Dissertation Synthesis

Bachelor in Work and Human Resources (Honours)

Four students obtained a First Class Honours Bachelor’s Degree in Work and Human Resources. They were congratulated for their splendid academic achievement and presented with a financial award by the CLS Board on 26 November 2015. What follows is a synthesis of the dissertation presented by each of these students.

Dulcie Brincat Peplow

Title
An Analysis of Motivation within the Postal Sector from the Perspective of Management and Employees.

The Aim of the Study
The study sought to explore the differences between what managers perceive to be important motivating factors, in comparison to their employees’ expectations. The study offers a better understanding of employee motivation in a medium-sized privately owned postal service provider.

Methodology
This quantitative research adopted the quantitative approach using printed questionnaires which were in turn statistically analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The studied organisation employed over 600 employees in both Malta and Gozo. Participants came from all the different departments, and participation was strictly on a voluntary basis.

For this study, a short and simply designed questionnaire was administered. The design and length were both intended to encourage a greater level of participation and a higher response accuracy. The challenge with this study was to identify if employee motivation depends on different variables. Thus, the following hypotheses were derived:
Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in perception between management/supervisory levels and other employees regarding the relative importance of motivating factors.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in work motivation priorities based on employees’ age.

Hypothesis 3: Significant differences exist in motivational preferences based on the employees’ gender.

KEY FINDINGS
Hypothesis 1: The results indicated that employees were motivated primarily by interesting work, job security and good working conditions. Thus the motivating factors most important to them were all extrinsic, mainly due to the fact that all factors could be manipulated by a third party. The results achieved were not in line with those of Catania and Randall (2013) who found that Maltese employees were satisfied mainly by intrinsic rewards. The difference in the results could be attributed to the different definition of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. However, these findings were in line with Maslow’s theory. Moreover, since ‘good wages’ was rated amongst the first five factors, this study revealed that pay is not such an important factor and that there are other, more influential incentives. However, wages might not have been an important motivational factor for these employees as wages were previously set by a collective agreement. Management were of the opinion that employees were mainly motivated by Maslow’s lower level needs and that they did not value the importance of providing individuals with the opportunity to achieve: indeed, they placed the motivational factor ‘interesting work’ sixth in their rating. Meanwhile, the motivational factor ‘career growth and promotion’ was given greater importance by managers/supervisors than by employees themselves: the latter rated it last amongst the ten motivational factors. Such a low rating could have been associated with the basic level of education that the employees possessed and thus linked to low self-efficacy. However, this could also be due to the company’s career advancement system which is latched to the employee’s seniority.

Hypothesis 2: The overall relationship between employee’s age and work motivators revealed that there is no statistical significance between the three age groups. However, the mean scores of each age group in relation to the ten motivational factors revealed that individual’s preferences did differ slightly. The youngest age group was more concerned with their financial burdens: thus, their primary motivator was ‘good wages’ followed by ‘interesting work’ and ‘personal and company loyalty to employees’. However, results also showed that today’s young employees are also trying to fulfil their social and self-actualisation needs. Both older age groups rated job security as their number one motivator. Safety and esteem needs were also valued by the older age group. However, since results were not shown to be statistically significantly different, the above considerations need to be treated with caution.

Hypothesis 3: This study did not find a statistical difference between males and females. It was noted that both rated the motivator ‘job security’ as the most important factor; while discrepancies emerged in the rating of the factors ‘good working conditions’, ‘knowing what is going on in the company’, ‘finding sympathetic help with personal problems’, and ‘interesting work’. The first factor was given more importance by males whilst the last three factors were rated higher by females. The motivating factor ‘finding sympathetic help with personal problems’ was rated higher by women than men. However, the differences between the ratings were actually very small.

CONCLUSION
The factors that motivate employees are volatile and can change in accordance with the external and internal stimuli influencing the individual. Job enrichment is important in order for an organisation to be able to enhance the motivation of its current and future employees. The knowledge attained from this study could be utilised by organisations to integrate various motivational factors in their reward system, with the intention of helping in the identification, recruitment, employment, training and retaining of a productive workforce.

Managers and supervisors need to take note of the needs of the employees they supervise in order to be able to adequately motivate them. McGregor’s theory presents employees as being naturally active
Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in perception between management/supervisory levels and other employees regarding the relative importance of motivating factors.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in work motivation priorities based on employees’ age.

Hypothesis 3: Significant differences exist in motivational preferences based on the employees’ gender.

KEY FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1: The results indicated that employees were motivated primarily by interesting work, job security and good working conditions. Thus the motivating factors most important to them were all extrinsic, mainly due to the fact that all factors could be manipulated by a third party. The results achieved were not in line with those of Catania and Randall (2013) who found that Maltese employees were satisfied mainly by intrinsic rewards. The difference in the results could be attributed to the different definition of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. However, these findings were in line with Maslow’s theory. Moreover, since ‘good wages’ was rated amongst the first five factors, this study revealed that pay is not such an important factor and that there are other, more influential incentives. However, wages might not have been an important motivational factor for these employees as wages were previously set by a collective agreement. Management were of the opinion that employees were mainly motivated by Maslow’s lower level needs and that they did not value the importance of providing individuals with the opportunity to achieve: indeed, they placed the motivational factor ‘interesting work’ sixth in their rating. Meanwhile, the motivational factor ‘career growth and promotion’ was given greater importance by managers/supervisors than by employees themselves: the latter rated it last amongst the ten motivational factors. Such a low rating could have been associated with the basic level of education that the employees possessed and thus linked to low self-efficacy. However, this could also be due to the company’s career advancement system which is latched to the employee’s seniority.

Hypothesis 2: The overall relationship between employee’s age and work motivators revealed that there is no statistical significance between the three age groups. However, the mean scores of each age group in relation to the ten motivational factors revealed that individual’s preferences did differ slightly. The youngest age group was more concerned with their financial burdens: thus, their primary motivator was ‘good wages’ followed by ‘interesting work’ and ‘personal and company loyalty to employees’. However, results also showed that today’s young employees are also trying to fulfil their social and self-actualisation needs. Both older age groups rated job security as their number one motivator. Safety and esteem needs were also valued by the older age group. However, since results were not shown to be statistically significantly different, the above considerations need to be treated with caution.

Hypothesis 3: This study did not find a statistical difference between males and females. It was noted that both rated the motivator ‘job security’ as the most important factor; while discrepancies emerged in the rating of the factors ‘good working conditions’, ‘knowing what is going on in the company’, ‘finding sympathetic help with personal problems’, and ‘interesting work’. The first factor was given more importance by males whilst the last three factors were rated higher by females. The motivating factor ‘finding sympathetic help with personal problems’ was rated higher by women than men. However, the differences between the ratings were actually very small.

CONCLUSION

The factors that motivate employees are volatile and can change in accordance with the external and internal stimuli influencing the individual. Job enrichment is important in order for an organisation to be able to enhance the motivation of its current and future employees. The knowledge attained from this study could be utilised by organisations to integrate various motivational factors in their reward system, with the intention of helping in the identification, recruitment, employment, training and retaining of a productive workforce.

Managers and supervisors need to take note of the needs of the employees they supervise in order to be able to adequately motivate them. McGregor’s theory presents employees as being naturally active
and non-resistant to change, thus are all motivated, capable of assuming responsibility, and to direct their behaviour for the achievement of set goals. Moreover, management is responsible for recognising and developing these characteristics and to help employees achieve their own goals by directing their efforts towards the organisation’s objectives. The success of one party comes in tandem with the success of the other, and neither can succeed without the input of the other. An organisation can directly benefit from the understanding of what motivates employees primarily through the metrics of lower absenteeism rates, a reduced job turnover and an increased rate of productivity.

Reference

**Madion Dingli Scicluna**

**TITLE**
Learning and Developmental Needs of Health Assistants and Nursing Aides: An Explanatory Study

**THE AIM OF THE STUDY**
A health care system depends on the individuals working within it. It is the health sector labour force that determines the quality and success of any health organisation. Patients and the general public expect high standards of care from whoever delivers it. To date in Malta, most of the health care professions have received support for further training, education and ongoing professional development to ensure high quality standard of care. However, minimal attention has been given to the unregulated category of health care support staff. Over the past 20 years, this category of health care workers has been assigned a variety of titles, including health assistants, nursing aides, carers and care workers.

This research study focuses on the Health Assistants and Nursing Aides because these types of workers are engaged directly within the public sector.

Forming part of a health care team is a very sensitive role. Whoever is involved in attending the patients’ bedside care requires the necessary knowledge, skills and training in doing the job in a safe and efficient manner. Health support workers working alongside nurses and other allied