

Motivational Strategies and Job Satisfaction among Lecturers in Ghanaian Universities:- A Comparative Analysis between Public and Private Universities

Professor P R Banerjee
London College of Management Studies, UK

Bernard Lawer Tetteh-Dumanya
Breyer State University London Centre-UK

Irene Ohenewah Apea
Breyer State University London Centre-UK

Abstract

The average age of a Ghanaian lecturer is over 50 years and the number of lecturers has declined over the years. What is undermining young and energetic qualified graduates from lecturing still remain unsolved. This paper therefore, intends to identify the motivational strategies and working conditions that existed in Ghanaian universities from 2000-2006 in order to make practical recommendations on how to improve staff motivation to help solve the issue of declining lecturers. For the purposes of in-depth analysis, one public and one private university were selected as case study. The work revealed that, factors that may motivate a public university lecturer may differ from one in the private university and the need for managers of universities to refrain from making wholesale assumption in their managerial style is imperative in order to prevent unwarranted policies that may put off young graduates from lecturing as a profession.

Key Words

Job satisfaction, motivation, Lecturers

Introduction

Employee's performance does not yield highly expected results without proper motivation. This concern has become a major challenge to managers and administrators in all institutions and organisations through out the world. It is a challenge in the sense that, managers are always looking for new strategies and methods through which to motivate employees. Research suggests that as employees' income increases, money becomes less of a motivator (Kovach, 1987). Consequently, what motivates employees may vary according to the sex, age, education and other socio-economic factors. Motivation like another social term is not easy to define because it implies differently based on context and situations. Motivation according to Dutta (2001) is a process to

energize employees towards work goal through a specific path. Schermerhorn, Jr. *et al* (2000) defined it as forces within an individual that account for the *level*, *direction*, and *persistence* of effort expended at work. The *level* according to this definition implies how hard employees will work, *direction* is what employees do when they are presented with a number of possible alternatives and finally the *persistence* refers to how long an employee continues in a given action. These factors are therefore the key in any successful organisational settings.

The government of Ghana in 2006 realised that if the country was to advance from its present state then it needs to develop its human resources fully. In view of this the government introduced a human resource development blueprint which was to be implemented by all ministries, institutions and organisations. The outcome of this for example is growing decline of lecturers and continuous annual strike from University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) since 1995 throughout the country to back their demand for increase in salaries and improved conditions of service. It was even said that, in 1994, a Vice-chancellors annual salary was equivalent to the salary of a promoted cleaner or driver at other organizations run by government, for example the Bank of Ghana. Currently, a newly graduated, BA-holding tiller-trainee in a foreign-based bank with branches in Accra begins his job with a wage roughly twice that of a professor, although the professor will have served with promotions in the university system for over a decade (Djangmah 31 March-Ghanaweb).

The Association of African Universities seminar paper (2002) indicated that a succession crisis was looming in African universities because good academicians were leaving the country to seek greener pastures while at the same time, there is lack of new blood to replace them One of the featured articles in *Tabloids* (Ghanaweb 28 June 2003) reported that universities in Ghana have difficulty recruiting and retaining young lecturers. Retired faculty members are perpetually retained to fill vacancies. This can only be a temporary measure as they will leave the scene sooner rather than later (Ghanaweb *Tabloids*-feature article 2003). Statistics have always been provided that suggests that, about 45-60% of lecturers in Ghana are above 50 years and that if young blood are not injected into the system, in the next 10-15 years, Ghanaian lecturers would be an "endangered species". What makes teaching unattractive to the current youth is yet to be understood.

This paper therefore adopted the operational definition for motivation as the factor that induces an employee to behave in a purposive manner to achieve personal or organizational goals which may be referred to as job satisfaction. The paper focuses on three levels viz, given the limitations on empirical support for motivation of Ghanaian lecturers; it redresses the discrepancies by investigating and synthesizing findings from two selected Universities (one Private and one public). Secondly, the methodological approach of comparative analysis was used lastly using Landy and Becker (1987) observation that, motivational research is still about finding competitively 'one best way'. The study consequently highlights different motivational practices in the life of a Ghanaian university lecturer.

Motivational Theories

Schermerhorn, Jr. *et al* (2000) categorised motivational theories into two namely, content theories and the process theories. The content theories centred on individual needs (Physiology and psychology) and the proponents include Maslow, Alderfer, McClelland and Herzberg etc. This theory suggests that key motivation in the work place, is an environment that responds positively to the needs of the employee. For that reason, explanation to poor performance, tardiness and absenteeism, low levels of efforts, poor attitudes, that either directly blocked or left employees unsatisfied on their job comes from this theory. The process theory whose advocators are Adams, Vroom among others also underscores how the internal thought or cognitive processes may influence decisions regarding work environment. Accordingly, this theory explained why the opportunity to earn promotion might prove attractive to one employee but unattractive to another.

Motivation may influence behaviour of employee rather than performance. Absence of link between job performance and employees effort may not be successful if programmes intended to enhance job performance does include motivation. Abraham Maslow (1943) came out with five types of needs, which can be ranked in a hierarchy as a way of motivation. They include: physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Maslow mentioned that the lower level needs must be satisfied before the next higher level need would motivate employees. These and other theories that existed over the years continue to provide the basis for a momentous amount of organization and management development and training which may include work redesign and career development. The core assumption might be the variation of motivational potency according to sex, age, income level, job type and organizational level. This paper tries to look at the factors that may be motivate Ghanaian university lecturers which are in particularly applicable to the content of the motivational theories accentuated earlier.

Methodology

Ghana at the moment has five public universities and a number of established and semi established university colleges. For the purposes of in-depth analysis, one public and one private university were selected for this case study. Yin (1989) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not evident. For the purpose of anonymity the names of the universities were not used but are available with the authors and are simply known in this research as public and private Universities. Questionnaires were used as a means of collecting data. In all 100 questionnaires were administered 50 in each university and 26 from public and 25 from private universities were returned. The questionnaires were administered personally by one of the authors. Factors of motivation used were:

- Salary
- Staff promotion
- Scholarships for further training

- Accommodation provision to lecturers
- University managers' performance
- Recreational facilities provided for lecturers
- Delegation of responsibilities to lecturers
- Participation in decision making
- Working environment
- Lecturers' relationship with university management
- Management style by university authorities

The core questions in the questionnaire centred on the above motivational factors. Respondents were also asked to supply some demographic data like sex, name of the university and length of service. Since the target level were the lecturers the non-academics were not selected in the administration of the questionnaires. In all both nominal and ordinal data were used. Therefore chi-square was used as a measure of independence in order to show significant relationships. Significance values that falls below 0.05 were accepted otherwise rejected. Additionally, non-parametric test to show the mean ranks between the responses of the independent groups in order to ascertain the test results used.

Findings and Discussion

The lecturing profession in Ghana has been dominated by the male like all other professions in the country. Responses from both the public and private universities confirmed this perception, as seen in figure 1a below :

of respondents

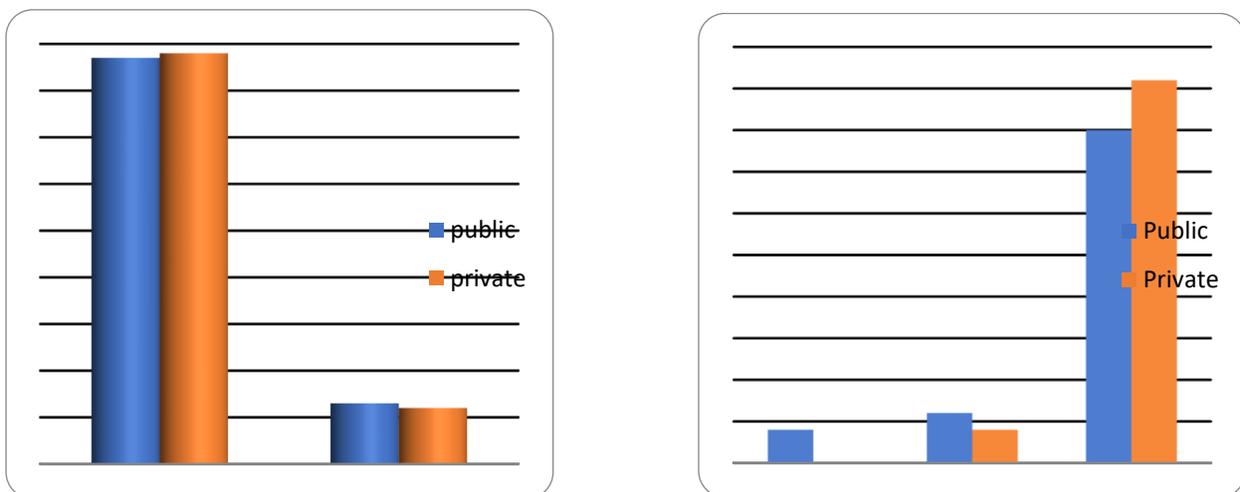


Fig 1b: *Length of services of respondents*

It is clear from figure 1a that both public and private universities are dominated by men and women form small fraction. This adds to the debate that women should be

encouraged to take up lecturing as a profession. The length of service also proves the initial assertion that majority of lecturers are more than 5 years old in the system. Public university has over 80% of staff more than 5 years whereas the private did not even recruit any staff for the past 2 years with over 90% recruited over 5 years ago.

Salary, staff promotion and working environment

Job satisfaction according to Schermerhorn, Jr. *et al* (2000) is the degree by which employees feel positively or negatively about their jobs. This involves employees' attitude or their response to work task as well as physical and social conditions at workplace settings. The common aspects associated with job satisfaction are salary, staff promotion and working conditions. Frederick Herzberg came out with what is called two-factor theory which identifies different factors as primary causes of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is influenced by what is called *hygiene factors* which may include organisational policies, working conditions, promotion, and salary whereas those factors that caused job dissatisfaction are known as motivator factors. For that reason, this paper used these hygiene factors to understand the nature of job satisfaction among Ghanaian lecturers in the universities.

The respondents from public university mentioned that, salary used to be poor as compared with their counterparts in the financial institutions but through frequent strikes by the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) for better conditions of services, the current salary for them is to be termed as *fair*. But contrary to the public university, salaries in private university are better and it continues to improve up to date. This paper also identified irregular staff promotion in both sectors. There is general observation that, working conditions has been improved since 2000 to date in the public university because of the governments *GETFUND* institute aimed at financing public universities, thus improving the general working conditions in terms of teaching materials and other amenities. This has facelift the public institutions as compared to the private university where respondents think that there had been a declined over the years in terms of working conditions.

Scholarships for further training

Scholarship for further training was a major motivating factor that both public and private lecturers were keen at. They derived a lot of satisfaction if they are given the opportunity to get further training especially in the developed countries. Apart from them gaining knowledge from the training, majority think it is also a source of prestige to be exposed to a more advanced environment. These undeniably boast their self-esteem and make them stay on the job. The findings show that lecturers in the public university claimed further training was inadequate until the year 2000-2001 when the GetFund was established and operating fully. This attracted a number of young graduates into the profession in the public universities, though were not enough to resolve the growing decline. The scholarship for training programme in the private universities were instituted right from the establishment, but as the university grows and the number of lecturers increases, it become increasing difficult to maintain the initial status quo for

further training. This was clearly shown in the work as the respondents from the private university indicated the decline over the years in scholarship for further training.

Accommodation provision to lecturers

Accommodation has been a major headache to lecturers in both universities. In the public university 73% of the respondents had accommodation in 2003 and this even increase up to 96% up in 2006. The situation is the same in the private university. This implies accommodation is a priority for the heads of universities and it is one of the motivational factors that have been keeping most people on the job. It was also revealed that where the lecturers had no accommodation, they were given housing allowance in monetary terms.

Management Style and Performance

Respondents from the public university claimed the managerial style was laissez-faire. Thus, university administrators' tend to abdicate and avoid decision making citing hierarchical bureaucracy. This perception was high (70%) in 2003 but the perception drop to 62% in 2006. The reason attributed to the fall was change of leadership. They explain that when a new Vice Chancellor takes office, working conditions tend to improve, but it's not sustained and in less than two years the system collapses and sometimes become worse than before. Conversely, the situation in private university is different. The initial managerial style was perceived by respondents as laissez-faire as indicated in the findings that, in 2003 76% of respondent saw the managerial style as laissez-faire but this drop down to 20% indicating clearly that private university administrators may change their managerial style in due time, in order to suit to the changes in the system.

Delegation, participation and lecturer's relationship with university management

The respondents claimed delegation of responsibilities in the public was procedural in 2003 but changed considerably in 2006. The reason assigned been that, most of the junior lecturers are made to work for the senior members, although benefits are not shared equally. One is delegated to, based on the relationship with a senior lecturer or management. If the relationship is cordial, it means that the lecturer concern may have more issues delegated to him or her than the one with remote relationship. This means that participation of a lecturer in the university affairs depend on the niche that he or she forms with the university management. Contrary to the public school, the private university responses reveal that delegation of authority or power is bias and except one is favoured by management, it will be difficult to be delegated. This indicated that participation in decision making was higher in public than the private. In the public it was seen as moderate as and more than half (46%) of the respondents confirmed that by

the year 2006 there had been reduction in participation. Coincidentally, the same responses were arrived at in the private university.

Recreational facilities provided for lecturers

Both public and private universities indicated that, there are no recreational facilities provided by the university's management. Recreation has not been part and parcel of the universities plans and design. The only source was/is the annual get-together that are organised by the university management each year.

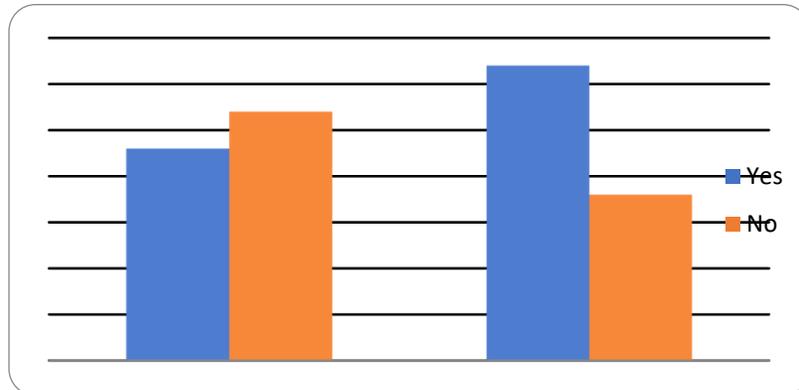


Figure 2 above shows that, given alternative job opportunities, majority of lecturers in public university indicated that they may not like to work again as conditions of service are generally poor. Two major issues were raised viz, poor salary and staff promotion. They believe that salary must match their colleagues with the same ranks and qualification in financial institutions. This is to enable them care for their families and keep abreast with the constant rising cost of living.

On the other hand, the private university indicated that, working conditions are the major factors that will continue to keep them on the job. Figure 2 shows that, majority of the respondents said given alternative job opportunities, they may continue to work in the university unlike their counterparts in the public universities. The comparison on what will make lecturers seek jobs somewhere in figure 3 below shows different perception of public and private lecturers.

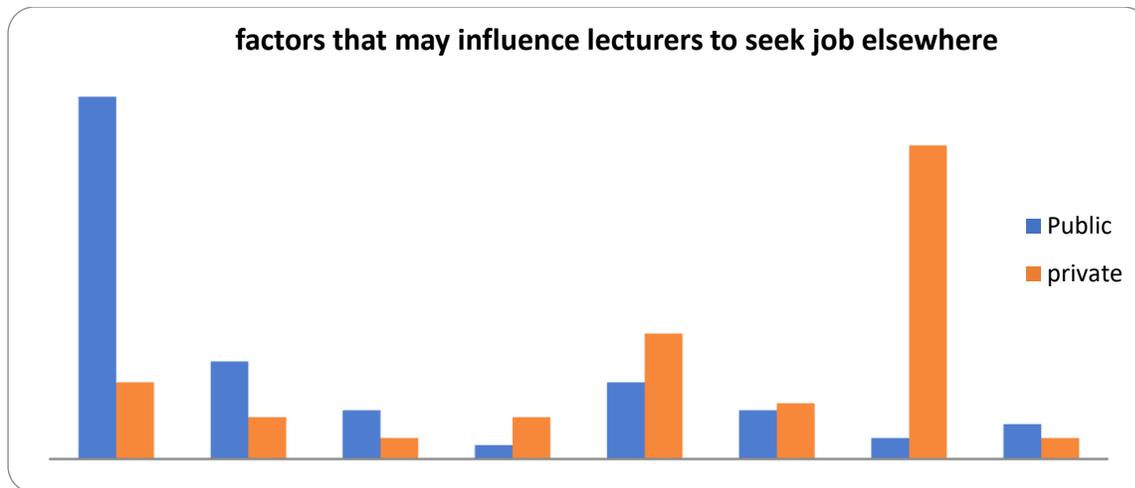


Figure 3: Factors that may influence lecturers to seek job elsewhere

Figure 3 indicates that, whereas the public universities put premium on the salary as a means of seeking alternative jobs elsewhere, the private place emphasis on management relationship.

Conclusion

The general aim of this research is to find out the motivational strategies that has existed in Ghanaian universities most especially from 2000-2006 and whether lecturers have job satisfaction in order to retain them and also recruit new young ones. Since education is the backbone of a nation, the importance of maximum performance in institutions of higher learning can not be overemphasised. These institutions provide the country with its much needed skilled human resources which are essential for the economic, political and social development of the nation. Most developing countries have shortage or lack experts and specialists in most fields and have to import from other countries or sponsor individuals for training at a very high price. This tells on our scarce foreign revenue and makes the nation highly dependable. Motivation has now become a universal concept and in today's work environment, gains in productivity and performance will be seen with managers who truly respect the needs of their employees both on the job and their personal lives. Only when employees experience a sense of personal satisfaction from their work is high performance possible on a continuing basis. The government of Ghana in 2006 realised that if the country was to advance from its present state then it needed to develop its human resources fully. In view of this the government introduced a human resource development blueprint which was to be implemented by all ministries, institutions and organisations.

The crust of the matter is that, the universities are filled with experts and specialists in various areas of studies who should be able to train students to perfection given the right conditions and facilities. It was also obvious from the work that, administrators of private university do better than their counterparts in public. This is because to ascend to the management position depends on how long one has served in the public university instead of relevant profession skills. For example, a professor without any managerial

background takes over the helm of affairs because he has been the oldest fellow among the rest. It was also clear that, issues of accommodation were not a problem in both universities. One other issue was that, whereas the public university place emphasis on salary improvement the private are on the management relationship. This is the prove that factors that may motivate public university lecturers may be different from one in the private university and the need for administrators of universities to refrain from making wholesale assumption in their managerial style is imperative in order to prevent unwarranted policies that may put off young graduates from taking up lecturing as a profession.

Recommendations

Educational administrators must concern themselves with how high level of lecturers' motivation can be aroused, directed, and sustained. Modifying lecturers' work through career ladders may make more meaningful incentives available to them, throughout their years of service. The work also recommends that, administrators should work harder to enhance the image of university lecturers. Salary was the main issue with public universities which means that administrators of public universities have to do more than depending on the government subvention to motivate its staff. Staff promotion and working conditions were also seen as inadequate in both private and public universities in Ghana. There is therefore the need to improve upon these factors that may be able to attract others to the university. This paper shows that men dominate the teaching profession. Therefore there is a need to put in place measures to attract more.

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