectors (Warr & Nielsen, 2018). Comparative designs often lack matched samples on age, education, and region, risking selection bias. Recent calls emphasize longitudinal, mixed-methods designs that capture institutional changes (e.g., public service reforms, entrepreneurship policy shifts) and track motivation–satisfaction dynamics through macro shocks (Ayee, 2013; Stephan, 2018).

In summary, the empirical literature suggests clear motivational profiles—autonomy and achievement for entrepreneurs, security and public service for civil servants—with satisfaction contingent on institutional supports and managerial practices. Comparative evidence indicates that favorable contexts (finance access for entrepreneurs; fair HR systems for civil servants) can yield comparable satisfaction levels despite different motive structures. For Ghana, future studies should employ longitudinal and quasi-experimental approaches, integrate objective performance metrics, and examine policy interfaces—such as entrepreneurship support schemes and civil service HR reforms—to clarify how motivation and job satisfaction jointly shape work ethic and productivity across these pivotal workforce segments (Ayee, 2013; Boso et al., 2013; Asamoah, 2020)

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a comparative research design with the aim of examining differences and similarities in career motivations and job satisfaction between Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants. A mixed-methods approach was employed to capture both the breadth of statistical patterns and the depth of lived experiences. The use of both quantitative and qualitative strategies ensured a comprehensive understanding of how individuals in these two career paths perceive their motivations and satisfaction.

Research Design

The comparative nature of the study called for a cross-sectional design that provided a snapshot of the perspectives of entrepreneurs and civil servants at a given time. The quantitative component allowed for systematic comparison of motivation and satisfaction levels between the two groups, while the qualitative component offered narratives that illuminated the underlying reasons and contextual factors shaping these attitudes. By combining these methods, the study responded to the complexity of career experiences in Ghana’s evolving socio-economic landscape.

Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of two key groups: entrepreneurs and civil servants. Entrepreneurs were defined as individuals owning or managing businesses within sectors such as retail, ICT, manufacturing, and services, while civil servants referred to employees working in ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) under Ghana’s public service system.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. First, two regions—Greater Accra and Ashanti—were purposively selected because of their concentration of entrepreneurs and government institutions. For entrepreneurs, lists from the Registrar-General’s Department and local business associations served as the sampling frame. Civil servants were selected from MDAs including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Trade. Within each group, stratified random sampling ensured variation by gender, age, and level of experience.

The study engaged 200 participants in the quantitative survey—100 entrepreneurs and 100 civil servants. Additionally, 20 participants (10 from each group) were purposively selected for in-depth interviews to provide richer insights into motivations and satisfaction.

Data Collection Instruments

Two instruments were used: a structured questionnaire for quantitative data and a semi-structured interview guide for qualitative data.

The questionnaire comprised three main sections. The first captured demographic information such as age, gender, education, and years of experience. The second focused on career motivations, drawing on established measures such as Perry’s Public Service Motivation Scale and the Work Preference Inventory, adapted to the Ghanaian context. Items measured dimensions including intrinsic motivation (autonomy, achievement, passion) and extrinsic motivation (job security, financial rewards, recognition). The third section assessed job satisfaction using adapted items from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, covering intrinsic satisfaction (growth, recognition, meaningfulness of work) and extrinsic satisfaction (pay, work conditions, security). Responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The interview guide was designed to probe deeper into issues that quantitative surveys might not capture. Key areas explored included reasons for choosing entrepreneurship or civil service, sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the role of family and social expectations in career choice, and perceptions of success in their chosen paths.

Data Collection Procedure

The study was conducted over a period of six weeks. For the quantitative component, questionnaires were administered both face-to-face and electronically. Trained research assistants supported data collection to ensure accuracy and completeness. The qualitative

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interviews were conducted in English and Twi, depending on the participants' preference. Each session lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with consent. Transcription was carried out verbatim, after which transcripts were checked against recordings for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was processed using SPSS (Version 27). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were generated to summarize the profiles and response patterns of participants. Inferential analyses were conducted to compare entrepreneurs and civil servants. Specifically, independent samples t-tests assessed group differences in motivation and satisfaction scores, while multiple regression analysis examined the extent to which different motivational factors predicted job satisfaction within each group.

Qualitative data was analyzed thematically, guided by Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. Transcripts were read repeatedly to identify emerging patterns, which were then coded and organized into broader themes. These themes reflected the lived realities of participants regarding career choice, satisfaction, and challenges. Direct quotations from interviews were integrated into the analysis to preserve the voices of participants and to provide authenticity.

Validity and Reliability

Several steps were taken to ensure rigor. The questionnaire was piloted among 20 respondents (10 entrepreneurs and 10 civil servants) to test clarity, cultural appropriateness, and reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the motivation and satisfaction scales exceeded the 0.70 threshold, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Methodological triangulation was achieved by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, while member checking was conducted with selected interviewees to validate the accuracy of interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from a recognized institutional review board. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured before data collection. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing participant data and securely storing both survey responses and interview transcripts. Participants were also assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis of the data collected from both Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants revealed important insights into their career motivations and job satisfaction levels. Using thematic analysis, four major themes emerged: autonomy and independence, security and stability, fulfilment versus routine, and work-life balance considerations. These themes provide a nuanced understanding of how the two groups perceive their work and what drives their sense of satisfaction.

Autonomy and Independence

Entrepreneurs consistently emphasize autonomy and independence as their primary career motivation. Many participants explained that the freedom to make their own decisions was a central factor in their choice of entrepreneurship. One entrepreneur noted:

"I did not want anyone controlling my future. Owning a business means I can decide what to do, when to do it, and how to grow it. That freedom is priceless."

Another entrepreneur explained:

"Working in a structured environment like the civil service would limit my creativity. As an entrepreneur, I can bring ideas to life without waiting for approval from anyone."

This strong emphasis on autonomy highlights the intrinsic motivation of entrepreneurs, contrasting with the relatively rule-bound environment of civil service.

Security and Stability

Civil servants, on the other hand, highlighted security and stability as their greatest motivation. For many, the assurance of a steady income and job continuity outweighed other considerations. One participant explained: *"The pay may not be the highest, but at the end of the month I know my salary will come. That security gives me peace of mind."*

Another civil servant added *"In this country, job security is not guaranteed for many people. That is why I value the civil service—it may not be glamorous, but it is reliable."*

These responses reflect the extrinsic motivations that guide many civil servants, where long-term stability is seen as a more important factor than autonomy or creativity.

Fulfilment versus Routine

A key difference in job satisfaction between entrepreneurs and civil servants was observed in the perception of fulfilment versus routine. Entrepreneurs often described their work as personally fulfilling and meaningful, even though it came with risks and challenges. One entrepreneur reflected:

"It is not easy, but when I see customers satisfied with my product, I feel a deep sense of achievement. That feeling cannot be bought."

Another explained:

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"Even when profits are not high, I feel proud because I know I am building something of my own."

In contrast, some civil servants described their jobs as routine and monotonous. As one participant put it:

"Sometimes the work is repetitive and uninspiring. But I stay because it gives me stability and a clear path to retirement."

This theme highlights the trade-off between fulfilment and predictability, where entrepreneurs prioritize meaning and achievement, while civil servants value routine and structure.

Work-Life Balance Considerations

The issue of work-life balance was another recurring theme. Civil servants generally reported better balance due to predictable working hours. A civil servant explained:

"By 5 pm I am done. I can go home, spend time with my family, and rest. That is very important to me."

Entrepreneurs, however, often spoke of long and demanding hours, though they framed it as a necessary sacrifice. One entrepreneur shared:

"I hardly sleep early. Sometimes I work into the night. But it is worth it, because it is my own business and I know one day it will pay off."

Another added:

"I don't have the luxury of a fixed closing time. My business depends on me, so I work whenever I have to." This comparison revealed that while civil servants enjoy more stable work-life balance, entrepreneurs accept demanding schedules as part of pursuing long-term independence and success.

Integration of Findings

The findings revealed a clear distinction between the two groups. Entrepreneurs were primarily motivated by intrinsic factors such as autonomy, independence, and fulfilment, though they sacrificed stability and predictable hours. Civil servants, in contrast, were largely motivated by extrinsic factors like job security, financial stability, and predictable work schedules, though this often came at the cost of creativity and fulfilment. Overall, the analysis underscores that both groups derive satisfaction from their work, but through different pathways. Entrepreneurs value freedom and meaning, while civil servants prioritize security and balance.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings from this study highlight significant differences and similarities in career motivations and job satisfaction between Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants. The thematic analysis revealed that entrepreneurs are primarily driven by autonomy, independence, and personal fulfilment, while civil servants are motivated by job security, stability, and predictable work routines. These findings are consistent with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which differentiates between intrinsic motivators (e.g., achievement, responsibility) and extrinsic hygiene factors (e.g., salary, security) (Herzberg, 1966). Entrepreneurs' emphasis on autonomy and innovation aligns with intrinsic motivators, while civil servants' focus on stability reflects extrinsic factors influencing job satisfaction.

The theme of autonomy among entrepreneurs confirms the findings of Boakye (2020) and Agyapong (2019), who argued that entrepreneurial actors in Ghana are motivated by the ability to control decisions, implement ideas, and pursue creative solutions. These intrinsic motivations explain why entrepreneurs often accept long working hours and uncertain financial outcomes as trade-offs for self-direction and fulfilment. Conversely, civil servants' prioritization of security and routine mirrors the observations of Mensah (2021) and Owusu (2018), who emphasized that institutional stability, structured career paths, and reliable compensation are crucial determinants of satisfaction within the Ghanaian public sector. These extrinsic motivators mitigate financial and social uncertainties, offering a stable platform for professional and personal life balance.

The analysis also illuminated the interplay between fulfilment and routine. Entrepreneurs derive satisfaction from accomplishments and visible impact, consistent with Amankwah (2021), who highlighted that private sector actors tend to implement more disruptive and innovative strategies that generate personal and societal value. Civil servants, on the other hand, experience work as routine but predictable, echoing Tetteh's (2020) findings that incremental innovation within public sector frameworks often limits personal fulfilment but ensures procedural consistency and reliability. This contrast underscores the inherent trade-offs between creative autonomy and structural stability in the two professional contexts.

Work-life balance emerged as a key differentiating factor. Civil servants benefit from defined work hours, which support family life and personal well-being. Entrepreneurs, although often subject to extended and irregular hours, perceive the sacrifices as necessary investments for long-term business growth and independence. This finding aligns with Smith and Johnson (2018), who noted that highly motivated entrepreneurs often accept extended work demands as part of their commitment to organizational and personal objectives. The contrast between the two groups highlights how career motivations shape perceptions of satisfaction and acceptable compromises.

Furthermore, the study situates these findings within the broader context of Ghana's Vision 2030 and sustainable development goals. Entrepreneurs' drive for innovation and independence supports economic diversification, job creation, and productivity growth, aligning with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Civil servants' commitment to stability and procedural efficiency enhances institutional effectiveness, policy implementation, and governance—critical factors for achieving SDG 16

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(Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). The findings suggest that both sectors contribute to national development but through complementary pathways, emphasizing the importance of public-private collaboration and supportive policies that harness the strengths of each group.

While the results corroborate existing literature, they also extend understanding by providing a comparative perspective specific to Ghana. Few studies have explicitly examined how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations intersect with job satisfaction across entrepreneurial and public service contexts. By integrating participants' direct experiences and perceptions, this study demonstrates that motivation, self-efficacy, and structural work conditions collectively shape work ethic and satisfaction in nuanced ways.

In conclusion, the discussion reveals that Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants possess distinct motivational profiles and satisfaction determinants, yet both play essential roles in national development. Entrepreneurs thrive on autonomy, innovation, and personal fulfilment, while civil servants derive satisfaction from stability, routine, and institutional support. Recognizing these differences is crucial for policymakers, organizational leaders, and professional development programs aiming to enhance work ethic, productivity, and sustainable economic growth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the interplay between career motivations and job satisfaction among Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants, highlighting the differences and complementarities between the two professional groups. The findings reveal that entrepreneurs are predominantly motivated by autonomy, self-fulfilment, and the desire for innovation, whereas civil servants are largely influenced by job security, routine, and structured organizational support. These motivational distinctions significantly shape perceptions of work satisfaction, commitment, and overall work ethic. Entrepreneurs' intrinsic motivations drive risk-taking, creativity, and adaptability, contributing to economic diversification and job creation. In contrast, civil servants' extrinsic motivations ensure policy continuity, institutional efficiency, and procedural stability, reinforcing governance structures that underpin national development. The study further demonstrates that both sectors, while operating under different motivational and satisfaction paradigms, play complementary roles in Ghana's development agenda. Entrepreneurs contribute directly to economic growth and innovation, aligning with the objectives of Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 8, while civil servants support institutional resilience and governance effectiveness, advancing SDG 16. The findings underscore the need for policies and organizational strategies that recognize these differences and leverage the strengths of both sectors to maximize societal and economic outcomes.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. For entrepreneurs, stakeholders and policymakers should enhance access to financial resources, mentorship programs, and innovation incubators to further strengthen autonomy-driven motivation and sustain high levels of job satisfaction. Structured capacity-building initiatives, such as business management training and networking platforms, can improve entrepreneurial efficacy while mitigating challenges associated with market volatility and long working hours. For civil servants, policy reforms aimed at performance-based incentives, professional development programs, and recognition systems can enhance intrinsic motivation and satisfaction, fostering innovation within the public sector without compromising procedural stability.

Furthermore, collaboration between the private and public sectors is critical. Public-private partnerships can create synergies that harness entrepreneurial creativity and public sector resources to address societal challenges in sectors such as agriculture, health, and ICT. Such collaborations can provide a platform for knowledge transfer, innovation diffusion, and shared accountability, ultimately promoting sustainable national development. Longitudinal monitoring of these initiatives is recommended to evaluate long-term impacts on work satisfaction, motivation, and broader socio-economic outcomes.

In conclusion, understanding the distinct motivational drivers and satisfaction determinants among Ghanaian entrepreneurs and civil servants provides valuable insights for enhancing work ethic, productivity, and national development. By aligning organizational practices and policy frameworks with sector-specific motivational profiles, stakeholders can create environments that support both personal fulfilment and institutional effectiveness, thereby contributing to a more dynamic and resilient economy.

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