

Importance of Motivational Factors among Future Business Persons: Further Evidence from Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Businesses design motivation systems to persuade employees to perform in the most effective way but also to attract potential candidates. The key to create the efficient motivation system is an answer to the question what actually motivate employees. The rationale of this paper is to find which of the motivation factors are seen as the most important by students considered as future business persons either by gender or job possession as set out in the questionnaire. The study was based on the questionnaire distributed to the sample of 462 respondents from Presbyterian University college of Ghana. Respondents were asked to rank thirteen motivation factors in the order of their importance. The findings showed that Good wages and job security were the most important factors for all students as well as good working conditions.

The research recommended the creation of motivation systems for freshly graduated potential employees and freshly graduated employees to meet their expectations as well as for planning recruitment strategies focused on future job seekers.

1.0 Introduction

A great volume of world wealth occurs in a form of human capital. As a result, managing human resources plays a central role in a process of increasing companies' effectiveness and efficiency. The importance of motivating people at work is manifest at all levels of organization. Beginning from managers who need to be aware of factors that motivate their subordinates to make them perform well, through employees who need to think through what expectations they have of work, ending up with HR professionals who have to understand motivation to effectively design and implement reward structure and systems. It seems to be obvious that companies need motivated employees and without any doubts motivation is an important aspect of HRM. However, because of a complex nature of human behavior, motivation is not easy to understand and to use.

Today, with many studies, managers are no closer to understanding employees' motivation than their counterparts more than a half of century ago (Kovach, 1980). Although, some of research sought to suggest that money is not as persuasive as it seemed to be, firms tried to implement monetary incentives as their main tool to motivate employees. Performance related pay became the new hymn that was used undeniably by firms (Frey and Osterloch, 2002). Recently, as a result of a financial crisis, many large and small organizations had to cut costs through reduction of employees' salaries and bonuses. The question that has arisen is if there are other options of motivating employees that would be equally effective but more costs efficient.

The literature on a subject of motivation shows that there are several other ways to motivate employees. The most well know and often cited theories can be divided into two categories: content theories and process theories. The first group is focused on what motivate people. It is represented by authors such as Maslow, McClelland and Herzberg who are known by almost everyone who ever read anything about motivation. The second category – process theories, try to find out how motivation occurs. Vroom, Adams, Locke and Latham created the most influential process theories. The points of view presented by authors of those theories in some aspects are complementary but in others are totally opposite. It occasioned in a number of possible suggestions about motivators that could play a crucial role in growing employees'

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performance. Oldham & Hackman (2010) indicates that job design plays vital role in shaping employees behavior while (Allender and Allender, 1998; Lu, 1999) suggested that leadership style and freedom given to employees are crucial in motivating employees. Another group of researchers (Luthans and Stajkovic, 2000; Armstrong and Murlis, 2004) try to prove that recognition can be used to motivate people to perform well. In this host of possible options, it is not easy to answer the question – what in fact motivates employees. The easiest way to find out is simply to ask them.

There is a long history of researches which ask employees to rank the importance of motivating factors. Some researchers have spent most of their lives studying employees' responses. In their studies they compared answers from employees coming from different cultures, age groups, levels of organization and even from different points of time in a history. Their results showed that importance of motivating factors might vary among particular groups of people. However, there are several motivating factors that are very often ranked high positions. Interesting work, full appreciation of work done, Feeling of being well informed and involved and good wages are those factors that received high rates in many research (Fischer and Yuan 1998; Kinnear and Sutherland, 2000).

The several studies have analyzed the importance of motivating factors among people who already worked. There are not many researches that investigate factors that motivate students who will join workforce in the future. Lim, Srivastava and Sin Sng (2008) found that pre-existing work attitudes developed before entering workforce may serve as basis for individuals' attitudes in their future work. Therefore, if firms have knowledge about job factors that students value the most, they will be able to attract more people. It will result in a larger number of applications and better choice of candidates. So, students' attitudes towards motivating factors might be predictors of their attitudes at work in future. It means that not only recruiters can take an advantage of results coming from the research presented in this paper but also managers who deal with freshly graduated employees.

Therefore, to think through what fresh graduates work expectations are, self-reflection about factors that will be motivating for them at work will positively influence the choice of a company and a position they apply for. The right match between students' expectations about motivators and a motivation strategy used by firm may result in better performance and satisfaction of students when they will make their first gigantic step in the career.

1.1 Objectives

The study among other thing wish: to describe the difference in work motivation priorities based on gender, to identify difference in work motivation priorities based on students working and future job seeker and to identify most two important motivating factors of students.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Motivation of Students'

The literature review demonstrates that there is a group of authors who decided to focus on young people who have not started working yet. Krau (1989, as cited in Lim, Srivastava & Sin Sng, 2008), stated that how far students' pre-existing attitudes to motivating factors are predictors of their future work motivation. They established that work attitudes developed before entering workforce may serve as basis for individuals' attitudes in their future work. Another support for this approach comes from Ajzen (1991) theory of planned behavior. It said that intentions to perform behaviors can be predicted from attitudes toward those behaviors. Also anthropological studies (McCall and Lawler, 1976) showed that work attitudes are developed before entering the workforce. It appears that studies focused on students are relevant for all firms that hire fresh graduates from school. As a result, several authors used students as a group of their main interest. In Lim, Srivastava and Si Sng (2008) investigated data from college students in Singapore to find relation between money motives and motivation to work. They split money motives into three categories. Positive money motives reflect obtaining money as a measure of achievement and success as well as a way to cover life necessities. Freedom of action motives imply that people earn money to spend it in a way they wish for. Negative motives leads to obtaining money to have a superior position in social comparisons. The findings show existence of relation between those motives and motivation to work. They suggest that people who want to earn money to provide life security for their families and to measure their work achievements are more likely to work hard in organizations. People who are high on other motives

might be abstracted by their reasons to work (spending money on things, comparisons) and in result they work less hard because working itself is not rewarding for them.

The effects of culture and gender on work goals among business students in Canada and China were analyzed by Bu and McKeen (2001). Significant variances were found between those two groups. Chinese students showed feebler concern for a balanced life and stronger interest in fundamental/intrinsic rewards, routine and moral congruence. Their attention to extrinsic rewards and organizational influence were equal comparing to Canadian students attention. Another comparison of students from different countries has been made by Sagan, Tomkiewicz, Adeyemi-Bello and Frankel (2008) who focused on students from Poland and Russia. They found that students from Poland had a greater preference for intrinsic factors while Russian students had greater preference for extrinsic factors. Russians were much more interested in possessing high position in a company than Poles. Good wages were also more important for Russians. Students from Poland were more interested in work that requires creativeness, variety of duties, intellectual stimulation, developing own methods of work and duties concerning problems of central importance to the company.

The overview of research on motivating factors presented in this paper shows some differences between findings. There are factors that constantly were chosen as the most important by the majority of employees. In another vein, there are authors who indicate particular groups of employees that were motivated by other factors. Finally, there are researches that focused exclusively on students and their job attitudes as predictors of their future work motivation. The empirical part of this paper will be based on research inspired by studies presented in this chapter. The particular group that will be taken into investigation is a group of students from Denmark and Poland who will join the workforce after their graduation.

2.2 Choice of motivational factors by employees

One approach to research on employee motivation is looking for factors that are most often chosen by employees when they are asked to make a decision on what motivates them at work. This is commonly than in survey. It normally consists of a number of motivating factors that are made to be ranked. Sonawane (2008) in her paper about rewards mentioned the most important studies on this topic. As she suggests one of the first survey about motivating factors was conducted by Lindhal in 1949. The result of those studies indicated "full appreciation of work done", "feeling of being in on things" and "interesting work" as the most important motivators for employees. Another mentioned author who through questionnaires distinguished the most important factors was Herzberg (1968). He suggested that the order for crucial factors is following: Security, Interesting work, Opportunity for advancement, Appreciation, Company and management, intrinsic aspects of the job. Another example comes from Keller's (1965) research. In his research ranking was opened by Job satisfaction on the first position and was followed by Pride in organization, Relation with fellow workers, Relation with superiors, Treatment by management, Opportunity to use ideas, Opportunity to offer suggestions at work and Appreciation of one's effort. Again, another cited study was conducted by Sharma (1989) in 51 organizations in India. The study found that Safety, Security and Monetary benefits were recognized as the most important by Indian workers. This suggestion is confirmed by results of the survey that asked people to rank factors taken into consideration when they decide whether take the job or not. Respondents' choices included Open communication, Effects on personal/family life, Nature of work, Management quality (Nelson, 2001, as cited in Sonawane, 2008). Job design factors such as Advancement opportunities, Flexible work schedules and Opportunities to learn new skills were chosen in a survey by Watson Wyatt in 2006. Kinnear and Sutherland (2000) focused on knowledge workers and factors that motivated that occupational group. Findings of their study suggest that financial reward and recognition was the motivator ranked at first place. Knowledge workers were also strongly motivated by Freedom to act independently, Developmental opportunities and Access to new technologies. A comparison of this study with other studies leads to the conclusion that specific occupational groups may be motivated by other factors than other groups.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The approach for this study was survey method with the aid of close ended questionnaires to be ranked by respondents in order of priority. Simple random method of sampling was adopted in this study to gather data. Students were grouped into two thus, working students and non-working students as well as male and

female. The completed and returned questionnaires were edited to detect and correct errors omissions where necessary to help better appreciate the analysis of the data. And the mean of each factor was taken to rank in order of priorities. The population was students of Presbyterian university college, Ghana with a same size of 500 students. Even though 500 students were targeted as the sample size, it is crucial to note that only a total of four hundred and six-two (462) questionnaires were received and well answered by the students. This represents 92.4% of the total questionnaires sent to students.

4.1 Analysis and Discussion of Result

Table 1: Mean ranks and overall positions in the ranking of motivation factors by gender

Factors	Male		Female	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Good wages	3.11	1	2.09	1
Job security	4.18	2	4.07	2
Tactful discipline from superiors	4.25	3	5.22	6
Good working conditions (such as light, temperature, cleanliness, low noise level)	4.39	4	4.14	3
Open communication	4.67	5	5.01	4
Feeling of being well informed and involved	4.84	6	5.15	5
Freedom to plan and execute work independently	5.05	7	5.64	8
Interesting work	5.23	8	5.77	9
Participation in goal setting	5.89	9	6.79	12
A good match between job requirements and abilities and experience	6.12	10	5.43	7
Personal loyalty to employees from superiors	6.23	11	6.33	11
Promotion and growth in the organization	6.44	12	5.89	10
Full appreciation of work done	7.17	13	7.91	13

The analysis of motivation factors according to the gender are offered in Table 1 above. The outcome proposed that there is no reason to say that there is a statistically significant difference between the underlying distributions of the means ranks of males and the mean ranks of females.

But by considering the overall ranks given by males and females, it can be seen that there are some differences in the order of factors. However, the Spearman’s rho was used to test the correlation and to check the relationship between overall ranks given by males and females indicated strong agreement between those groups (rho=.897, p<0.01).

It seemed that good wages is the most important motivating factor for both gender which was ranked first. This is followed by interesting work where both male and female ranked it second among the list. Tactful discipline from superiors appeared to be very vital for males which were placed in 3rd position according to mean rank, however, female placed less important for same factor which was 6th position. On the 3rd position women placed good working conditions while men ranked it 4th. Open communication and felling of well informed and involved were also ranked slightly higher by females than males. Participation in goal setting, freedom to plan and execute work independently and interesting work was ranked higher by males than female.

Whiles women ranked a good match between job requirements, abilities and experience more important men saw it to be less important. Apparently, full appreciation of work done was ranked last by both men and women.

Table 2: Mean ranks and overall positions in the ranking of motivation factors by working students or non working students

Factors	Students working		Future Job Seekers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Good wages	3.33	1	1.17	1
Interesting work	4.60	2	6.88	9
Job security	4.91	3	3.78	2
Feeling of being well informed and involved	5.32	4	7.10	11
Tactful discipline from superiors	5.49	5	6.20	5
Open communication	6.22	6	5.48	3
Good working conditions (such as light, temperature, cleanliness, low noise level)	6.31	7	5.61	4
Freedom to plan and execute work independently	6.57	8	6.42	8
Promotion and growth in the organization	7.35	9	6.23	6
Personal loyalty to employees from superiors	7.55	10	7.68	12
Participation in goal setting	7.56	11	6.89	10
A good match between job requirements and abilities and experience	7.61	12	6.29	7
Full appreciation of work done	8.75	13	8.98	13

The statistical tests were employed to compare groups of students who were working and those who are not working. Equally to comparison of gender groups, U Mann-Whitney test shows that the present facts is not strong enough to say that having a job lead to different outcomes ($U=82$, $p=.928$). Two sets of overall ranks given by compared groups are similar to each other ($\rho=$, 926 , $p<0$, 01). The comparison of mean ranks and overall places of particular factors are showed in Table 2. Even though, the disparities between two groups are very sharp, it can be observed that both group of students' ranked good wages first among the motivating factors listed. Also, students who had no job ranked job security higher whiles students with job ranked interesting work higher than students who are not working.

In fact Maslow concluded that the higher needs arise when the lower needs are fulfilled. This could be elucidating why good wages are the most important factors for Students in Ghana. Financial resources are needed to assure basic needs related to everyday life expenses. Basically, students start their work career with support from their parents. When they enter the workforce they want to be independent and the first step to do this is to pay their bills on their own as well as time to pay back to his family as the case in Ghana and for that matter sub-Sahara Africa. It is possible that the wages become most important in their entire work days because in Ghana every now and then there is a financial commitment to your extended family needs. McClelland (1968) said that needs change over life as they are shaped by others' experience but this might not be the case in Ghana. In the present study there were no significant difference between students who had a job and those who did not. The possible explanation for that might be that time of students' service as employees was too short to change their expectations about work.

From the results presented above, Good wages and job security are the two most important motivation factors for students from Presbyterian University College in Ghana whether working or not and irrespective of gender. The same factors were found the most important in (Lindner, 1999) research. Kovach (1995) in his research indicated Interesting work as the most important factor which seems to support the position of males. But in a sharp contrast Good wages were not so important for his respondents when he analyzed the whole group but it was the most important factor for the group under 30 years old. Interesting work seems to be the factor that is indicated as one of the most important in many researches in various settings and environments most in the advance nation. However, Good wages are seen as very important by respondents from under developing or developing nation. Therefore, there is something so special about the students from Ghana and for that matter Africa (developing nations) that find monetary rewards a crucial motivation factor.

Lindner (1998) argued that growing employees' responsibility will not only make a job just interesting but could also affect the level of pay. Evidently, Human Resource units that take charge of campaigns to attract students and for that matter manager who deal with freshly graduated potential employees should

remember not only about wages, job security and interesting work but also other significant factors shown in this study.

4.2 Conclusion

This study results suggest that the most suitable motivation and reward system should try to please a variety of needs from more than one class. The preferred job for future business person should be well paid and job security. Moreover, good working conditions are also of key interest to future business persons in Ghana. Perhaps there should be also a great chance for promotion and Tactful discipline from superiors. This might motivate employees to perform very well. Though, it might be hard to suggest a position that satisfies all those needs, organizations should make an effort to be aware of the existence of these factors of motivation.

This research will help to create motivation systems for freshly graduated potential employees and freshly graduated existing employees as well as for planning recruitment strategies focused on future job seekers. Further research should be established whether findings from this research would be confirmed in other schools in Ghana and as well as comparative analysis between two countries of West Africa sub-region.

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