MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS OF LECTURERS OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the primary objective was to ascertain what factors motivate lecturers of private universities in Ghana. It also sought to determine whether these employees perceive the motivating factors as readily available to them or not. The study examined the ranked importance of motivational factors of university lecturers. Using descriptive survey, data was collected and analysed in terms of descriptive statistics. Findings suggest high salary and personal development are the main motivating factors of university lecturers. Carefully designed reward systems that include high salary, opportunity for personal development, fringe benefits, and non-monetary compensation should be considered.

Keywords: employee, motivational factors, perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tertiary education sector plays an important role in the economy of any nation and the employees of these institutions are the best resources responsible for delivering good services to customers [1]. The establishment of private universities in Ghana has increased access to tertiary education in Ghana. However, there is doubt, as to whether the increased competition has resulted in service improvements.

The ability of private universities to offer a wide range of services with a high level of quality will enable them to win a niche in the higher educational sector in both Ghana and in Africa. It is, therefore, a challenge for management of private universities to motivate their lecturers in order that quality teaching services are provided, and subsequently to satisfy the needs of their students. Motivation is one of the keys to performance. There is an old saying you can take a horse to the water but you cannot force it to drink; it will drink only if it is thirsty – so with people. They will do what they want to do or otherwise motivated to do. Nowadays, employee motivation is, therefore, used as a key factor to gauge the performance of a particular employee and an organisation [2], a fact largely confirmed in the management literature [3], [4], asserting that people are the most important organisational resource and the key to achieving high organisational performance.

Motivation drives the human beings to reach personal as well as organizational goals through every challenge and constraint they face in their workplace; considering it as an advantage to go ahead in the direction they have put for themselves. The motivated employee volunteers to do more than what is expected and is more successful at achieving goals than others.

In order to enhance the understanding of employee motivations, managers are encouraged to recognise the imperatives, concepts, and differences of the motivational factors in terms of individual needs [4]. Subsequently, managers should also be aware of the various existing motivational factors and the changes in the levels of priority of these factors deemed by employees over time. Consequently, this study investigated the relative importance of the different motivational factors (wants) perceived by lecturers and the availability of these factors (gets) to them in their current job.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this paper are to:

a) To ascertain what factors motivate lecturers of private universities in Ghana; and

b) To ascertain the perceptions of lecturers regarding the availability of these motivating factors at their present job.
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to [5], motivation is an internal state or condition (sometimes described as a need, desire, or want) that serves to activate or energize behaviour and give its direction. Several studies on motivation have been undertaken by industrial psychologists and behavioral scientists. As a result, some theories about motivation and human behavior have been developed by researchers. Theories of motivation explore the sources of pleasure that people experience when they maintain equilibrium and preserve homeostasis by avoiding pain and over stimulation. The dynamic process of change in and of itself has important implications for employees in modern organizations. In particular, it affects their basic need to know who they are as a secure anchor amid incessant change. Frequent changes in organizations and in technology influence the power structure, the skills needed to excel on the job, an organization's values, and its managerial philosophy.

Employee motivation is one of the most intensively studied topics in the field of social sciences (Manoliopoulos, 2008). Although employee motivation is an intricate and sophisticated issue, contemporary managers must face and address the phenomenon in order to achieve organisational success (Kim, 2003) as the strategies of managers in any organisations should aim to enhance effective job performance among workers (Shadare& Hammed, 2009). Wiley (1997) suggested that in order to ensure the success of any organisation, employers must understand what motivates their employees, because such understanding is essential to improve productivity. These suggestions imply that organisational success depends heavily on employee motivation, and managers will be empowered when they understand what motivates their employees (Kim, 2003).

Motivation constitutes a central element in going through the process of human learning. If an organisation does not possess the ability to motivate its employees, the knowledge within the organisation would not be practically optimised. Therefore, it should be the objective of every learning organisation to look for the factors that would motivate its employees to acquire continuous learning and to take advantage of the inherent knowledge, to secure their existence in an organisation (Islam & Ismail, 2008). Moreover, motivation is also a process of arousing and sustaining a goal directed behaviour (Shadare& Hammed, 2009). As mentioned by Perry and Porter (1982), motivation usually refers to that aspect which energises, directs, and sustains behaviours. Since the term motivation is derived from the Latin word 'movere' which means to move the word motivation implies to move, push or persuade towards satisfying a need which is a basic psychological process [12]. [7][also cited that motivation is a force that acts on or within a person causing behaviour in a specific, goal directed manner. Thus, work motivation refers to how much a person tries to work hard and well--to the arousal, direction, and persistence of effort in work settings.

The expectancy theory of[13] was used as the foundation of this study as this theory is generally accepted as a most comprehensive explanation of an employee motivation. The expectancy theory relates an individual's increased effort and performance to the deserved and wanted rewards [12]. Based on this theory, an individual is inclined to act in a certain manner with the expectation that such act will be followed by a given outcome as well as on the attractiveness of such outcome to an individual [14].

The expectancy theory also suggests that people usually join organisations with certain values and expectations [15, 16]. A strong premise of the theory is when expectations are met, individuals are motivated and exert a high level of effort to achieve organisational and personal goals, and usually stay with the organisation for a longer period of time. Otherwise, if there is a substantial gap between what an individual wants from his or her work (i.e., 'wants'), and what he or she gets from the work (i.e., 'gets'), such individuals are likely to leave the organisation sooner [17]. An important assumption is that an individual would strive to balance the wants and gets. The actions that an individual usually takes in order to balance the wants and gets could include:
1. Modifying either 'wants' or 'gets' to bring them into a certain level of balance.
2. Seeking other sources of 'gets' that would be more closely parallel to the 'wants'.
3. Choosing to do little about either the 'wants' or 'gets', which could result in an individual's frustration, dissatisfaction or retaliation [17].

Motivation remains a difficult factor to manage because employees’ aspirations and targets do not always match with what their employers may provide [18]. Moreover, not all jobs can be made as interesting as what the employees would expect and more importantly, what is interesting to one person might not be interesting to another [19]. Therefore, organisations and managers should not limit themselves with only one specific motivational factor, but are obliged to consider instead, diverse motivational models in order to realise the different needs of their employees [7].
5. METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study employed a descriptive survey method. The data used for this study were collected through a questionnaire survey of lecturers of two private universities in Ghana: Valley View University (VVU) and Datalink University College (DUC). The population consisted of all full-time lecturers consisting of 95 lecturers from VVU and 50 lecturers from DUC. The total sample was 30 made up of 20 from VVU and 10 from DUC. A non-recurring ordinal scale was used. The respondents were asked to rank the 12 work-related motivational factors in terms of importance by assigning 1 to the most important, 2 to the second most important, 3 to the third most important, and so on, with 12 indicating the least important motivational attribute. These factors were referred to as ‘Wants’. Likewise, the respondents were also asked to rank the same factors in terms of availability in their jobs by assigning 1 to the most available, 2 to the second most available, 3 to the third most available and so on, with 12 to indicate the least available, and these features were referred to as ‘Gets’.

The frequency of every factor against each rank was determined. This was followed by the separate calculation of the frequency of every motivational factor relative to its importance (wants) and availability (gets) for employees. After counting the frequencies against each rank for all motivational factors, the mean value of each factor was estimated in order to determine its relative importance and availability [20].

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the comparison of Wants and Gets motivational factors made by the employees are given in Table 1. The content of Table 1 show that a significant difference existed in six factors in terms of their importance by and availability to the employees. However, the two factors which the employees ranked as the most important were not the most available factors provided by management. In terms of Wants versus Gets, these factors were high salary (1 vs. 5) and personal development (2 vs. 4). The other four factors having significant differences in terms of Wants and Gets as assessed by the employees were: 1) balanced of work and family life, 2) social status (prestige), 3) Advancement, and 4) secure future. These factors were ranked by the employees as less important, but were highly available for them in their jobs.

Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics on Motivational factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (Wants)</th>
<th>Std. Deviation (Wants)</th>
<th>Rank (Wants)</th>
<th>Rank (Gets)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High_salary</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.3667</td>
<td>.55605</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal_development</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.7667</td>
<td>2.40235</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure_future</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.2000</td>
<td>1.71001</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe_benefits</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.0000</td>
<td>3.23771</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve_society</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.3333</td>
<td>1.74856</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working_environment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.0000</td>
<td>2.16556</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance_work</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.7000</td>
<td>1.89646</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.9667</td>
<td>2.91823</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement_benefits</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.3667</td>
<td>2.34128</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed_environment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.0333</td>
<td>2.23581</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.2333</td>
<td>1.77499</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.9667</td>
<td>2.17324</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data, 2012

It is generally believed that one of the major objectives of individual employees is the chance to provide some benefits to society [23, 22]. This was confirmed by the respondents as it was rated among the top 6 motivational factors. A stable and secure future, which is considered as one of the most important factors for employees [23], was ranked as number three. However, this was also one of the most available motivating factor to the employees, indicating they perceived they were secured and stable in their jobs. Nevertheless, this factor could also prevent the employees from working hard and competitively. In addition, the relatively
low level of fringe benefits available to the employees could result in demotivation of the employees, as described by [24].

Social status/prestige is considered as one of the most rewarded factors in the private sector job, but in the study, the employees ranked this factor among the least wanted aspect in their jobs (ranked 11 among wants). This could be due to the general worsening economic conditions in Ghana and the relatively high inflation rates, which justified the notion that it is not only the private sector job, but it is also the money that defines the social status and prestige of a person. A common perception that many employees do not want to learn is questionable. In this study the learning factor was ranked amongst the most important (i.e., at number 2). Since the employees rated this factor as highly important, administrations may arrange various training courses and also sponsor lecturers for higher education to motivate them.

A widespread perception that private sector employees prefer higher pay [17] was also supported by this study. Among the 12 motivating factors, the most important motivating factor for the employees was ‘a high salary’. The results of the study about high salary are consistent with the findings of [16] and [26].

7. CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to ascertain the relative importance of various motivational factors for lecturers of private Universities and the availability of such factors in their jobs. The findings showed that the employees ranked ‘high salary’ and ‘personal development’ as the two most important motivational factors. The findings of this study also revealed that except for ‘fringe benefits’ and ‘high salary’, the availability of other motivational factors ‘Gets’ is not significantly different as far as the ‘Wants’ of the concerned employees. A salient contribution of this preliminary study lies in implications and consequences for human resource management policies and practices for private Universities. Administrators are encouraged to consider better diverse motivational models to realize the different needs of their employees. Furthermore, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the motivational factors among lecturers, more relevant and important motivational factors could be considered by researchers when conducting similar studies in the future.

REFERENCES


