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WORK MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE OF ADMINISTRATORS IN SEDLECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OF HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

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Abstract:

This article discusses the determination of the work motivation of administrators in selected private universities of Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. It stresses the profile of the administrators, the impact of work motivation, the administrators' perception of work motivation and performance, and the problems faced by the administrators. The findings of the study consist of personal professional profile of the administrators, the administrators' perception of work motivation and performance, the impact of work motivation, the influence of work motivation on the profile of the administrators, the influence of the level of work motivation on the impact, and common problems encountered by the administrators. Based on the research findings and conclusions, some recommendations are forwarded.

Keywords: administrators, private universities, work motivation and performance, impact, problems

1. Introduction

Viet Nam has become a member of ASEAN Economic Community since 2015 after having undergone significant social, political and economic change over four decades. It is obvious that Viet Nam must take actions to modernize the economy and engage with the global knowledge-based economy step by step.

Education innovation in Viet Nam has been implemented for years and at present, there are still shortcomings to overcome. Thus, it is evident that such things as strong leadership, good administration, and support from lecturers, office staff,

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students in universities, parents and the public should be established and developed with great speed to minimize or terminate those shortcomings.

Despite of great efforts to innovate and reform the education content of different levels to make it more progressive, but on the whole as compared to other countries in ASEAN community and in the world, education in Viet Nam is still backward; particularly the content of higher education curriculum is revealing a great deal of inadequacy and limitation (Pham Cong Nhat, 2014). The management of education and training is weak and imperfect. The number of teaching staff and educational administrators is inadequate. The quality of teaching and management is limited.

In the 21st century, those who work in the field of education must be well-informed and competent. Moreover, they can work in a team successfully with good relationship with others (Luanglue, 2003). Currently administrators working for educational institutions in Viet Nam are required to have profound knowledge about their workplace, especially their institution's philosophy, mission, vision and core values so as to successfully articulate the institution's goals and objectives and make them relevant to the needs of students and parents and the public. Administrators play a very important role and are in charge of the implementation of educational policies and the realization of the goals and objectives of the institution.

In order to fulfill the given task, universities in Viet Nam have to assert their own aims and objectives to educate and train talented experts having wide knowledge, critical thinking, and competence so as to solve problems arisen from real-life situations. They are looking for the factors to develop the teaching and training quality; one of these important factors is administrators' work motivation and performance in educational environment.

At present, the income of the administrators of private universities of Ho Chi Minh City in Viet Nam is very low (about 1,000 USD per month before tax). Due to low income, the work motivation of administrators is low (giaoduc.net.vn cited in Tran Xuan Loc, 2015). Additionally, limited fringe benefits, inconvenient working environment, and inadequate finance for training make administrators desire to take other profession or change job to become lecturers so as to earn more money to keep up with their living. Staffs often claim that their pay or salary is not much to provide the growing needs of their family so they become loudly insistent for more side jobs. Moreover, they have insufficient recognition of those in high rank or status with higher academic qualifications and are lack of opportunities and incentives for career development (Schemerhorn et al., 2000).

In Viet Nam there have been researches done on work motivation of teachers, lecturers and office staff in government universities. However, little interest in the research done to find out the administrators' work motivation in Viet Nam's private universities and their problems related to work motivation and performance.

Thus, the researcher attempted to study the work motivation and performance of administrators in selected private universities of Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.

2. Literature review

2.1 Motivation theories

Motivation theories can be categorized into two groups: content theories/need approaches and process theories/cognitive approaches.

2.1.1 Content theories/ Needs approaches

Need Approaches or Content theories puts emphasis on the individual's needs, trying to explain the different factors that contribute to encouraging or terminating a behavior within that individual.

| Table 1. Comparison of internal recent meetics of work attori | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| | Maslow's Hierarchy | Alderfer's EGR | Herzberg's | McClelland's Acquired |
| | of Needs | Theory | Two- Factor Theory | Needs Theory |
| High- order needs | Self-actualization | | | Achievement |
| | needs | Growth | Motivators | need |
| | Esteem/Ego | needs | (intrinsic factors) | Power |
| | needs | | | need |
| Low- order needs | Social/Belonging | Relatedness | | |
| | needs | needs | | |
| | Safety/Security | | Hygiene | Affiliation |
| | needs | Existence | (extrinsic factors) | need |
| | Physiological | needs | | |
| | needs | | | |

Table 1: Comparison of Internal Need Theories of Motivation

2.2 Process theories/ Cognitive Approaches

2.2.1 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

This theory was developed by Victor Vroom. Vroom's expectancy theory is based on the belief that employee effort will lead to performance and performance will lead to rewards or outcomes (Vroom, 1964).

Effort → Performance → Rewards or Outcomes

- Porter-Lawler Extension of Expectancy Theory

According to Porter-Lawler, extrinsic rewards in the form of pay and promotions are outcomes set and awarded external parties and intrinsic rewards such as self-esteem and feelings of accomplishment are outcomes internal to the individual.

- Equity Theory was developed by J. Stacy Adams.

Adam's equity theory states that employees try very hard to achieve equity between themselves and other workers.

- Theory X and Theory Y

Mc.Gregor's Theory X and Theory Y points out that democracy, participation in decision making and group work have strong impact on employees' work motivation.

In sum, these above theories suggest some implication for administrators or managers.

A. Expectancy theory

Vroom suggests that administrators / managers should select employees with ability, train them to use their ability, support work effort, and clarify the performance goals to the employees to make them feel competent and capable of achieving the desired performance level to maximize expectancy. As to maximizing instrumentality, administrators/ managers should clarify psychological contracts, communicate performance-outcome possibilities, and identify rewards that are contingent on performance to make the employees competent in understanding which rewards and outcomes will follow performance accomplishments. Concerning maximizing valence, managers/ administrators should identify individual needs, adjust rewards to match individual needs to make the individual understand the value of various possible rewards and work outcomes.

B. Equity theory

Adam's equity theory states that administrators / managers should be aware that underpaid people experience anger and overpaid people experience guilt. Also, perceptions of rewards determine motivational outcomes. Therefore, negative consequences of equity comparisons should be minimized, if not eliminated. In addition, administrators/ managers should not underestimate the impact of pay as a source of equity controversies in the workplace (gender equity, comparable worth).

C. The Porter-Lawler Extension of Expectancy theory

This theory suggests that people will be more satisfied when performance results in fair rewards. Therefore, managers must remember that performance can lead to satisfaction and be sure that any motivation system involves fair or equitable rewards.

3. Work motivation

To achieve high efficiency and productivity in labor, any organization should have strong staff. Beside knowledge, professional skills, and ethics, work motivation is one of the factors that determine working efficiency and productivity.

Work motivation consists of internal factors that stimulate human beings to work actively in a certain condition that gives high productivity and efficiency. Human beings always have needs to be satisfied both mentally and physically. According to May (2013), when the employees feel that their needs are satisfied, psychologically they will work more actively and harder. If the employee has no work motivation, he won't be able to achieve his objectives because he only works to fulfill the assigned tasks without great efforts or creativity.

Work motivation shows that people are willing to work with great efforts in order to attain the goals and objectives set by the organization and themselves.

Motivation originates from people's needs and their needs satisfaction. Actually, there is a certain gap between needs and needs satisfaction, then work motivation helps bridge this gap.

Work motivation is a matter of concern among scientists and scholars all over the world. There are a number of researches related to work motivation done in Viet Nam. These researches have built up a system of concepts concerning the motivation instruments and factors affecting work motivation in Viet Nam. However, a few typical researches about teachers' work motivation in Viet Nam's universities have been done. These researches assess the real situation of teachers' work motivation and suggest some measures to motivate teachers to work: salary increase, quality assurance improvement, university policy development, work condition development, career promotion, work environment improvement (Tran Thi Hong Van, 2012), determine the factors affecting work motivation in Viet Nam's government universities and recommend the framework of work motivation for these government universities (Canh Chi Dung, 2011), recommend some projects, experience derived from educational management work, and measures to create work motivation in the university (Pham Hong Quang, 2010), point out the work motivation that affects strongly to the administrators' behavior, help them work for the objectives of the organization (Vu Thi Uyen, 2007).

3.1 Factors affecting work motivation

Maslow, Herzberg, Alderfer, McClelland, Adams, Victor Vroom's research show that school managers' and educational administrators' high motivation result in teachers' motivation and job satisfaction (Khorshidi, 2011). Khorshidi (2011) states that there are factors affecting intrinsic motivation (personal reasons for job selection, job priorities and expectations, promotion ability, higher qualification achievement) and those affecting extrinsic motivation (attitude towards job, income, work environment, benefits, safety, training and equipment efficiency).

3.2 The Impact of work motivation

The objective of work motivation is helping to increase the employees' work efficiency. Motivation forces negative and positive behavior. Employees who have positive motivation will psychologically work well, and be loyal to the institution. This helps this institution survive and become stronger day by day. Conversely, those with negative or low motivation will not work effectively and be uninterested in making the institution develop further.

Reward is one of the factors that affect work motivation. According to Ayesha Binte Safiullah (2014), rewards can be extrinsic or intrinsic.

- Extrinsic rewards (salary/pay, incentives, bonuses, promotion, job security, flextime, etc.) are external to the job or employee's task performance.
- Intrinsic rewards (pride in one's work, a feeling of accomplishment, appreciation, new challenge encounter, employer's positive concern, participation in decision-making, etc) are intangible rewards or psychological rewards which one receives from the job itself.

Reward involves monetary and non-monetary reward. Monetary reward includes salary and incentive increase and overtime income; and non-monetary reward consists of recognition, career development, educational development, working environment development.

Salary can be understood as a fixed sum of money paid to an individual based on the labor quantity, quality that he consumes during his work performance in return for work done. It is obvious that employees want to have equality about the salary not only for safe daily expenditure but also for their own self-respect.

Mullins (1999) points out incentives contribute to the increase of mental and physical life of the employees and incentives can be used as an effective tool to motivate the employees' work performance (Kelly, 2010).

In sum, increased incentives and income including overtime income is the employees' most concern because it provides recognition of achievements, job security, and mental and physical safety.

Recognition has a very strong influence on the employee's work motivation. No recognition to his task performance and achievement might cause his frustration and disappointment against the administrators.

Nowadays when the employees' living is improved, they are willing to have career development thanks to the improvement of their education, expertise and professional skills. Also, they are expected to perform more difficult, interesting and challenging tasks (Vastano, 1985).

Educational development refers to the activities or processes the employees participate to learn to expand knowledge, improve professional skills and perform tasks more effectively. Vastano (1985) asserts that educational development helps organization improve productivity, work effectiveness and quality thanks to the employees' new critical thinking, creativity, knowledge and professional skills.

There is an impact of the working environment on employees' work motivation and effectiveness. Creating and improving good working environment, happy and cozy, professional climate in the workplace is a must for administrators. A working environment which is convenient, appropriate for employees, with great concern of the administrators towards each employee certainly provides conditions to the employees increase work motivation (Herzberg, 1987).

4. Work performance

Work Performance can be defined as people's general attitude about their jobs (Ahmad et al., 2002). Performance is involved in both quantity and quality output and the efficiency of work fulfilment (Mathis & Jackson, 2009).

According to Mc Cloy et al. (1994), employee performance may be taken from the perspective of three factors or determinants which make the employees carry out tasks better than others. These determinants may be declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and motivation.

According to Ganta (2014), motivation is the key to performance improvement. Motivation has great influence on individual work performance. Work performance can be viewed as the function of ability and motivation. Ability to work depends on such factors as education, experience, trained skills. Ability relies on education, experience and training. Its improvement is slower and longer than motivation.

The determinants of individual performance include:

- + Motivation the desired to do the job
- + Ability the capability to do the job
- + Work environment the resources to do the job

In the motivational model suggested by Maier and Lawler (1973), it can be seen that:

Performance = motivation x ability

Ability = gifted ability x training x resources

Motivation = desire x voluntary/willingness

Thus, performance is considered to be a function of ability and motivation.

Job Performance = f (ability) (motivation)

5. Conceptual framework

The paradigm shows that there is a significant influence on the level of work motivation and level of performance on the profile of the respondents. In addition, there is an impact influenced by the work motivation and work performance of the administrators. Last but not least, there arise some problems encountered by the administrators.

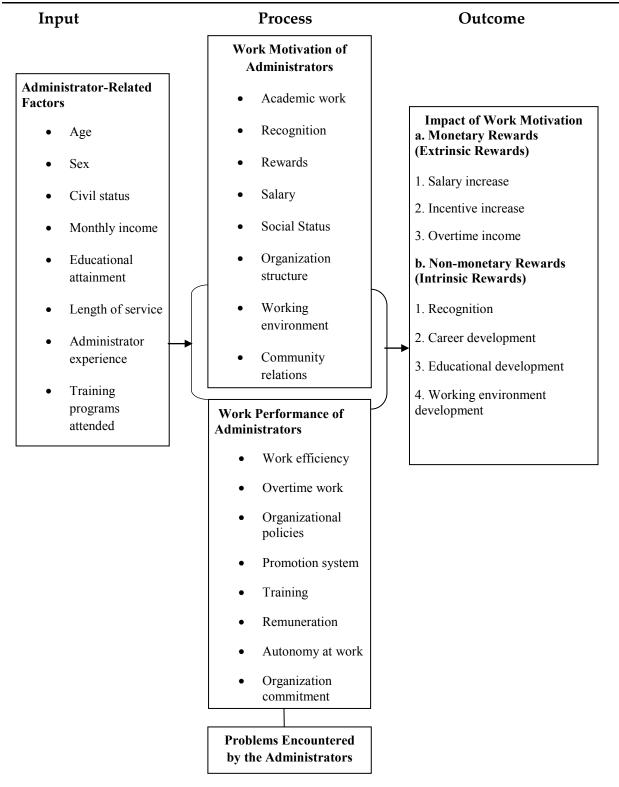


Figure 1: The Research Paradigm

6. Methodology

This study employed the descriptive-correlational method of research. One group of respondents was used: administrators. The data were treated using frequency count

and percentage, means, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, and Multi Linear Regression. The gathered data were processed through the SPSS and SEM-PLS.

7. Findings

The following are the findings of this study:

7.1 Personal and professional profile of the administrators

- a) On Age. Almost all of the respondents (357 or 98.2%) belong to the age level of 26-30 years to above 50, and the least (3 or 0.8%) belong to the age bracket of 20-25 years.
- b) On Sex. Majority of the administrators (204 or 56.7%) are females.
- c) On Civil Status. Majority of the respondents (232 or 64.4%) are married.
- d) On Monthly Income. Majority of the administrators (290 or 52.8%) have the monthly income from 15 million VND to over 20 million VND.
- e) On Educational Attainment. Great majority of the administrators (273 or 75.8%) finished the master degree.
- f) On Administrative Experience. Great majority of the respondents (274 or 76.1%) have been in their job from 10 to more than 15 years.
- g) On Training Programs Attended. Majority of the administrators (210 or 58.3%) have attended training programs for 3 times and more per year.

7.2 Level of work motivation of administrators

- a) Academic work. The administrators have a "satisfactory" level of work motivation along academic work with the overall mean rating of 3.41.
- b) Recognition. The administrators have a "very satisfactory" level of work motivation along recognition with the overall mean rating of 4.38.
- c) Rewards. The administrators have a "satisfactory" level of work motivation along rewards with the overall mean rating of 4.09.
- d) Salary. The administrators have a "satisfactory" level of work motivation along salary with the overall mean rating of 3.56.
- e) Social status. The administrators have a "satisfactory" level of work motivation along social status with the overall mean rating of 4.2.
- f) Organization structure. The administrators have a "satisfactory" level of work motivation along organization structure with the overall mean rating of 3.62.
- g) Working environment. The administrators have a "satisfactory" level of work motivation along working environment with the overall mean rating of 3.6.
- h) Community relations. The administrators have a "satisfactory" level of work motivation along community relations with the overall mean rating of 3.75.

7.3 Level of work performance of administrators

- a) Work efficiency. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along work efficiency at an "above average" level with the ovverall mean rating of 3.73.
- b) Overtime work. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along overtime work at an "average" level with the overall mean rating of 3.4.
- c) Organizational policies. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along organizational policies at an "above average" level with the overall mean rating of 3.68.
- d) Promotion system. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along promotion system at an "above average" level with the overall mean rating of 3.51.
- e) Training. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along training at an "average" level with the overall mean rating of 3.3.
- f) Remuneration. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along remuneration at an "above average" level with the overall mean rating of 3.5.
- g) Autonomy at work. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along autonomy at work at an "above average" level with the overall mean rating of 3.63.
- h) Organization commitment. The administrators perceived their level of work performance along organization commitment at an "above average" level with the overall mean rating of 3.76.
- i) The impact of work motivation. The overall level of impact of work motivation along monetary rewards and non-monetary rewards is at a "high" level with the overall mean rating of 4.09.

7.4 Influence of work motivation on the profile of the administrators

There is a significant influence of the combination of the facts related to the work motivation (F-ratio= 3.197, F-prob < .01). This tends to imply that the work motivation is significantly influenced by the profile of the administrators.

It is further observed from the table that when the variables are taken singly, experience (t = 2.019) and average training session annually (t = 2.044) found to have a significant influence with the work motivation of the administrators. This implies that experience and average training session annually influenced the work motivation of the administrators.

7.5 Influence of the level of work motivation of the respondents on the impact

There is a significant influence of the combination of the facts related to the impact of work motivation of the administrators (F-ratio= 55.243, F-prob < .01). This means that when these factors are taken together it gives significant contribution with the impact of work motivation of the administrators. Based on the value of RSq (.557), the factors

explain 74.7 percent of the variance of the impact of work motivation of the administrators. The remaining 25.3 percent can be explained by other variables not included in the study. This tends to imply that the impact is significantly influenced by the work motivation of the administrators.

Further analysis of the data reveals that when the variables are taken singly, academic work (t = 2.033), recognition (t = 4.953), rewards (t = 3.772), organization structure (t = 4.027), working environment (t = 1.966) and community relations (t = 4.473) found to have a significant influence with the impact of work motivation of the administrators. This implies that academic work, recognition, rewards, organization structure, working environment and community relations influenced the impact of work motivation of the administrators.

7.6 The problems encountered by the administrators

In general, the administrators have little problems with a great number of the administrators having desire to take up other professions (4.7%), due respect from the colleagues and the society (5.6%), no democratic climate in the workplace (8.3%). However they have problems with low motivation for work among administrators in their university (25.8%), excessive and varied functions and responsibilities (28.1%), no well-equipped facilities to work with in their university (28.6%), few qualified people to handle the operation and management of their university (31.1%), low efficiency and effectiveness in the administrative work in their university (34.2%), low monthly income (41.8%), lack of system for professional development (47.5%) and few training courses conducted for career improvement (50.8%).

8. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the conclusions are drawn as follows:

- 1. The majority of the administrators in the selected private universities of Ho Chi Minh City are females with ages ranging from 35 to 50 years, married, earning a monthly salary of over 20,000,000 VND and below, having attained training programs for 3 times and more per year. Great majority of the administrators finished the master degree, and have been in their job from 10 to more than 15 years.
- 2. The overall level of work motivation of administrators is "satisfactory".
- 3. The overall mean level of work performance of the administrators is "above average".
- 4. The overall impact of work motivation is "high".
- 5. The administrators' work motivation is significantly influenced by the profile of the administrators.
- 6. The impact is significantly influenced by the work motivation of the administrators. This implies that academic work, recognition, rewards,

- organization structure, working environment and community relations influenced the impact of work motivation of the administrators.
- 7. There are some problems encountered by the administrators related to a great number of the administrators having desire to take up other professions (4.7%), no due respect from the colleagues and the society (5.6%), no democratic climate in the workplace (8.3%), low motivation for work among administrators in their university (25.8%), excessive and varied functions and responsibilities (28.1%), no well-equipped facilities to work with in their university (28.6%), few qualified people to handle the operation and management of their university (31.1%), low efficiency and effectiveness in the administrative work in their university (34.2%), low monthly income (41.8%), lack of system for professional development (47.5%) and few training courses conducted for career improvement (50.8%).

9. Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded:

- 1. The personal profile of the administrators should be improved especially on their educational attainment to hold doctoral degrees. This could enhance their competence in their management work.
- 2. More opportunities (salary increase, incentive increase, overtime income, recognition, career development, educational development, working environment development) to enhance work motivation of the administrators should be provided in order to come up with outstanding performance.
- 3. More chances (training workshops, conferences, in-service study) should be given to administrators to further their studies. This would qualify them to better job positions and they would have a better life.
- 4. Monthly income should be increased to improve the work motivation of the administrators.
- 5. System for professional development should be set up to enhance work motivation of the administrators.
- 6. More training courses should be conducted regularly for career improvement to reduce low efficiency and effectiveness in the administrative work in the university.
- 7. A follow up study might be conducted to include other variables not covered in this study to improve work motivation.

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