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Demographic Differences In The Perceived Best Ways Of Motivating Employees

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Abstract:

The paper contributes to the body of knowledge in the area of motivation by examining the role of socio-demographic variables in motivation. The research design is quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional survey. The target population is marketing students of Sunyani Polytechnic. A sample of 200 respondents was selected through convenience sampling method. Primary data were collected through self-designed questionnaire, administered during lectures. The data was analysed using cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis. The results revealed socio-demographic differences in perceived importance of motivational factors. Motivational policy should be based on customized packages to target individual unique employees. Future studies should look at causal studies in a comparative study of actual employees and future employees.

Key words: Age; Gender; Motivation; customized; employees; region

1. Introduction

The need for an organisation to have competitive advantage has resulted in increase attention on motivation of employees by employers in the literature. Economist, business people, management experts, human resources practitioners and researcher are interested in determining the best ways to motivate employees to increase their productivity so that the organisations will succeed on the market field (Kukanja, 2013; Karaskakovska, 2012).

Whereas some people call for general employee motivation others call for Customized employee motivation (Kukanja, 2013; Karaskakovska, 2012), since it is believed that individual employees are differently motivated. That is demographic differences exist in the motivational profiles of employees (Kukanja, 2013; Karaskakovska, 2012; DelVecchio & Wagner, 2011; Sabir et al., 2011). Motivational package should be tailored to suit individual employees.

Karaskakovska (2012) reported that irrespective of an employee demographic profile (gender and age), what motivate employees in the study conducted are advancement opportunities, challenging job positions, and good compensation packages (money and well managed/good work environment).

The current paper is based on integration of theories of motivation developed by various theorists (Herzberg, 1987; Adams, 1965; Vroom, 1964; Mac Gregory, 1960; Maslow, 1943; Taylor, 1911). The theories are Expectancy theory (Vrooms), Adams (Social Equity Theory (Adams), Productivity theory (Taylor), Two factor theory (Herzberg), Theory X and Y (Mac Gregory) ERG theory (Alders), Need theory (Maslow) and Reward theory (Skinner).

Greenberg and Baron (2003) defined motivation as “The set of processes that arouse, direct, and maintain human behaviour towards attaining some goal”. According to Robbins (1993) motivation is the “willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organisational goals, conditioned by the effort’s ability to satisfy some individual need”. These definitions indicate that productivity is a function of employee motivation. For workers to give their best they need to be motivated in different ways since the motivation reduces the tension in the individual worker.

The increased concern on individual motivational package has lead to increase empirical research in the area of socio-demographic differences in motivation of employees based on these theories. This is the focus of the current paper. The findings on the role of demographic variables in the motivation of employees are found in the works of various researchers (Kukanja, 2013; Karaskakovska, 2012; DelVecchio & Wagner, 2011; Sabir et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2010; Saifuddin et al., 2010; Rehman et al., 2009; Tirmizi et al., 2008; Getahun et al., 2007; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Tan et al., 2007; Tella et al., 2007; Shah & Jalees, 2004; Crossman & Abou-Zaki, 2003; Nelson, 2001; Jurkiewicz et al., 1998; Wiley, 1997; Harpaz, 1990; Kovach, 1987; Churchill et al., 1979).

Qayyum and Sukirno (2012) reported of significant demographic differences in motivation and indicated that age, experience, education and gender significant influence on ranking behaviour of employees in the importance of various motivational factors. For example, Kukanja (2013) reported of statistical significant correlation between motivational factors and demographic factors. There was a significant association with gender and money and fun with women preferring more money and fun than men. Age significantly correlates with health benefits, fun and flexible working hours. Respondents up to age 30years prefer fun and flexible working hours than respondents who are above 30years but prefer less health benefits.

There was significant link between education and factors such as career development, training and health benefits. More educated respondents prefer career development, training and health benefits as compared to the less educated respondents. Significant relation exists between personal income and factors such as health benefits. The less wealthy respondents less prefers social security as compare to the more wealthy respondents. Statistical significant difference exists between work experience and factors such as career development, training, health benefits and fun. The more experienced respondents prefer career development, training and health benefits as compared to the less experienced respondents.

The study by Wiese and Coetzee (2013) revealed significant differences between demographic and motivation of employees. Sales representatives with higher education are less motivated by having power over other people as compared to representatives with less education. Males are more motivated by growth and promotion opportunities than females. Age significantly affected motivation of employees. In relation to the demographic features of the respondents, the least motivating variables are location of the workplace, job security and benefits. Karaskakovska (2012) indicated that there is a significant age difference in importance to motivational variables such as challenge, security and work environment.

Kumar et al. (2012) reported of significant correlation between demographic variables and motivational factors. They stated that male faculty members are more satisfied than female faculty members and that faculty members are more satisfied by the work itself than working conditions. There is significant correlation between the designation of employees and motivation. Senior faculty members are highly satisfied by recognition as compare to junior faculty members. Junior faculty members are more motivated by a salary factor than senior faculty members (professors and heads).

According to DelVecchio and Wagner (2011) significant age differences exists in motivation and that promotion and interesting work are more important for the younger age group than for the older age group in an organisation. Hair et al. (2010) established significant age difference in motivation and reported that opportunity for advancement and promotion is a strong motivator for younger sales representatives than older sales representatives. Qayyum and Sukirno (2011) reported a significant effect of age, experience, education and gender on the ranking behaviour of employees in the importance of various motivational factors. The motivational factors identified in the study are High salary; seniority-based promotion; personal development/learning; a stable and secure future; balanced work and family life; opportunity for advancement; fringe benefits; relaxed working environment; chance to benefit society; physical working environment; social status/prestige and benefits after retirement.

Ahmed et al. (2010) and Rehman et al. (2006) established statistical significant correlation between age of employees and employee motivation in an organisation. Qammar et al. (2006) reported of no significant correlation between professional qualifications and employees' motivation (chi-square=7.197; p=0.303). There is significant correlation between designation of employees and motivation (chi-square=19.333; p=0.004). Senior managers are more motivated than entry level managers since senior managers enjoy more facilities, less repetitive work and more empowerment.

There is a statistical link between the age of respondents and motivation (chi-square=23.924; p=001). Respondents in the age group 40-50years are more motivated than those in the age group 20-30years. There was no statistical significant correlation between gender and employees motivation (chi-square=1.396; p=0.498). Women were not motivated than men. Huddleston et al. (2002) reported that women valued job security more than men which indicate demographic differences in motivation. Studies (Warr et al., 2001) indicate that as individuals aged their personality traits (openness, neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness) changes. Some personality traits decline as individuals get older whereas some other traits increase and these affect their motivational preferences.

Some studies such as that of Stead (2009), Ross (2005) and Komives (1991) produce contrary results. Komives (1991) established no gender difference in the motivational levels of employees. The results indicate mixed findings. These hypotheses have been identified in literature through the review of the literature.

- The demographic factor of 'age' affects work motivation,
- The demographic factor of 'gender' affects work motivation,
- The demographic factor of 'marital status' affects work motivation,
- The demographic factor of 'education' affects work motivation,
- The factors that motivate professionally qualified employees are different from the factors that motivate employees who are not professionally qualified,
- The factors that motivate professionally qualified women are different from the factors that motivate non-professionally qualified women,
- The demographic factor of 'level' in the organization affects work motivation,
- The factors that motivate supervisory employees are different from the factors that motivate non-supervisory employees,
- The demographic factor of 'work tenure' affects work motivation,
- The Demographic factor of 'annual family income' affects work motivation,

- The factors that motivate employees of high family income are different from the factors that motivate employees of low family income.

The best way to increase productivity in order to maximise profit in a profit oriented firm is through motivation of employees by management. If the current reward package is viewed by employees as inadequate other things equal effort is reduced and subsequently productivity falls as well as profit margins.

The firm might lose its competitive advantage. In view of these the paper explores the effect of socio-demographic variables on the perceived importance of motivational factors in relation to students who are the future employees of organisations. In the knowledge of the researchers relatively few works have been done on students in the literature and on the study area. The current paper fills in the literature gap. The findings have been inconsistent in the literature and as such more empirical studies are worth doing to contribute to the debate.

The findings of the paper provide further understanding of theories of motivation by providing answers to the research questions in the paper. The findings provide policy guidance for employers on the best ways to motivate individual employees. Useful reference materials are provided for future researchers doing similar research work.

The aim of the paper is to contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of motivation by exploring the role of socio-demographic variables in motivation of employees. Specifically, the paper investigates the correlation between socio-demographic variables and the importance of motivational factors.

The paper is based on the question; How far is the importance of motivation determined by the socio-demographics of respondents? The paper is based on the assumption that socio-demographics of respondents play significant moderating role in perceived importance of motivational factors.

The sample was based on the convenience sampling method. Hence the findings might lack external validity. The findings are based on self-reported responses of the respondent and respondent biases in the data may be possible. Since the focus of the paper is motivation of employees only articles on motivation are reviewed.

2.Methodology

The research design is quantitative design with descriptive research and survey research strategies. The target population is marketing students of Sunyani polytechnic. A sample size of 200 was selected through convenience sampling method and data obtained from the sample through self-designed questionnaire, administered through lecture hours. Likert scale was used to obtain the responses from the respondents. Data analysis is based on cross-tabulations and chi-square test analysis.

3.Discussion Of Results

This section is used to present and discuss the empirical results of the study. Information is provided on the descriptive summary statistics and the correlation analysis of the variables used in the survey.

3.1.Descriptive Statistics

3.1.1.Results On Cronbach's Alpha For Reliability Test

The Cronbach's Alpha of the variables used in the study was investigated for internal consistency. The range for the Alpha is between 0 and 1 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The values reported in Table 1 indicate good internal consistency for the scale of measurement. The lowest value is 0.764 and the highest value is 0.801. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) stated that the highest value should be 0.9.

3.1.2.Socio-Demographics Of Respondents

Table 1 report of the descriptive features of the respondents. Out of the total sample of 200 respondents in the study, 58.5% were males and 38.5% were females. Majority, 64% belong to the age group of 18-22years. On the issue of religion, majority 84.5% of the respondents are Christians followed by Muslim (10%).

| Demographic Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 115 | 58.5 |
| Female | 77 | 38.5 |
| Missing respondents | 6 | 3.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100 |
| Age | | |
| Less than 18 | 9 | 4.5 |
| 18-22 | 128 | 64.0 |
| 23-27 | 52 | 26.0 |
| 28-32 | 5 | 2.5 |
| Above 42 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Missing response | 5 | 2.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| Region | | |
| Western | 18 | 9.0 |
| Volta | 7 | 3.5 |
| Eastern | 13 | 6.5 |
| Brong Ahafo | 38 | 19.0 |
| Ashanti | 81 | 40.5 |
| Central | 4 | 2.0 |
| Greater Accra | 3 | 1.5 |
| Northern region | 12 | 6.0 |
| Upper west | 9 | 4.5 |
| Upper east | 14 | 7.0 |
| Missing response | 1 | 0.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| Religion | | |
| No religion | 9 | 4.5 |
| Christian | 169 | 84.5 |
| Muslim | 20 | 10.0 |
| Missing responses | 2 | 1.0 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| Family income status | | |
| Low | 32 | 16.0 |
| High | 63 | 31.5 |
| Medium | 80 | 40.0 |
| Neutral | 25 | 12.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |
| Personality type | | |
| Individual | 120 | 60.0 |
| Collectivistic | 67 | 33.5 |
| Neutral | 13 | 6.5 |
| Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Table 1: Demographic Features Of Respondents

3.2. Correlation Analysis

The association between socio-demographics and important employee motivational factors was tested using Pearson chi-square test. The results are reported in this section of the paper.

3.2.1. Gender Effect In Motivation

Gender shows significant correlation with only one of the important motivational factor 'tactful discipline' (chi-square=9.523; p=0.049) identified in the survey.

3.2.2.Age Effect In Motivation

There is significant association between age and motivational factors 'good wages/salaries' (chi-square=25.603; $p=0.060$); 'interesting work' (chi-square=39.645; $p=0.000$); 'company loyalty to employees' (chi-square=19.118; $p=0.086$); 'team spirit' (chi-square=42.057; $p=0.000$); 'job satisfaction' (chi-square=27.005; $p=0.041$) and 'less working' (chi-square=35.898; $p=0.003$).

3.2.3.Religion

There is statistical significant link between religion and important motivational factors such as 'good wages/salaries' (chi-square=18.061; $p=0.021$); 'promotion of employees' (chi-square=28.670; $p=0.000$); 'team spirit' (chi-square=13.674; $p=0.091$); 'satisfying goal of employees' (chi-square=14.879; $p=0.062$) and 'less working hours' (chi-square=13.460; $p=0.097$).

3.2.4.Region

There is statistical significant relation between region and important motivational factor 'job satisfaction' (chi-square=56.423; $p=0.016$).

3.2.5.Family Income Status

There is a statistical significant correlation between family income status and important motivational factors 'job security for employees' (chi-square=21.852; $p=0.039$) and 'sympathy help with personal problems' (chi-square=26.975; $p=0.008$).

3.2.6.Personality

A statistical significant correlation exists between personality type and important motivational factors 'full appreciation of work done' (chi-square=16.543; $p=0.035$) and 'sympathy help with personal problems' (chi-square=16.830; $p=0.032$).

3.3.Cross-Tabulation Analysis

Cross-section was used to provide the descriptive statistics on the perceived importance of motivational factors and socio-demographic variables.

3.3.1.Gender Effect In Motivation

More male respondents (70.7%) than female (69.4%) respondents strongly agree/agree that tactful discipline is important motivational factor. This is the only motivating factor gender significantly influenced.

3.3.2.Age Effect In Motivation

A significant majority of respondents (100%) in the age groups of 28-32years and above 42years strongly agree/agree that good wages/salaries is an important motivating factor than those in the age groups of 18-22years (96.1%) and 23-27years (98.1). Majority of the respondents (94.2%) in the age group of 23-27years than those in the age groups of 18-22years (89.9%); less than 18years (77.8%) and 28-32years (80%) and above 42years (0%) strongly agree/agree that good interesting work is an important motivational factor.

Very significant majority (100%) of the respondents in the age group above 42years than those in the age groups of 23-27(92.3%); 18-22years (92.1%); 28-32years (80%) and less than 18years (66.6%) strongly agree/agree that company loyalty to employees is important motivational factor. Significant majority (100%) of the respondents in the age group above 42years than those in the age group of 18-22years (91.4%); 23-27years (78.8%); less than 18(77.8%) and 28-32years (75%) strongly agree/agree that team spirit is important motivational factor.

Significant majority (100%) of the respondents in the age group above 42years than those in the age groups of 23-27years (96.2%); 18-22years (92.9%); 28-32 (80%) and less than 18years (66.6%) strongly agree/agree that job satisfaction is important motivational factor. Majority of the respondents (66.7%) in the age group less than 18years than those in 23-27years (65.4%); 18-22years (47.6%); 28-32years (0%) and above 42years (0%) strongly agree/agree that less working hours is important motivational factor.

3.3.3.Religion

Significant majority (100%) of the respondents who are Muslims than Christians (95.8%) and those with no religion (88.9%) strongly agree/agree that good wage/salary is important motivational factor. Majority (100%) of the respondents who are Muslims than Christians (96.4%) and those with no religion (77.7%) strongly agree/agree that promotion of employees is important motivational factor. Majority (100%) of the respondents who belong to no religious group than Christians (86.9%) and Muslim (80%) strongly agree/agree that team spirit is important motivational factor.

Significant majority (91.6%) of the Christian respondents than Muslim respondents (80%) and those with no religion (77.7%) strongly agree/agree that satisfying goals of employee is important motivational factor. Majority (88.1%) of the Christian respondents than those with no religion (66.6%) and Muslim respondents (21.1%) strongly agree/agree that less working hours is important motivational factor.

3.3.4.Region

Significant majority of respondents (100%) from Central region; Eastern; Greater Accra region; Upper East region and upper West region than respondents from Brong Ahafo region (97.4%); Western region (94.5%); Ashanti region (90%); Volta region (85.7%) and Northern region (66.7%) strongly agree/agree that job satisfaction is important motivational factor.

3.3.5.Family Income Status

Significant majority (93.8%) of the respondents with medium family income than respondents with low family income (84.4%); neutral response on family income status (84%) and those with high family income status (80.9%) strongly agree/agree that job security for employees is important motivational factor. Significant majority (94.9%) of the respondents with medium family income than respondents with low family income (78.2%); neutral response on family income status (84%) and those with high family income status (90.3%) strongly agree/agree that sympathy help with personal problems of employees is important motivational factor.

3.3.6.Personality

Significant majority of the respondents (94.9%) with individual personality trait than those with collectivistic trait (94%) and those with neutral responses on personality trait (92.3%) strongly agree/agree that full appreciation of work done is important motivational factor. Majority of the respondents (88.3%) with individual personality trait than those with collectivistic trait (80.6%) and those with neutral responses on personality trait (61.5%) strongly agree/agree that sympathy help with personal problems of employees is important motivational factor.

3.4.Discussions

The findings reported are in support of the findings of previous researchers (Kukanja, 2013; Karaskakovska, 2012; DelVecchio & Wagner, 2011; Sabir et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2010; Saifuddin et al., 2010; Rehman et al., 2009; Tirmizi et al., 2008; Getahun et al., 2007; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Tan et al., 2007; Tella et al., 2007) who have established statistical significant correlation with perceived importance of motivational factors and socio-demographic variables such as age; gender; religion; region; family income status and personality traits.

According to Kukanja (2013) statistical significant correlation exists between motivational factors and demographic factors. Women in Kukanja (2013) survey prefer more money and fun than men. Respondents up to age 30years prefer fun and flexible working hours than respondents who are above 30years but prefer less health benefits. Also, the less wealthy respondents less prefer social security as compare to the more wealthy respondents, indicated significant effect of income levels.

Wiese and Coetzee (2013) established significant difference between demographic and motivation of employees and reported that sales representatives with higher education are less motivated by having power over other people as compared to representatives with less education. Males are more motivated by growth and promotion opportunities than females, indicating gender and educational differences in motivation.

Karaskakovska (2012) reported of significant age difference in importance to motivational variables such as challenge, security and work environment. Kumar et al. (2012) established significant correlation between demographic variables and motivational factors. Male faculty members are more satisfied than female faculty members and that faculty members are more satisfied by work itself than working conditions.

These results support the argument that motivational package for employees should be customized. Since what one individual prefer may be different from the preference of other employees. The concept of mass motivational policy should be looked at in organisational human resources practices.

4.Conclusions And Policy Implications

The objectives of the paper have been achieved. The socio-demographic variables significantly affect the motivation of respondents in the study. There is the need for management of organisations to pay attention to the effect of demographic variables in designing policy on motivation in order to best satisfy individual worker for increase effort and productivity.

Since various motivational factors were identified in providing motivation in an organisation a combination of these factors must be considered to meet the expectation of all employees. Total reward systems and not just financial rewards system should be considered by managements of organisations. Managers must develop employee motivation systems that are directed toward work environment or organization climate, work-life balance and the nature of the job and the quality of the work, and career opportunities in relation to socio-demographics.

Comparative study in the future is worth doing with larger sample size of actual workers of the organisation since the current paper is based on future employees. Causal studies based on structural modelling must be done for the current paper is descriptive in nature.

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