

Employee Motivation and Performance in Ghana's Local Governance System: The Experience of the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly

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The study specifically examined the effects of employee motivation on the job performance of local government units in Ghana using the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly as a case study. The study used the mixed method with a sample size of 90 respondents based on simple random sampling technique and deployed the Vroom Yetton's expectancy theory of motivation. The key findings of the study were: First, the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly implemented motivation strategies such as: working salary, employee training and development as well as periodic promotion based on performance and availability of vacancies to motivate the employees of the Assembly. Second, though all the employees admitted that the motivation strategies did influence their performance, they were not enough to effectively motivate them; hence some of the employees of the Assembly alluded to the fact that motivation was inadequate in the Assembly. Based on the findings, the study recommends the following: The Assembly should formulate and implement employee-centered motivation strategies that meet the motivation needs of employees and there should be improved conditions of service for employees of the local governance system.

Keywords: local governance, Kwahu South Municipal Assembly, employee, motivation, performance

Introduction

Following the World Bank's report in the 1980s that declared the problems faced by countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as the "crisis of governance" with centralization as the main cause, most countries in SSA started the decentralization of their systems of governance (World Bank, 1989). Decentralization is simply defined as the transfer of power, authority, and resources from the central government or national state actors to sub-national level governments for the purposes of effective and efficient administration and development.

Ghana adopted decentralization following the promulgation of the 1988 Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207) to deepen local governance as part of the implementation of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (Ayee, 2002). On return to constitutional rule in January 1993, Articles 35(6)(d), 240 (1) and 245(a) of the 1992 Constitution and the Local Governance Act 2016 (Act 936) all made provisions for Ghana's local governance. For instance, Article 240(1) clearly states, "Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized". Again, the legal provisions gave political, administrative, economic, social, and developmental powers and authority to the

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Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to create an enabling environment for development (Republic of Ghana, 1992; 2016). Furthermore, the Local Governance Act, 2016 in Section 76(1) states, “The Office of the District Assembly shall have the staff that are necessary for the proper and effective performance of its functions”. The existence of staff does not automatically result in the attainment of the enabling environment for development. They must be imbued with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA), motivation, and environment. Against this backdrop, this paper sought to examine the strategies of motivation implemented in Ghana’s local governance system and how they shaped employee performance using the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly (KSMA).

Significant studies have been done on the subject matter of employee motivation and performance. Most of these studies were conducted in the context of the public and private sectors. Others focused on specific sectors such as health, education, banking etc. For example, Analoui and Antwi (2008) examined local government in Ghana in the context of the challenges facing human resource capacity building and development policies. Seniwobila (2014) studied the implementation of staff performance appraisal in the local government service of Ghana. Scholars such as Adjei, Emmanuel, and Forster (2016) and Bonenberger, Aikins, Akweongo, and Wyss (2014) explored the effects of motivation and job satisfaction on health workers in Ghana. Seniwoliba and Nchorbono (2013) interrogated the role of motivation on employee performance in Ghana’s public sector and Bonsu and Kusi (2014) conducted a study on the effects of motivation on the job performance of local government workers in Ghana. However, limited studies have explored the linkage between local government, motivation, and performance particularly in Metropolitan Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs). This study thus makes a modest contribution by examining the connection between employee motivation and performance within the local governance system of Ghana using the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly (KSMA) as a case study. Specifically, the study was driven by two research objectives and questions namely:

- a. To discuss the employee motivation strategies formulated and implemented by the KSMA and,
- b. To examine how these strategies influenced the performance of employees at the KSMA.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: conceptualizing motivation and employee performance, studies on employee motivation and performance with local governance focus, methodology, profile of the study area, findings and discussion, conclusion and recommendation.

Conceptualizing Employee Motivation and Performance

Motivation is from the Latin word “movere” meaning to move. It literally means that which inwardly moves a person to behave in a certain way, mental state or force which induces an action of volition. According to Cole (1996), it is essentially what propels someone to work in a specific manner and with a specific level of effort. Vroom (1964) defined motivation as a mechanism that controls how people choose between several types of voluntary behaviors. From the above, motivation may be referred to as a process in which people choose between alternative forms of behaviour in order to achieve personal goals. In the organizational context, it may be referred to as what causes employees to choose one course of action over the other to attain organisational results (productivity).

In the literature, two main theories of motivation have been identified. These are the content or needs theories and the process theories. Content theories explain the precise factors that drive employee motivation at work. These theories focus on understanding people’s needs, their relative strengths, and the objectives they seek in order to meet those needs. Major content theories of motivation include Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Aldefer’s

existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory, Herzberg's two factor theory, and McClelland's acquired needs theory. Process theories emphasize how events, needs, and outcomes motivate behaviour. They focus on the psychological factors or processes that have effect on motivation as well as fundamental needs (Armstrong, 2010). Theories that fall under this category are the expectancy theory, equity theory, and goal setting theory.

Aside this broad classification, there exists the behavioural theory of motivation. Under this category are theories such as the Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y as well as the William Ouchi's Theory Z.

According to Armstrong (2010), performance is frequently described in terms of outputs, or the accomplishment of quantifiable goals. However, performance is not just a matter of only what people achieve but also how they achieve it (Armstrong, 2010). Performance therefore encompasses both what people do as well as how they accomplish it. In the words of DeNisi and Griffin (2005), employee performance is a function of three factors, namely ability, motivation, and environment and culture. For the purposes of this study, ability and environment and culture are constant for employee performance. Generally, scholars such as Knippenberg (2000); Indahingwati et al. (2019); Paais and Pattiruhu (2020); Kwapong, Opoku, and Donyina (2015); Aryan and Singh (2015); Olalere (2015); Yusuf, Aduku, and Suleiman (2015), Adjei et al. (2016); and Owusu (2012) have in their studies across various sectors established the relationship between employee motivation and performance.

Conceptualizing Local Governance

Olowu and Wunsch (2004) defined local governance as a rule-governed process that allows residents of a defined area to participate in their own governance in a small number of locally significant issues. According to them, residents play a key role in deciding what issues are most important to them, how to respond to those concerns, what resources will be raised to address those concerns, and how those responses will be managed and improved. Local governance also focuses on the relationship between the local governments and the local community where there is interaction between both formal and informal actors, institutions, rules and regulations, and involvement by all in the community (Agbevide, 2018). There are various forms of local governance. These are administrative decentralization, political decentralization, and economic/fiscal decentralization. The significance of human resource as a mechanism for effective local governance aside legal and fiscal instruments has been emphasized in the literature (Olowu, 2003). Olowu (2003) opined that organizing human resources for local governance poses two crucial questions: (i) how to ensure that all local governments in a country are able to recruit qualified officials and (ii) how to ensure that these officials are properly motivated. Ayee (2019) in contributing to the discourse on human resource and local governance doubted the quality of some of the appointed personnel to the MMDAs and their performance. In his view, these people lacked the requisite knowledge and information on effective local governance. Ayee (2019) further proposed reduction in the extreme and excessive partisanship in appointing party loyalists to the position of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) and the 30% membership of the MMDAs. He counseled that, even when the appointments were done on partisan lines, some competence and diligence should be involved. In short, this paper interrogates how the human resources of Ghana's local governance system are motivated for the required performance using the KSMA as a case study.

Studies on Local Governance, Employee Motivation and Performance

According to Opoku (2021), staff in local government units are more productive and tend to perform better when they are motivated. Elements like welfare, promotions, incentives, recreational facilities, and other intrinsic

and extrinsic motivational factors contribute to increased productivity and performance in Ghana's local governance system.

A study by Antwi (2009) on motivation and Ghana's local governance, found that, motivational challenges such as lack of financial incentives for local government service workers hinder their effective performance in Ghana. Antwi (2009) called for the implementation of a deliberate motivational reward system aimed at non-tangible rewards to make workforce motivation achievable in the local governance system instead of complaining. Bonsu and Kusi (2014) in their study on the effects of motivation on the performance of local government workers established that workplace motivation is crucial for both productivity and quality of work. They contended that giving public sector employees great pay and comfortable working conditions encourages them to put in more effort. The study also showed that the majority of local government employees think about quitting their jobs owing to low pay and fringe perks in pursuit of better working environments and higher pay elsewhere. The researchers also came to the conclusion that central governments should implement stronger pay and reward systems in local governments to encourage workers to perform at the highest level possible and to enhance their attitudes towards work. Similarly, Domfeh and Takyi (2014) found that MMDAs lacked motivational packages and made ineffective efforts to generate revenue. The Cape Coast Municipal Assembly was found to be lacking fundamental compensation packages, including staff accommodation, offices, and the tools (computers, vehicles) they need to do their jobs, which negatively impacted performance and led to a rise in employee turnover. They further postulated that a high employee turnover rate affected key departments such as audit, budget, and engineering units in the assembly establishing a link between how lack of motivational rewards affects employee performance and how their performance directly affects the effective operation and functioning of local government units (LGUs). Studies further discovered that motivation was also statistically significant for predicting duty attendance, achieving deadlines, finishing tasks, and working overtime in MMDAs. Factors such as incentives, feedback, and goal definition were also identified as contributing to employee performance. This study makes a modest contribution to the literature by discussing the linkage between strategies of employee motivation and performance in Ghana's local governance system using the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly as a case study.

Methodology of the Study

The study used a mixed method of research and a single case study because of the concentration on the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly. The population of the study was 148 employees of the Assembly made up of 89 males and 59 females. Since the entire population was qualified to be considered for the study, a simple random sampling technique was deployed. The Yamene (1973) sample estimation formula was employed with an error term of 0.05% to arrive at a sample size of 108 consisting of 65 males and 43 females. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources with questionnaire and face to face interview being the main instruments for the former while the latter was through official reports, journal articles, and chapters in books. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was deployed for the data analysis.

Profile of the Study Area

Ghana has a three-tier local governance system consisting of district, municipal, and metropolitan assemblies (MMDAs). For a locality to be classified as a district, municipality, and metropolis, it must have a minimum population of seventy-five thousand (75,000), ninety-five thousand (95,000), and two hundred and

fifty thousand (250,000) people respectively. In addition, “the geographical contiguity and economic viability of the area, namely, the ability of an area to provide the basic infrastructural and any other developmental needs from the monetary and any other resources generated in the area” (Republic of Ghana, 2016, p. 13). Ghana currently has 261 MMDAs.

The Kwahu South Municipal Assembly (KSMA) is one of the 261 MMDAs. It is located in the Eastern Region which has 13 local government units (LGUs). It was established in 1988 under Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 1988, Act 1742. The municipal capital is Mpraeso. The Assembly shares boundaries with Kwahu East to the north, Asante-Akim South to the west, the Kwahu West Municipality and East Akim Municipal to the south, and Fanteakwa Municipal to the east. It is specifically located between longitude 0°55’’ West and 0°20’’ West and latitude 6°35’’ North and 6°45’’ North. The KSMA has a total surface area of 602 km² with a population of 80,755 of which 39,667 are males representing 49.1 percent and 41,088 are females representing 50.9 percent.

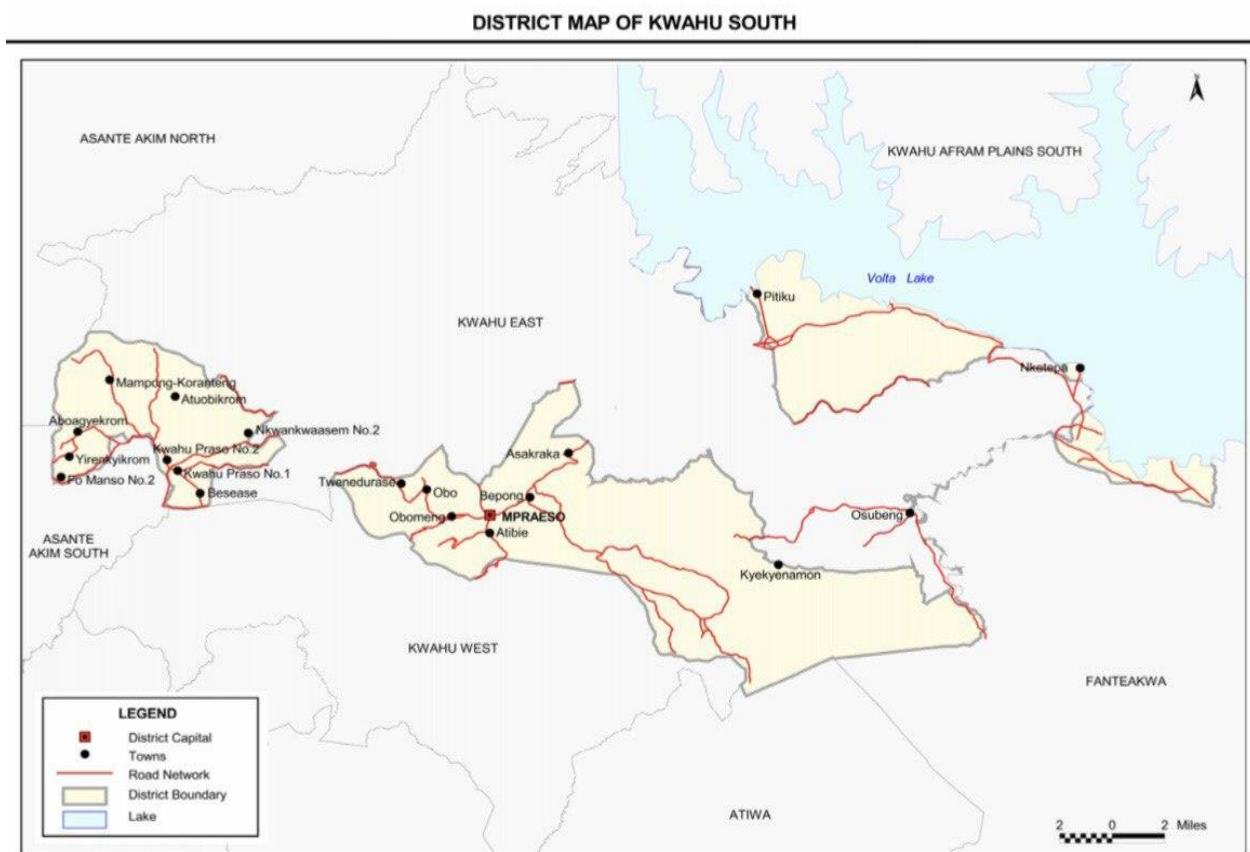


Figure 1. Map of the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly.

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2021.

The vision of the municipality is to develop into one of the most effective, efficient, and accountable MMDAs that provide high-quality, easily accessible services in a democratic setting that encourages development. In terms of its mission, it exists to improve the quality of life of the people in the Municipality through effective mobilization and judicious utilization of resources.

The municipality’s political and administrative structures include six Zonal Councils, a Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), 37 Assembly Members, and a Member of Parliament representing the Kwahu South

Constituency. The District Coordinating Director is the administrative head of the municipal assembly, while the MCE is its political head. There are 37 members of the Assembly. Out of this number, 12 were appointed by the government and 25 were elected. A number of established subcommittees serve as the Executive Committee's working arms and aid in carrying out particular activities of the assembly. The Kwahu South Municipal Assembly's economy is mostly agricultural, providing about 44.7% of the working population with jobs. The economy also includes smaller-scale service and manufacturing industries.

Findings of the Study

The study was guided by two-fold research objectives:

- a. To discuss the employee motivation strategies formulated and implemented by the KSMA and,
- b. To examine how these strategies influenced the performance of employees at the KSMA.

The Strategies of Motivating Employees at the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly

The Kwahu South Municipal Assembly implemented several strategies in motivating employees for improved performance. From the study, it became known that the Assembly implemented strategies such as financial rewards which encompassed monthly salary and other financial benefits; there is training and development where the assembly organized periodic workshops to train workers both on the job and off the job. The latter normally involved selected employees sent to the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) to study and earn course certificates. Lastly, there was periodic promotion of every four years based on performance and availability of vacancy.

The Linkage Between the Strategies of Motivation and Employee Performance

Table 1

Influence of Motivational Factors on Employee Performance at Work

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|---------------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | | | | |
| | Excellent | 40 | 44.4 | 44.4 |
| | Very good | 30 | 33.3 | 77.8 |
| | Good | 15 | 16.7 | 94.4 |
| | Average | 5 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| | Below average | 0 | 0.0 | |
| | Total | 90 | 100.0 | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

Table 1 indicates the impact of motivational factors on the respondents' performance at work. From the table, 44.4% of the respondents indicated that the motivation strategies implemented by the Assembly excellently influenced their performance at work. Another 30 respondents representing 33.3% posited that the motivational factors were very good in influencing their performance at work. Fifteen respondents representing 16.7% were of the view that the motivation triggers put in place by the Assembly were good in influencing their performance. Furthermore, five of the respondents signifying 5.6% averred that the motivational factors averagely motivated their behavior in performance. In short, all the employees of the Assembly did recognize that the motivation strategies implemented by the Assembly did influence and shape their behavior in contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Assembly.

Table 2 below depicts whether employees lacked any of the motivational factors.

Table 2

Do the Employees Lack any of the Motivational Factors

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 73 | 81.1 | 81.1 | 81.1 |
| | No | 17 | 18.9 | 18.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 90 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

From Table 2 above, it came to light that 73 of the respondents representing 81.1% lacked some of the motivational factors at the assembly and 17 respondents representing 18.9% responded in the positive that they did not lack any motivation. From the analysis, majority of the respondents lacked some form of motivation at the assembly.

Table 3 and Figure 2 below present the motivational factors that the 73 respondents of the Assembly lacked.

Table 3

Motivational Factors Employees Lack at the Assembly

| Good salary | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Selected | 70 | 77.8 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 20 | 22.2 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |
| Recognition | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Selected | 19 | 21.1 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 71 | 78.9 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |
| Promotion | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Selected | 21 | 23.3 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 69 | 76.7 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |
| Training and development | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Selected | 20 | 22.2 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 70 | 77.8 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |
| Work flexibility | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Selected | 15 | 16.7 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 75 | 83.3 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |
| Job security | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Selected | 6 | 6.7 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 84 | 93.3 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |

Table 3 to be continued

| Good working environment | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Selected | 37 | 41.1 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 53 | 58.9 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |
| All of the above | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
| Valid | Selected | 1 | 1.1 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 89 | 98.9 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

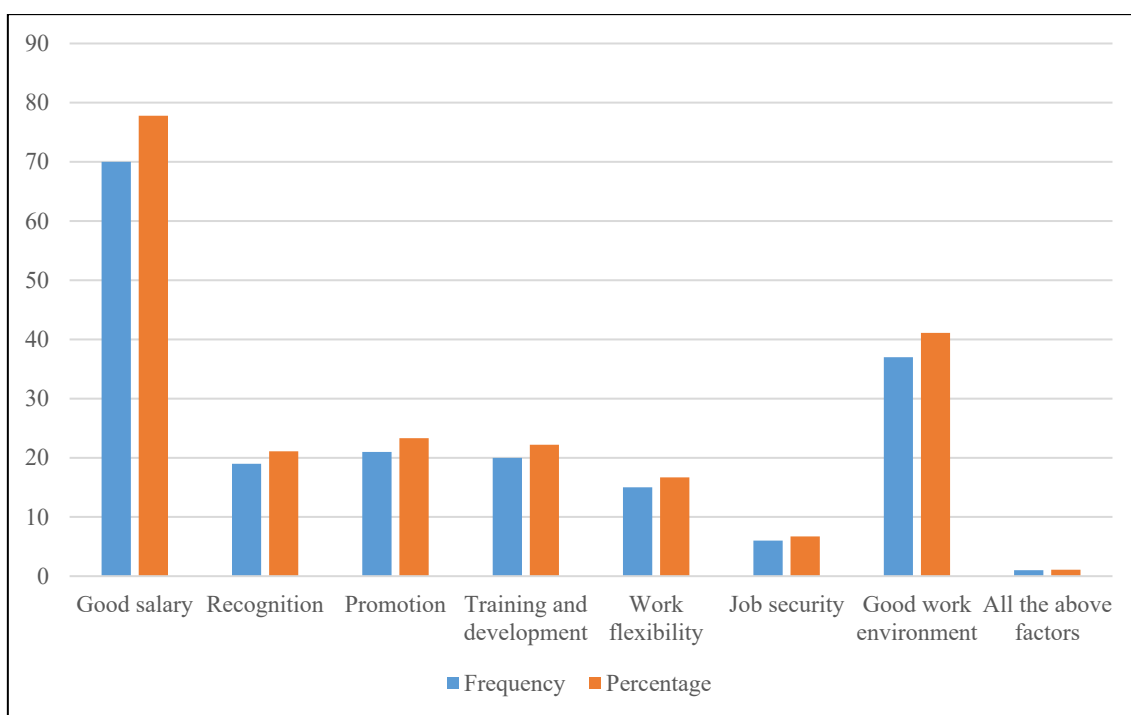


Figure 2. Motivational factors lacked by employees at the KSMA.

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

Figure 2 above indicates the motivational factors that the employees lacked at the assembly. From the figure, 70 of the respondents representing 77.8% lacked good salary, while 37 respondents representing 41.1% pointed to the absence of good working environment. Continuing with the lack of motivational factors, 21 respondents, which is about 23.3% ascribed to the non-availability of promotion opportunities in the Assembly, 20 (22.2%) of the respondents mentioned lack of training and development as the motivational factor that they lacked in the Assembly. Lack of recognition was identified by 19 of the respondents representing 21.1% as the motivational intrigue that they do not experience in the Assembly. Fifteen, six, and one respondents representing 16.7%, 6.7%, and 1.1% respectively brought lack of work flexibility, job security, and absence of all the motivational factors respectively to the fore as what they lacked in the Assembly. From the analysis, majority of the workers identified lack of good salary as the key motivational factor lacking in the Assembly.

Table 4

Lack of Motivation Affects Employee Performance at Work

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|---------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 63 | 70.0 | 71.6 | 71.6 |
| | No | 25 | 27.8 | 28.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 88 | 97.8 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 2 | 2.2 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

To interrogate whether the lack of motivation influenced the performance of the employees, the sampled employees of the Assembly were asked “Did lack of motivation influenced your performance?” A whopping 63 respondents representing 70% responded in the affirmative while a paltry 25 respondents standing for 27.8% responded in the negative while there were two (2.2%) missing figures. It is clear from the analysis that majority of the respondents’ performance was shaped by the existence of motivational factors.

Table 5

Lack of Incentives Affected Employee Performance

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|---------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 81 | 90.0 | 92.0 | 92.0 |
| | No | 7 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 88 | 97.8 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 2 | 2.2 | | |
| Total | | 90 | 100.0 | | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

To ascertain whether the existence of motivation changed the performance of employees, the sampled respondents were asked “If provided with the incentives employees of the Assembly lacked, will it boost your performance?” From Table 5, 90% (81) of the respondents responded in the positive while an insignificant number of seven responded in the negative. From the analysis, majority of the respondents indicated that their performance at work was high when provided with the motivational factors they lacked.

Table 6

Feeling Motivated to Go the Extra Mile for the Organization

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 35 | 38.9 | 38.9 | 38.9 |
| | No | 55 | 61.1 | 61.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 90 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

Table 6 above indicated employees at the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly who felt motivated to go the extra mile for the organization. From the data, 61% of the respondents opined that they did not feel motivated to go the extra mile for the organization and 39% indicated that they felt motivated to go the extra mile. It is clear from the analysis that majority of the respondents did not feel motivated to go the extra mile for the organization.

Table 7

Satisfied With the Motivational Rewards Received at KSMA

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 33 | 36.7 | 36.7 | 36.7 |
| | No | 57 | 63.3 | 63.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 90 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

Table 7 above provides data on whether employees of the Assembly were satisfied with the motivational rewards they received at the Assembly. From the table, 63% of the respondents were not satisfied with the motivational rewards they received from the Assembly and 37% of them indicated they were satisfied with it. It is clear from the analysis that majority of the employees were not satisfied with the motivational rewards given to them at the Assembly.

Table 8

Ever Leave the Organization in Search for Better Rewards Elsewhere

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percent | Cumulative percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 76 | 84.4 | 84.4 | 84.4 |
| | No | 14 | 15.6 | 15.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 90 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Fieldwork, September 2022.

Table 8 provides feedback on whether respondents at the Kwahu South Municipal Assembly would ever leave the organization in search of better rewards. From the data, 84.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that they would leave the organization for better rewards, while some minor respondents of 15.6% said otherwise. It is clear from the analysis that majority of the respondents would leave the organization in search of better rewards. If this occurs, the Assembly will grapple with a high rate of labor turnover.

Discussion of Findings

The study sought to examine the strategies of motivation implemented at the KSMA. The Assembly implemented both financial and non-financial motivation strategies to urge the employees to contribute towards the achievement of the assembly's objective. The strategies did shape the performance of employees positively. In the midst of this, the employees lacked some motivation factors such as good salary, recognition, promotion, training and development, flexibility in work, job security, and good working environment. The absence of these motivational factors negatively affected the performance of the employees in the KSMA. The absence of motivational factors in the assembly has the potential of the assembly experiencing labour turnover, since most of the respondents indicated their readiness to exit the assembly if they got a better employment opportunity elsewhere.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established the fact that the KSMA intentionally implemented employee motivation strategies aimed at ensuring that the Assembly's strategic objectives were attained. These strategies did help the employees in their performance. However, the strategies were not comprehensive as some of the employees indicated that they lacked some motivational strategies which resulted in their performance experiencing a nosedive. Also, the

employees were likely to sever their employment relationship with the Assembly if they received a better employment offer elsewhere.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

First of all, the formulation and implementation of compensation and reward systems to motivate staff to put in their very best for enhanced performance in the KSMA. This can be done through increase in the percentage of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) allocated to the MMDAs and KSMA should endeavour to increase its internally generated funds (IGFs) so that part can be earmarked for employee motivation purposes.

Second, there should be a deliberate management initiative to identify what actually motivates employees of the KSMA for the implementation of targeted employee motivation strategies. This will position the KSMA to implement employee motivation driven strategies.

Third, the Assembly and the Local Government Service of Ghana should implement a performance related pay and promotion strategy instead of the current wholesale system where employees received pay rise and promotion periodically and automatically without any rational justification.

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