

Employees' Attitude and Their Performance: A Study of Senior Staff of University of Cape Coast

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Abstract

How employees feel and behave in an organisation is very important in determining how they will perform any assigned task. As such, employee attitude has been at the centre stage of human resource management strategies as a means to improving their performance and commitment to their job and by extension the performance of the organisation. In this regard, this study examined the causality between the attitude and job performance of senior staff of University of Cape Coast. Due to the large number of staff and demands of the research objectives, a quantitative approach was adopted using a descriptive research design. A sample size of 308 was derived from a population of 1,532 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Questionnaire was used to randomly collect data from 308 senior staff. SPSS was used to code and capture the data besides performing factors analysis on the challenges that impede management's ability to improve the attitude of senior staff. Smart PLS 3 was used to perform partial least square regression analysis on the link between attitude and performance of the staff. The results show that about 43% of changes in senior staff's job performance can be attributed to changes in their attitude. Also, the attitude of the senior staff can predict about 26% of how they will perform their job. Stimulating innovations and change, improving ethical behaviour and total quality management are the main challenges that impedes management's ability to improve the attitude of the senior staff in relation to their job performance. For policy implications management should also dedicate resources to mitigating jealousy among staff.

Keywords: Commitment, Employee attitude, Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction, Job Security, Performance

Introduction

Imparting knowledge, building the skills and competences of future leaders are the primary goals of tertiary institutions (Boice, Torrissi-Steele & Boice, 2018; Datta, 2018). With the global demand for competent and skilled labour, tertiary institutions and organisations are devoting more resources to acquiring, training and maintaining skilled and competent employees as a strategy to creating a robust workforce (Madrigano, Chandra, Costigan & Acosta, 2020). These calibre of skilled staff do not only bring innovations and creativity to tertiary institutions, they ensure a guaranteed competitive advantage besides internal discipline (Galsworth, 2017). This inevitable need for such a skilled staff conforms to the assertion that human capital is the most important resource of any organization (Sumption, 2017; Contigiani, Hsu & Barankay, 2018). In support of this assertion, Nieves and Quintana (2018) explained that irrespective of the quality and quantity of machinery, procedures, polices and financial strength of any organisation, it is the human capital that can operate all these in a coordinated and synchronized manner to achieve a desired objective. For this to be possible, however, an organisations needs to have well motivated and dedicated staff.

This explanation is supported by the Herzberg and Maslow theories of motivation. Maslow (1943) is of the opinion that within every person, there exists a hierarchy of five needs. Each level of need must be satisfied before an individual pursues the next higher level of need. This means that once the basic level of need is reached, an employee may be encouraged to access the next level. Therefore, to be able to properly motivate

an individual, attitude must be given outmost priority. To achieve this, Maslow argued that the physiological needs must be considered first as a means to eventually achieving self-actualization. Herzberg on the other hand argued that though these needs may influence the attitude of an employee, it may be subject to circumstances. Therefore, only by devising effective strategies to manage employees' attitude that management will be able to achieve the needed benefits of their talents and skills (Herzberg, 2017).

Furthermore, there are enough evidence (Hee & Jing, 2018; Mohan & Sudarsan, 2018; Ciobanu, Androniceanu & Lazaroiu, 2019) to support the notion that managing employee attitude positively influence their job performance and by extension institutional performance. Similarly, Mohan and Sudarsan (2018) posit that if job performance is defined in terms of quantity and quality expected from an employee, then important determinants of employee attitude such a job satisfaction, job commitment, job involvement, task performance and contextual performance must be taken into account if management wants to achieve its goals and improve on job performance. Mohan and Sudarsan (2020) further explained that the need for such causality is as a result of the fact that attitudes are evaluative statements which may either be favorable concerning objects, people or events. Because they reflect how one feels about something. In the workplace, they reflect how an employee feels about his work, the work environment, resources, policies and procedures (Mohan and Sudarsan, 2020).

With a huge number of students to manage, train and graduate, tertiary institutions require an equally large number of staff of different categories with varied skills set to be able to fulfill their key objectives of imparting knowledge to students (Dixit & Dean, 2020; Iwu, Chapano & Twum-Darko, 2018). This makes job performance of the employees in tertiary institutions really important since that determines failure and success (Saputra, Sudiro & Irawanto, 2018). Similarly, Shen and Zhang (2019) observed that managing employee attitude is the most important factor in improving job performance. By the same token, Masa'deh, Almajali, Alrowwad & Obeidat (2019) argued that even the most skilled and talented employee might be prone to severe underperformance if his attitude in the workplace is lacking. The global rise in competition in every human discipline, the need to improve employee performance in tertiary institutions, particularly universities cannot be overrated (Abualoush, Obeidat, Tarhini, Masa'deh & Al-Badi, 2018). The ubiquitous nature of advance technology has made the world a global village and smaller than anyone could imagine (Iwu et al., 2018).

This means that acquiring tertiary education does not necessarily mean physically attending an institution (Abualoush, Obeidat, Tarhini, Masa'deh & Al-Badi, 2018). There are online institutions that offer diverse courses and training for anyone willing to learn. To further compound the rise in competition among universities in most developing countries like Ghana, tertiary institutions are springing up at a very rapid rate (Ohemeng, Amoako-Asiedu & Darko, 2018). These institutions offer diverse courses and programmes in strategic ways that suit the requirements of different category of students (Ohemeng et al., 2018). Thus, with such competition at hand, it is important for management of Universities to fill their ranks with employees whose positive attitude of dedication and commitment lead them to high levels of effort and can excel even when they are not the most talented and skilled (Mensah, 2019). Research findings of Madrigano et al., (2020) revealed that organizations have grown increasingly aware of the significance of managing employee attitude and are investing more time and effort than ever before to creating the best attitude possible among their employees.

Sachane, Bezuidenhout and Botha (2018) on the other hand noted that employee attitudes are not only related to different aspects of human life but also, they are rooted in the mind-set and manifest in the behaviour of the employee. Empirical evidence from the work of Sathyanarayan and Lavanya (2018) shows that job satisfaction is a primary factor in employee attitude. However, it is worth distinguishing it from the broader category of organizational commitment. Boateng and Hsieh (2019) on the other hand established a direct link between job performance and employee morale. Therefore, if management shows a willingness to listen and adapt, every attitude itself can provide a significant boost to employee morale. Boateng and Hsieh further noted that when employees believe that management listens to their concerns, cares about them and willing to make some compromises, it goes a long way toward creating a positive atmosphere and positive attitudes amongst them.

Based on the aforementioned review, it suffices to conclude that employee attitude is directly influenced by their job satisfaction, job involvement, job commitment, organizational justice, job security, motivation and many more. Further evidences (Perreira, Berta, Ginsburg, Barnsley & Herbert, 2018; Rahim, Hassan, Amdan & Munap, 2018; Charoensap, Virakul, Senasu & Ayman, 2019) point to the fact that these tenets of attitude do not just affect job performance but positively influence each other as well. They also found that job satisfaction has a significant effect on job performance while Alahmad, Pierce, Carter and Robert (2018) established a direct effect of job satisfaction on job performance but it was not significant. Jain and Ansari (2020) on the other hand noted that employee attitude is positively related to political behaviour. Conversely, Fako, Nkhukhu-Orlando, Wilson, Forcheh and Linn (2018) noted a significant inverse relation between political behaviour and job satisfaction. Mikkelsen and Olsen (2019) for their part noted that job security significantly influences job performance and job commitment whilst Lambert, Qureshi, Frank, Klahm & Smith (2018) also established a significant relationship between job involvement, job security and job performance.

The importance of managing employee attitude has been clearly noted in the aforementioned literature review. There are research evidences that indicate that employee attitude has an influence on the job performance. In this regard, this research sought to examine the Strategies University of Cape Coast (UCC) employ to manage employee attitude and how they impact on their job performance. The senior staff of UCC like that of any other well established tertiary institution is responsible for the operational level activities on the University as such their job performance directly determines the performance of the University. This means that the competence, effectiveness and efficiency of the university largely depend on how well the senior staff perform their daily tasks.

1. Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine how the attitude of Senior staff of UCC influences their job performance
- ii. To identify and assess the challenges to improving employee attitudes

2. Conceptual Framework

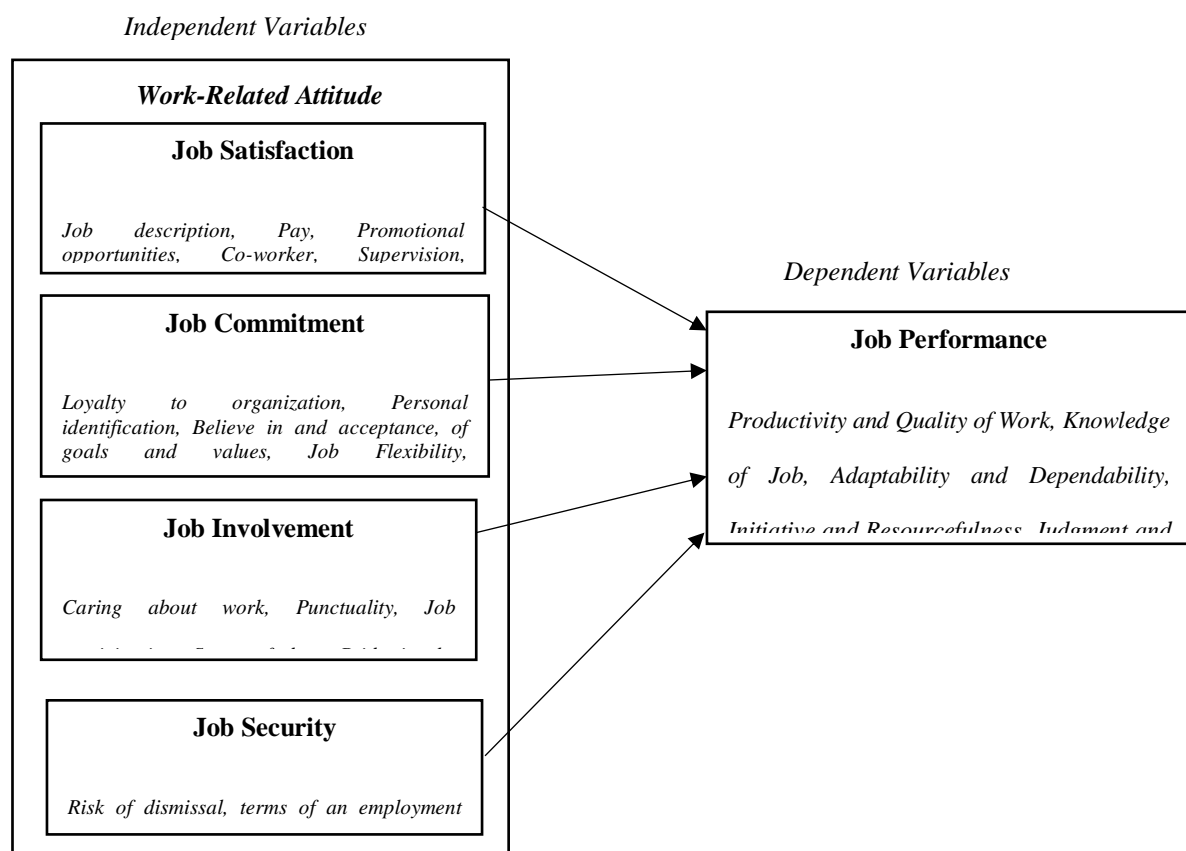


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework. Source: Authors' Construct, Buah & Akudugu, 2020

3. Research Method

Collecting data on work related attitudes and job performance of senior staff of UCC required tact. The data required for these constructs were latent and as such were measured using the Likert Scale. The staff were asked to indicate the extent to which factors influencing work related attitudes and job performance affected them. For the factors influencing work related attitudes, the staff were asked to indicate 1 as strongly agree, 2 as agree, 3 as not sure, 4 as disagree and 5 as strongly disagree. For job performance, the staff were asked to indicate 1 as Low, 2 as need supervision, 3 as average, 4 as indifferent, 5 as above average and 6 as excellent. Information from the human resource depart showed that as at 2019, there were a total of 1,539 senior staff in UCC. Therefore, using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a total of 308 staff were sampled.

Questionnaire was used to randomly collect data from 308 senior staff of UCC. SPSS version 22 was used to code and capture the data. Missing value analysis was done to ensure the data was valid for further analysis. For the challenges to improving employee attitudes, factors analysis was used to reduce the data to the ones with the most significant effect (Bandalos & Finney, 2018). SmartPLS3 was used to perform partial least square regression analysis on the link between work related attitudes and job performance (Benson & Tippets, 2018).

4. Results and Discussion

It can be observed from figure 2 that collective bargaining agreement, job participation, organisational justices, salary and incentives and work conditions are the prominent factors influencing the attitude of senior staff of UCC. However, it can be observed that organisational justices and salary/incentives have the highest impact on the staff attitude. Also, from table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha shows that the five main attitude of the Senior staff are 76.5% reliable and account for 77% of all factors influencing the attitudes of senior staff of the university ($\rho_A = 0.77$). Furthermore, since the AVE value is more than 0.5, it implies that the five primary attitudes of the senior staff correlates positively with each other. However, since the HTMT Value is less than 0.9, it implies that each of the five attitudes of the senior staff are distinct and do not linearly predict each other.

Similarly, with regard to job performance, it can be observed in figure 2 that the capability of the senior staff in doing their job rest on adaptability and dependability, initiatives and resourcefulness, judgment and policy compliance, knowledge of job, punctuality/quality of work and relations with coworkers. Out of these six job performance factors, it can be observed that relations with co-workers and knowledge of job were the least influential factors affecting job performance of the senior staff. Nonetheless, the Cronbach's Alpha in table 1 shows that the six job performance factors are 89.9% reliable and account for 90.4% of total job performance of the senior staff as indicated by the ρ_A value. Also, since the AVE value is more than 0.5, it means that there is a direct association between the six factors indicating the job performance of the senior staff. Furthermore, since the HTMT value is less than 0.9, it implies that the six factors influencing job performance are unique and do not linearly predict each other.

Table 1: Quality Criteria of the Effect of Employee Attitude on Job Performance

Statistics	Employee Attitude	Job Performance
f Squared (Effect Size)		0.744
Fornell-Larcker Criterion (Discriminant Validity)	0.719	
	0.653	0.816
Cronbach's Alpha	0.765	0.898
ρ_A	0.770	0.904
Composite Reliability	0.842	0.922
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.517	0.666
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)	0.779	
Inner VIF Values		1.000

Buah & Akudugu, 2020

5. How the Attitude of Senior Staff of UCC Influences Their Job Performance

The results in figure 2 shows that 42.7% of changes in the job performance of the senior staff can be attributed to changes in their attitude. Furthermore, a unit change in the attitude of the senior staff will cause a 65.3% change in their job performance.

The regression model is written as

$$\text{Job performance} = 0.427 + 0.653 (\text{Employee Attitude})$$

Equation 1: Impact of Senior Staff Attitude on their Job Performance

The model means that if there are no changes in the attitude of the senior staff, their job performance will increase by 0.427, however, a unit change in their attitude will result in a corresponding increase of 0.653 in their job performance. Similarly, the f-square effect size value in table 1 indicates that 75.4% of job performance of the senior staff can be explained by changes in their attitude. Thus, the attitude of the senior staff is very important in determining their job performance. Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker criterion indicates that the attitude of the senior staff is 71.9% distinct from their job performance and as a result they do not linearly predict each other. Nonetheless, the composite reliability in table 1 also indicates that as a model, the attitude of the staff is 84.2% reliable whereas their job performance is 92.2% reliable as indicated in equation 1. The inner variable inflation factor of 1 further rules out any signs of multicollinearity.

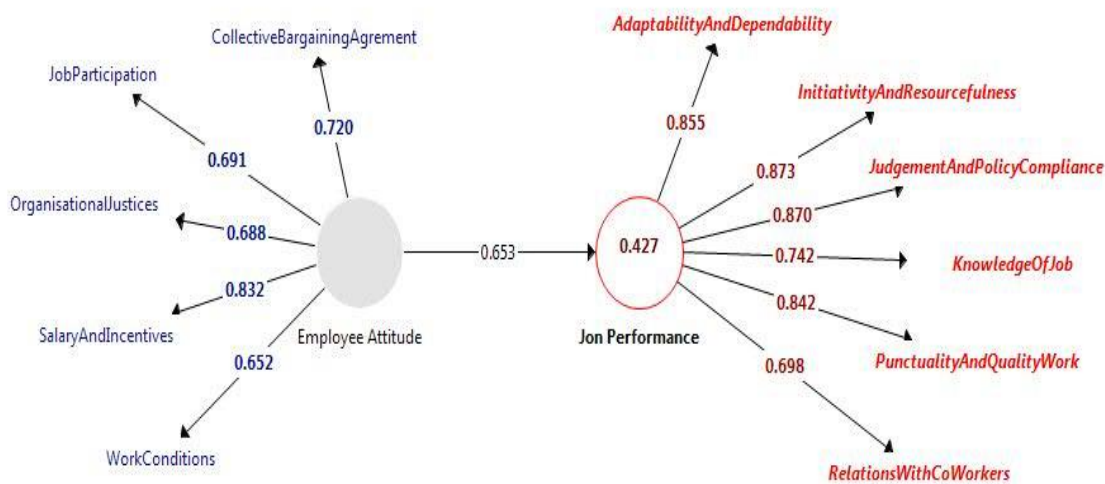


Figure 2: Effect of Employee Attitude on Job Performance. Source: Buah & Akudugu, 2020

6. Significance of the Attitude of Senior Staff in Explaining their Job Performance

The results in Figure 3 is a bootstrapping analysis to indicate the significance of the senior staff attitude in explaining their job performance. The values indicated in the model are t-test of significance, the t-values indicate the differences measured in means/averages the constructs could have happened by chance. The rule of thumb is that as long as the t-value is greater than or equal to 2, the effect is deemed significant. It thus suffices to conclude that the attitude of senior staff of UCC significantly explains their job performance.

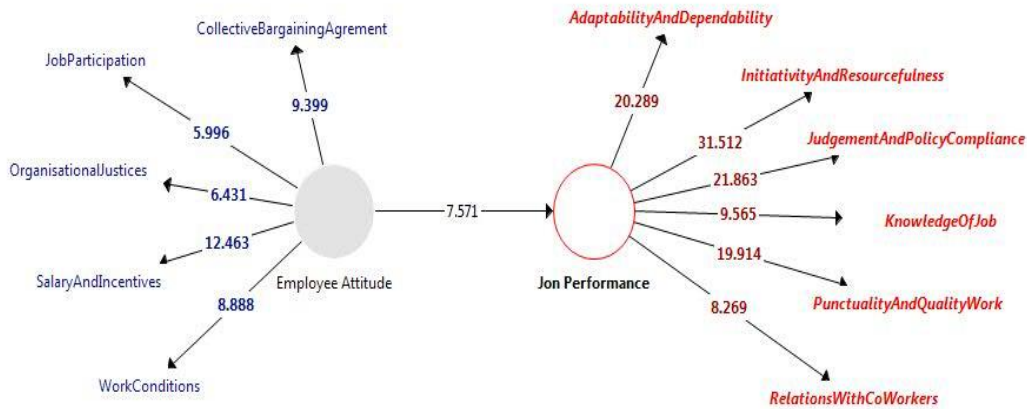


Figure 3: Significance of Senior Staff Attitude in Explaining Job Performance. Source: Buah & Akudugu, 2020

7. The extent to which the Attitude of the Senior Staff predicts their Job Performance

The results in figure 4 show that 25.8% of changes in the job performance of the senior staff of UCC can be predicted by changes in their attitude.

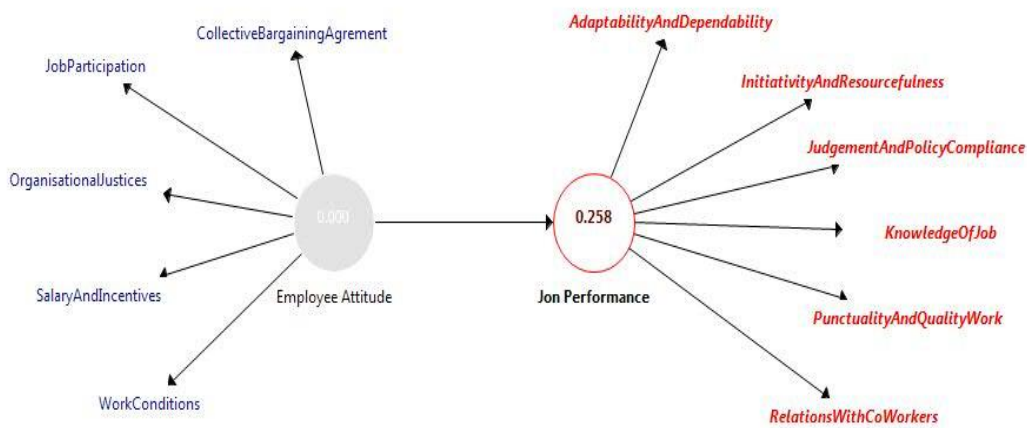


Figure 4: Predictive Relevance of Staff Attitude on their Job Performance. Source: Buah & Akudugu, 2020

8. The Challenges to Improving Employee Attitudes

Evidence from table 2 shows that there are three primary challenges that impede management of UCC ability to improve the attitude of the senior staff. By contrasting it with the results in table 3, it can be observed that stimulating innovations and change, improving ethical behaviour and total quality management are the main challenges that impede management’s ability to improve the attitude of the senior staff in relation to their job performance. The three factors account for about 31% of variations in the challenges to improving employee attitude.

The second category of challenges is constituted by improving people's skills and poor working conditions which account for about 24% of the variations in the challenges to improve the attitude of senior staff. Finally, it can be observed from table 2 that jealousy alone forms the third category of challenges that hinder improvement in the attitude of the senior staff. Table 4 shows that it accounts for about 15% of variations in the challenges to improving the attitude of the senior staff.

Furthermore, the KMO value in table 3 confirms that 62.3% of variations in the challenges to improving the attitude of senior staff of UCC can be attitude to variation in the three prominent categories of challenges in table 2. Also, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with an approx. Chi-Square value of 135.297 and Sig value of 0.0 indicates there are significant variations in the three categories of challenges. This means that they each exhibit an independent effect on the job performance of the senior staff.

Table 2: Challenges to improving Employee Attitude

Factors	Component		
	1	2	3
Stimulating Innovations and Change	0.813		
Improving Ethical Behaviour	0.794		
Total Quality Management	0.744		
Improving People's Skills		0.885	
Poor working conditions		0.700	
Jealousy Among Employees			0.858

Source: Buah & Akudugu, 2020

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			0.625
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		135.297
	df		21
	Sig.		0.0

Source: Buah & Akudugu 2020

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	24.988	35.683	35.683	2.498	35.683	35.683	2.163	30.907	30.907
2	13.337	19.094	54.777	1.337	19.094	54.777	1.664	23.769	54.676
3	10.722	15.318	70.095	1.072	15.318	70.095	1.079	15.419	70.095
4	7.488	10.686	80.782						
5	5.644	8.057	88.839						
6	4.4	6.877	95.715						

	8 1								
7	. 3 0 0	4.285	100.000						
Source: Buah, & Akudugu, 2020									

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analyses, it is obvious that the attitude of the senior staff of UCC is very important in determining their job performance and can equally predict the extent to which they will perform their job well. Furthermore, it can be observed that jealousy is a very significant hindrance to improving the attitude of the senior staff.

Implication for Human Resource Management

For policy implications, management should dedicate more resources to improving the attitude of senior staff in terms of job satisfaction, job commitment, job security and job involvement as they significantly determine the performance of staff and by extension the performance of the institution. Also, though stimulating innovations and change, improving ethical behaviour and total quality management are the main challenges impeding improvement to the staff attitude and as such must attract the lion share of resources, evidence from the analyses suggest that management should give significant attention to jealousy among staff as it defines the limits of co-worker relations.

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