

FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION AT INFRASTRUCTURE UNIVERSITY KUALA LUMPUR

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ABSTRACT

Employee motivation in higher education institutions is a significant issue. Higher education institutions are facing the challenge in motivating their skilled employees. The objective of the study is to examine the factors strongly affect employees' motivation at Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL). The study used quantitative research method and a 37 items questionnaires were distributed among 120 employees at IUKL. ANOVA and Multiple Linear Regression test were used to analyze the research question. The major findings of the study show that the R squared of 51.1 implied 4 predictor variables explained 51.1% of the variance in the employee motivation at IUKL. The ANOVA test revealed that F-statistics (30.035) and the corresponding p-value was highly significant (p.011) or lower than the alpha value of .05. The multiple linear regression analysis shows that the largest beta coefficient is .307, which was for Work and Relationships. It means that such variable Work and Relationships makes the strongest contribution with a t-value 5.520, and p-value .000 in explaining the dependent variable employee motivation. The second most influential predictor variable is Job security and Environment which is significant at p.001 and the t-value is 3.485. The third most influential predictor variable is Rewards and Recognition which is significant at p.003 and the t-value is 3.079. However, the t-value and p-value for the predictor variable Salary and Benefits are consecutively -.426 and .671 show a negative influence on Employee Motivation. The study recommends that the higher education institution to monitor Salary and Benefit as it shows negative influence on the employee motivation.

Key Words: Employee Motivation, Higher Education, Reward, Salary & Benefit, Workplace Relationship & Job Security

INTRODUCTION

Employee motivation has become one of the key issues worldwide among the organizations (Kallio & Kallio, 2014). Importantly, higher education institutions are in a challenge to reduce employee turnover and retain the more productive employees (Lazaroiu, 2015). If good salary, good physical working conditions, recognition and many other factors are considered, one's motivation will be boosted resulting into higher performance. Kallio and Kallio (2014) stated that employees always seek benefits from the organization. They prefer good environment and, on the other hand, they look for better options. Additionally, the importance of employee motivation can also be understood through organizational culture (Dimitrios, Kastanioti, Maria & Dimitris, 2014). When employees feel a bond with other employees such as through their structural culture, they tend to be more motivated and satisfied with their job compared with employees who do not feel a connection with their organizational culture (Scheers & Botha, 2014). Employee motivation and organizational culture are intertwined (Sokro, 2012). Berry (2011) stated that an organizational culture can communicate to employees what is important to the organization, such as employee motivation. Additionally, motivated employees achieve their goals and they are asset for the organization (Berry, 2011). Their working level goes high and they make easy solutions for their activities, and moreover, organizations are concerned of how to make their employees happy and motivated (Berry, 2011).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Motivation originated from the word motive which suggests requirements, wishes, desires or drives within the persons (Sharma, 2016). The findings by de Lourdes Machado-Taylor (2016) on Portuguese higher education employees' motivation showed that physical work environment; conditions of employment; and personal relationship motivates the employees to work with more productivity. Likewise, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) found that job rank level and long term career are the predictors of higher job satisfaction among employees at higher education institutions. Moreover, when employees trust their managers and leaders, their sense of empowerment tends to be good (Hasani & Sheikhesmaeili, 2016). Fisher (2012) asserted that human capital is the main asset capable of leading organization to succeed and if not managed properly can lead to failure of the organization and high staff turnout. Studies conducted by Sharma (2016), Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) and Hasani and Sheikhesmaeili (2016) were mainly done in different contexts and business organizations. However, Hasani & Sheikhesmaeili, (2016) Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) focused on higher education institutions. The total number of employees at IUKL is 365 (229 Lecturers and 136 academic staffs) according to the Registrar Office as at 31 August 2017. From February 2016 to January 2018 a total of 28 employees (academic 19, non-academic 9) left the university. Motivation could be one of the main reasons they left. No up-to-date study has been done to identify the factors affecting employees' motivation in higher education institutions and Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL). Thus, there is a need to investigate factors including reward, salary and benefit, relationship and job security affecting employees' motivation in IUKL, which would increase employees' retention in the higher education institution.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the study are,
To examine the factors affecting employees' motivation in IUKL.
To identify the demographics of employees' motivation in IUKL.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions for the study are:
What are the factors affecting employees' motivation in IUKL?
What are demographics of employees (academic and non-academic) working in IUKL?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Motivation in Higher Education

Motivation is a "factor that inspires the eagerness and enthusiasm in individuals to be devoted towards a task and to make constant exertion to accomplish that task" (Shafiq, Mariam, & Raza, 2011). According to Hasan and Alam (2016) employees in education sector become motivated when they are trained in the specific field they work. Another study conducted in Bangladesh by Hasan (2016) showed that the inspiration from the institution transforms the employees into motivational tools. Additionally, the successes of persons and organizational objectives are independent processes linked by employees' work motivation (Farooqi, 2014). The major issue in all organizations is the motivation of employees whether they are skilled or unskilled or professionals. Based on their argument, employee motivation is also a key concern for IUKL. It is today's challenge for the university management in this competitive world to motivate academic staff to conduct more research and motivate their employees to gain their institutional aims.

Related Studies on Motivational Factors of Employees

Motivation is one of the major factors affecting employee motivation in any organization. Elias, Smith, and Barney (2012) argued that motivation by way of it is evidently recognized to us, is the process of inspiring, encouraging and inducing the employees towards their jobs for the accomplishment of the goals. Ashtalkosi and Ashtalkoska (2012) found that organizations try to keep their employees happy and motivated in many other ways even though organizations give their employees a good environment, good salaries, incentives, rewards, and bonuses are important too. At present every organization is thinking about issues on how to motivate their employees. This study investigates the factors affecting employees' motivation in IUKL. As per Kuo (2013), a successful organization must combine the strengths and motivations of internal employees and respond to external changes and demand promptly to show the organization's value. In this study, several techniques of motivation were taken from existing literature, and managed to make flow of motivation from young-age employees to old-age employees through perceived selected factors.

Moreover, the staff of any industry are key resources to that industry's success. Human asset in the 21st century is considered the most important asset of any company (Hafiza, Shah, Jamsheed & Zaman, 2011). According to Hafiza et al. (2011), there are several factors that can affect employee performance like training and development opportunities, working conditions, worker-employer relationship, job security and company over-all policies and procedures for rewarding employees. The major factors or the independent variables that motivate employees in an institution are detailed here.

Rewards and Recognition

There are two types of rewards namely financial rewards and non-financial rewards. Financial rewards are monetary incentives that an employee earns as a result of good performance. Panagiotakopoulos (2013) showed that factors affecting staff motivation at a period where the financial rewards are kept to the least leads to arouse employee performance. Armstrong, Brown and Reilly (2010) identified that great amount of money was used in these reward practices. Only few of the human resource managers are able to justify and measure whether the reward practices in use are efficient and resulting the outcomes which the reward programs try to aim these rewards are aligned with institutional goals (Armstrong et al., 2010). A total reward system is recommended by Aguenza and Som (2018) for employee motivation. Olubusayo (2016) and Dzuaranin (2012) argued that institutions that only focus on monetary incentives to motivate their employees must also introduce non-monetary rewards to their performance rewards systems to increase the motivation level of their employees since many people prefer the former over the latter. By working closely with employees, one may know how they react to recognition, thus being able to off a fitting way of appreciation (Heathfield, 2017).

Salary and Benefits

The second factor in affecting employee 'motivation is salary and benefits. To use salaries as a motivator effectively, higher authorities must consider salary structures which should include importance of institution attached to each job, payment according to performance, personal or special allowances, fringe benefits, pensions and so on (Adeyinka et al., 2007). According to Arnulf (2014) with that prospect of salary, today many young people are still striving from poorer to better living conditions, from low to high education since they think it is the only way to ensure a prosperous future. Therefore, employees who work more needs to be given more salary (Kiruja & Mukuru, 2018).

Work and Relationships

Another factor affecting employees' motivation is good relationship. According to Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi (2012), "to increase employee performance, find out what employees like about their jobs and then try to add more tasks that align with their own natural interests and talents". Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi (2012) describe that employees should have a vested interest in its success. A positive relationship is also emphasized in the findings of Ritz, Brewer and Neumann (2016) in which teacher motivations may include bonuses, equity and profit sharing, including opportunities for career development and flexible work schedules. In this study, the nature of work is related to flexible work schedules and interesting work.

Job Security and Environment

Job security is one of the most influential means of motivating employees particularly in times of economic downturn (Olubusayo, 2016). According to Lane, Esser, Holte and Anne (2010), different factors within the working environment such as wages, working hours, autonomy given to employees, institutional structure and communication between employees and higher management may affect job motivation. Motivated employees who feel fulfilled at work contribute more effectively to the institution’s performance and growth (Lane et al., 2010) and institutions need to set great working environment (Kim, Kim, Han, Jackson & Ployhart, 2017) in supporting their employees’ motivation.

Employee Motivation

Employee motivation is a dependent variable in this study. Abzari and Sadri (2011) argued that if there is high motivation, employees work harder, the workplace becomes more joyful, absenteeism will be reduced, satisfaction will be enhanced, workplace rules and regulations will be observed, and employees will do their best to actualize the organization’s goals and strategies. According to Abbah (2014), employees with high motivation are thought to have better work performance, and overall resulting in a better, more productive and effective institutional performance. Rukhman, Ramesh and Jayakrishnan (2010) noted that motivation is purely and simply a leadership behavior. They found that it stems from wanting to do what is right for people as well as for the institution. Leadership and motivation are active processes in education management. The more motivated the employees are, the more contribution they bring if overall performance management system is established in the institution (Mone & London, 2018). They argued that promotions are likely to motivate higher productivity even though they are not necessarily followed by a difference in the salary structure. This study has developed a conceptual framework based on the previous studies as below:

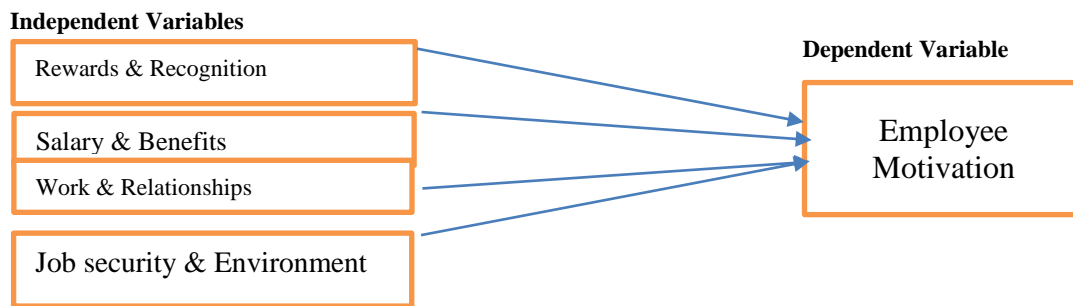


Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework of the Factors Affecting Employees’ Motivation at IUKL

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research design was used in this study. The researchers found quantitative study appropriate in the study. This is a descriptive study which allows researchers a way to explore questions that could not be examined with experimental procedures (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The population consists of a total of 365 (229 lecturers and 136 academic staffs) employees in IUKL. This figure was obtained from the IUKL Registrar Office as at 31 August 2017. Selecting appropriate samples for the study is significant for the study. In the study, 127 questionnaires were distributed among the employees in Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur. According to Gay and Diehl (1992), the minimum sample size is 10% of the population. In this study, the researcher took 35% of the population. $(365 \times 35 / 100) = 127$. A convenience sampling was used to measure the factors affecting motivation among employees in Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL). In other words, this sampling method includes getting participants wherever the researcher can find them and typically wherever is convenient. According to Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2012), this is the first offered primary data source used without additional requirements and no inclusion criteria are identified prior to the selection of subjects where all subjects are invited to participate during data collection.

A survey questionnaire with 37 items was distributed to the respondents. The structured questionnaire was designed to determine the factors affecting employee motivation among employees in Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur. A Five Point Likert’s Scale was used to rate the employees’ motivation at IUKL as follows: 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Fairly disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Fairly agree, and 5-Strongly agree. The data for the study was collected from 120 respondents. A Pilot Testing was done with 20 respondents to check the reliability of the instrument. The independent variable Work and Relationships obtained the highest Cronbach’s Alpha of .931, followed by Salary and Benefits (.870), Job security and Environment (.850), Rewards and Recognition (.840) and dependent variable is Employee Motivation (.839). This showed the reliability of the collected data. Demographic information is presented in percentage and it is followed by Multiple regression analysis and ANOVA test to test the data for answering research questions.

FINDINGS

Demographic Information

This section covers demographic of respondents which include age, gender, highest academic qualification, occupation, position, category in the organization, motivation at the work place and total years of working in IUKL. Among the 365 population, a total number of 120 samples were taken from IUKL. Firstly, the result showed that the age between (20-29 years old) has the highest

frequency which is 44.2% (53). The second one was age between (30-39 years old) which is 36.7 % (44), and the lowest was age between (50 and above years old). In terms of the gender, most of the respondents who participated were 56.7 % (68) female and 43.3 % (52) male. This is consistent to the number of females who outnumbered the male in this institution as shown the demographic information in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents (N=120)

Demographic Variable Category	Option Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-29	53	44.2
	30-39	44	36.7
	40-49	19	15.8
	50 and above	4	3.3
Gender	Male	52	44.3
	Female	68	56.7
Highest academic qualification	Diploma	17	14.2
	Degree	36	30.0
	Master	61	50.8
	PhD	4	3.3
	Others	2	1.7
Occupation	Academic staff	57	47.5
	Non-academic staff	63	52.5
Position	Assistant Lecturer	10	8.3
	Lecturer	34	28.3
	Professor	3	2.5
	Others	73	60.8
Category in the organization	Top management	2	1.7
	Mid management	40	33.3
	Junior management	26	21.7
	General staff	52	43.3
Motivation at the work place	Yes	111	92.5
	No	9	7.5
Total years of working in IUKL	1-10	103	85.8
	11-20	10	8.3
	21-30	4	3.3
	31-40 and above	3	2.5

Thirdly, regarding academic qualification of the respondents in IUKL, Table 4.1 showed that respondents with master qualification has the highest percentage 50.8% (61) followed by degree 30.0% (36), diploma 14.2% (17), PhD 3.3% (4) and others 1.7% (2). In terms of occupation category, Table 4.1 showed that academic staff 47.5% (57) and non-academic staff 52.5% (63). The position has the highest frequency which is 60.8% (73) followed by lecturer 28.3% (34), Assistant Lecturer 8.3% (10) and Professor 2.5% (3). In terms of the organization category, the highest percentage consist of General staff which is 43.3% (52), Middle management 33.3% (40), junior management 21.7% (26) and Top management 1.7% (2). Thereafter, motivation at the workplace obtained “yes” response 92.5% (111) and “No” response which is 7.5% (9). Total years of working in IUKL has the highest percentage between (1-10) years which is 85.8% (103). Secondly, between (11-20) years which is 8.3% (10). Thirdly, between (21-30) years and finally, between (31-40) years and above which is 2.5% (3). Thus, the majoring of the respondents had 1 to 10 years of working experience.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis was used to determine the four independent variables which are Rewards and Recognition, Salary and Benefits Work and Relationships, Job security and Environment and the dependent variable Employee motivation that is employee motivation based on their work in Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur.

A four set of predictor using multiple linear regression model was proposed. The four model variable were Rewards & Recognition (X_1), Salary & Benefits (X_2), Work and Relationships (X_3) and Job security and Environment (X_4). The equation (2) of the proposed multiple regression models were as follows.

$$Y(EM) = b_0 + b_1(X_1) + b_2(X_2) + b_3(X_3) + b_4(X_4) + e \dots \dots \dots \text{(Equation 2)}$$

Where: Y = Employee motivation (EM), b_0 = Constant (intercept), b_{1-4} = Estimates (regression coefficients), X_1 = Rewards and Recognition, X_2 = Salary and Benefits, X_3 = Work and Relationships, X_4 = Job security and Environment, and e = error

As depicted in Table 4.3, the coefficients table the estimates of the model coefficient for b_0 is 2.57, b_1 is 3.07, b_2 is -.42, b_3 is 5.52, b_4 is 3.48. Therefore, the estimated model is as follows.

$$Y(EM) = 2.57 + 3.07(X_1) + \{-.42(X_2) + 5.52(X_3) + 3.48(X_4) + e \dots \dots \dots \text{(Equation 2)}$$

Table 4.2 shows that R-squared of .511 which implied that four predictor variables explained about 51.1% of the variance on motivation among employees'. This was quite a satisfactory result.

Table 4.2 : R Square Result

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.715 ^a	.511	.494	2.30745

a. Predictors: (Constant), totJobsecurity, totSalary, totWork, totrewards b. Dependent Variable: totEmployee

The R squared of 51.1 which implied 4 predictor variables explained 51.1% of the variance in the employee motivation in IUKL. This was a good and respectable result. The ANOVA Table 4.3 revealed that F-statistics (30.035) and the corresponding P-value was highly significant (.011) or lower than the alpha value of .05. Table 4.3 showed that the largest beta coefficient is .307, which was for Work and Relationships. It means that such variable (Work and Relationships) made the strongest contribution in explaining the dependent variable, employee motivation. As shown that one's standard deviation increases in Work and Relationships is followed by .307 standard deviation increases in employee motivation. Similarly, for Job security and Environment ($p=.001$) and Rewards and recognition ($p=.003$) was the third strongest significant predictor of employee motivation. The beta value for Salary and Benefits did not contribute significantly ($p=.0671$).

The ANOVA revealed that the F-statistics (30.035) was large and the corresponding p-value was highly significant ($p=.011$) or lower alpha value of (.05). This indicated that the slope of the estimated linear regression model line was not equal to zero conforming that there was a linear relationship between the 4 predictor variables. Table 4.3 shows that the dependent variable is significant at $p=.011$. Rewards and Recognition has significance $p=.003$, Salary and Benefits is significant at $p=.671$, Work and Relationships is significant at $p=0.00$, and Job security and Environment is significant at $p=.001$.

Table 4.3: Estimates of Coefficients Selected Factors Affecting Employees' Motivation in IUKL

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient Beta	T	Significant
	Beta	Std.Error			
Constant	4.116	1.601	-	2.571	.011
Rewards & Recognition	.028	.009	.254	3.079	.003
Salary & Benefits	-.024	.056	-.034	-.426	.671
Work & Relationships	.307	.056	.412	5.520	.000
Job security & Environment	.272	.078	.282	3.485	.001

R = .715; R² = .511; Adj.R² = .494, F = (30.035), $p = .0001$ *Significant levels $p < .05$.

DISCUSSION

The research question addressed what are the factors strongly affecting employees' motivation in IUKL. The Work and Relationships and Job security and Environment these two factors obtained the positive significant coefficient. In terms of Work and Relationship different people might have different values and approaches and, therefore, being able to understand

employees' needs and using appropriate motivating methods can help increase the level of motivation (Gleeson, 2016). Findings by Elliot and Zahn (2008) showed the importance of effective supervision, and more so, a good relationship between the employee and the supervisor for increased employee motivation. Moreover, they warned that maintaining a good relationship with the people you work with doesn't come with a limit, so it should be given habitually. The same result was found in the current study.

Findings in this study are in line with Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi (2012) that to increase employee performance, find out what employees like about their jobs and then try to add more tasks that align with their own natural interests and talents. They said that people experience the enjoyment, competence, and self-motivation when performing a task and credit their behaviors to internal factors, which they control, such as emotions.

In terms of workplace environment, environment is needed for enjoyment and fulfillment to have a work-life balance, to feel engaged and satisfied with the work but still able to enjoy meaningful life to the fullest. Or it is simply about the impact their work has had on e.g. society and, environment. The previous studies showed the need for good working environment (Kim et al., 2017) in the institution.

In terms of job security, it is one of the most significant variables of employee satisfaction which expresses the general attitude of the employee towards his/her job (Kuruja & Mukuru, 2018). They added that job security is an employee's assurance or confidence that they will keep their current job and feel motivated employees with a high level of job security have a low probability of losing their job in the near future.

CONCLUSION

Employee motivation is influenced by the predictor variables work and relationship, job security and environment, reward and recognition, and salary and benefits at IUKL. Among the four predictor variables, work and relationship as asserted by de Lourdes Machado-Taylor (2016) has highest influence, followed by job security and environment, and reward and recognition. These three predictor variables have significant influence in employee motivation. Thus, IUKL needs to emphasize on these factors. However, the factor on salary and benefit has a negative influence on employee motivation and therefore the institution needs to monitor this factor for enhancing quality, productivity and improved employees' retention. As the study was conducted in only one institution, the findings may not be applicable to other institutions. The researchers also recommend another variable such as Leadership could affect the employee motivation in a different institution with a bigger population size to get broader finding on the impact of certain factors influencing employee motivation.

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