
UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION: THE CASE OF NON-TEACHING STAFF OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY.

Dr. Mohammed S. Chowdhury**
Department of Business and Accounting
Touro College and the University System
27-33 West 23rd Street New York, NY 10010

Dr. Zahurul Alam
Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies
University of Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Mrs. Sharmeen Ahmed
Associate Professor,
Department of Management Studies
University of Chittagong, Bangladesh.

ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study was to identify the motivation factors for non-teaching staff of a public university of Bangladesh. Further, it examined ranked importance of certain factors in motivating non-teaching staff of a public university of Bangladesh. The research design for this study employed a descriptive survey method. The target population of this study included non-teaching staff from Bursar and Admission Office of the university. The sample size included 55 employees of the target population. 49 employees of the 55 employees participated in the survey for a participation rate of 91%. a survey questionnaire was developed to collect data for the study. Data was collected through use of a written questionnaire hand-delivered to participants. Questionnaires were filled out by participants and returned to an intra-departmental mailbox. The findings of this research supported the idea that what motivated employees differed given the context in which the employee worked. What was clear, however, was that employees ranked pay as the most important motivational factor followed by full appreciation of work well done.*

KEYWORDS: Motivation, Non-teaching staff, Hygiene factor, Hierarchy of needs, Hawthorne Studies

INTRODUCTION

Motivation has always been a determinant of employee performance and has remained a major issue for every profit and non-profit organization. Ceteris paribus, the workforce having the strong motivation mean success for the organization. But the question of what motivates the workforce has, however, never been an easy answer since its inception, which dates to the beginning of Industrial Revolution. This is partly due to the fact that what motivates employees changes constantly (Bowen & Radhakrishna, 1991). For example, research suggests that as employees' income increases, money becomes less of a motivator (Kovach, 1987). Also, as employees get older, interesting work becomes more of a motivator.

At one time, though the employees were considered machines to make the output, that way of thinking about employees began to change following the research referred to as Hawthorne

Studies, conducted by Elton Mayo from 1924 to 1932 (Dickson, 1973). The Hawthorne Studies began the human relations approach to management. Since then there have been different theories expounded by psychologists in terms of the assumptions made about human motivation. All these theories (e.g., Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1968; Aldefer 1972;, Likert, 1961; Luthans, 1973; McGregor, 1960, McClelland, 1972; Vroom 1964) suggest that humans are motivated by many factors such as psychological needs, physiological drives, survival, urges, emotions, hurts, impulses, fears, threats, reward, promotions, values, freedom, intrinsic satisfaction, job satisfaction, likes and dislikes, established habits, goals, ambitions, and above all, money.

Motivation Defined

Management uses the term motivation to describe an inner drive that directs a person's behavior toward the fulfillment of the goals. Kreitner (1995) defines motivation as the psychological process that gives behavior purpose and direction. Its interest lies in determining what activates human behavior and what directs this behavior toward a particular goal and how can the behavior be sustained (Rue & Bayers, 2013). It is an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need (Higgins, 1994).

Research Problem

This paper aims at identifying and ranking the importance of motivating factors for non-teaching staff of a public university in Bangladesh. Non-teaching staff plays an important role in schools and as such, their motivation should be streamlined so as to ensure efficient and effective delivery of the services they render. Further than this, employee satisfaction among the non-teaching personnel is amply indispensable as it further leads to the quality of treatment they offer to the students. Non-teaching staff at all levels need to be motivated through various measures and programs and often enough to ensure long-term success of an organization. Motivated employees work harder, remain loyal to an organization and stay committed to organizational objectives.

Research Objectives:

- To identify motivating factors for non-teaching staff
- To describe the ranked importance of certain factors in motivating non-teaching staff of a public university of Bangladesh.

Research Questions:

What motivates non-teaching staff? Which of those factors are more important than the others?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within 30 to 40 years of the publication of Hawthorne, some major approaches to motivation have been discernible in the writings of the psychologists such as Maslow's hierarch of needs theory, Herzberg's two factor theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, Adam's equity theory, Skinner's reinforcement theory, McClelland' achievement motivation theory, McGregor's theory X and Y etc. All these approaches have led to our understanding of what motivates employees and how they were motivated.

Maslow (1943) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When one need is fulfilled a person seeks to fulfill the next one, and so on. The earliest and most widespread version of Maslow's (1943, 1954) *hierarchy of needs* includes five motivational needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid.



This five stage model can be divided into basic (or deficiency) needs (e.g. physiological, safety, love, and esteem) and growth needs (self-actualization).

Herzberg (1959) constructed a two-dimensional paradigm of factors affecting people's attitudes about work. He concluded that such factors as company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary are hygiene factors rather than motivators. According to the theory, the absence of hygiene factors can create job dissatisfaction, but their presence does not motivate or create satisfaction

Vroom's theory is based on the belief that employee effort will lead to performance and performance will lead to rewards (Vroom, 1964). The key construct in the Vroom's expectation theory of motivation are the valence of an outcome, expectancy and instrumentality. Expectancy is the belief that efforts lead to performance (If I try harder, I can do better). Instrumentality is the belief that performance is tied to reward (for example, If I perform better, I will get promotion). Valence is the value or importance one places on a particular reward. Rewards may be either positive or negative. The more positive the reward the more likely the employee will be highly motivated. Conversely, the more negative the reward the less likely the employee will be motivated.

As interest grew in the study of motivation, Clayton Alderfer (1972) and David McClelland (1953) further coined the need theories of motivation. Alderfer suggests that the more the lower needs, existence, and relatedness go unsatisfied, the more they will be desired. On the other hand, if a growth is frustrated, the individual will likely regress toward seeking relatedness or existence needs which are more attainable.

The study of motivation has been the life-long work of David McClelland. His theory is that the need for achievement (e.g., drive to excel, achieving in relation to a set of standards, striving

to succeed, power (seeking position of leadership) and affiliation enjoying a sense of intimacy and understanding are major motivations in work.

Adams' Equity Theory calls for a fair balance to be struck between an employee's inputs (hard work, skill level, tolerance, enthusiasm, and so on) and an employee's outputs (salary, benefits, intangibles such as recognition, and so on). Skinner's theory simply states those employees' behaviors that lead to positive outcomes will be repeated and behaviors that lead to negative outcomes will not be repeated (Skinner, 1953). Managers should positively reinforce employee behaviors that lead to positive outcomes. Managers should negatively reinforce employee behavior that leads to negative outcomes.

In his hugely influential 1960 book, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (McGraw-Hill), McGregor made the simple yet powerful observation that managerial practice often expresses some very deep assumptions about the nature of human beings: Two competing theories about human nature, he claimed, dominate the managerial thought-world. Theory X says that the average human being is lazy and self-centered, lacks ambition, dislikes change, and longs to be told what to do. The corresponding Theory Y maintains that human beings are active rather than passive shapers of themselves and of their environment. They long to grow and assume responsibility. The best way to manage them, then, is to manage as little as possible. Give them water and let them bloom, say the Y-types.

All of these theories discussed so far reveal that there are a number of ways in which human organizations can be constructively wired together. The theories of Maslow, Alderfer, McClelland, Herzberg, McGregor specify what it is that makes people do their jobs. These are called content theories of motivation. The theories expounded by Adam, Vroom, and Skinner are called process theories aimed at trying to find out how motivation occurs. The points of view presented by authors of those theories in some aspects are complementary but in others are totally opposite. 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.

Therefore, 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. It normally consists of a number of motivating factors that are made to be ranked. There is a long history of researches which ask employees to rank the importance of motivating factors. 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 good wages are those factors that received high rates in many research (Fischer and Yuan 1998; Kinnear and Sutherland, 2000). “full appreciation of work done”, “feeling of being in on things” and “interesting work” received high importance in the study by Lindhal in 1949.

Herzberg (1968) suggested that the order for crucial factors is following: security, interesting work, opportunity for advancement, appreciation, company and management, and intrinsic aspects of the job. Sonawane (2008) reported reward as the most important motivator. 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 efforts.

The purpose of the paper has, therefore, been to investigate and identify the ranked importance of the following motivating factors generated from the foregoing motivation literatures : (a) job security, (b) policy of the university , (c) supervision, (d) interesting work, (e) good working conditions, (f) relations with co-workers, (g) good salary, (h) promotions and growth in the organization, (i) feeling of being in on things, and (j) full appreciation of work done, (k) achievement, (l) recognition, and (m) responsibility and (n) relations with superior

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study employed a descriptive survey method. The target population of this study included non-teaching staff from Bursar and Admission Office of the university. The sample size included 55 employees of the target population. 49 employees of the 55 employees participated in the survey for a participation rate of 91%. The sample population was predominantly male (68.5%), with nearly two-thirds (65.2%) under 40 years of age. About 48% had bachelor degree, nearly 38% had master degrees and the rest 14% had completed 4 year college. In regard to marital status, 80% of women employees were married as opposed to 60% male employees who were married. Almost 55% have completed their 10 years or more tenure with the present job, with 35% under 10 years in the present job whereas only 10% reported that they were new (under 3 years) to the present job.

Instrumentation

From a review of literature, a survey questionnaire was developed to collect data for the study. Data was collected through use of a written questionnaire hand-delivered to participants. Questionnaires were filled out by participants and returned to an intra-departmental mailbox. The questionnaire asked participants to rank the importance factors that motivated them in doing their work: 1=most important . . . 5=least important. The instrument was pilot tested with 9 similarly situated employees within the university. As a result of the pilot test, minor changes in word selection and instructions were made to the questionnaire. We conducted validity and reliability test in which no construct value was below 0.60, thus supporting all constructs in this study feasible for use and is supported by previous study (e.g., Sekeran , 1992, cited in Chowdhury and Ahmad, 2011). If the value of Cronbach's alpha is smaller than 0.60, it is considered poor. If it is in the range of 0.60 to 0.80 , it is considered acceptable. If it is above 0.80, it is considered good (Sekeran, 1992 cited in Chowdhury & Ahmad, 2011).

The second part of the questionnaire related to employee demographic data. They were age bracket, sex, marital status, educational attainment and years with the present job.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents were provided with a list of 13 potential motivation factors in their jobs. They were asked to rank them according to what their top motivators were for themselves. Those factors were: (1) job security, (2) policy of the university, (3) supervision, (4) interesting work, (5) good working conditions, (6) relations with co-workers, (7) good salary, (8) promotions and growth in the organization, (9) feeling of being in on things, (10) full appreciation of work done, (11) achievement, (12) responsibility and (13) relations with superior. Despite one individual differences when averaged a crossed the group the overall ranking was the one provided above. The second part of the exercise consisted in ranking those factors not based on what motivates them, but based on what they feel motivates people. Individual results varied

even more greatly, but when aggregated, the ranking looked something like the one as depicted in table 1

Table 1: the ranking of motivation factors

Factors	Rank
Job security	5
Policy of the university	13
Supervision	10
Interesting work	6
Good working conditions	4
Relations with co-workers	3
Good salary	1
Promotions and growth	7
Feeling of being in on things	9
Full appreciation of work done	2
Achievement	12
Responsibility	11
Relations with superior	8

What is interesting is to look into the ranking of these motivation factors along the levels of the Maslow's need-hierarchy theory, which provides some interesting insight into employee motivation. The number one ranked motivator, good salary, is a physiological factor. It is quite obvious because of the socio-economic character of the country. The public university is a government entity. In government organization, the employees (non-teaching staff) are poorly paid. As a matter of fact about two-thirds of the people of Bangladesh live on less than \$2 a day (UNICEF, 2008). Therefore, it is quite expected that money would be their top priority. The number two ranked motivator, full appreciation of work done, is an esteem factor. The number three ranked motivator, relations with co-workers, is a social factor. The number four ranked factor is good working conditions, a safety factor. Therefore, according to Maslow (1943, 1954), if managers wish to address the most important motivational factor of public university non-teaching staff, physiological, safety, social, and esteem factors must first be satisfied. If the university wished to address the first most important motivational factor of non-teaching staff, good pay, increased pay would suffice. Maslow's conclusions that lower level motivational factors must be met before ascending to the next level were confirmed by this study.

The following example compares the second ranked motivational factor (full appreciation of work done) to Vroom's expectancy theory. The employee sees a direct relationship between performance and rewards. Given the reward, the employee will work harder and harder, thus conforming to Skinner's reinforcement theory that says the behavior that is rewarded is the behavior that is repeated. On the other hand, motivation will be diminished if the employee is not appreciated for the job well done.

Full appreciation of work done is comparable to Adam's equity theory. If an employee feels that there is a lack of appreciation for job well done, as being too low relative to another employee, an inequity may exist and the employee will thus be de-motivated. In public

universities of Bangladesh it is not unusual, the inequity is rampant, promotion and reward are based on favoritism and nepotism and is heavily influenced by political bureaucrats, government officials and bribery as well. Adams (1965) stated employees will attempt to restore equity through various means, some of which may be counter-productive to organizational goals and objectives. For instance, employees who feel their work is not being appreciated may work less or undervalue the work of other employees.

The ranking of motivational factors in this study is not in consonant with several studies (e.g., Kovach, 1987, Harpaz, 1990). Pay was not ranked as the most or one of the most important motivational factor but was ranked second in the research conducted by Harpaz. Full appreciation of work done was not ranked as one of the most important motivational factors by Harpaz (1990), but was ranked second in this research and by Kovach (1987). The discrepancies in these research findings supports the idea that what motivates employees differs given the context in which the employee works. What is clear, however, is that employees rank pay as the most important motivational factor.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The ranked importance of motivational factors of employees provides useful information for the university administration and non-teaching staff. Knowing how to use this information in motivating its non-teaching staff is not easy. There is no commonly accepted theory of motivation. The strategy for motivating employees depends on many factors relating to both the individual and the environment. The key to motivating non-teaching staff is to know what motivates them and designing a motivation program based on those needs.

Regardless of which technique (s) is followed, pay and appreciation of work well done appear to be important links to higher motivation of non-teaching staff of higher education in this country. The effectiveness of the organization is dependent upon the motivation of its employees (Chesney, 1992; Buford, 1990; Smith, 1990). Knowing what motivates employees and incorporating this knowledge into the reward system will help the university administration identify, recruit, employ, train, and retain a productive workforce. Survey results of this study will help the university authority determine what motivates employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The employee motivation is a complex process. There is no commonly accepted principle of motivation since it is a function of many factors relating to both the individual and the environment. There is no theory of motivation that adequately encompasses all of the aspects of the individual and the environment in which he/she works. One area for future study, therefore, concerns what happens after the environment in the organization changes (e.g., technological advances and globalization). The authority must pay attention to these changes in order to create a good working environment.

Another area relates to an understanding of the whole of the organization, the values of the organization and the cultural standards of the employees, thus enabling employees to better relate their contribution to the overall mission of the organization and to contribute to the structural deficiencies that might exist in the organization.

Further research could also consider other factors such as location of the organization, other demographic factors and regional tendencies (for e.g. developed and developing countries).

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