

MOTIVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST LIBRARY, GHANA

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Abstract

This paper discusses the importance of motivation. It points out that heads of sections should take interest in motivating their subordinates, for this influences their performance and organizational effectiveness.

The paper then gives a short review of the administrative structure of the University of Cape Coast Library. The main focus is the presentation of empirical data, which were gathered by means of a questionnaire, relating to the motivation and productivity of library assistants at the University of Cape Coast Library. It also goes on to give suggestions aimed at improving the productivity of staff.

Introduction

Management is basically a process which enables organizations to achieve their objectives by planning, organising and controlling their resources, including gaining the commitment of their employees through motivation.¹

The functions of management can be grouped into five areas: planning, decision making, organizing and co-ordinating, leadership, motivation and control.² It can therefore be considered

as a set of common processes or functions which when properly and systematically carried out results in organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The functions are interrelated and therefore managers perform them simultaneously and concurrently.

According to Likert in his book "New Patterns of Management", the central and most important task of management is managing the human component because all else depends on how well it is done.³ It is also true that a well motivated staff bring out the effective and efficient functioning of any organization. A functional library building with a well-stocked collection cannot offer effective and reliable services to its users without a crop of well-trained and competent staff.

The managerial function of staff covers all the different tasks connected with both obtaining and retaining the human resources of an organization. Some of these tasks include recruitment, directing, training and evaluation, discipline and development of staff.

The staff of most libraries usually

consist of employees with various educational backgrounds and levels of responsibilities. Librarians provide leadership by managing both the whole organization and the various divisions and sections in addition to facilitating the required services to the clientele of the library.

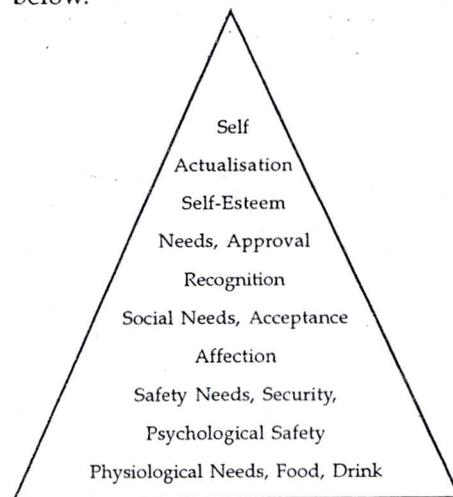
Professional librarians need assistance from other staff in carrying out their functions. The supporting staff consist of workers with a variety of skills ranging from para-professional to clerical. The latter are often the largest category of staff in a library system. The supporting staff undertake important schedules. These include bibliographic searching and verification, ordering, circulating publications, filing and shelving, hence the need for motivation for the supporting staff.

According to Lucey, the central objective of any organization will be achieved more efficiently when the people who work in it have drive and commitment, in other words, when they are motivated.⁴

Motivation can be explained as a driving force or commitment people have for doing things.⁵ In other words, motivation implies the inner state that energises, channels and sustains human behaviour. From the management perspective, a person who is motivated works hard, sustains hard work, and has self-directed behaviour towards important goals. Thus, motivation involves effort, persistence, and goals. It is the actual performance that managers can

evaluate to determine the worker's desire. Performance problems are not necessarily caused by a low level of motivation. Other factors like shortage of resources or lack of skills may be the cause of low productivity in an organization.

The best known theory of motivation is probably Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory.⁶ He hypothesised that within every human being there exists a hierarchy of five needs. This is normally presented in the form of a pyramid with each level consisting of a particular class of needs as shown below.



The relationship between the needs is related to the pyramid structure. Maslow argues that the lower down the needs, the more basic they are. Thus, the most basic needs are those concerned with physical survival. These needs have to be satisfied, at least to some minimum level, before the next level of needs become important. According to Maslow,

individuals work their way up the hierarchy, but each level of needs remain dependent on the levels below. Thus if one is motivated at work by the opportunity to "self actualize" and suddenly he is made redundant, the whole system collapses, as the need to feed and provide for oneself and his dependents again becomes the predominant need.

Although Maslow's theory has some flaws, it provides managers with a conceptual means of understanding motivation of employees by giving a guide to an individual's needs and desires.

Managers, these days, take a keen interest in motivation because it has an effect on both employee output or performance and organizational effectiveness. Before managers can motivate, they have to provide an environment which induces employees to contribute to the goals of the organization. Evidence has shown that majority of people do not work to the fullest extent of their capabilities and that most jobs do not require that they do. It is therefore imperative that managers and supervisors understand the nature of motivation if they want their subordinates to perform optimally and maximally.

Administration of the Library
The University of Cape Coast Library was established in November 1962 while its parent institution was established in October, 1962, by the Government of Ghana. The Library started in the present Institute of

Educational Planning and Administration offices with 650 books inherited from the erstwhile Kumasi College of Arts and Education. These formed the nucleus of the library collection and they were mainly books in the Arts and the Humanities since the Science books were found unsuitable for undergraduate work.

In 1963, three staff members joined the sub-librarian who was appointed in November, 1962 to run the Library. Just like the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Bauchi, Nigeria which started in a temporary building in 1981 and was soon found to be inadequate to cater for the increasing stock and staff who were needed to provide effective services to the university community,⁷ the University of Cape Coast Library also started in the present University chapel building. The chapel building was completed as a small library to house 20,000 volumes. With the expansion in physical development, increase in staff and student intake in the 1963/64 academic year, that building proved extremely inadequate. Soon work started on a prefabricated building, envisaged as a temporary structure to house 50,000 volumes for a period of five years when a main and permanent University Library building would have been completed.

To complement the inadequate space in the Library, the Science collection of over 60,000 volumes had to be moved away in 1969 to occupy a wing of the Faculty of Science building. Another library was improvised for the Faculty of Education.

With a fairly large and relatively new collection of over 151,886 volumes and 2,000 journals by 1987, the University Library had performed quite satisfactorily. However, the absence of a main, central or permanent library complex and the many fragments of libraries all over the campus had their disadvantages. Among these were unavoidable but expensive duplication in the acquisition of general reference materials like dictionaries and newspapers. The situation also called for the recruitment of more qualified staff which had not been possible due to the institution's poor finances. Finally, this was putting undue physical hardship on some sections of the student population who had to walk long distances from their halls to particular libraries. It was clear that a central, permanent library complex would promote the development and functioning of the library's services for the entire University community. Fortunately, the new library complex which commenced in 1976, and which by 1987 had only started moving off the foundation level, was eventually commissioned for use in 2001.

The University Librarian is the chief academic and administrative officer of the University Library. He attends meetings of Boards and Committees and initiates policies for approval by the Library and Academic Board. He also controls the finances of the Library. The University Librarian is also responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the planning, development and management of the University's bibliographical support for the

teaching, study and research programmes.

The Library has four divisions. These are Administration, Acquisitions, Reader Services, Cataloguing and Technical Services respectively. The Administration section is directly under the University Librarian. Currently the Reader Services section is headed by an Assistant Librarian whilst the Acquisitions and Cataloguing sections are headed by Senior Assistant Librarians. The heads of department are directly in contact with the junior staff and supervise their work.

Out of the fifty members of staff, only eighteen of the lot constitute library assistants. The latter represent 36 percent of the entire work force. Library assistants have a crucial role to play to ensure the realization of the objectives of the library. This study is therefore an attempt to find out the degree of motivation and the extent to which this would influence their work in the Library.

Methodology

The data which form the basis of this investigation were basically collected through the use of a questionnaire. There are a total of 18 Library Assistants in the University of Cape Coast Library. Each of them was given a copy of the questionnaire to fill. The questionnaire contained thirty-seven items which required straight forward answers and comments. It was composed of questions relating to sex, age and qualifications of the respondents. Other questions focused

on areas such as length of service, conditions of service, job satisfaction, interaction with peers and supervisors, involvement in decision-making and appraisal methods. In all 16 out of the 18 copies of the questionnaire were completed and retrieved within a period of six weeks. These gave a response rate of 88.9 percent.

Presentation of Results
Background of Respondents (Table 1-3)

Tables 1 to 3 give statistical data about the respondents with respect to sex, age and educational qualifications. According to the investigation, there were more male library assistants than female library assistants. Thus the Library profession in Ghana just like in Nigeria⁸ appears to be male dominated.

TABLE 1: CATEGORY BY SEX

| Sex | No | Percentage |
|--------|----|------------|
| Male | 10 | 62.5 |
| Female | 6 | 37.5 |
| Total | 16 | 100 |

On the distribution of age of the respondents, it was found out that majority of them - 75 percent were aged between 31 and 35 years. The rationale for finding out this information was to relate this to their levels of maturity vis-a-vis how they could likely adapt to situations in their environment such as conditions of service, productivity and work ethics. This clearly shows that most of the library assistants are mature.

TABLE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION

| Age | No | Percentage |
|---------|----|------------|
| 16 - 20 | 1 | 6.25 |
| 21 - 25 | 1 | 6.25 |
| 26 - 30 | 2 | 12.50 |
| 31 - 35 | 12 | 75.00 |
| Over 35 | - | - |
| Total | 16 | 100 |

The educational qualifications of staff at any level influence their career advancement and contributions towards the corporate goals of the organisation. For example, in a University Library some of the library assistants deal directly with the requests of the library patrons. Lack of understanding of a client's request may result in an unsatisfactory service or no service at all even though the request could have been attended to positively if the right calibre of staff had attended to it.

TABLE 3: TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS

| TYPE | NO | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|----|------------|
| Primary & Middle | 0 | 0 |
| G.C.E. "O" Level | 5 | 31.25 |
| G.C.E. "A" Level | 8 | 50.00 |
| Diploma in Librarianship | 3 | 18.75 |
| Total | 16 | 100 |

According to Table 3, 31.25 percent of the respondents had GCE 'O' Level, 50 percent had GCE 'A' Level and 18.75 percent had a Diploma in librarianship. This is to be expected since the recruitment guidelines of the Library require a Library assistant to have a minimum of five GCE O Level passes including English. It is more advantageous to recruit bright library assistants who can perform effectively and thus further their education to at

least the Diploma level than to employ "dead woods" who can hardly fit into an academic environment.

Salaries

The respondents were then asked to state if their current salary was commensurate with their work and qualifications. Unfortunately, no one answered in the affirmative. They all thought they were receiving low salaries. It must be pointed out that it is not only the library assistants who complain of low salaries in the University system in Ghana. This is evident by the number of strike actions that occur within an academic year. The government is, however, trying to improve conditions of service for University staff.

Working Experience

TABLE 4. WORKING EXPERIENCE

| YEAR(S) | NO | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------|----|------------|
| Less than 1 year | 2 | 12.50 |
| 1 - 2 | - | - |
| 3 - 4 | 4 | 25.00 |
| 5 - 6 | 2 | 12.50 |
| 7 - 8 | 1 | 6.25 |
| 9 - 10 | 2 | 12.50 |
| 10 and above | 5 | 31.25 |
| Total | 16 | 100 |

It was found out that a good proportion of the staff (31.25%) had working experience in the library spanning 10 years and above. A high proportion of the staff (50%) had working experience spanning 1-6 years. The turnover among this category of staff is high as expected. This is due basically to the fact that their qualifications make them eligible

to pursue post secondary courses.

Conditions of Service

TABLE 5. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

| RATING | NO | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|----|------------|
| Excellent | - | - |
| Very Good | 3 | 18.75 |
| Good | 12 | 75.00 |
| Fair | 1 | 6.25 |
| Total | 16 | 100 |

Conditions of service here can be defined as the aggregate of factors that prevail in a work environment to enable one to work in a conducive or non-conducive atmosphere and that these factors involve both monetary and non-monetary factors like discipline, types of leave, promotions, allowances of all kinds, working hours, nature of work, duties of staff, facilities and work environment and so on.

The writer had this definition in view when she requested the respondents to rate the conditions of service of the university as they affect them. Table 5 gives a break down of their various responses. Only 18.75 percent rated this as being very good while 75 percent considered the conditions of service to be good. Generally, staff of the University are dissatisfied with their conditions of service. This has led to the University Council in 1994 revising the conditions of service to improve staff welfare. It should be pointed out that staff welfare cannot be greatly improved if the University continues to receive inadequate budgetary allocation from the government.

Job Satisfaction

TABLE 6. HIGH JOB SATISFACTION

| REASONS | COUNT | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Job is challenging & interesting | 6 | 23.0 |
| Gain experience in doing it | 7 | 27.0 |
| Good leadership of supervisor | 5 | 19.2 |
| Attractive salary and incentives | 1 | 3.8 |
| Conducive work climate | 0 | 0 |
| No Response | 7 | 27.0 |
| Total | * 26 | 100 |

* Multiple responses were allowed.

TABLE 7. LOW JOB SATISFACTION

| REASONS | NO | PERCENTAGE |
|--|----|------------|
| Routine & Boring | 5 | 31.25 |
| Tasks are too demanding | 2 | 12.5 |
| Below qualification; training and status | 3 | 18.75 |
| Offering no challenges | 6 | 37.5 |
| Total | 16 | 100 |

In this study, job satisfaction relates to the work environment in the context of one's job. The major sources of satisfaction are colleagues, the management of the supervisory climate or general atmosphere or overall work climate. An overwhelming number of respondents (73%) confirmed that they were satisfied with their present job while 27% held a contrary view. Tables 6 and 7 give a summary of the reasons for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction respectively. For example, a mere 3.8 percent gave attractive salary and incentive as contributing to job satisfaction, thus supporting a general workers' view that a worker will most likely be motivated and this will eventually lead to high performance or productivity if the job is interesting

or stimulating and offers him challenges.

Reward for Hardwork

The Library undertakes an annual staff appraisal exercise at the end of each financial year. Staff appraisal has 2 main objectives. These are:-

1. To determine how well an employee is performing on the job, and
2. To assist an employee know how well he is doing so that if improvements need to be made, the employer is aware of the areas in which performance is below expectation.

Performance appraisal can thus be used as a mechanism of encouraging the growth and development of an individual worker. All the respondents

conceded that they get an annual increment in salary. This is an indication that the Library is satisfied with their work because annual salary increase is not automatic. According to the University policy it could be withheld for ineffective performance of duty and, or misconduct.

Appraisal Methods

The way appraisal methods are carried out do affect staff morale and productivity. If a worker has no confidence in the appraisal exercise he is not likely to work hard. The Library has therefore adopted the open reporting system. This requires heads of section to evaluate their subordinates using standard appraisal forms. The completed appraisal forms are given back to the subordinate for him to countersign. Where a subordinate disagrees with the head, he can state this on the form with reasons to enable management look at his objections.

To the respondents, the major parameter which can influence workers to increase productivity is promotion followed by staff training and development and award of prizes in that order.

Staff Development

Human resources are valuable assets of organisations. They are in fact too valuable in working out programmes required for upgrading staff. The University sponsors staff who want to upgrade themselves to do a Diploma in Librarianship course at the University of Ghana and other higher courses elsewhere.

Attitudes of Colleagues and Supervisors

The respondents were almost unanimous - indicating that they enjoyed a good working relationship with their colleagues. Again, majority of them 75% did state that interaction with their heads were cordial. 65% of them went on to indicate that their heads correct their errors in respect of their schedules in a friendly atmosphere and because of this 40 percent of them even discuss some of their personal problems with their heads. These are healthy developments because the effective supervisor "sees the job as an obligation to create a climate of support by being open and receptive to people's ideas".

Participative Management

This style of management "involves subordinates in making organisational decisions. This style does not imply democratic governance or majority rule. Subordinates take part in the decision-making process through consultation.⁹ Participative management structures, according to Jones and Jordan, "create conditions at work which enable staff to realise their potential, make greater use of their professional training, and thus improve the effectiveness of the service offered".¹⁰

There are no committees in the Library itself. The whole University has a Library Board with the Librarian as a member of it. No other staff of the Library serves on this Board.

The respondents suggested that at least

a Consultative Committee can be set up in the Library with the Librarian as the Chairman. With this, they believe major issues and policies will first be discussed before their heads send their views to the Committee for final ratification. This is based on the principle that it is only when the rank and file benefit by having a chance to participate in the governance of the Library that better decisions are made with staff involvement, and that increased job satisfaction of staff will lead to a better library service.¹¹

According to Charlton, unless the more direct forms of participation are developed at lower levels, the indirect form, imposed at the top, will never achieve the results which are expected from it, that is, the development of a pluralist approach to organisational decision-making".¹² When the respondents were asked if they are consulted when decisions affecting them and their jobs are taken, 85% of those who answered the question replied in the affirmative.

Staff meetings contribute to staff development in addition to involving staff in the decision-making process. Majority of members thought that staff meetings are occasionally held in the Library. The Library holds at least two general meetings involving all staff every semester.

A very high proportion of the respondents (90%) confirmed that they contribute ideas at staff meetings while 70% indicated that the suggestions they give at such meetings are normally accepted. This is an

indication that management is receptive to suggestions from staff. This is an indication that members of staff are more likely to implement projects or decisions which are collectively agreed on at meetings.

Discipline

Discipline is the action taken by an organisation against an individual employee when that employee's performance has deteriorated to the level where action is necessary to preserve the interests of the organisation and protect the rights of the individual. 40% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the Library's current disciplinary procedures while 50% expressed a contrary view. The latter, however, failed to give reasons for their responses. It is therefore suggested that management should look at its disciplinary procedures with the view to improving them.

Communication

Costley and Todd define communication as "the vehicle through which human abilities and physical resources are combined to produce outputs and attain objectives." There are three types of communication: written, oral and non-verbal. In an organisation, communication generally can be considered to flow in three directions; downwards (from superior to subordinate) or vice versa; and horizontal (lateral - this does not follow the chain of command). Most of the respondents pointed out that they orally communicate with their heads while an overwhelming