

Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Job Satisfaction In Ghana

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Abstract- This study was conducted among employees of CSIR-Food Research Institute (CSIR-FRI) in Accra, and sought to, firstly, establish the average job satisfaction level of all employees in the institute, and secondly, to elicit their views on the relationship between prevailing Human Resource Management (HRM) practices at the institution, and their job satisfaction. The motivation for this was the dearth of published research on the subject, and within the context of Ghanaian research institutions. The study adopted a quantitative survey approach in which questionnaire were distributed to sixty (60) employees who were recruited using a stratified and convenience sampling methods. Fifty-eight (58) responses were duly completed and returned. Response data were analysed descriptively using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics. Findings revealed that majority of CSIR-FRI employees are generally satisfied with their present jobs. Employees also agreed that standard HRM practices prevail in the institution, and that these are implemented effectively by management. More importantly, employees agreed that the HRM practices being implemented have contributed in improving their job satisfaction levels. Based on these findings, the study recommended that Management of CSIR-FRI should place more emphasis on creating a conducive work environment, and also on providing training and development opportunities for all categories of staff both within and outside the institution, as these have been determined to be the dominant factors contributing towards employee job satisfaction.

Index Terms- Human Resource Management Practice; Employee; Job Satisfaction; Ghana

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee job satisfaction and motivation are associated with the retention of personnel in organisations. Much of the interest of organisations in assessing and analysing employee satisfaction stems from a concern about possible on-the-job behavioural consequences (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Low levels of job satisfaction among employees have been shown to produce various undesirable behaviours, such as using the organisation's time to pursue personal tasks, psychological and practical withdrawal from the job, and behavioural changes that alter the workplace environment. Additional negative consequences associated with low levels of job satisfaction include attendance problems, higher rates of turnover, early

retirements, lack of active participation in job tasks, and psychological withdrawal from work (Hom & Kinicki, 2001).

Organisational growth is largely based on the workforce of the organisation and how the human resource is effectively put to use to ensure that the organisation's objectives are met. If organisations in Ghana are unable to achieve such growth, then the implication might be as a result of poor strategic mechanisms, poor employee commitment, lack of satisfaction and motivation, inadequate resources and limited revenue for the organisation. If the organisation achieves its target, then it would mean that there has been a positive impact as a result of employee commitment. As to whether or not employee job satisfaction will influence performance depends on the productive effort of the employees and their commitment. Lack of job satisfaction is a predictor of quitting a job (Hom & Kinicki, 2001). Sometimes workers may move from one organisation to the other because of the lack of satisfaction with the previous job. Satisfaction on a job might be motivated by the nature of the job, its pervasive social climate, the extent to which workers' peculiar needs are met and working conditions that are comparable to local and international standards (Oshagbemi, 2000). Other inclusions are the availability of power and status, pay satisfaction, promotion opportunities, and task clarity, according to Bolarin (2005). Employee job satisfaction is therefore largely a human resource issue, and it is with this understanding that the study sought to examine the relationship between human resource management practices and employee job satisfaction in a research institution in Ghana using CSIR-Food Research institute as case study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Resource-based theory

The resource-based view of Wright and Snell (2001) the emphasis is on gaining sustainable competitive advantage by means of effective and efficient utilisation of the resources of an organisation. Resource-based theory caused a change in strategic management thinking from an outside-in approach to an inside-out approach. In this 'new' stream of thought, internal resources form the starting point of determining organisational success, in contrast to the 'old' paradigm of outside-in thinking. Authors like Kamoche (2000), Boxall (2001) and Wright et al. (2001) specifically applied this theory to the field of human resource management and state that it is people that encompass the value, rareness, inimitability and non-substitution which, according to

Barney (1999), are the necessary conditions for organisational success. The choice of the resource-based view (RBV) for this study affords the researchers several advantages in investigating the strategic nature of HRM.

Human resource management practices

HRM is a strategic and coordinated approach to the management of people working in an organisation. It aims for the development of integrated HR policies and practices (bundling). It is aimed at gaining job satisfaction, organisation commitment, treating people as assets and the principal of mutuality. The line managers have a greater responsibility in performance and delivery of HRM (Ulrich & Lake, 2011). Collection of re-enforcing HR practices have begun to be referred to as a "bundle" and the task of HR managers is to identify and implement such systems (Armstrong, 2005). There is a "pick and mix" approach to the HR bundle (Wood, De Menezes, 2008). Some scholars have identified what they refer as best practices. Employment security, selective hiring, extensive training, learning and development, employee involvement, information sharing and worker voice, team working, compensation contingent on performance and reduction of staff differentials have been isolated as component of best practice (Pfeffer, 2002). Sophisticated selection and recruitment, sophisticated induction programmes, sophisticated training, coherent appraisal systems, flexibility of workforce skills, job variety, use of formal teams, frequent and comprehensive communication to workforce, use of quality improvement teams, harmonised terms and conditions, basic pay higher than competition and use of incentive schemes have also been identified as a bundle of best practices (Patterson, et. al., 2009). Guest (2014) identifies job design and employee ownership programmes as an important component of HRM best practices.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction has become one of the most widely focused areas of interest in organisational research due to the growing awareness of its relationship with employee behaviours such as absenteeism, intention to quit, and motivation. Early work on this subject laid the foundation for what has become a multi-disciplinary pursuit, including extensive work in human resources management, applied psychology, sociology and labour economics (Hoppock, 2014; Kerr, 2012). Job satisfaction is a pre-requisite for employee performance in any organisation. It is important for both the employee and the employer. For the employees, job satisfaction gives them a sense of security and fulfilment. In return, it leads to employee commitment, decreased absenteeism and reduced employee turnover. For the employer, employee job satisfaction ensures committed staff and stable workforce which reduce cost of recruitment and training. According to Stogdill (2009), successful organisations consider worker morale and job satisfaction an output just as important as productivity.

Locke (2006) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Schneider and Snyder (1999), on the other hand, defined job satisfaction as a personal evaluation of conditions present in the job, or outcomes that arise as a result of having a job. Job satisfaction thus, has to do with an individual's perception and evaluation of his job, and this perception is

influenced by the person's unique circumstances like needs, values and expectations. People will therefore evaluate their jobs on the basis of factors, which they regard as being important to them. Spector (2011) asserted that job satisfaction is the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. Job satisfaction is a positive orientation of an individual towards the work role, which he is presently occupying. He further stated that variables related to job satisfaction include achievement, advancement, job enhancement, job enrichment and teamwork.

Relationship between HRM practices and employee job satisfaction

Variability in satisfaction rating has been observed and an attempt made to explain them. From a situational perspective, satisfaction varies because work conditions vary. From a dispositional perspective, satisfaction varies because affective dispositions vary. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (situation theory) proposes that job content factors ("motivators"), such as responsibility, recognition, the nature of work itself, achievement, growth and development are responsible for presence or absence of job satisfaction. Job Context factors ("hygiene factors") such as pay, working conditions, company policy, administration, supervision, status, job security and interpersonal Relations are responsible for the presence or absence of job dissatisfaction (Armstrong, 2005; Herzberg, 1968). Lawler's satisfaction model (Equity-based models) view satisfaction as a function of the extent to which the perceived amount of job rewards one receives matches the perceived deserved rewards (Mowday, 2010). Locke's Value theory proposes that satisfaction is a function of the extent to which one's job is perceived as fulfilling important values (Locke, 2001); do perceived job characteristics match desired characteristics? Satisfaction is determined by the discrepancy between preferred levels of job factors (pay, autonomy, etc.) and the actual level. Job enrichment has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Vroom (1964) proposed that job satisfaction is equal to the valence of the job; differences in valence of jobs are due in part to differences in properties of jobs. Positively valent outcomes: use of skills and abilities, control over pacing, decision authority. Satisfaction relates to the nature of the work itself, social relationships at work, and economic benefits of work (Dessler, 2003). Variables most strongly related to satisfaction include autonomy, perceived control, job complexity, pay level, coworker satisfaction, workload, and quality of interpersonal relationships.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive survey design because large amount of data was collected simultaneously for analysis. The population of this study was the entire staff of CSIR- Food Research Institute in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. As at the time of the study, this number stood at one hundred and forty-one (141). The study adopted a multi-stage approach - stratified and convenience sampling by categorising the study population into the following four strata - Management, Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff - and then using a convenience sampling technique to obtain respective participants within each stratum. Categorising the population into the various strata ensured that all categories of staff were adequately represented in the sample.

Convenience sampling approach was then used to obtain the final sample because, as explained earlier, this approach enabled the researcher to quickly and easily locate staff members who were ready and willing to participate in the study.

Sample size for the study was obtained by first determining the optimum sample size for each stratum using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator (<http://www.raosoft.com>). Setting a confidence level of 90% and a 5% margin of error for the population of each stratum, the system calculated an optimum sample size for each stratum. As shown in Table 1, a theoretical sample size of 88 was obtained. Due to time and logistical constraints however, the convenient sampling strategy adopted fell short of achieving the targeted sample size, as a final sample of 60 was obtained. This is discussed below as one limitation of the study.

Category	Stratum size	Calculated Sample Size	Actual Sample Size
Management	10	10	10
Senior Member	25	19	10
Senior Staff	72	36	27
Junior Staff	34	23	13
Total	141	88	60

Table 1: Data on stratified and convenience sampling
Source: Survey/Field data (2017)

Since the study adopted a descriptive survey design, and based on the general understanding that survey is the most popular research method for obtaining data on behaviours, interests and opinions shared by people (Engel & Schutt, 2005), survey questionnaire were deemed to be the most appropriate data collection instrument. This study thus adopted a paper-based questionnaire that comprised mainly closed-ended questions with restricted options. As no specific research model or framework was evolved or adapted to inform the research, questions in the questionnaire were arrived at based on the research questions, and a synthesis of some models and frameworks discussed in the literature review. A draft questionnaire comprising 20 questions was pre-tested with 10 employees who were deemed to be a representative sample of the study participants, and also with a seasoned researcher. Based on comments and feedback, these were revised to 8 questions. All questions required respondents to choose an answer, or set of answers, from a pre-defined set of options. One question comprised a set of Likert statements in which respondents were required to specify their level of disagreement or agreement on a symmetric disagree-agree scale (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree, and scored, 1, 2, 3, 4,5 respectively). The purpose of this was to capture the intensity of respondents' feelings towards the respective items (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Abiding by the prescribed code of research ethics, the researcher presented a letter from Central University to the authorities of CSRI-Food Research Institute, Accra, requesting permission to administer the research questionnaire to employees. This was granted, and the researcher visited the institution in the first week of December 2017. Adopting the convenience sampling approach, the researcher visited employees, one at a time, in their offices, laboratories and workshops. On coming into contact with any employee, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and requested that they spend a few minutes to answer the questions in the questionnaire. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the responses were anonymous (hence there was no need to identify oneself in the questionnaire), and that the data was solely for academic purposes. Understandably, some employees were quite busy and thus indicated their inability to participate, whilst others willingly took copies and asked the researcher to return in a few minutes for collection. Such respondents were thus given time to answer the questions, and the researcher returned within an hour to collect all completed questionnaire.

In all, 60 questionnaires were administered. In retrieving the responses, whilst some employees completed the questionnaire the same day and returned them to the researcher, others asked for more time. These were thus retrieved after three more visits to the institute. At the end of the exercise, 58 fully completed questionnaire were retrieved representing a response rate of 96%. All completed questionnaire were first inspected for errors and/or omissions, and were all deemed to be clean enough for analysis. As there were no open-ended questions in the questionnaire, all responses to each of the questions were grouped numerically and analysed using simple descriptive statistics, in accordance with the research questions. Using Microsoft Excel, all data were inputted into pre-defined fields and columns. These were then sorted, grouped into appropriate categories and displayed in percentages and bar graphs for easy visualisation. Measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode), variability (standard deviation) and correlations were also performed on the data using International Business Machines - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM-SPSS), and these were interpreted descriptively to answer the research questions.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic data of respondents

Questions in the research questionnaire requested respondents to provide their demographic data. The purpose was to establish how well the study sample represented the population. Table 2 shows a compilation of these data. As Table 2 shows, the various categories of staff considered for the study were all adequately represented in the sample. One thing worthy of note is that the male to female ratio in the sample perfectly mirrored the male to female ratio of staff at the CSIR-FRI which is 2:3. With regard to gender therefore, the sampling strategy adopted achieved the objective of ensuring a fair representation of the population in the sample.

CSIR-FRI has four main categories of full-time staff - Management, Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff. As the names suggest, Management are those in management positions - Directors, Deputy Directors, and Heads of Departments. Senior Members are high ranking professionals such

as administrators, engineers, scientists, technologists etc., who have been in their professional practice for a considerable period and risen through the ranks. Persons in the senior staff category are typically the middle level supervisors, technicians, administrative assistants etc. This is a broad category that encompasses persons who have worked for several years as well as freshly employed graduates from tertiary institutions. Junior Staff are the general support staff, including artisans, drivers, cleaners etc. Senior staff is the dominant category of staff in the institution, and this is again reflected in the sample where staff in that category comprised 47%. With regard to the length of service in the institution, majority of the participants (60%) indicated that they had worked in the institution for over 10 years. This is understandable, given that majority were in the Senior Staff category, and would have attained their positions by serving for considerable periods of time in the institution. In this regard, most of the study participants could be deemed to have experienced the various HRM practices that have been implemented in the institution over the past 10 years, and therefore their responses on the contribution of these practices to their job satisfaction levels could be considered worthy enough to generalise to the entire CSIR-FRI staff with some level of confidence.

Participant Profile	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	23	40
	Female	35	60
Category of Staff	Management	8	14
	Senior Member	11	19
	Senior Staff	27	46
Length of Service	Junior Staff	12	21
	5 years or less	9	16
	6 - 10 years	14	24
	11 - 15 years	11	19
	Over 16 years	24	41

Table 2: Participant demographics

Source: Survey/Field data (2017)

Relationship between HRM Practices and Job Satisfaction at CSIR-FRI

The question in the survey therefore listed the HRM practices, and respondents were required to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale, their level of agreement with the suggestion that each of these practices contributed in improving their job satisfaction levels. These practices were:

- i. Adequate compensation (salary, incentives etc)
- ii. Assuring employees of their job security
- iii. Effective performance and appraisal systems
- iv. Training and capacity building opportunities
- v. Fair promotion policies and practices
- vi. Employee participation in decision making
- vii. Making detailed job descriptions available to employees
- viii. Standard selection and recruitment practices
- ix. Good working relationships with colleagues and superiors

Responses were coded as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral/will not say (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5). Table 3 shows the cumulative percentages of responses.

As Table 3 demonstrates, an overwhelming 71% of participants strongly agreed or agreed with all the statements to the effect that the various HRM practices prevailing in the institution contribute in improving job satisfaction of employees. Only 12% disagreed, whilst 17% chose the neutral option. This overview clearly points to an acceptance by majority of the employees that the various HRM practices are contributory factors towards improving employee job satisfaction, and so it can be concluded that there exists a positive relationship between HRM practices and employee job satisfaction at CSIR-Food Research Institute.

Being the first study of its kind involving staff of CSIR-FRI, this specific finding cannot be affirmed or disputed with literature evidence. However, empirical evidence abound in the literature (e.g. Petrescu & Simmons, 2008; Absar, et. al, 2010; Islam et. al. 2018) on the existence of significant positive relationships between HRM practices and employee job satisfaction in several sectors of the global economy.

Table 3: Relationship between HRM Practices and Job Satisfaction

	Compensation	job security	Appraisal	Skill Dev	Fair promotion	Participation	Job description	Fair Recruitment	Relationships	Total	Cumulative Percentages
Strongly agree	18	22	18	27	21	25	25	27	27	210	40%
Agree	18	20	18	18	19	13	19	13	21	159	31%
Neutral	9	10	15	7	14	10	8	12	6	91	17%
Disagree	8	4	5	4	2	6	4	4	2	39	8%
Strongly disagree	5	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	23	4%

Source: Survey/Field data (2017)

Having established that employees at the institution generally agreed that HRM practices contributed in improving their job satisfaction levels, the study went further to determine if individual employees who agreed that the various HRM practices contributed in improving their job satisfaction also indicated that they were satisfied with their current jobs. To achieve this, the mean values of each respondent's level of agreement with the statements on HRM practices were computed and, using IBM SPSS Statistics v.25.0, a Pearson correlation analysis was

conducted between these values and respondents' respective job satisfaction levels.

As the results in Table 4 show however, no significant correlation was established between the levels of agreement with almost all the statements linking HRM practices with job satisfaction, and the levels of job satisfaction. The interpretation of this is that, agreeing or disagreeing with statements that prevailing HRM practices contribute in improving job satisfaction has no relationship with how satisfied or dissatisfied the employees are with their respective jobs.

Table 4: Correlation matrix for agreement levels and job satisfaction
Source: Survey/Field data (2017)

		Job Satisfact ion	Job Security	Compe n-sation	Apprais al	Skills Dev	Promoti on	Participat ion	Job Descripti on	Recruitme nt	Relationshi ps
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	1									
Job Security	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	-.034	1								
Compensation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	-.126	.005	1							
Appraisal	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	-.245*	.503**	.108	1						
Skills Dev	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	-.002	.537**	.135	.500**	1					
Promotion	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	.094	.394**	.147	.418**	.516**	1				
Participation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	.101	.139	.052	.398**	.398**	.388**	1			
Job Description	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	.131	.487**	-.108	.373**	.538**	.374**	.467**	1		
Recruitment	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	-.038	.354**	.069	.402**	.341**	.222*	.386**	.621**	1	
Relationships	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed)	.006	.317**	.083	.203	.312**	.252*	.356**	.549**	.730**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

In answering the last research question therefore, one is right in saying that employees of CSIR-FRI generally accept that the HRM practices prevalent in the institution contribute in improving their levels of job satisfaction. This is in line with most

other studies (e.g. Petrescu & Simmons, 2008), however, this study has gone further to establish that an individual employee's job satisfaction level has nothing to do with whether that individual agrees or disagrees with statements that HRM practices

contribute in improving job satisfaction. In other words, an employee can be very satisfied with his/her job, and yet disagree with statements suggesting that it is the HRM practices that contributed in improving his/her satisfaction level. A reasonable argument in support of this scenario can be that such an employee is not deriving his/her job satisfaction from the HRM practices prevailing at the institution, but from other sources. The converse can also be said to be true, i.e. an employee can be very dissatisfied with his/her job, and yet fully agree with statements that HRM practices contribute in improving job satisfaction. For such an employee, one will not be wrong in arguing that the standard HRM practices are not being effectively implemented in the institution, hence the employee's dissatisfaction with his/her job. This is quite an interesting finding that is worth investigating further.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The issue of HRM practices such as human resource planning, job analysis and design, recruitment and selection, promotion, compensation, performance appraisal, training and development, and labour relations (Dessler, 2007), and how they relate to employee job satisfaction, and ultimately employee performance and output, has received considerable attention from employers, researchers and practitioners. There is therefore a growing body of literature that not only aim at providing guides to employers on how best to maximise the benefits of HRM practices in the workplace, but also point researchers to new avenues for further research aimed at improving the collective understanding of all stakeholders in this discipline. The findings point to the fact that all study objectives were satisfactorily achieved. In all, the fact that employees at the institution generally expressed satisfaction with their jobs was not surprising, likewise their general agreement with the fact that HRM practices contribute in improving job satisfaction levels. These findings are largely in conformity with what most studies in this field have reported in the literature, though not within the Ghanaian context. For instance, Islam et al. (2018) reported a significant positive relationship between HRM practices and job satisfaction among bank employees in Bangladesh. Petrescu and Simmons (2008) also determined that the implementation of several HRM practices tend to raise workers' overall job satisfaction among British employees.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a study that focused on employee views and perceptions, and the limitations therein notwithstanding, the findings of this study are largely in conformity with findings of similar studies. However, given that the study was conducted in an institution in which no similar study has as yet not been reported, the following recommendations are deemed relevant to the institution's stakeholders, and the academic community at large.

- i. Management of CSIR-FRI should place more emphasis on creating a conducive work environment, and also on providing training and development opportunities for all categories of staff both within and outside the institution, as these have been determined to be the dominant factors contributing towards employee job satisfaction.

- ii. Though the study revealed that majority of employees are satisfied with the jobs they presently hold, a good 12% of the workforce have expressed dissatisfaction, and a further 2%, extreme dissatisfaction with their jobs. This should be cause for concern, and Management needs to seek innovative ways to continually improve employee job satisfaction levels, especially as only 12% indicated that they are very satisfied with their jobs.
- iii. Employees of CSIR-FRI have affirmed the established understanding that standard HRM practices contribute towards improving job satisfaction. It therefore behooves Management, and to a larger extent, the government, to ensure that appropriate HRM polices are designed and implemented in ways that employees will perceive as favourable to their cause. This way, chances are that employees will report higher job satisfaction levels, and by implication, higher productivity levels.
- iv. Though not explicitly verified, this study has raised a pointer to the presence of other factors besides HRM practices that employees perceive to be contributing towards their job satisfaction. Management should therefore take steps to identify such factors, and if they are within their realm, address them appropriately.
- v. Further research works on employee job satisfaction should widen the scope beyond HRM practices as there is a possibility that such non-HRM practices can potentially impact job satisfaction, and ultimately, productivity.

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