

STAFF MOTIVATION IN SPECIAL LIBRARIES IN GHANA

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Abstract

The study sought to examine why many library workers seem to drift towards special libraries rather than to other types of libraries. It also aimed at finding out whether the seeming drift towards special libraries was caused by the fact that special libraries motivated their staff better than other library organizations and how motivation affected productivity.

The use of questionnaire, observation and personal interviews with the management staff and the library staff of the organization whose special libraries were studied made it possible to draw certain conclusions. The questionnaire was designed to check and double-check the responses elicited from the two sets of populations which were involved in the data collection. The interview segment was also to probe further for information to clarify certain issues and confirm perceptions and attitudes that came out at some points in the administration of the questionnaire. The result was that responses were wholly confirmed or wholly denied by the subjects thereby making it possible to authenticate conclusions to be made from the survey.

Introduction

Interest in the issue of motivation in organizations has risen steadily in recent years. Some thirty years ago, the level of knowledge and research in the area of motivation consisted largely of fragmentary data. In the early part of the 1960's however, interest in motivational problems of organizations increased significantly. This trend continued through the 1970's and 1980's into the 1990's. Today, it is difficult to pick a current research journal in organizational behaviour, industrial psychology or the general area of management without finding at least one section dealing with motivational problems of work (Steer and Porters, 1976). Motivation is in many ways the key to the success of Human Resource Management. Employers should aim to increase performance through self-motivation.

Motivation should be built into the performance management system where employers will have the opportunity to communicate and motivate staff on their performance (Tankenton, n.d.). The relation between the organization and its members is governed by what motivates them to work and the fulfillment they derive from it. The employer needs to know how best to elicit the co-operation of staff and direct their performance to achieving the goals and objectives of the organization. The employer must understand the nature of human behaviour and how best to motivate staff so that they work willingly and effectively (Mullins, 1999).

Employers need to motivate their employees to join and remain in the organization and to exhibit high attendance and job satisfaction. Motivation refers to

forces that energize, direct and sustain a person's efforts and a highly motivated person will work hard towards achieving performance goals (Bateman and Snell, 1999). Jones et al (2000), define motivation as "psychological forces that determine the direction of a person's behaviour in an organization, a person's level of effort, and a person's level of persistence in the face of obstacles". According to them, motivation is so central to employees because it explains why people behave the way they do in organizations. They accept that each member of an organization should be motivated to perform highly and help the organization achieve its goals. Motivation is therefore a state of need or desire that activates a person to do something to satisfy the need or desire for good.

Today, in all fields of endeavour, managers, workers, governments and all have come to accept the issue of motivation. It is therefore not uncommon to hear employers asking what they can do to make employees more concerned about their work, how to make employees take pride in the work they do; what to do to make employees perform at a high level; accept challenges and take up responsibility (Edward, 1985).

Staff motivation is one of the most significant in managing people and the essential skill is in knowing what motivates people and satisfying the needs of individuals at a given time. The most simple and cost-effective method in increasing efficiency is simply to show employees that you care about them and appreciate their hard work. It is therefore important that employers motivate their workforce and ensure that his or her employees will continue to bring energy, passion and positive attitude to work everyday (www.bccentral.co.uk/admin/people/movitation/motivating/staff.asp).

Motivation therefore comes from an act of recognition, a word of encouragement or a sense of respect. It is the power of

acknowledgment that brings enthusiasm to worthwhile work. It is imperative to know that every employer has an unlimited supply of such power. Thus, the basic principle underpinning motivation is that if staff are managed effectively, they will seek to give of their best voluntarily without the need for control through rules and sanctions (Tankerton, n.d.).

The employers must also encourage staff to direct effects towards the successful attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization. Motivation does not involve only tangible rewards in the form of good salaries but it involves also intangible factors such as training facilities, equipment to work with, co-operation from the members of staff including management staff and incentives (Mullins, 1999).

The underlying concept of motivation is some driving force within individuals by which they attempt to achieve some goal in order to fulfill some need or expectation. People's behaviour is determined by what motivates them and their performance is a product of both ability level and motivation (Mullins, 1999). Therefore, if the employer is to improve the work of the organization, attention must be given to the level of motivation of its members.

In Ghana, despite the fact that some classes of people enjoy a good standard of living, majority of the people are still poor. The situation has been worsened by the present economic problems facing the country. In a country where there is a lot of poverty, hungry, poor or diseased employees cannot think properly. In such a situation no employer should expect a person who is not sure of where the next meal is coming from to perform efficiently or at full capacity (Harrison and Havard, 1989).

Methodology

Staff motivation in special libraries is a research undertaken in 1999 using three

organizations as a case study. They are the Volta River Authority (VRA), Ghana Export Promotion Council (GEPC) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS). It is believed that these organizations have withstood the test of time and lived up to expectations. Productivity is high and services offered are excellent. Again, these organizations are able to meet the financial needs and aspirations of their workers.

In conducting such a survey, the questionnaire, interviews and observation methods were used. Two sets of questionnaires were drawn up. One set was administered to the management in all the three organizations under study. The other set of questionnaires was administered to the library staff of the institutions.

Apart from the questionnaire method, interviews were also conducted with the library staff. This was done to find out their opinions on the topic under study. Frequent visits to the organizations under study gave the writer the opportunity to have a firm observation of whatever goes on in their respective libraries. Other documentary sources such as books, periodicals, databases and theses were consulted.

Questionnaire

In all, thirty (30) questionnaires were administered to the management staff of the three organizations under study. Out of the total, twenty (20) were retrieved. The figure represented 67% of the responses from management staff. Questions were asked to elicit responses from management that will indicate their opinions and attitudes about motivation and how it affects workers' job performance; whether they motivate their employees and the types of motivation that they give to their staff.

The primary step taken to analyse the responses was to follow the layout of the

questions. Since the questions could not be analysed one after the other, they have been categorized under different headings.

The author distributed ten (10) copies of the second questionnaire to the library staff. Out of the ten (10), nine (9) were duly filled and returned. This represents ninety percent (90%) of the total distributed.

Findings

Motivation and Productivity

Many scholars believe that there is a link between motivation and productivity. Bearing that in mind, a number of questions were asked which sought to establish management's position on this assertion. Responses elicited indicate that all the twenty (20) management staff of the three organizations under study confirm that assertion. Interviews alongside the questionnaires to elicit clarification from management showed that management believes that there cannot be productivity when there is no motivation. These are seen as twins. In fact they are inseparable for one cannot live in isolation of the other. During the survey the writer realized that when management understood the relationship between motivation and productivity, they are better able to motivate their workers.

Respondents' length of service

All the nine (9) responses from the library staff which form 100% of the responses retrieved had worked with their various organizations for a number of years. Out of the nine (9) responses, six (6) respondents who formed 66% of the total respondents had worked for fifteen years. Out of the remaining three (3), one had worked for thirteen (13) years, another for six (6) years and the other for six (6) months respectively. The study revealed that all the six (6) library staff who had worked for fifteen years are Library Assistants.

From the survey it seems that the Library Assistants have worked for very long years.

The above analysis further confirms the low turnover of staff in these organizations under study. This is because if out of the nine (9) respondents, six(6) indicated that they had worked with their organizations for fifteen years then something might have kept them there. The issue boils down to the fact that they are probably better motivated by the organizations under study.

Educational background

The nine (9) respondents hold qualifications such as Diploma in Library Studies, Bachelor of Arts, Postgraduate Diploma in Library Studies and Masters in Library Studies. The survey indicated that out of the nine (9) respondents, only three (3) are professional librarians. This formed 33% of the total responses. Out of the number one holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Library Studies and the remaining two (2) hold Masters in Library Studies. These are the head Librarians of the three organizations under study. The remaining six (6) who formed 67% hold Diplomas in Library Studies.

The above analysis revealed that 67% of the total library staff are Library Assistants. With the present changes in libraries and information systems, such staff would not be able to meet the challenges facing the libraries in a computerized world and the need for quicker information than before. It is therefore important for such staff to upgrade themselves always through workshops, seminars, conferences etc. in order to face the challenges of meeting the needs of their clients.

Previous working experience

When workers were asked if they had worked in other organizations before their present jobs, all the nine (9) respondents (100%) indicated that they had worked in

other organizations before their present jobs. The survey revealed that they left their former jobs because they were not motivated in terms of salary, incentives, training opportunities, working tools, job satisfaction and others. This survey confirms that many librarians are attracted to these high-performing libraries because several avenues exist to motivate them.

Motivation on the present job

The survey revealed that all nine (9) respondents indicated that they took their present jobs because management in these organizations motivates workers better. The survey showed that they are now better motivated comparatively in their present jobs.

In an interview with the library staff all the respondents indicated that they have never regretted accepting their present jobs. The survey further revealed that because they are now better motivated in several ways, they are able to offer better services to their clients.

Working tools

Jones et al (2000) accept the notion that employers can use salaries to motivate employees to perform at a high level and attain their work goals but believe it is impossible to achieve higher productivity without working tools. Thus, the availability of adequate working tools is essential in achieving the organization's aims and objectives. It raises the image of the organization and enhances worker's morale.

All the nine (9) respondents agreed that adequate working tools enabled them to offer effective and better services to their clients and basically, it was the availability of working tools in the library that can help the organization to achieve its aims and goals.

When respondents were asked what effect motivation would have on services they offered if they were less motivated, all the nine (9) respondents indicated that if they were less motivated, that would affect productivity. Some confirmed this by referring to the lack of working tools in libraries, which resulted in the needs of many clients not being met and that led to the low image of the library and that of the organizations in which they worked. On the other hand, all the nine (9) respondents said they were now able to offer better services in their present jobs because of the availability of working tools. The above analysis indicate that to the librarian, the availability of working tools is paramount in his work even though other things are necessary. This is because when the librarian is not able to meet the needs of a client, he or she becomes disillusioned.

Management attitude towards the library

On the question of management attitude towards the library, the study indicates that out of the nine respondents, six indicated that management attitude towards the library was encouraging. In further interviews with the library staff, it came to light that some management staff seemed to value the services of the library, a few of them did not see any meaningful contribution the library made towards productivity. The survey revealed that out of the nine respondents only three forming (33%), said that management attitude towards the library was lukewarm.

The three (3) responses from above seem unfortunate because all the three organizations under study have training schools and so one wonders how the training schools could exist and train employees to work in these organizations without the contribution of their libraries. On the contrary however, the author realized

from the survey that the libraries had been contributing immensely to productivity but since their contributions could not be quantified, some management staff seemed to ignore them.

The survey indicated that when management was asked about the service of the library, all the 20 respondents being management staff, said they valued the services of the library. The survey revealed that generally, management's attitude to the libraries was encouraging. This may explain why the libraries under study were performing well because without the co-operation of the management staff, the libraries would not have achieved their aims.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the collective feeling and beliefs that workers have about their jobs. Workers who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to perform above and beyond the call of duty. A highly satisfied worker may never even think about looking for another job. However a dissatisfied worker may always be on the lookout for new opportunities (Jones et al 2000). Thus job satisfaction involves communication, working enthusiastically together, cultivating common goals, knowing one another, helping one another to do a better and more meaningful job (Tarkenton, n.d.)

Job satisfaction to the librarian means how he feels about his work; the work environment and the prospects in the organization. When the conditions under which the employee works is poor, unhygienic and not congenial, the morale of the workers will be affected.

From the study, seven (7) of the respondents which formed (77%) of the total response said that the conditions under which they worked were good enough to enable them offer better services to their clients. The survey showed that the above respondents

had enough facilities to enable them offer efficient services and respond to inquiries even from outside the country.

On the other hand, two of the respondents said that they were not happy about the conditions under which they work. The responses of the respondents were true for the survey indicated that one of the three libraries was ill equipped in terms of equipment.

When asked whether they were satisfied with their work, they responded in the negative. The survey showed that they were not satisfied because they were not able to meet the entire needs of their clientele especially when responding to inquiries both local and foreign. The survey indicates that whilst a majority of the library staff were satisfied with their jobs, a few were not satisfied with the conditions under which they worked.

Interview with the library staff

Apart from the questionnaires which were distributed to the library staff, the writer conducted interviews with the library staff. The questions centred on patronage of the libraries, finance, special training of the staff, and how the library was administered and problems in the libraries, (if any). All the nine (9) library staff representing (100%) who were interviewed gave their views on these.

Patronage

Many people seem to have the idea that special libraries in organizations are not well patronized by the workers of the various organizations. In an era when people seem to clamour for knowledge, the establishment of libraries in organizations should be welcomed. However, what seems to be the assumption now is that these libraries have a record of low patronage. In an interview with the library staff and from the author's own observation, it came to light that such a problem did not exist. Special libraries are

well patronized by their clientele but since workers work for several hours, they do not spend much time in the library. It was revealed that the libraries had high patronage on Mondays to Thursdays. However, the number of workers who used the library everyday was not recorded. It was however revealed that frequent use of the library by workers depended on how effective the library was able to meet the needs of its clients.

Administration

The interview with the library staff revealed that administratively, all the three librarians belonged to the senior member class. At VRA, the library comes under organizational service. However, in IRS and GEPC, it comes under Finance and Administration. The various departments control the activities of the library. It is a healthy sign to see that librarians belong to the senior member class. In this way, the librarian will be able to influence any decision affecting the library.

Finance

The interview revealed that all the libraries did not have absolute control of their budgets. In other words, the organizations do not give them money to make their own purchases. However, two of them agreed that they are given petty cash to purchase a few things for the library.

Training

Employers are urged to provide improved education and training for their workers. This is because productivity is fundamentally about how productive people are at work, their skills, motivation and commitment. Thus, there can never be productivity without training (Michie, et al 2002).

The interview revealed that apart from the basic qualification in librarianship; only one of the staff has had special training. However, many library staff have had further training through seminars, conferences and

workshops organized by the Ghana Library Association and the Library School at the University of Ghana, Legon. The staff of any special library should possess special training in the organization's particular area of operation apart from the training at the library school. The organization should sponsor such staff to obtain additional knowledge in its particular area of operation. For example, the VRA which aims at generating power, should equip the staff with such training so as to enable the staff offer better and efficient services to the organization.

Problems

The library staff complained of a number of problems, which included selection of library books, space and more working tools. In the interview with the library staff, it came to light that all the libraries under study had problems with selection. When it came to selecting library books from the catalogues sent out, many departments wanted their choices to be selected. Thus the librarian was faced with the problem of how to achieve a balanced collection.

The survey revealed that all the nine (9) respondents had little space to operate. The writer's frequent visits to the libraries during the survey confirmed this. It was observed that because the library has little space to operate, there were books which had not been made available to the clients.

Recommendations

Motivation seems to be the pivot around which production revolves. Better motivation therefore ensures higher productivity (Gatewood, 1994). This means that motivation and productivity can never be separated from each other. Employers who have come to realize and accept the essence of motivation in one way or the other strive to look for avenues to increase the morale of their employees in order to elicit higher productivity from them.

Motivation is essential to the success of every organization. Employers should see their employees as "Human Beings" and understand their needs and aspirations. As the success and increase in productivity are important to the employer, so should the welfare and needs of the employee be his concern (Stoner, 1995).

The following recommendations are therefore being made in the belief that when closely considered they will enhance the performance of the special library in the scheme of affairs of the parent organizations.

Management Attitude

Jones, et al (2002) encourage managers to develop the skills to engage in and to attend and retain workers and to ensure that they perform at a high level and contribute to the accomplishment of organizational goals. Employers should have a planned approach to managing people effectively for performance. They should establish a more open, more flexible and caring management skills so that staff will be motivated, developed and managed in a way that they can and will give of their best to support the organization's aim (Tankenton). Thus in looking at motivation, workers do not ask for increase in salaries or incentives only. They look also at the attitude of management staff.

The success of every library and how effective and efficiently the library is able to provide its services depend to a large extent on the attitude of the management staff of the organization (Alemna, 1992). In organizations where management attitude towards the library is poor, it affects the services the library offers. It is therefore recommended that in order to change the attitude of the management staff towards the library and its activities, management should make a conscious effort to be involved

in the library and its activities. Again, management staff of such organizations should be invited to chair or present papers and participate in programmes organized by the Ghana Library Association. If this is done, management attitude to the library will change for the better because they will have been exposed to the problems and services of the library. In addition to the above recommendations, the library should also organize user education programmes for staff. Through this, management will get to know the services and contributions the library has to offer to the organization.

It is hoped that such methods would help to disabuse their minds and upgrade the knowledge of the management staff about the library. When this is done, their attitude towards the library will change for the better and since they are a decision-making body, they would respond to requests made by the librarian.

Administration

It came to light that all the three librarians in the organizations under study come under other departments. Since the department under which the library operates is headed by someone who is not a librarian and may not take interest in the library, it is likely that he will not give much attention to the library. He has to meet the obligation of his department before he considers those of the library. In such circumstances, the library may be neglected.

It is recommended that in order that the library should function properly, it should come under the direct control of the Chief Executive since the libraries under study do not have library committees. If this is done, the Chief Executive will be able to see the needs of the library more than when it is put under another department.

Finance

The survey revealed that none of the three libraries under study had its own budget

controlled by the librarian. It is recommended that every special library should have a budget controlled by the librarian. The Librarian has been trained for not just meeting the needs of the clients but managing the entire library system. He knows what is good for the library or the facilities he must put in place in order to carry out his duties effectively. Thus, when the librarian has control over the library's budget, he would be able to provide facilities, which will eventually help to meet the needs of the clients, and will enhance productivity.

Patronage

Patronage in special libraries seems to bother many librarians. Many hold the notion that there is low patronage in special libraries. However, the survey conducted proved that notion wrong. Special libraries are highly patronized by the workers of the organisations, management staff and even research officers. Even though patronage is not low, the writer recommends that a lot could be done to increase the patronage. For example, the library should organize user education programs for staff. Through these the staff would be better informed about the essence of using the library and patronage will increase.

Special Training

The survey revealed that out of nine library staff, only one had special training. This means that apart from the basic qualification in library studies only one has the chance to study in an area not related to the library. Special libraries are "special" in terms of stock, clients and services they offer (Alemna, 1989). Thus for the staff to offer effective and efficient services which will enhance productivity, the staff must receive special training even in the area of operation of the organization.

Space

The writer observed during the survey that all the special libraries under study had little

space to operate. These libraries were housed in small or adjunct rooms. The writer recommends that for special libraries to be able to offer their services effectively and contribute immensely towards productivity, they should not be housed in adjunct rooms. Special libraries should therefore have their own specially designed buildings.

Equipment

Motivation of the library staff does not only deal with salary but it includes equipment. In any modern library, staff would be able to carry out effective services to their clients with the availability of equipment. The writer recommends that all special libraries should be computerized and should have such facilities as fax services, e-mail, CD-ROM and all electronic facilities that would enable the library staff carry out their duties effectively. Again, it is recommended that all special libraries should be hooked onto the Internet. This will enable the libraries to be abreast with new developments in information technology, modern practices in libraries, and assist in the acquisition of knowledge.

Conclusion

The study was undertaken on the assumption that:

1. Management staff recognize and therefore accept that motivation is linked with productivity;
2. Special libraries perform well because their staff are better motivated; and
3. Many library school graduates tend to drift towards special libraries because special library staff are better motivated in terms of tangible and intangible rewards.

The assumption that management level staff recognize and accept that motivation is linked with productivity was confirmed. All twenty (20) management responses, which represented 100% agreed that motivation

is linked with productivity. By this assertion it means that, better motivation leads to higher productivity.

The assumption that special libraries perform well because the staff are better motivated compared to other libraries was also confirmed. Both management staff and library staff agreed that staff are better motivated so they perform well.

Again the survey confirmed the assumption that library workers tend to gravitate towards special libraries because workers at special libraries are better motivated in terms of tangible and intangible rewards. The writer's own observation from interaction with prospective library school graduates confirm this. However, the assumption was underscored by management staff's responses which indicated that numerous applications are received from library graduates who wish to work with their organizations, even when no vacancies have been advertised.

The issue of motivation has come to be accepted by all employers and it is linked directly with productivity. Thus, the more avenues exist to motivate the workers, the more the worker is able to give of his best to achieve higher productivity. Since it is established that productivity is linked to motivation, the employer cannot do away with the issue in his organization. Rather, he should face the situation and look for avenues to raise the morale of his workers. Again, since the needs and problems of the worker indirectly affect productivity, the employer should look for avenues to reduce some of the problems and meet the needs of his workers.

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