



Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance

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Abstract

This study sought to find out the extent of employee engagement in the public sector in Ghana using the Upper East Regional Health Directorate as a case study. The survey method was employed in the study. Close-ended and Likert-Scaled questionnaires were administered to participants to generate the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic data while the Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to analyze the scaled responses using the equation: $RII = \frac{\sum W}{A \times N}$. The figures obtained confirmed the positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. The good performance of the Upper East Regional Health Directorate was found to be influenced by the effective engagement of the staff.

Keywords: Engaged; Effective; Disengaged; Positive; Influence; Successful.

1. Introduction

Employee engagement has generated a great deal of interest among managers and researchers alike (Wollard and Shuck, 2011). The level of employee involvement with organizational activities determines to a very large extent its success or failure (Gruman and Saks, 2011). Empirical evidence suggests that effective employment employee engagement has a positive influence on employee motivation (Hakanen and Schaufeli, 2012), dexterity (Bakker and Demerouti, 2012) and ingenuity (Slatten and Mehmetoglu, 2011). According to Robison (2007), engaged employees work with zeal and passion and exhibit a sense of belonging to their organization. However, disengaged employees are only at work to earn a living but do not contribute much towards the success of the organization. They may be regular and punctual at work but their performance on the job is poor and sometimes counter-productive. Poor employee engagement has an adverse effect on income generation (Agarwal *et al.*, 2012) and increased employee truancy (Shantz *et al.*, 2014).

Most of the studies so far corroborate the positive and negative effects of employee engagement on productivity. Sathe (2017), revealed that employee engagement is affected by organisational culture, the way and manner new employees are hired and fired, placement of employees in positions that they are not best suited, lack of opportunities for staff development and involvement of employees in decision-making. The onus lies with managers to harness the potential of employee engagement to the benefit of their organizations. Non-engagement of employees can lead to high staff attrition rate which can affect the motivation of the remaining staff, customer satisfaction and organizational performance. Meyer (2013), posited that a major gap exists between managers and employees with regards to employee engagement which is a very critical issue at the workplace as managers disregard the importance of employee engagement and the need to establish a favourable work environment. A study worldwide revealed that one out of every three employees is engaged (Right Management, 2009).

Much of the studies on employee engagement appear to be in the private sector, but large amount of resources are channeled to the public sector in most developing countries without experiencing a significant improvement in service delivery. This study therefore seeks to find out the extent of employee engagement in the health sector in Ghana using the Upper East Regional Health Directorate as a case study.

2. Literature Review

Despite the fact that there is unemployment, there is still a high demand for fully engaged employees because engaged employees have a positive influence on organizational performance (Wachira, 2013). Stockley (2007), described employee engagement as the commitment to achieve organizational goals through dedication to the vision and values of the organization. Frank *et al.* (2004), explained employee engagement as the level of discretion displayed by staff in the performance of their duties. It is believed that engaged employees are more likely to

exercise good judgment in carrying out their duties as compared to their counterparts who are not engaged (Truss, 2014).

Gallup Consulting (2008), identified three categories of employee engagement; engaged disengaged and actively disengage. They described engaged employees as the bedrock of the organization. They are those who sacrifice everything for success of the organization. They are very passionate in whatever they do; and are less likely to leave the organization. Disengaged employees on the other hand wait to be told what to do; and do exactly what they have been told to do. They often focus on the task rather than the goals of the organization. Employees who are disengaged often feel unwanted, disrespected and underutilized. They try to maintain a distance between themselves and senior management. Actively disengaged employees are “cave-dwellers”. They operate like rebels hidden within the organization that come out from time to time to launch attacks on the management or the organization itself and retreat. Such employees undermine the efforts of their engaged colleagues by sowing seeds of rancour which has the potential of retarding the progress of the organization. Some of the negative effects of actively disengaged employees include; increased operating costs due to waste, poor customer service leading to customer dissatisfaction, high maintenance cost due to persistent breakdown of equipment, production of poor quality goods and services leading to high returns inwards, high staff turnover and absenteeism (Sterling, 2016).

The negative effects of actively disengaged employees on an organization warrant attention if an organization wants to be successful. Anitha (2014), stated that whenever an organization fails to create opportunities for employee development, they make room for disengaged employees to derail the progress of the organization. Sterling (2016) emphasized that staff development is very critical to having engaged employees. Some authors claimed that leadership has a significant influence on employee engagement (Dajani, 2015; Maximo, 2015). Maximo (2015), stated that leadership qualities such as transparency, integrity, proper communication, accountability, fairness and trustworthiness have an impact on employee engagement. Employees develop confidence in the ability of leaders when the leaders are able to exhibit these qualities which go a long way to promote employee engagement (Maximo, 2015).

Employee engagement has been found to have a positive influence on factors such as customer satisfaction, increased productivity, staff motivation, and organization success (Right Management, 2009). Gallup Consulting (2008), concluded in an extensive study over ten years on the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance that there was a very strong positive relationship between employee engagement and the performance of an organization.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the survey design method. Close ended and Likert-Scale questionnaires were used to conduct interviews with staff of the Health Directorate of the Upper East region in order to gain insights into the effects of employee engagement on the performance of public service organisations in Ghana. The population of this study is the Senior Staff of the Upper East Regional Health Directorate. The directorate is comprised of a number of management units including Operations and Research Unit, Internal Audit, Training Unit, Health Information and ICT Unit, Finance Unit and the Regional Director’s office. The study was conducted in all the units except the office of the Regional Director. The study purposively targeted staff in the directorate. Creswell (2013), stated that purposive sampling refers to the careful selection of participants that are best suited and willing to respond to the questionnaires for the study. The Sample size was selected in a manner that is statistically representative of all the categories of the population. The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 90 respondents. After the questionnaire retrieved they were prepared by coding and fed into the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20) for data aggregation and subsequent analysis. The study employed descriptive statistics for the demographic data of respondents such as age, gender, level of education, etc. Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to analyse the scaled responses using the following equation: $RII = \frac{\sum W}{A \times N}$. Where $\sum W$ is the summation of weights, A is the highest range which is 5, and N is the sample size.

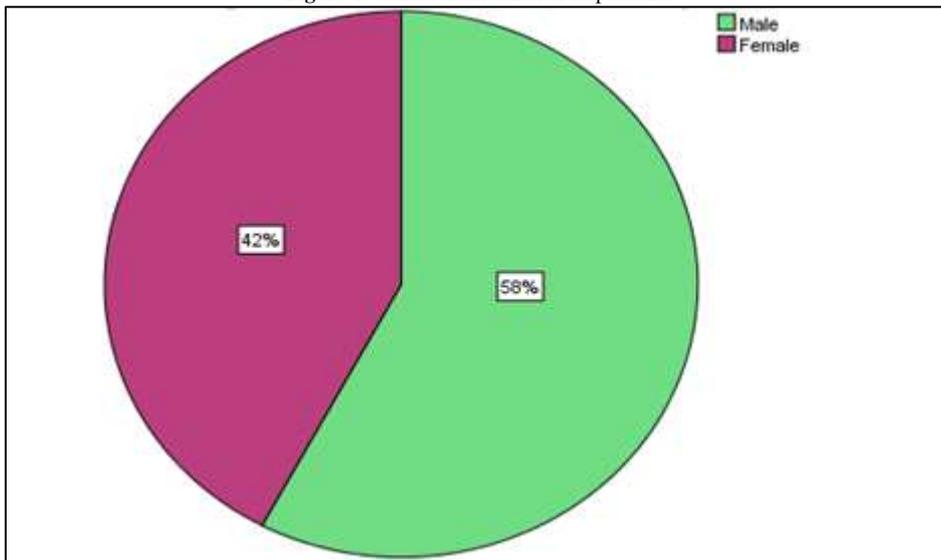
4. Results

The following results were obtained from the study:

4.1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Figure 1 below depicts the gender distribution of responses obtained from the questionnaire administered.

Figure-1. Gender distribution of respondents



Source: Field survey, (October, 2020)

From figure 1 above, 38 respondents representing 42% of the sampled population are females while the remaining 52 respondents representing 58% are males.

4.2. Working Experience of Respondents

The number of years respondents have worked in the Upper East Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service is presented below.

Table-1. Number of Years with the Organisation

Number of Years	Frequency	Percent
0-5 years	31	34
6-10 years	20	22
11-15 years	26	29
16-20 years	5	6
21 years and above	8	9
Total	90	100

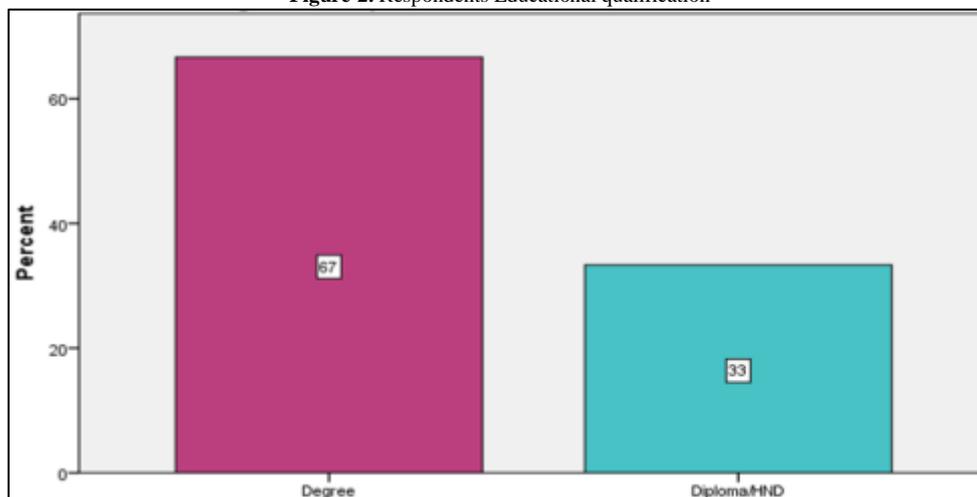
Source: Field Survey (2020)

Table 1 above shows that 31 respondents representing 34% of the sampled population have worked with the Assembly between 0 – 5 years, 20 respondents representing 22% of the sample worked with the organisation between 6 – 10 years, 26 respondents representing 29% worked between 11 – 15 years, 5 respondents representing 6% of the sample worked with the organisation between 16 – 20 years while the remaining 8 respondents representing 9% of the sample worked with the organisation for over 21 years and above.

4.3. Educational Qualification of Respondents

The educational qualification of the respondents is presented below in the figure.

Figure-2. Respondents Educational qualification



Field survey, (October, 2020)

Figure 2 shows that 60 respondents representing 67% of the sample have attained a degree in various disciplines and the remaining 30 respondents representing 33% of the sample have also acquired either a diploma or HND in various disciplines.

4.4. Age Distribution of Respondents

The age distribution of respondents of the Upper East Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service is presented below.

Table-2. Age of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	5	6
26-33 years	27	30
34-41 years	41	46
42-49 years	4	4
50 years and above	13	14
Total	90	100

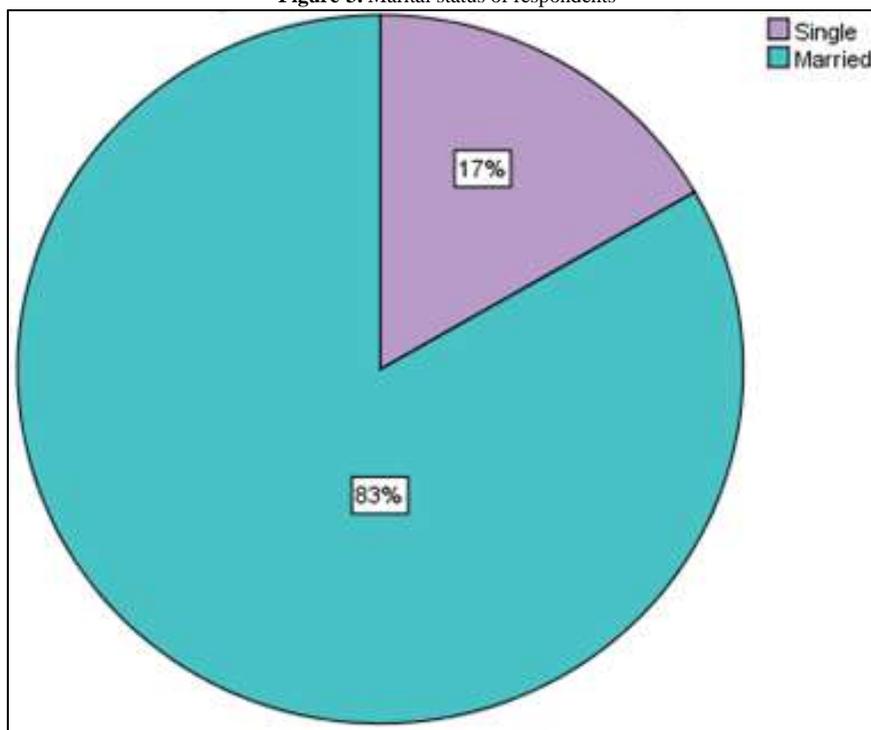
Source: Field Survey (2020)

Table 2 above depicts the age distribution of respondents in the Upper East Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service. From table 2 above, 5 respondents representing 6% of the sample are between 18 – 25 years, 27 respondents representing 30% of the sample are also between 26 – 33 years, 41 other respondents representing 46% of the sample are between 34 – 41 years, 4 respondents representing 4% of the sample are between 42 – 49 years and the remaining 13 respondents representing 14% of the sample are 50 years and above.

4.5. Marital Status of the Respondents

The marital status of respondents in the Upper East Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service is presented in the figure below.

Figure-3. Marital status of respondents



Field survey, (October, 2020)

From figure 3 above, 15 respondents representing 17% of the sample are single and the remaining 75 respondents representing 83% of the sample are married. There were no respondents in the Upper East Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service who are divorced or widowed.

4.6. Employee Engagement

One of the objectives of this study is to assess whether employees of the Upper East Regional Health Directorate are engaged or not. The table below represents participants’ opinions on employee engagement and how they feel at work. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of opinion on how often they feel at work using a Likert scale where N = Never, R = Rarely, O= Often, VO = Very Often, A = Always. Their responses are presented in the table below.

Table-3. Factor Analysis of How Employees Feel at Work

NO.	Factor	Frequency					Weighting	RII Value	Ranking
		N 1	R 2	O 3	VO 4	A 5			
1	I am full of energy at my workplace	0	0	51	96	245	392	0.8711	6 th
2	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	0	0	36	132	225	393	0.8733	5 th
3	I always persevere even when things do not go well	0	0	42	132	215	389	0.8644	7 th
4	I feel like going to work early in the morning	0	0	48	148	185	381	0.8467	8 th
5	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	0	0	24	16	390	430	0.9556	2 nd
6	I am enthusiastic about my job	0	0	0	88	340	450	0.9511	3 rd
7	My job inspires me	0	0	0	76	355	478	0.9578	1 st
8	I am proud of the work that I do	0	0	33	100	270	403	0.8956	4 th
9	To me, my job is challenging	5	32	30	108	160	335	0.7444	11 th
10	Time moves very fast when I am working	0	12	54	68	245	379	0.8422	9 th
11	I feel happy when I am working intensely	0	0	42	76	285	403	0.8956	4 th
12	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	5	0	48	104	215	367	0.8156	10 th

Source: Field Survey, (October, 2020).

4.7. Employee Engagement Indicators

One of the objectives of this study is to identify the factors that affect employee engagement of the Upper East Regional Health Directorate. The table below represents participants' opinions on factor analysis of employee engagement. Respondents were asked to indicate the level of effectiveness of factors of employee engagement using a Likert scale where I = Ineffective, LE = Less Effective, N = Neutral, E = Effective, HE = Highly Effective. Their responses are presented in the table below.

Table-4. Factor Analysis of Employee Engagement Indicators

NO.	Factors	Frequency					Weighting	RII Value	Ranking
		I 1	LE 2	N 3	E 4	HE 5			
1	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job	0	12	15	108	170	377	0.8378	7 th
2	I received recognition or praise for doing my job	0	0	141	108	80	329	0.7311	9 th
3	I have a best friend at work	31	20	63	32	100	246	0.5467	11 th
4	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	0	0	72	92	215	379	0.8422	6 th
5	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	0	36	75	100	110	321	0.7133	10 th
6	At work, my opinions seem to count	0	16	84	124	115	339	0.7533	8 th
7	I know what is expected of me at work	0	0	0	60	375	435	0.9667	1 st
8	There is someone at work who encourages my development	0	0	66	64	260	390	0.8667	4 th
9	This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	0	0	90	40	250	380	0.8444	5 th
10	My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	0	0	54	56	290	400	0.8889	3 rd

11	The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important	0	0	18	68	335	421	0.9356	2nd
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Source: Field Survey, (October, 2020).

4.8. Organisational Performance

One of the objectives of this study is to determine the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance in the Upper East Regional Health Directorate. As a result of this objective, it is imperative to examine organisational performance in the organisation before determining the relationship it has with employee engagement. The table below represents participants' opinions on organisational performance. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of organisational performance using a Likert scale where N = Not at All, SE = To a Small Extent, ME= To a Moderate Extent, LE = To a Large Extent, VE = To a Very Large Extent. Their responses are presented in the table below.

Table-5. Factor Analysis of Organisational Performance

NO.	Factor	Frequency					Weighting	RII Value	Ranking
		N 1	SE 2	ME 3	LE 4	VE 5			
1	The organisation mission statement aptly capture what we do	0	0	24	80	310	414	0.9200	1st
2	The organisation often achieves its annual targets	0	12	54	60	255	381	0.8467	7th
3	The organisation supports innovation	0	0	15	108	290	413	0.9178	2nd
4	Employees attendance is closely monitored	8	48	30	84	135	305	0.6778	10th
5	The organisation closely monitors its effectiveness	0	0	54	88	250	392	0.8711	5th
6	The staff numbers are adequate for the organization's mission	11	32	27	20	245	335	0.7444	9th
7	The organisation responds promptly to changes in technology and to competitors actions	0	0	72	60	255	387	0.8600	6th
8	Services are delivered within set timelines	0	0	38	124	200	362	0.8044	8th
9	Employees performance is adequately monitored	0	10	0	168	215	393	0.8733	4th
10	The organization's resources are adequate to meet all its objectives	11	52	51	0	180	294	0.6533	11th
11	The organisation regularly engages its stakeholders	0	0	33	68	310	411	0.9133	3rd

Source: Field Survey, (October, 2020).

4.5. Effects of Employee Engagement on Organisation Performance

The objective of this study is to determine the effects of employee engagement on the performance of the Upper East Regional Health Directorate. The table below represents participants' opinions on the effects of employee engagement on organisational performance. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree on the stated effects using a Likert scale where SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N= Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Their responses are presented in the table below.

Table-6. Factor Analysis of Effects of Employee Engagement on Organisational Performance

NO.	Organisational Performance	Frequency of Ranking					Weighting	RII Value	Rank
		SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5			
1	Employees are well aware of their roles and responsibilities in the organisation	0	0	0	60	375	435	0.9667	2nd
2	There is a clear policy on health and safety procedures in the organisation	0	0	63	60	270	393	0.8733	9th

3	There are clear policies and processes for recruitment of staff in the organisation	0	0	0	76	355	431	0.9578	4th
4	There is clear staff exit procedure	0	0	15	24	395	434	0.9644	3rd
5	There is a clear policy on staff supervision and performance development	0	10	18	116	250	441	0.8756	8th
6	There are clear procedure for carrying out staff appraisals within the organisation	0	0	15	0	425	440	0.9778	1st
7	There is policy on staff training and development	0	0	33	122	255	400	0.8889	6th
8	There are clear guidelines on time for reporting to work and leaving	0	22	30	40	295	387	0.8600	10th
9	There are clear codes of conduct in the organisation	0	0	24	76	315	415	0.9222	5th
10	Security is provided within the work environment in the organisation	0	32	0	16	350	398	0.8844	7th

Source: Field Survey, (October, 2020)

5. Discussion

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of employee engagement on organisational performance in the Upper East Regional Health Directorate of the Ghana Health Service. It was also intended to identify the factors that affect employee engagement in the organisation as well as determine the relationship between employee engagement and job performance. Analyses of the demographic data revealed that majority of the staff are males (58%) which confirm the male dominance in the formal sector of the Ghanaian society. The dominant age group of the participants was 34-41 constituting 58% which shows that majority of the staff were within the active age group. Again, majority of the staff comprising 66% are graduates, which indicates that the staff are highly qualified. Furthermore, an overwhelming number of respondents constituting 83% are married and this shows that the majority of the staff are responsible and more likely to be committed to their jobs for a longer period. With regards to the number of years with the directorate, only 34% of participants (34%) were employed between 1 to 5 years which implies majority of the staff had more than five years work experience. This clearly signifies high staff retention rate.

A factor analysis about how staff feel revealed that the highest ranked RII value as 0.957 which says that “my job inspires me” and the least RII value as 0.744 which says that “my job is challenging”. Both RII values are above the standard minimum RII value of 0.600. All the factors analysed indicates that the staff are all very happy with their work. The factor analysis of employee engagement shows that with the exception of one factor which says that “I have a best friend at work” which scored an RII value of 0.546, all other RII values were above the standard average of 0.600 with the highest RII value being 0.967. This signifies that there is a very high level of employee engagement at the regional health directorate. With regards to organizational performance, all the RII values obtained were above the standard average RII value of 0.600 which implies that the performance of the directorate is very good. On the effects of employee engagement on organizational performance, the RII values obtained were all above the standard average of 0.600 which clearly depicts that employee engagement has had a positive impact on organizational performance.

6. Conclusion

The demographic data together with the factor analysis confirms the fact that employee engagement has a positive impact on organizational performance. This implies that the success of the Regional Health Directorate of the Upper East Region of Ghana is being influenced by the effective engagement of the staff. Employee engagement was found to encourage employee motivation thus affecting the general organizational performance.

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