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Assessing the Impact of Workplace Environment on Employee Productivity: A Case Study of Gold Fields Ghana Limited

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Abstract:

This study sought to identify the key environment under which Gold Fields Ghana Limited (GFGL) operated, the nature of these environments as well as their impact on the productivity of the workforce. For this reason, both primary and secondary data were collected for the analysis. Primary data was solicited from 240 respondents involving expatriates, senior management and other staff of GFGL through interview. Also, secondary was sourced from books, journals and other relevant published and unpublished articles. Both qualitative and quantitative method of data analysis was adopted. The study revealed that, like all other organizations, GFGL has physical, social as well as rewards and compensation as its environment which is known to have impact on productivity. The study also revealed the aspects of physical infrastructures like buildings, the safety of buildings, the safety of work tools and noise as having an impact on productivity whilst air quality and lighting do not impact productivity. The study recommended that management should revise the industrial policy of GFGL to ensure that the right reward and compensation regime is instituted to assure the workforce of job security. Also, the study proposed the development of vertical and horizontal communication channels for strengthen communication and access to the management by all the workforce.

Keywords: Employee productivity, working environment, management

1. Introduction

All over the world, it is believed that comfortable people are more productive. However, comfort is one of those catching words that are easy to use and hard to define. People are comfortable when they feel comfortable, which is a state of mind dependent on both physical sensations and emotional states. Creating effective personal satisfaction must account for both these elements together with the constraints of cost and technology (Sehgal, 2012). Interestingly, one of the most important factors of comfortability is "the environment which is man's immediate surroundings which he manipulates for his existence" (Thujo, 2018). For an employee, these environments could be in the form of the physical working conditions, organizational climate, reward and compensation as well as career progression and professional development.

Suffice to note is that the wrongful manipulation of these environments has the tendency to introduce hazards that make the environments unsafe and impede the productivity rate of the worker (Chapins, 1995). The workplace environment has gradually become a critical factor in keeping an employee satisfied in today's business world. Workplaces are different, diverse, and constantly changing. The typical employer/employee relationship of old has been turned upside down. Workers are living in a growing economy and have almost limitless job opportunities. This combination of factors has created a situation where the environment in which an employee works goes a long way to affect his performance (Smith, 2011). From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the creation of an enabling working environment is important for the successful operation of companies. However, these conditions appear to be a mirage for the mine worker in sub-Saharan Africa and for that matter Ghana. It is therefore imperative to take a critical look at the working environment of mining companies in relation to the productivity of the employees.

Ghana is Gold and Gold is Ghana judging by the name "Gold Coast" and the historical importance of mining in the economic development of Ghana cannot be overemphasized (Amponsah-Tawiah & Dartey-Baah, 2011). It is an undeniable fact that Gold dominates the country's mineral endowment and the country currently has 19 operating mines and over 128 local and foreign companies with exploration licenses, mainly in the domain of gold. The sector now accounts for more than 30% of gross foreign exchange earnings (Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001). Among the mining companies legally operating in Ghana, Gold Field Ghana Limited (GFGL) is one that has operated in the country for over 30 years. The company is a major stakeholder in the mining industry and as a corporate entity. GFGL is driven by the global paradigm which emphasizes the need to create a working environment conducive to ensure employee welfare and productivity.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine the nature of the working environment, assess the impact of this working environment on employee productivity in mining companies in Ghana using GFGL as a case study. The study will, as a result, identify some potential challenges and suggest alternatives to the existing working environment for enhancing productivity.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data Sources and Data Collection Instrument

Relevant information for the study was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primarily, questionnaires and interviews were employed in gathering information from the staff. Questionnaires employed the use of both open and close-ended questions with interviews using both structured and unstructured techniques. The use of this form of questionnaires and interviews ensured coordination while facilitating easy analysis. Secondary sources of data such as periodicals, journals, reports, publications as well as manual on the workplace environments were studied in detail not leaving out another unpublished thesis regarding the issue under examination.

In the administration of the questionnaires, the purposive technique in interviewing the respondent is used. To ensure that the target groups were reached, the questionnaires were administered mostly during the late morning when most of the respondents were around. The levels of education of a section of the respondents lessen the burden of the questionnaire administrator as a higher percentage of the respondents could read and write. Questionnaires were left with the respondent of which follow up calls were made regarding when to pick it. The state and nature of the work environment made the respondents very responsive and accommodative to the researcher especially on the realization that it was for only academic purposes.

2.2. Population and Sampling Size Determination

All the staff of GFGL represented the population. Information from the Human Resource department of the company indicated that the entire workforce of two thousand three hundred and eighty-two (2382) is categorized into expatriates, senior officials, senior staff and junior staff as shown in Table 1. The 2382 therefore represented the population.

The selection of the sample went through the multi-stage technique. The first stage involved the stratification of the workforce of GFGL. On this base GFGL, Tarkwa had thirty-nine (39) expatriates, eighty-five (85) senior officials, three hundred and forty-six (346) senior staff and one thousand nine hundred and twelve (1912) junior staff. The junior staff is made of the labourers and other auxiliary workers. Each of the circuits, therefore, formed a stratum. From each of the stratum, a quota was randomly selected to ensure data was highly representative. A criterion was therefore developed to assist in the selection of that quota. This was done in the form of a proportion. The proportion was 1:10 meaning that for every 10 people from the various stratum, 1 person was randomly selected. The application of this formula resulted in the choice of the following quota from the various stratum. At the end of this stage, a total of two hundred and thirty-seven (237) people representing all the categories of the staff that were randomly selected for sampling.

Staff Category	Total Number	Quota
Expatriate	39	4
Senior Officials	85	8
Senior Staff	346	35
Junior Staff	1912	190
Total	2382	237

Table 1: Sampled Respondents

2.3. Variables

The crust of the study was to assess the nature of the work environment of GCGL and the extent to which it affects productivity. Suffice to note is that it's almost impossible to assess the work environment since it is virtually latent. To help measure the work environment therefore, some indicator variables were used to determine how the work environment affects productivity. The indicator variables studied to measure the work environment included, physical environment, social environment as well as the rewards and compensation systems in place in GFGL while the productivity will be assessed in terms of the willingness to give forth one's best.

2.4. Reliability and Validity of the Study

To show that the study has internal reliability, the Cronbach's alpha is employed. The alpha is calculated for the factors on the work environment towards the productivity of employees – where a four-point Likert scale was used in the dependent variable. In measuring the internal reliability, the Cronbach alpha is estimated on the unit weighting items with salient loadings in a factor, where Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.5 or higher is considered acceptable (Mokhlis et al., 2008; Mokhlis, 2009; Goiteom, 2011). These factors produced alpha coefficients and are shown in Table 2. Observing from Table 2, the alpha (0.601) was greater than 0.5, thus, suggesting that the adequate reliability of the data.

In order to ensure content validity, the questionnaires were pre-tested on a few staff of the mines to ensure that the questionnaire actually measures what it is intended to measure. Also, external validity was considered by ensuring that the selection of the sampling size and the sampling unit was representative enough to ensure the generation of the findings. This is indicated in the process that the researcher went through before the final selection of the sampling units

using a combination of methodologies and approaches. To a large extent, the study achieved both content and external validity.

Cronbach Alpha	Cronbach Alpha (Standardized)	No. of Items
0.601	0.681	10

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

2.5. Data Analysis

Before the data was analyzed, the collated data was processed by editing and coding to eliminate all errors. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data analysis were adopted. Quantitatively, the data collated were interpreted and analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) because it is most appropriate for studies of this nature. The qualitative technique involved the use of tools which were descriptive and narrative in nature.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study facilitated the study of a total of 240 respondents from the GFGL in Tarkwa. 25% of the respondents were females with 75% being males. This was so because mining from history has always been a male-dominated field and the few women involved find themselves as part of the administrative staff. Table 3 represents respondents from the various category as per the procedure used in the study. The sample interviewed was a true representation of the workforce as respondents were drawn from the various categories in the company.

Figure 1 gives the years the respondents had worked in GFGL. The majority of the respondents, about 60% had worked in the company for a maximum of five years. Approximated 15% had been with the company between 6 and 10 years, with a few having over 11 years' experience. This trend in the years of employment is so because GFGL, Tarkwa was officially incorporated in Ghana in 1993 and this trend is not far from wrong. The rest were mainly new employees. Respondents sampled were engaged in various activities ranging from administration, mechanics, drivers, underground workers and also cut across all levels, etc.

Category of staff	Respondents
Expatriate	4
Senior Officials	8
Senior Staff	37
Junior Staff	190
Total	240

Table 3: Profile of Respondents

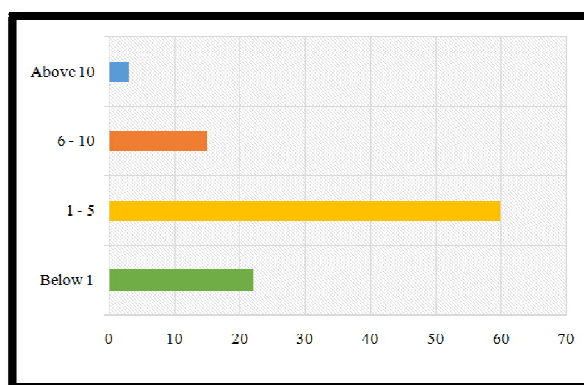


Figure 1: Employee Years Spent with the Company

3.2. Nature of the Working Environment in GFGL

This section details the nature of GFGL environment and the extent to which it impacts on productivity in the organization.

3.2.1. Social Environments

The social environs looked at issues that border on human interaction at GFGL. Areas assessed included the relationship between management and staff, accessibility of the management, the ability of staff members to express themselves, job satisfaction and output levels. Staff members of GFGL indicated that there was a good relationship between the staff at all levels and the management. This was as a result of the fact that the company has put in place mechanisms and systems that allowed the staff of all levels to relate well with management. 18% of the respondents indicated the relationship between management and staff is not good whiles 82% rated it as well as shown in Figure 2.

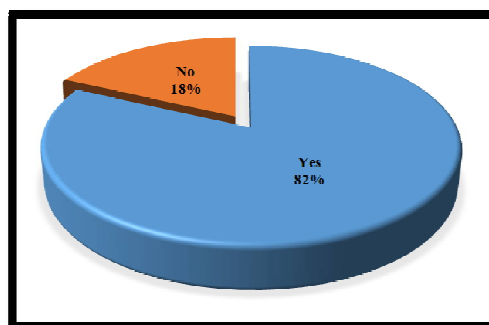


Figure 2: Relationship between Management and Staff

The 18% indicated that the system has created some artificial barriers which make it extremely difficult for staff members to have a good relationship with management. An example was the location of the offices of the management members and the bureaucracy in place. In terms of getting access to management when the need arises, 87% of respondents indicated they are able to access management members on any issue that borders on the task assigned to them in the company. This is done through the various Heads of Department and the staff representatives. 13%, however, indicated that accessing the management was a problem and the only means is through your departmental head or a representative and this is not the best as direct access is limited. Figure 3 indicates the number of staff who are able to access management as and when needed.

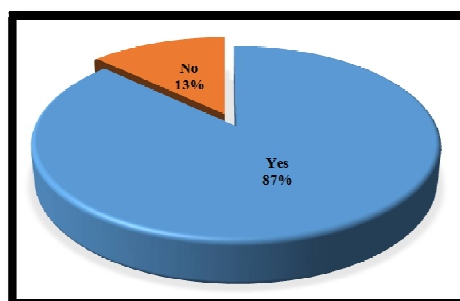


Figure 3: Accessibility of Management

As part of a good social environment, an opportunity should be provided for a staff member to meet and discuss issues that affect their work. An investigation conducted at GFGL indicated that staff durbars, forums, and departmental meetings are conducted periodically, where all the members air their views and grievances on issues that affect their work and welfare. To this extent, 92% of the respondent reiterated that there is a very good social environment in the company as all staff is given the opportunity to express themselves. It came to light that staff members attend departmental meetings, durbar, and other forums, such arrangements presented an opportunity for management to listen and act on the needs of the staff; however, 8% believed those avenues are not enough as there are instances whereby for fear of intimidation and victimization staff members don't express the real issues bordering them. They describe the process as a mockery since it is organized only to satisfy a certain conscience.

In all fibre of social life, a good communication channel provides an opportunity for all to participate in the administration of a system. Communication systems designed to facilitate interaction included the use of phones, the internet, notice boards as well as pictorial signs. Approximately, 60% of the staff thought that there exist good levels of communication in the company; about 37% believed communication was just fair whilst 3% remained neutral as shown in Figure 4.

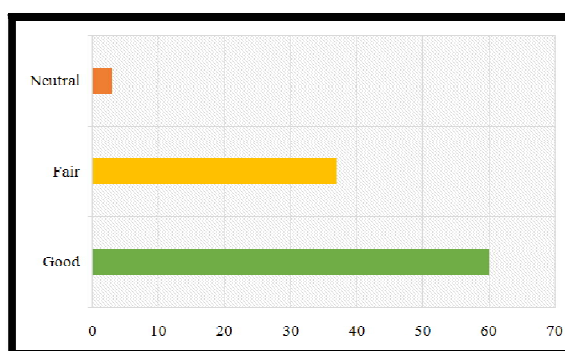


Figure 4: Nature of Communication in GFGL

Invariably, the majority of the respondents sampled were happy, content and fulfilled with their schedule of work as a result of the kind of relations that exist between the management. To a large extent tension and other hostile conditions were absent giving them the necessary environment to put up their best. The majority of the staff felt happy with the work they were doing. This is shown in Figure 5. Workers in GFGL were generally content and satisfied with the schedule of work, this, however, does not indicate working at GFGL is not stressful. For the respondents it was a privilege as well as a prestige to find themselves working with a multinational company and coupled with the kind of social environment that has been created in the company, it was a joy to be a part of the company. Figure 5, however, indicates that there is a minority of 8% who were not happy working in GFGL. The reason given was the fact that there is some level of discrimination in the company.

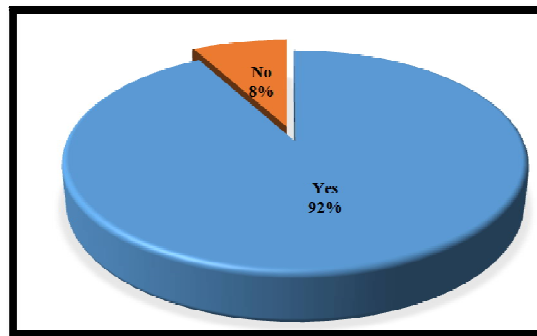


Figure 5: Happiness towards Work

From the foregoing discussion, one will not be far from wrong to assert that there is a positive relationship between social environs and productivity which may be a subject for further investigations. Despite all the above, 40% of the staff interviewed were willing to leave GFGL if they had an alternative opportunity as shown in Figure 6. Figure 6 shows that about 40% of the current workforce of GFGL were willing to quit should an alternative job present itself. The mind bordering question was why? The respondents indicated that although they are happy with the job, the current happenings in the Gold industry where the company keeps cutting down on the workforce was creating a sense of insecurity which was gradually wiping away their happiness. The respondent had witnessed instances where friends and colleagues had to be laid off. The sense of insecurity in the company has risen and staff members were willing to leave if they get an alternative.

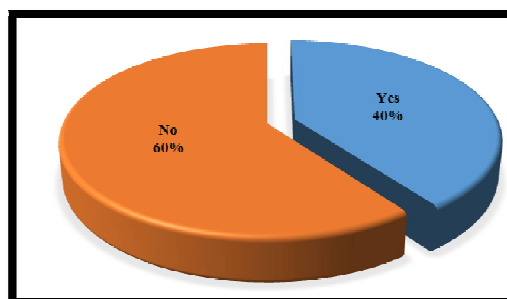


Figure 6: Workers Who Would Leave When an Alternative is Presented

3.2.2. Physical Environment

The physical environs of the company are made up of buildings, sanitary facilities, lighting, quality of air, noise levels amongst a host of other infrastructure. To assess the respondents' perception of the physical environment, they were asked to rank the elements that made the physical environment and the responses are presented in Table 4. Table 4 is an assessment of the physical environs of GFGL in terms of the quality of buildings, quality of air, noise level, lighting, sanitation facilities, the safety of work tools and safety of buildings. Buildings in the mines are built to specific quality due to the kind of operation in the fields. 87.5% of the respondent believed that the buildings were of good quality with 10% rating it as fair. The majority were of the opinion that despite the machinery and workforce the buildings host daily, there were no signs of cracks and as a result, the buildings were good in terms of quality.

On Air quality, 45% of the respondent perceived the air within the mines to be of good quality while 47.5% rated it as fair. 2.5% could not indicate whether it was good quality or not. The quality of air in the mine was affected by the blast of rocks, the movement of heavy-duty tracks and other automobiles that operated in such field. This affected greatly the quality of air through dust and fumes from machinery and equipment and explains the reason why 47.5% indicated it as fair as against 45% who believed it was good. The activities undertaken in the mining of gold in Ghana encompasses the blasting, movement of heavy truck and the use of other tools resulting in a very noisy environment. 30% of respondents sampled rated the noise level as good while about 55% indicated it as fair. 7.5% thought that noise level was high thereby

rating it as poor while 7.5% remained neutral. Majority of the sampled employees thought that the level of noise was not the best.

From all indications, lighting in GFGL was not a problem as a significant 80% indicated it was good, this was corroborated by 17.5% who rated it as fair with only 2.5% rating it as poor. The reason assigned was that mining is a very risky activity that has the potential to destroy a whole community with the least mistake. To ensure security and the protection of lives the company had invested so much in lighting to make the environment user-friendly. The story was the same for sanitation as 85% rated it as well. The reason was that the set up involved the use of a lot of chemicals which makes miners prone to all forms of infection and disease. In line with this, there were good sanitation facilities like washrooms which were well maintained to reduce the risk of infection in the mines. However, 10% rated it fair while 2.5% saw it as poor. 2.5% remained neutral. 85% as well as 87.5% of the respondent validated work tools and building as safe. By all standard GFGL has instituted a fairly good physical environment which creates the enabling environment for workers to perform their task assigned. The question then is, does the physical environment really affect productivity?

Ranking	Quality of Buildings	Air	Noise	Lighting	Sanitation	Work Tools Safety	Safety of Building
Good	87.5	45.0	30.0	80.0	85.0	85.0	87.5
Fair	10.0	47.5	55.0	17.5	10.0	15.0	12.5
Poor		2.5	7.5	0	2.5	-	-
Neutral	2.5	5.0	7.5	2.5	2.5	-	-
Total	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100

Table 4: Assessment of Physical Facilities

3.2.3. Reward and Compensation

Staff members at GFGL received salaries, wages, and allowances as well as other forms of compensation as a motivation for enhanced productivity. Salary levels in the company varied from person to person and are dependent on the skills and qualifications of the personnel. The salaries of respondents are presented in Figure 7. Interestingly, about 50% of the people sampled were taking salaries above GH ₵800 with about 12.5% receiving below eight hundred Ghana Cedis (GH₵800). The others were the senior members of staff whose salaries were paid in dollars with the least being \$1500. From all indications there exist a huge level of inequality amongst the management and other staff of GFGL. This is similar to most of the conditions in multinational companies that operate in Ghana and a recipe for discontent and strife.

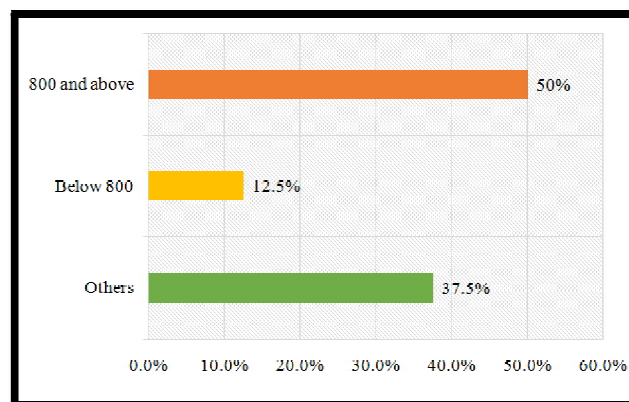


Figure 7: Salaries of Respondents

Aside from the monthly salaries, other forms of reward and compensation existing in the company are presented in Figure 8. The staff of GFGL is rewarded and compensated in the form of commissions, medical allowances, provident funds, study leave with pay, health and other forms of insurance and paid leave. These are facilities instituted by the company to help them wither against any unforeseen shocks in the line of duty. It also serves as an incentive and a motivation for staff members to bring out their best performance. The trends in the payment of these facilities show that medical allowance or free health care is the most accessed by the staff of the company.

This was followed by health and other forms of insurance since the environments under which miners operate make them more prone to all forms of diseases as well as exposure to risk. Others like the provident fund which is set aside for the staff from the contribution made by the company as well as a proportion of the worker's monthly salary also existed. Occasionally, the company grants deserving staff the opportunity to go on study leave with pay to help them develop whilst beefing up the manpower base of the company.

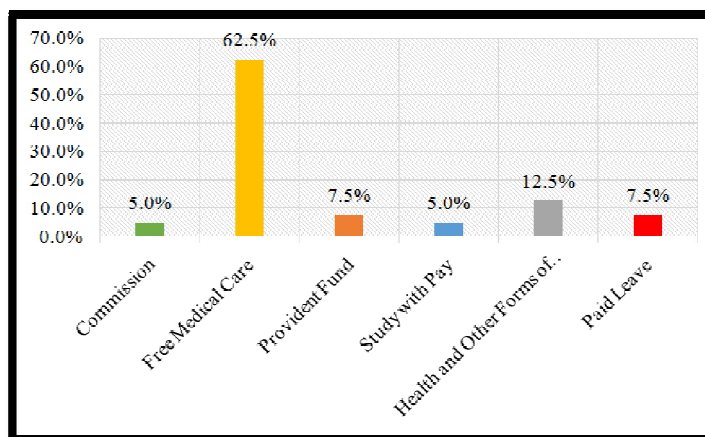


Figure 8: Other Forms of Rewards and Compensation

3.3. Impact of the Working Environment in GFGL on Employee Productivity

The impact is assessed according to the environments identified in GFGL.

3.3.1. Physical Environments and Productivity

Respondents were asked whether the elements of these physical environments in the company affect their capacity to work and their responses are presented in Figure 9. Interestingly, 68% of the respondents indicated that the physical environment at GFGL does not in any way affect their productivity while 32% indicated it affects their productivity. The 68% thought that work was about your health and the psychological preparedness and those things like buildings, lighting and other elements do not come in. On the other hand, 32% also argued that work is exciting under the right kind of setting of which the physical environment was part, thus, confirming Sundstrom et al. (1994) stands that the physical environment has an impact on productivity.

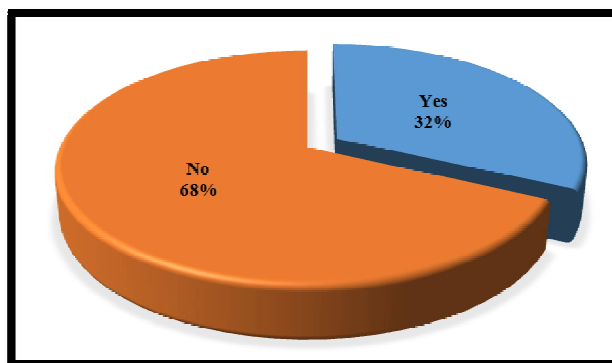


Figure 9: Effects of the Physical Environment on Employee's Productivity

To confirm this perception or otherwise, a regression analysis of the impact of the element of the physical environment on the staff of GFGL was conducted. The analyses were run on the individual elements captured under the physical environment and presented in Table 5. The examination of Beta value (0.663) for Quality of building with P-value (<0.05) in Table 5 indicate that it contributes significantly to the productivity of employees. Safety of the Building had a Beta value of (0.405) with its P-value is less than 0.05; and as a result, contributes to employee productivity. Safety of a working tool with a Beta value of 0.154 and a P-value < 0.05 indicates that it also contributes significantly to the productivity of the employees. Sanitation, Lighting and Quality of Air with Beta values of 0.063, -0.138 and 0.139 respectively, and all with P-value > 0.05 indicates that they do not contribute significantly to employee productivity. Low Level of Noise with a Beta value of -0.339 with P < 0.05 indicates that it also contributes significantly to the productivity of the employee.

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	P-Value
	Estimate	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-0.164	0.252		-0.649	0.517
Quality of Building	0.929	0.141	0.663	6.604	0.000
Safety of the Building	0.930	0.173	0.405	5.375	0.000
Safety of Working tool	0.328	0.149	0.154	2.203	0.030
Sanitation	0.078	0.120	0.063	0.652	0.516
Lightings	-0.180	0.112	-0.138	-1.605	0.111
Quality of Air	0.140	0.095	0.139	1.484	0.141
Low Level of Noise	-0.315	0.084	-0.339	-3.774	0.000

Table 5: Impact of Physical Infrastructure on Productivity

3.3.2. Effect of Social Environs on Productivity

To establish the effect of social environs on the productivity of staff, respondents were asked whether the kind of communication that exists between the management and staff, accessibility and the expression of the opinion has any bearing on their output. Figure 10 represents the responses of the respondents. 92% of the respondent indicated yes as against 8% who opted for No. The reason assigned was that working among hostile colleagues brings down morale, creates a feeling of rejection and can drive staff to a state of total despair. Under hostile condition staff members find no joy in the execution of their work and this leads to a lackadaisical attitude which eventually reduces productivity. The 8% who thought that social environments do not have any effect on productivity also reiterated that the workplace is not a place to socialize and staff members should be able to perform their utmost best no matter the kind of people and conditions that exist between management and other staff members in the mines.

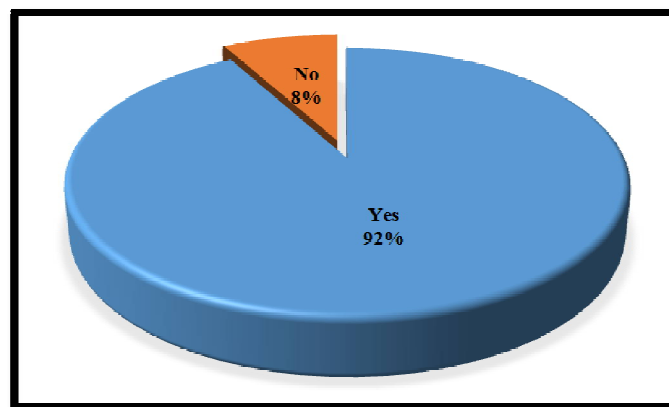


Figure 10: Effect of Social Environment on Employees' Productivity

3.3.3. Impacts of Reward and Compensation on Productivity

Unanimously, all respondents supported the issue of rewards and compensation as having a significant effect on employee productivity. They indicated that working in the mines is one of the riskiest ventures, humanity can opt for. This is because for them the only thing certain in the mines is the fact that they do not know what may befall them in the next minute, it could be the collapse of a structure, the loss of a body part, infection, the loss of sound and sight and all forms of loss. In this respect, the institution of a good reward and compensation system grants them security and assures them of a well-designed future. In this regard, all the respondents were of the opinion that Rewards and Compensation affect productivity. Overall, 27.5% agreed strongly that the work environment has some effect on productivity, 67.5% of the respondents agreed with only 2.5% disagreeing that the work environment has any impact on productivity as shown in Figure 11. It can be established that a good reward and compensation system enhances employee productivity; implying that when a job is designed such that the needs of employees can be fulfilled, then the employee will perform to a high standard because he is satisfying personal as well as organizational goals or requirements.

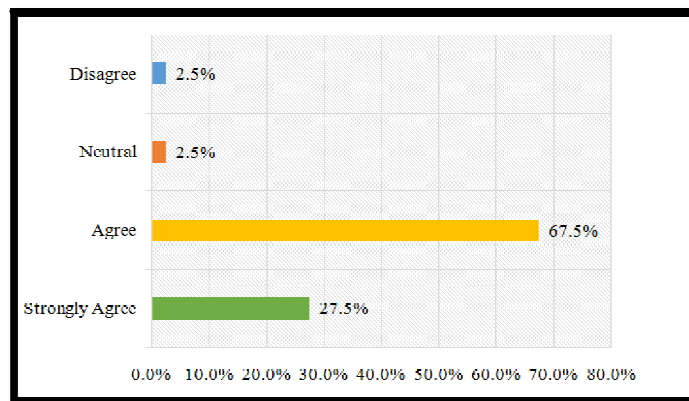


Figure 11: Impacts of Reward and Compensation on Employee Productivity

3.4. Challenges Associated with GFGL Environments

The analyses suggest a relatively good working environment capable of enhancing productivity. This is however not to suggest that there are no challenges associated with the environment. For this section, the challenges are categorized into the physical, social and rewards and compensation.

3.4.1. Physical Environment

A greater percentage of the respondents sampled were content with the kind of physical infrastructure available in the mines. Notwithstanding, the following was detailed as some of the challenges emanating from the physical environment which needs to be addressed. As part of the physical environments, GFGL is constituted by all forms of equipment and machinery to facilitate smooth operation. One of the challenges is the lack of adequate tools and equipment coupled with the harm that this machinery causes to its operators. There are instances where this machinery leads to the loss of a part of the body or even worse situations, the death of operators. The problem above is compounded by the lack of implementation of safety standards in the operations of the machines as well as the usage of the physical infrastructure generally. Although there are safety standards to protect lives and properties, the respondents indicated that these standards are not implemented to the letter thereby hampering the protection of lives and properties. It also came to the fore that, although there are washrooms well fitted with modern facilities, the lighting systems in the washrooms are bad. The reason assigned was that the washrooms are not open to the public but only to the staff and as a result, they are to some large extent neglected during both periodic and routine maintenance.

Another challenge indicated was the location of the office block within the mines. The respondents indicated that the constant blasting impacts the building thus shaking it to the very foundation. For the staff in these offices, it appeared to be scary anytime the blast is done and sometimes interferes with their schedule and work. Although there existed a relatively fair road network within the mines, the use of heavy-duty equipment on the roads as well as the frequent blasting that takes place in the mines has led to the dilapidation of the road within the mines thereby increasing the travel time; affect productivity invariably. The constant blasting and movement of heavy-duty equipment result in the emergence of a lot of dust in the mines. This is associated with high rates of respiratory tract infections amongst both the management and other staff of the mine; a risk affecting productivity and the respondents felt the need to remedy the situation.

3.4.2. Rewards and Compensation

It is interesting to note that in terms of rewards and compensation, the highly skilled labour in GFGL had no issues and qualms but the same cannot be said with the rest of the staff. The first on the list of challenges catalogued by the respondents included. It was revealed that unlike other public sector workers in Ghana, staff in GFGL work for 12 hours a day; six days a week as against the normal 8 hours a day and 5 days a week in the public sectors. This the respondent indicated results in high levels of stress, lack of social life and this plight was worsened by the fact that allowances paid do not commensurate with the level of stress since there is no means of quantifying the stress.

There were indications of growing discontent concerning the salaries of the staff. There exists a large gap in the salaries of the category seen as the management and the field staff. There were complaints that although the work done by the field staff was extremely risky and involved a lot of manpower, salaries paid does not commensurate the efforts injected in the operations.

Further to the above was the problem of poor assessment systems. About 60% of the respondents indicated the no availability of an effective appraisal system to effectively monitor the performance of the workers and to commend those due for promotions. It came to bare that workers work for long years without promotion and this was a great disincentive for productivity. Then also, it came to the fore the high rates of taxation slap on the meager salaries of the workers was affecting the staff and productivity as well. The respondents indicated that although the salaries do not correspond to the work done and unable to support their livelihoods; the amount set aside in the form of taxes is too high although they do not see any benefit accruing from the high taxes being paid.

Finally, the recent trend in the gold market is also affecting the workers greatly. There appeared to be a growing uncertainty and insecurity in the mines and is affecting the workers. There were indications that the work environs are

saturated with fear and panic as staff members do not know who may be laid off as some of the colleagues have already suffered that fate.

In this contemporary world of technology where things are changing at an extremely faster rate, organizations dreaming of having the best of environments must be frequent in the revision of policies, systems, and processes. It came to light that, the policies, systems, and processes in place that govern the environment of GFGL are outdated, obsolete and inconsistent with the current trend due to lack of periodic reviews and revisions.

As part of the reward and compensation systems in place, it was highlighted that the company provides food for the staff. The respondents, however, thought that although they are fed, the meal services were not balanced and also high in fat and cholesterol. Coupled with the high rates of stress and lack of rest, such a venture tends to expose the staff to a lot of diseases.

3.4.3. Social Environment

Although the analysis suggested all is well in terms of the relationship between management and the staff, an assessment of the challenges brought to bear a host of issues of which the lack of collaboration between management and staff is a part. Approximately 45% of the sampled indicated that there are cracks in the relationship between the management themselves on one hand and the management and staff on the other hand. It was difficult for the staff to come together, pull resources and work as a team and this issue was to a large extent affecting the workers negatively.

Another issue that came up involved the offering of training on equipment handling in the mines and safety in the organization. Although this is done, it is not frequent and looking at the mixture of equipment handled in the operation of the mines, respondents were of the view that training on equipment handling was limited.

Unlike the current concept in management where a manager is part of a team, it came to the known that a section of the management in the company is autocratic and play what the respondent labelled "industrial politics" to the detriment of the organization. There were reports of unfairness, favouritism in work-related activities and career development in the organization and was thus hampering effective coordination and collaboration in the organization. The effect of the above has resulted in a very hostile relationship between a section of the management and staff including attachment students who come in just for industrial exposure.

As a result of the hostility existing in the organization, freedom of speech is limited as staff members who dared to express their opinions on a given issue were victimized and, on some occasions, sacked with the least opportunity. Respondents felt intimidated and unable to express themselves due to the difficulty in locating a new job should they be sacked. About 35% were desperate to the extent of suggesting a total replacement of the management as the only remedy to salvage the situation.

With long hours spent in the workplace by the staff, one would have thought that it would have been a good approach to propel social interaction between all levels of staff in the company. Sadly, it came out that some limited activities and programs bring the staff together as a form of social interaction and for recreation considering the high level of stress coming from the long hours spent in the offices and the constant demand for high performance.

4. Conclusions

A comfortable environment is believed to be a convenient place for enhanced productivity. In an organization, the environment comes in the form of the physical working conditions, organizational climate, reward and compensation as well as career progression and professional development. Suffice to note is that the wrongful manipulation of these environments has the tendency to introduce hazards that make the environments unsafe and impede the productivity rate of the worker. In recent times organizations spend so much on putting up physical infrastructures that aim to ensure a comfortable environment for productivity to thrive. In the wake of fierce competition, a company is likely to be crowded out if the physical facilities are not up to the standard.

The social environment involves the creation of a good environment that promotes interaction and a congenial atmosphere for staff to get access to management, facilitate very good communication thereby ensuring a feeling of belongingness in the organization. However, there appear to be issues in terms of the social environment as there are complaints of unfair treatment, workplace politics that discriminate against workers and a host of other issues. Suffice to note is that, these are issues that affect productivity and profitability and it is important organizations adopt a policy that reduces victimization and intimidation in the workplace to ensure productivity is enhanced.

Employees receive from the organization inducements in return for contributions made to the growth of the organization. The inducement comes in the form of paid leave or vacation, health and other forms of insurance, free medical care and retirement income and in a situation where employees are not satisfied it can result in agitations.

It is interesting to note that in Ghana, companies invest so much in the physical infrastructure but not much is undertaken in the area of the social environment and the rewards and compensation. Due to this dissatisfaction, employees pretend to be working and companies pretend to create the right and congenial environment; at the end of the day what suffers is productivity.

In conclusion, it is stated that although a lot has been done in terms of creating the right environment for enhanced productivity, there is still the need to ensure that policies governing the work environment are revised and reviewed frequently to create and sustain a good working environment for improved productivity.

5. Recommendations

As part of the effort to help create a good working environment for GFGL, the following are some of the proposals put forward by the researcher to ensure enhanced employee productivity.

5.1. Physical Environment

Although to a large extent the infrastructure in the form of the building is seen to be in good condition currently, it is prudent for periodic and routine maintenance to be undertaken judiciously considering the kind of activities that goes on in the mines. This will surely reduce any unforeseen risk in the operation of the organization.

As part of the schedule of the estate officers, routine inspections in the washrooms and other places that are not open to the public should be made a priority to ensure the safety of all staff of the company.

The activities of mining are such that noise is always a part of the process, however, to reduce the negative impact on the staff, it is recommended that the company embark on a total overhauling to its structures making good use of construction materials that can with-stand and reduce to a large extent the effect of noise on the environment.

Since it is eminent that quality of buildings, the safety of work tools, the safety of buildings and the level of noise affect productivity, it is recommended that management develop a policy or guideline and ensure its implementation to effectively and efficiently make it more user-friendly as well as to monitor the usage of such infrastructures. Although sanitation, lighting, air quality has not proven to have any impact on productivity, it aids in creating the necessary condition for productivity to thrive and as a result the need to effectively ensure its quality.

To reduce the risk associated with the use of machinery and equipment, it is proposed that people who are highly skilled in the operation of such machinery should be employed. Training on workplace safety and hazards should be undertaken frequently. Finally, management should create a forum where staff can share experiences and good practices.

It is also advocated that in the future office block should be located off the main mining site to reduce the noise, shock as well as the impact of mining. Frequently the office structure should be inspected for possible cracks that may have resulted from the blasting and the need to seek expert advice to prevent any unforeseen situation.

Transportation is one of the ingredients that propel productivity. The evidence was that the transport networks in the mines were bad. It is recommended that the organization makes the necessary step to reshape it so as to ensure effective delivery of services in the Mines.

One common disease is apparent in the mines as a result of dust in the respiratory tract infections. To protect and prevent productivity from being affected due to an unhealthy workforce, it is suggested that periodic screening should be undertaken for all staff and those found to be infected be treated at the cost of the organization. This will even be a source of motivation for the staff and encourage good performance.

5.2. Reward and Compensation

To close the gap in salaries between management and other staff, it is recommended that the current pay structure should be reviewed to reflect the current trends in the job market whilst tying the kind of job being done to the remuneration to be received. This will introduce some level of fairness and equity and encouraged all to give forth their best.

Apart from the medical care that appears to be for all staff, it is suggested that effort should be made by management to review the current system that invariable cut off a lot of people from some of the rewards and benefits available. This will boost the morale of all staff and provide some sort of security for them.

To remedy the high level of stress complained by the respondent who indicated they work twelve (12) hours a day; Six (6) days a week, it is proposed that where applicable casual hands or some of the workers who have been laid off and are available may be recruited to supplement the permanent workforce. This will give the staff some space to relax as too much stress without rest is a recipe for all forms of diseases which can, in the long run, reduce productivity. Then again expert may be brought in to help educate the staff on the techniques of stress management so as to help them in managing the stress related to their jobs.

Generally, GFGL needs to review its assessment, industrial, systems, and other policies and updates to capture the contemporary issues trending in other mines in the country and beyond. This will provide some form of security to the staff and help in enhancing productivity.

Finally, it came out that as part of the company's policy, staff members are fed; although it is a good initiative, the complaints were that the food served was imbalanced and high in cholesterol. To remedy the situation, staff members should be allowed to express their opinions on what to put on the menu whilst the matron in charge gives consideration to the issue of cholesterol in the preparation of the meal.

5.3. Social Environment

It is advocated that to further improve on the current level of communication both vertical and horizontal channels may be fused into the current system whiles encouraging the use of suggestion boxes in the organization.

Current trends in management do not encourage managers to be autocratic in dealing with subordinates. It encourages the building of teams who stand and fall together. It is recommended that frequent managerial training on organization management should be rolled out for all staff so management will be certain as to what they ought to do whilst the subordinates will also come to terms with their obligation and duties in the entire managerial process to reduce the autocracy and to encourage collaboration.

Then also it is recommended that a well-planned and specific laid down process should be laid down and made known to all staff. This will encourage staff with grievances to comfortably and confidently table such grievance for remedies to be made. This will also prevent the flaunting of process and further reduce the victimization and intimidation as reported in GFGL.

It is an undeniable fact that favouritism exists in almost every human institution and it is not surprising that GFGL is one of them. A good organization manages this canker so as not to demoralize the workforce. It is recommended that as much as possible, management should make the effort to reduce unfairness and favouritism to the barest minimum but sticking to laid down rules and regulations to ensure that all staff members are treated fairly.

Finally, to strengthen the level of social interaction social programs that encourages interactions in the form of outdoor games, parties, and any other social event should be frequently organized and instituted for the staff to help promote socialization. It can also serve as a source of stress management for the workforce.

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