Examining How Compensation, Recognition, Work Conditions, Supervision, Knowledge of Information, Communication, and Technology Contribute To Nurses' Job Satisfaction in Ghana

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Abstract: **The purpose of this qualitative single purpose phenomenological study was to establish the main determinants accounting for job satisfaction among nurses in a government health center within the Volta Region of the Republic of Ghana. The study population was 35 nurses and purposive sampling method was used to select 20 study participants. The study was based on hierarchy of human needs and two factor theories (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snydermerman, 1959; Maslow, 1943), and used the electronic, online anonymous survey, and email in gathering data. The data was analyzed, and interpreted using the Nviro. Findings from the study suggest key factors contributing to job satisfaction of nurses were better compensation and benefits; regular training; revised HRM policies; safe working environment; trade unionism, socialization, coworkers – supervisor relationship and periodic performance appraisals; notation of accomplishments; availability of infrastructures and amenities; reduction of the workload; avoidance of unnecessary reshuffles; early posting of trained nurses; autonomy.**

Keywords: **determinants accounting, government health center, nurses.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this qualitative single purpose phenomenological study was to establish the main determinants accounting for job satisfaction among nurses in a government health center within the Volta Region of the Republic of Ghana. Adequate attention in areas such as compensation, work environment, coworkers, training, human resource management and development, and turnover could encourage job satisfaction of employees including nurses, and maintain the essential human capital in the nursing industry (Amon-Kotei, 2016; Ghana Web, 2016). The sample size for the study included 20 registered nurses. A purposive sampling method was used to select 20 key participants to provide for data saturation.

2. LITERATURE REVEIEW

Supervision: As far as supervision is concerned, information in the existing literature suggests supervision influences the phenomenon (employee satisfaction) under consideration in this study. Supervision is derived from two Latin words super or supra meaning above or over, and ver-see or video meaning see. Thus, supervision is overseeing or superintending the work of other people. Taylor (1940) stated that supervision in the health industry means over-seeing, or higher vision. It consists of all those activities by which supervisors, directors of instructions, or ward instructors may express leadership in the improvement of learning and teaching of nursing care and nursing services.

Promotion: Promotion is the upward movement in a person's current position and comes with higher tasks, higher grade, as well as improved pay and wages (Heathfield, 2015). Thus, it is advancement of employees from a current position to a position that is higher than the current position. Promotion in the workplace is in three main forms including up or out promotion in which an employee earns or seeks promotion in another organization, dry promotion which does not attract any salary increase, and paper promotion in which the employee earns promotion and higher salary in a different department within the parent organization (Burks, 2015).

Compensation and benefits: One important thing that usually attracts potential and existing employees to work in a company is the compensation package. According to McNamara (2016) compensation include the salaries and wages of nurses and employees in general, pay grade, employee bonuses, planning and implementing budgeting, and tips for the labor force. Tips may be given by managers and clients to express gratitude for the quality services rendered by a worker. The human resources management concept or job benefit may be tangible or intangible. Tangible benefits include medical, life, dental, and disability insurance, among others. On the other hand, intangible benefits are indirect and include good remarks and comments from a boss, possibility of being upgraded, and providing a conducive environment for the employee, among others (McNamara, 2016). Maslow (1943) and Herzberg et al., (1959) considered tangible and intangible benefits as essential human needs. Benefits may be company-paid, and company-employee-paid. Company-based benefits include those benefits companies pay for employees and include holiday pay, and vacation pay, among others. Some benefits in the workplace are very expensive in terms of financial value, and thus are usually paid jointly by the employer and employee, including vacation assistance programs, temporary assistance programs, workers' benefit fund, and medical and life insurance (McNamara, 216).

Coworkers: Coworkers have been found to be a factor influencing job satisfaction. Coworkers are referred to as colleagues in the workplace. Coworkers are members of a team that work together to achieve organizational set goals. Being one of the members in a good and effective team enhances job satisfaction. Coworkers or colleagues must interact and socialize in the course of performing a task. Abraham Maslow (1943) postulated that people will be happy in the workplace when they have a sense of love and belongingness. Maslow associated colleagues or peers to love and belongings, the third level in his theory of human needs.

Work conditions or the job itself: According to Kim (2012) work condition factors that impact career satisfaction are independence (autonomy), challenging test, inventiveness or creative skill, and clear role or function. Previous research was conducted that aimed at exploring job satisfaction in nursing professionals using the method developed by Walker and Avant (Castaneda & Scanlan, 2014). Autonomy mainly relates to nurse's job satisfaction and patients' care. Studies revealed dictatorial and authoritarian conditions in the workplace encourage dissatisfaction among employees, while autonomy is seen as an intrinsic motivator that encourages high satisfaction among employees. Challenging jobs contribute to satisfaction in the workplace. Jobs that do not stretch an employee can lead to frustration, resentfulness, boredom, and dissatisfaction. Many professionals want challenging and responsible jobs, and jobs where they can be creative (Springs, 2015).

Recognition: In an article, Kim (2013) stated that management and board of directors may directly or indirectly recognize hardworking workers whose work outputs put the company on the highest pedestal and beyond the company's competitors. Thus, recognition is an intrinsic motivator that enhances employees' jobs satisfaction, performances, and results. Past studies have indicated goal recognition contributes to job satisfaction in hospitality and health professionals, particularly the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), the Licensed Practicing Nurse (LPN), as well as the Registered Nurse (RN) (Head, Washington, & Myers; 2013).

Population/Sample

The study population for this study included 35 nursing professionals in a government hospital in the Volta Region part of Ghana. The nurses were graduates from nursing institutions in the country and possessed the registered nurses' certification. The participants were all full-time male (14) and female (21) nursing professionals, 21 years of age and older, employed in Ghana Health Service anywhere from 1 to 20 years or more (Amon-Kotei, 2016). Nearly all the nurses involved worked in the out-patients, delivery and emergency wards in the hospital.

3. RESULTS

Compensation and benefits: Out of 20 respondents, 11 respondents representing 55% were not satisfied while 9 respondents representing 45% were satisfied. Some of the comments included, "I think I am satisfied compared to the salary of some of my friends in other places." "The compensation and benefit is too small and does not match with the hard job nurses do here." Other comments included, "The compensation or salary is too small", and "In fact, the salary and benefit is very small, and I am not satisfied with my job since the job nurses do in this hospital is very huge and strenuous." The participants supported the notion that compensation and benefit include the reward workers receive for their services. One participant who was dissatisfied with the compensation package provided by the employer said, "Personally, I'm not satisfied with the form of compensation the employer gave to the workforce in this facility." Similarly, a participant noted, "I don't understand why we perform the same functions but some appeared to be compensated more than others." Furthermore, a participant believed the available compensation was inappropriate noting, "This is the reason why I may not continue to work for this employer very soon." The participants' description of the nature of compensation was very critical situation employers must avoid. Adequate compensation package that the nurses wanted included free insurance, pay raises, good salaries, free food or lunch breaks, good retirement benefits, paid vacations, employee bonuses, and huge allowances. These examples agreed with the physiological needs on motivation hierarchy theory and the two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959; Maslow, 1943). According to the nurses these things would prevent them from showing any form of lackadaisical attitude to the nursing job and improve the nurses' job satisfaction in the study area.

Physical work environment: Out of 20 respondents who participated in the interview, 12 respondents (60%) were not satisfied, and 8 respondents (40%) were satisfied with the physical work environment. One participant noted, "I have worked in one or two places before coming to this present job I am not satisfied with the current physical work environment." The nurses wanted an environment equipped with all needed machines, chairs, and adequate beds for patients, medicines, and all medical suppliers. No doubt a participant said, "A major reason why I am not satisfied with the nursing job is that medical suppliers to this unit have been very limited, nursing work is too stressful."

Knowledge and application of information, communication and technology: About15 representing 75% of the respondents said they were not satisfied with the knowledge and application of information, communication, and technology. A participant said, "There are a number of information and technology things such as computers in most of the departments which I am not satisfied using them." Again, a participant said, "I am dissatisfied with the information and communication system as sometime they are too complex." A participant supported this assertion and said, "They even break down when administering nursing activities." It can be seen that nurses in that area had less access to information and communication technology, and also they were not able to apply the knowledge they gained during training in school.

Human resource management policies: Most of the nurses (65%) were not satisfied with the human resource management policies. A participants said, "Personally am dissatisfied with the policies of the ministry." Another participant said, "For example, the compensation and benefits package to nurses is too small." Five participants mentioned recruitment of new employees, employee training and development were limited and selective. The participants' views suggested that with favorable human resource policies such as regular recruitment of new employees, employee training and development, right balance built morale, improved quality, and developed teams and productivity through rewarding employees. Other HR policies mentioned by the participants that impacted on the nurses' job satisfaction were cordial employee relations and communication, trade unions, onboarding and out-sourcing, and paid time off.

Work schedules: The study showed that 15 of the 20 participants were not satisfied with the work schedule. A participants said, "Am not satisfied with the schedule the nursing authorities give me. I don't sometimes have time to complete my shift." Heavy work schedules were unpleasant compelling a participant to stress that, "I don't have time for other social activities which is affecting me so much." Another participant stated, "The work schedule is very tight and heavy almost every day."

Leadership style in the workplace: About 18 out 20 participants asserted that open, charismatic, transformational, laissez faire, all - inclusive, and democratic leadership styles had direct influence on job satisfaction. A participant said, "I

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am satisfied with the leadership style in this nursing department". A participant noted that, "my heads in this nursing department are democratic minded, fair and nice people to work under." However, a participant who was not satisfied with the leadership style said that the "leaders discriminate, unnecessary transfer, and unfair to some nurses in most cases." Majority of the participants' statements supported the tenets of Maslow's theory that emphasized love and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). The participants did not want autocratic and totalitarian leadership styles because these types of leadership styles creates fear, defiance, stagnation, suppression, and unhappiness among the workforce.

Relationship between nurses and their supervisors: Out of 20 participants 19 (95%) had good and cordial working relationship with the supervisors, while only 1 participant said there was hostile nurses-supervisors relationship. "I am satisfied with my job because of cordial relationship I have with nursing supervisors." Moreover, "My supervisors are caring and help solve problems that I encounter on the job" a participant concluded. Majority of the participants' view meant that a good nurse-supervisor relationship boost communication, feedback, and employees' satisfaction similar to the idea of belongingness, and self-esteem (Maslow, 1943).

Performance appraisals, accomplishments, and recognitions relationship to job satisfaction: 12 (60%) said performance appraisals were a source of job satisfaction in nursing, 4 (20%) said the appraisals improved productivity, and 4 (20%) said appraisals served as sources of efficiency. A participant said, "I like the periodic job appraisals conducted by the authorities in this hospital." Another participant also said the appraisals were "Motivating and satisfying when done on time." This statement was supported by a participant who noted, "I have received numerous bonuses as recognition to my effective and quality job performance." The participant believed the above theme contributed a lot to job satisfaction, higher bonus and promotions, provided feedback, and made nurses aware of their shortfall for improvement to be effective and efficient in the hospital.

In conclusion, the result from the participants' responses showed that job satisfaction of nurses was mainly based on a better compensation package, adequate training about application of nursing and medical software application to ensure patients' early recovery and nurses' job satisfaction, flexible work schedules, good nurse-supervisor relationship, and effective HRM policies including compensation, recruitment, and employee training and development, a safe working place, fair performance appraisals; charismatic, laissez faire, transformational, democratic, relational and task-oriented, open, and an all-inclusive leadership styles were vital in boosting the nurses' job satisfaction.

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