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Motivational Issues of Faculty in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: This study focused on the factors that affect motivation of faculty in Saudi Arabia. It included two surveys and open-ended queries to a focus group of five academic managers and 25 faculty members of varying nationalities, rank, and institutes in Saudi Arabia. The research showed that the faculties in Saudi Arabia's higher education industry feel disconnected from the program development. The faculty members did not feel motivated to participate in the development and improvement of the academic program due to: (a) lack of monetary and non-monetary incentives, (b) management not involving faculty in decision-making, and (c) lack of recognition and moral support. However, the faculties were intrinsically motivated to perform their best within the confines of the classroom. The results of the study indicated that there was a greater interest in intrinsic motivation as a personal measure for success inside the classroom, but extrinsic motivation was a factor that needed greater improvement from the management of the universities for faculty to partake in development of the program.

Keywords: faculty motivation, faculty motivators, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

The idea of motivation has created a wide range of theoretical frameworks centered around studying the causes of what drives people to do what they do or what they are supposed to do (Reiss, 2004). The observation of these factors is influenced by different variables that might positively or negatively affect the outcome and lead researchers to false or misleading results (Reiss, 2004). Some studies have identified empirical evidence that has established a direct correlation between motivation and obtaining wealth (Reiss & Havercamp, 1998).

Higher education is a field with many opportunities for motivation studies, particularly factors that affect student motivation. Research pertaining to faculty motivation identifies certain factors that are affected by different variables (Hsieh, 2007). The use of general variables can lead to a flawed study because some variables are affected by situations that restrict results to conditional motivation. The administration and faculty dynamics can also play a strong role in determining the results of motivation within faculty members. Some faculty may find extrinsic factors, such as wealth, more motivating, whereas others may be more motivated by intrinsic factors, such as personal fulfillment.

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Saudi Arabia in Context

Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Arab league, with a fast-growing economy (Country Watch, 2010). The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA), a faction of the Saudi government responsible for investment affairs, has conducted quantitative research into the economic development of Saudi Arabia to outline the economic status of the country for foreign direct investment. The result of the official data collected by census reports, economic indicators, and ministry reports indicated that Saudi Arabia has the largest economy in the Arab and North African region, and ranks number 24 in the world (INSEAD, 2010; SAGIA, 2010). Income per capita was reported as \$20,700 in the year 2007 (SAGIA, 2010). The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [IBRD] (2011) indicated the income per capita to be \$24,020 in 2009 and GDP per person employed to be \$28,460 in the year 2008, making Saudi Arabia a high-income country with a strong economy.

Several aspects of management may be needed to understand the mechanisms behind faculty motivation in Saudi Arabia. Academic managers in higher education who do not understand the complexities of motivation may damage faculty morale and affect teaching performance (Hsieh, 2007). Motivation amongst faculty members in higher education institutions remains a common issue faced by academic managers (Weightman, 2008). Faculty motivation may have a notable impact on productivity of professors and teachers and affects their teaching performance (Weightman, 2008). The performance of faculty members can affect the status of an academic program, thereby limiting investments and reducing profitability (Hsieh, 2007). Research published by INSEAD (2010) ranked Saudi Arabia's education investment 11th on a worldwide scale, yet it ranked 93rd on the knowledge creation index. Between the high investment and the low output, there might be a problem of faculty motivation.

Statement of Research and Hypothesis

The researchers explored motivational issues faced by faculty members in Saudi Arabia's higher education industry and examined intrinsic motivators for professors and teachers. The objective of the research was to study the nature of the factors that affect motivation among faculty in Saudi Arabia's higher education. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What are the factors that affect faculty motivation in Saudi Arabia's higher education industry?
2. What is the current role of management in relation to motivation of its faculty?

The second question was used to validate the consistency of faculty responses with the general management strategy in the universities and its departments.

The hypothesis in the study was centered on the significance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators on faculty. The hypothesis was tested by means of two surveys administered to the participants by random assignment (Creswell, 2009). The hypothesis was:

H₁₀: There is no significant difference between intrinsic motivators on faculty productivity and extrinsic motivators on faculty productivity.

H_{1a}: There is a significant difference between intrinsic motivation on faculty productivity and extrinsic motivators on faculty productivity.

Literature Review

A vast amount of literary information has been published on quality in higher education (Stensaker, 2008). The fraction of research related to faculty motivation was divided into numerous sub-categories that range from technological impacts on motivation to online faculty motivators (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Stensaker and Pratasavitskaya (2010) noted that the higher education industry has undergone drastic changes that still rely on a rewards-based system of motivation. This traditional method of rewards and punishments may have adverse effects on faculty motivation (Pink, 2010). Trimmer (2006) concluded that the reward and punishment based system busied the faculty instead of allowing for effective teaching. This element of research into the higher education industry may have created a need for alternative motivation research for faculty members. Intrinsic motivation has become a vital area of research concerning faculty motivation (Pink, 2009).

Hsieh (2007) discussed the importance of motivation in relation to productivity. Motivation is a field of humanistic science that has a direct effect on an employee's desire to complete a given task (Adair, 2006). Lerner, Schoar, and Wang (2008) denoted that academic investments are the results of successful programs. These two factors mentioned by Hsieh (2007) and Lerner, Schoar, and Wang (2008) lay a foundation for the importance of maintaining high motivation amongst faculty in order to improve overall academic performance. This becomes of the outmost importance when considering the changes higher education will experience in coming years, as discussed by Lefebvre (2008). Lefebvre predicted the growth rate to exceed 120 million enrolled students worldwide by the year 2020 (2008). Hussar and Bailey (2007) added that the enrollment in US-based universities has faced a 14% to 19% increase since 2005.

Catteeuw, Flynn, and Vonderhorst (2007) analyzed a set of studies conducted on 1,000 professionals and found that 54% were not motivated enough to complete their regular work tasks effectively. A quantitative study conducted by Bayt.com and YouGov (2009) concluded that only 21% of professionals in the Middle East are highly motivated in their jobs, with 45% claiming some level of motivation. According to the Bayt.com and YouGov (2009) study, 45% of employees showed some level of dissatisfaction with the opportunities for personal and professional development, and 53% regarding compensation and benefits. In terms of stress-levels, 85% of employees stated that they were under some level of stress (Bayt.com & YouGov, 2009). The study also included an inquiry into the intended duration of employment for participants. Seventy percent of respondents said that they were in the process of trying to change jobs or willing to change at the opportune moment (Bayt.com & YouGov, 2009). This denotes a high level of anticipated employee turnover. Ton and Huckman (2008) mentioned that a high rate of employee turnover can be detrimental to the success of an organization due to the increase in costs for human resource management.

According to Ton and Huckman (2008), faculty turnover is a result of low motivation. Ongori (2007) also stated that the employee turnover rate could be linked to various job factors that affect motivation. Job dissatisfaction was a major factor in employees' decision to leave (Ongori, 2007). Ton and Huckman (2008) mentioned that operating costs are affected by a higher turnover rate. They mentioned that a lower turnover rate might bring innovation and creativity from new employees. However, the human resource situation in Saudi Arabia increases the costs of recruitment, especially of expatriate employees, by costs of employment (Achoui, 2009). Ongori (2007) stated that management should seriously consider the rate of turnover in order to reduce the costs of recruitment.

Research Methods and Data Analysis

The research focused on a qualitative insight into the factors that affect motivation of faculty in Saudi Arabia and a quantitative analysis of the most effective nature of motivation on faculty (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). A survey design utilizes questionnaires and interviews in order to obtain statistical data for numerical analysis (Creswell, 2009). The target group was interviewed and surveyed on questions related to motivation (Creswell, 2009). Questions related to motivation were given in hypothetical situations with different scenarios. The responses of individuals were recorded and compared in qualitative and statistical analysis. Two perspectives were taken from two distinct groups of participants: (a) managers and (b) faculty.

In this study, the use of intrinsic motivators was tested on the faculty group to see if it increased motivation among faculty in Saudi Arabia or if it showed no difference from the extrinsic motivation (Creswell, 2009). Randomization was used in selecting the participants in both groups to assure equivalency between them and prevent any unbalance in the participants that may affect the outcome of the results (Creswell, 2009). The purpose was to validate that the results are indeed an affect from the use of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and not due other variables. The results of the analysis signified the effect of intrinsic motivation on the faculty members.

The qualitative research included phenomenological design (Creswell, 2009). The descriptive aspect of the rationale studies required a stronger focus on qualitative design (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The phenomenological design was warranted because the rationale behind human behavior was investigated (Creswell, 2009). The phenomenological design can contribute a more precise understanding of the experiences of participants.

The case study, narrative research, and ethnography methods were rejected because of time constraints and inapplicability to the problem statement. The ethnographic method was rejected because a single cultural group was not observed in the study (Creswell, 2009). The narrative research was rejected because the participant pool was too large to include a complete narrative study (Creswell, 2009). Case study design was inapplicable to the problem statement.

This study included two surveys and open-ended queries to a focus group of five academic managers and 25 faculty members of varying nationalities, rank, and institutes in Saudi Arabia. These interviews and surveys were administered chronologically with the quantitative analysis being followed up with qualitative analysis. This was expected to produce an explanation of the quantitative results (Creswell, 2009). The reason for using different nationalities was to reduce the rate of bias that might be found in interviewing single nationalities (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). This research followed a concurrent embedded strategy (Creswell, 2009).

Research should be able to serve policy makers, practitioners and the public it is directed to (Fowler, 2009). The findings are expected to be useful and applicable in order to foster change and good for the society (Duncan & Harrop, 2006). This research attempted to provide a list of strategies and techniques for academic managers to increase motivation among faculty. Because of the reason-orientated focus of this study, the qualitative approach was stressed more. The qualitative research was used to explain the quantitative findings and show how it affects faculty and how it can be used to provide positive results.

The interview questions were validated through a pilot study that was conducted with five individuals from a similar sample as the intended participants (Lancaster, Dodd, & Williamson,

2004). The participants in the pilot study were not considered for the actual study. Additionally, the participants of the pilot study were required to maintain confidentiality of the interview questions. A validated survey was obtained from Spector's (1994) job satisfaction survey. NVivo 8 was used to analyze qualitative data obtained from interviews with participants. The statistical tools that will be used in this study are PASW Statistics GradPack Base 17.0 and Excel. Excel was used to format data after the statistical analysis for ease of customization. However, a more sophisticated statistical tool was used for statistical analysis, PASW Statistics. The interviewees were granted confidentiality at their requests and were coded as faculty participants (FP1 through FP25) and manager participants (MP1 through MP5). The thematic analysis of the faculty participants provided an outlook into the causality of faculty motivation and the factors that faculty found positive or negative. The analysis of manager respondents provided the perspective of management into their faculty motivation to validate the responses of faculty participants.

Results and Observations

The research showed that the faculties in Saudi Arabia's higher education industry feel disconnected from the program development. The faculty members did not feel motivated to participate in the development and improvement of the academic program due to: (a) lack of monetary and non-monetary incentives, (b) management not involving faculty in decision-making, and (c) lack of recognition and moral support. However, the faculties were intrinsically motivated to perform their best within the confines of the classroom. The results of the study indicated that there was a greater interest in intrinsic motivation as a personal measure for success inside the classroom, but extrinsic motivation was a factor that needed greater improvement from the management of the universities for faculty to partake in development of the program. Faculty members gave mixed responses related to the involvement of their direct managers in their teaching. The faculty believed that their contribution to the program had a great impact on the productivity of the department that they teach. However, they believed no motivation to participate in developing the program due to extrinsic factors that de-motivated them. The research questions were examined in detail in QSR NVivo 8. The hypothesis was tested in PASW Statistics 18 and was based on the survey results. The quantitative analysis on job satisfaction and motivation preference complimented the results of the qualitative analysis on the factors that influence faculty motivation.

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that intrinsic motivation has a stronger effect on faculty than extrinsic motivation. The test was non-significant, $t(14.997) = -.731$, $p = 0.067$. The results show that the null hypothesis is not rejected and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Intrinsic motivators ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .96$) showed no significant difference in motivating faculty compared to extrinsic motivation ($M = 4.49$, $SD = .66$). Spector's (1994) job satisfaction matrix was divided into eight sections: (a) financial, (b) promotion, (c) supervision, (d) benefits, (e) environment, (f) coworkers, (g) nature of work, and (h) communication. The distribution of the means of the satisfaction surveys displayed ambivalence in the levels of satisfaction amongst faculty participants with regard to supervision, coworkers and the nature of the job. Higher levels of satisfaction were found among direct supervisors, coworkers, and the nature of the job ($M = 4.78$, $M = 4.80$, $M = 4.87$). The lowest satisfaction mean ($M = 3.13$) was related to the ability for a faculty member to grow professionally in the organization.

Discussion

The findings show several important factors that affect faculty motivation: lack of financial incentives, ineffective management, and lack of recognition. Hsieh (2007) demonstrated the importance of faculty motivation in establishing a profitable academic program. Teacher motivation proved to have a significant effect on the profitability of the university programs. Establishing what motivational factors affect faculty members can create a higher profitability index of academic programs and create value that can attract investments into the university. The study conducted by Gebauer and Fleisch (2007) strengthens the notion that faculty motivation can influence academic investment.

Saudi Arabia's higher education industry experiences a very high rate of investment from the government. For university programs to compete for the highest investment rate, they must address the issue of faculty motivation and consider the input of the faculty on how to improve a program's productivity and profitability effectively. Academic managers, deans, and rectors of Saudi universities can implement better policies to provide faculty with the best opportunity to create a more attractive learning environment. This effort can increase the rate of investment into the university and provide an overall better service to the students.

Private universities stand to benefit the most from the development of quality academic programs and obtaining funding for new colleges and departments. The Ministry of Higher Education (2010) in Saudi Arabia declared an increasing rate of private colleges and universities being established in the country. The competition between private and public colleges and universities concludes at the quality of service, or education, offered. The findings of this study can contribute to improving the quality of education to create better academic programs that may increase the student population or encourage investment. The results can be classified into three themes: (1) Intrinsic motivation, (2) extrinsic motivation, (3) management involvement and support. Investors into higher education can utilize the themes researched in this study to determine whether academic programs are a viable investment. The change in the way that management motivate or manage motivation in the university can yield results that are beneficial to the university's program.

The three themes constitute a general understanding of the factors that faculty faces in Saudi Arabia's higher education system. Understanding these factors from the perspective of the faculty can provide academic managers with the ability to address these issues appropriately in order to achieve the optimal level of performance. The thematic analysis provides a detailed understanding of the dynamics that affect faculty motivation. University management and academic managers can match these factors with their current faculty and utilize this knowledge to support and foster faculty productivity in order to improve the quality of their programs.

This study concentrated on a specific area in Saudi Arabia where higher education development is on the rise (IBRD, 2008). The results of the study were expected to add to the understanding of motivation in a diverse faculty workforce in a country that is also developing its education (IBRD, 2008). The result of the study may serve as a guideline in motivating faculty and improving faculty productivity by motivation. The results of this study are expected to assist academic leaders in understanding the motivational issues faced by faculty so that they may improve their techniques in order to improve the profitability of the program. Solving the issue of motivation of faculty may lead to higher efficiency in teaching and thereby improve overall profitability of a program (Yee, Yeung, & Edwin Cheng, 2008).

Research of this type may provide academic leaders and education investors with a broader understanding of the common issues faced with motivating faculty. In addition, the findings could lead to potential solutions to managing motivation, including how to create intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation for faculty. Research that considers cultural-specifics of an educational organization may improve cultural sensitivity within the non-local faculty. The results of filling these gaps may lead to higher profitability of an academic program by reducing a high-turnover rate of faculty (Kroth, 2007). The results of the research may contribute a stronger focus on positive implications that can improve management efforts in motivation of faculty in cross-cultural environments.

Conclusion

This study focused primarily on a commonality of motivation factors faced by faculty members that could be used to develop an understanding of motivation processes that could be implemented in the higher education industry of Saudi Arabia. The intended audiences for this study are current and potential academic managers and investors in higher education institutes in Saudi Arabia. This study was expected to provide a guideline to current and potential academic managers in Saudi Arabia for handling faculty motivation issues. This study was limited to particular instances with the effect of religion, culture, nepotism, and Saudization, or the nationalization of jobs, on faculty motivation.

The results of the study may positively contribute to change within an educational organization concerning managing its faculty members. Academic managers can benefit from the results of the research and improve their techniques in motivating their faculty to improve teaching performance. The intent of the researcher was to create a greater condition of social and academic management change. One of the strongest positive outcomes related to the study would be a creation of academic excellence for students. Improving the state of academic in Saudi Arabia would create a better learning environment for students who will soon enter a challenging job market.

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