

Impact of Work Environment on the Professional Development

Badji Ouyi

Department of Applied Psychology, Institut National des Sciences de l'Education, Université de Lomé, Lome, Togo

Abstract This research aims at assessing the link between a staff's work environment and his professional development. To achieve this, we assumed that the work environment has an impact and influences the professional development of workers. In order to test this hypothesis, the data were collected from seventy (70) employees of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education using a questionnaire. The quantitative method was used because the employees were not available for the interviews. The data analysis was carried out using the SPSS software. To confirm the relationship between the work environment and the professional development, we used the multiple logistic regression and Pearson's correlation. The analysis of this data confirmed that a good work environment positively influences the development of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education staff.

Keywords Work environment, Professional development, Humans resources

1. Introduction

Every organization has a particular environment in which its members operate. This environment appears as the personality of the organization, which distinguishes it from others. This concept includes the atmosphere that surrounds the living beings while conditioning their vital circumstances. The environment is therefore made up of a number of conditions that can be either physical, social, cultural or economic. According to [1], a work environment refers to all material and human elements that are likely to influence a worker in his daily tasks.

These definitions allow us to get into the concept of the work environment that is associated with the conditions of the workplace. The work environment therefore includes all the circumstances that affect the activity within the organization.

[2] combines the work environment and the well-being of the employees.

Therefore, not only an organization provides its members with a common collective goal, but it also provides them with a particular environment in which they operate. This environment is an organization-specific framework that distinguishes it from others. Whether a public, a parapublic, or a private organization, the need for the leaders to provide

the members with a supportive work environment leads them to maintain a steady course of action for a better performance. So it's no coincidence that the big firms invest into the development of huge structures for their employees. The work environment provides several aspects to be considered. These include the physical, organizational, psychological and social aspects. The work-conditions have a direct impact on the organization's social environment, but also on the productivity of employees ([3]). It is therefore conceivable that standards have been established for the establishment and development of the workplace (ventilation, temperature, lighting, etc.). The psychologists and ergonomists give a particular attention to the working conditions that they can analyze and possibly look for ways to improve them or reduce their negative effects, labor inspectors responsible for monitoring the enforcement of labor law in this field, and labor physicians responsible for periodic monitoring of the health of the assets. When considered as pathogenic conditions, they are risks of accidents; they can directly cause some diseases and allow others while influencing the well-being. The working conditions are therefore a determinant component of life expectancy, accidents and occupational diseases.

Despite this emphasis on the work environment and despite the recent factors demonstrating the new expectations of the employees regarding the well-being in the workplace, the working conditions at the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education (MEPSFP) leave much to be desired. Some directorates do not have an appropriate environment for the staff and this unfortunately sometimes impacts the services and results in the employee de-motivation and delays in the duties. The core problem of

* Corresponding author:

gilouyi@gmail.com (Badji Ouyi)

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our research is in line with a study conducted by [4] «working conditions». It is therefore a matter of understanding how people perceive their work environment and the impact of these perceptions on their level of development at work. The issue of the work environment and professional development has now become important to both researchers and business leaders because it contributes greatly to the performance of organizations. Other authors have addressed the issue in a similar way to what will be hereby discussed. Therefore, for [5] the perception of the work environment remains crucial and guides attitudes and behaviors at work. [6] states that there is a psychological field consisting of specific purposes, needs, social relationships, atmosphere (friendship, tense or hostile atmosphere) and degree of freedom. Indeed, the theory of equity [7] and the theory of social exchange [8] are based on the same principle that a person in relation to an organization adopts attitudes based on the quality of the exchange.

The main issue to be addressed in this paper is whether the work environment influences the professional development of the worker or employee.

To address this issue, we basically assume that the work environment influences the professional development of the employee. Two specific hypotheses arise from this first answer:

- The physical work environment influences the professional growth of the employee.
- The social environment characterized by professional relationships influences the professional development of the worker.

2. Methodology

The organization that was the subject of this research was the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education (MEPSFP). The study did not cover only the MEPSFP administrative staff. More specifically, it was limited to the employees in the directorates of the MEPSFP in Lomé.

The sampling was based on the « anybody » method. In the end, 70 employees from all categories participated in the study for returning well-informed questionnaires of the 127 distributed. The resulting sample consists of 69% men and 31% women. Thirty-two percent of the study respondents are under the age of 35, compared with 23% over the age of 45. The respondents aged 35 to 45 years are the majority with 46%. The married respondents make up 59% compared to 41% of single respondents. The personnel with 5 years of seniority represent 26%; the employees with seniority between 5 and 10 years represent 36% and those over 10 years represent 38%.

Therefore, we used a questionnaire developed our care as a data collection tool from specialized literature and exploratory interviews. To achieve this, we conducted an exploratory survey that allowed us to develop the first version of the questionnaire, submitted for a pre-test to test

the form of the questions, their scheduling, and assess the respondents' understanding and the relevance of the proposed response modalities. Most of the respondents returned the questionnaires correctly completed. At the end of this pre-test phase, we improved this questionnaire by taking into account the misunderstandings. This is the final version of the questionnaire that was distributed directly to the employees.

The questionnaires collected give a reliability coefficient (alpha of Cronbach) obtained by the sum of the statements, an internal consistency of 0.81. We were therefore encouraged by the metrological quality of the data collection tool.

Finally, to study the likely links between the «work environment» and «professional development » variables of the study, simple linear regression analyses and Pearson correlations were conducted.

3. Results

At the end of the measurements, the following are key results. Therefore, the results of the logistic regression analysis, which is a predictive technique are presented aiming at designing a model that allows predicting/explaining the values taken by a quantitative target variable. Then we provide the Pearson correlations results. Let's recall that a correlation is the ratio between two variables, two notions or two facts, one of which involves the other and vice-versa.

Table 1. Summary of the multiple logic regression analysis of the work environment effect on the development

Parameters estimates						
Development	B	Standard Error	Wald	Ddl	Sig. (p)	Exp(B)
Constant	-1.009	15.778	.004	1	.04949*	
Accident and Disease Protection	.489	3.192	.023	1	.001878***	1.630
Expectations	4.096	7.709	.282	1	.02595*	60.078
ICT Quality	-4.817	1.946	6.128	1	.6013	.008
Communication	1.75	21.220	.007	1	.02968*	.747
Industrial Relations	1.253	17.044	.005	1	.02941*	3.501
Self-esteem	1.159	2.513	.213	1	.03645*	3.188

* p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001

This table shows the significant impact of the work environment on the development. More specifically, the protection system in place within the work environment to protect the workers from accidents and diseases ($\beta=0.489$; $p<0.001$) expectations ($\beta=4.096$; $p<0.05$), communication ($\beta=1.75$; $p<0.05$), industrial relations ($\beta=1.253$; $p<0.05$), self-esteem ($\beta=1.159$; $p<0.05$) are significant on the development. However, regarding the ICT quality ($\beta=-4.817$; $p<.6013$) has no significant effect on the development.

Table 2. Correlations (Pearson r) between the professional development and the work environment variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Development	Pearson Correlation	1						
	Sig. (bilateral)							
2 Accidents and diseases Protection	Pearson Correlation	.439**	1					
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000						
3 Expectations	Pearson Correlation	.524**	.614**	1				
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	.000					
4 ICT Quality	Pearson Correlation	.025	.248*	.112	1			
	Sig. (bilateral)	.838	.038	.355				
5 Communication	Pearson Correlation	.363**	.015	.132	-.007	1		
	Sig. (bilateral)	.002	.899	.275	.955			
6 Industrial Relation	Pearson Correlation	.445**	.027	.084	.007	.713**	1	
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	.825	.489	.956	.000		
7 Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	.583**	.133	.234	.019	.441**	.348**	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	.272	.051	.879	.000	.003	

As presented in the table, the development is positively and significantly correlated with the protection of the work environment ($r = 0.439$; $p < 0.01$), staff expectations ($r = 0.524$; $p < 0.01$) communication ($r = 0.363$; $p < 0.01$), industrial relations ($r = 0.628$; $p < 0.05$) and self-esteem ($r = 0.583$; $p < 0.01$). However, the development is positively and not significantly correlated with the ICT quality ($r = 0.25$; $p > 0.5$).

Communication is correlated with the relation ($r = 0.712$; $p < 0.01$). The industrial relation is positively and significantly correlated with self-esteem ($r = 0.441$; $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.348$; $p < 0.01$).

The logistical regression analyses in relation to the protection of the work environment are presented in Table 1, which shows that the regression coefficient obtained for the protection of the work environment is positive and significant for the professional development ($\beta = 0.439$; $p < 0.001$). The logistical regression therefore shows that the satisfaction regarding the protection of the work environment would positively influence the professional development.

The logistic regression analyses in relation to the professional relationships are presented in Table 1, where it can be noted that the regression coefficient obtained for the professional relationships is positive and significant for the professional development ($\beta = 1.253$; $p < 0.05$). Likewise, the self-esteem is positive and significant for the professional development ($\beta = 1.159$; $p < 0.05$).

4. Discussions

As shown by our results, the work environment has a positive influence on the professional development of the MEPSFP employees. Indeed, the correlations analyses and the logistical regressions between the work environment and the development show that not only do these two variables

have significant statistical relationships, but that the professional development is based on the work environment. In other words, the employees would highly or poorly be developed whether their work environment were made attractive or unfavorable.

This results support the conclusions of [9] that the work environment influences the development of workers. Therefore, even the hygiene factors are linked to the work environment of the employees. Other factors include physical working conditions (heat, noise, brightness, safety, furniture, decoration, etc.) and social conditions (communication, friendliness, acceptance and mutual respect, in short, interpersonal relationships) that can influence the development at work. In this regard, [10] have shown that it is more than necessary today to consider the interactions between the environment, actors, tasks and other dimensions such as leadership and the work organization itself. [11] has consistently proven psychologically that even the presence of plants and a set of colours in a work environment have a significant impact on mental health.

The correlation matrix between the work environment and the professional development leads us to believe with [12] that this relationship is characterized by the satisfaction that the self-esteem positively influences the professional development. Indeed, the important keys to the development at work are self-actualization, recognition, employer's responsibility, worker's development and promotion [13].

Further the study also showed that the industrial relationships enhance the development at work. This result is also consistent with the literature. For example, according to [14], the needs of a group membership, whether social, relational or statutory, are vital to well-being.

The results also show a correlation between the work-related expectations and professional development. This is further confirmed by the fact that [15] had already shown that the development of work-related expectations,

coupled with the growing interest in the concepts of personal development, contributed in the 1960s to increase the academic interest in the respondent. Therefore, through these findings, we can understand the emergence of industrial psychology.

5. Conclusions

This research aimed at testing the relationship between the work environment and the professional development. To achieve this, we have developed a problem to address the topic and raise the challenge. For the data collection purpose, we have developed a questionnaire to which seventy (70) employees from the MEPSFP have kindly responded.

The SPSS software was used for the data analysis and to confirm the link between the work environment and the professional development, we made use of the multiple logistical regression and the Pearson correlations.

The analysis of these data therefore confirmed the hypotheses, the main one of which states that the work environment influences the worker's professional development. This could also be a lever for employee organizational engagement. Business leaders would benefit from knowing the needs and aspirations of their employees and trying to take them into account, especially when it comes to the work environment [16]. Since [17] has shown that a good work environment is linked to a good quality of life and a sustainable development. So, as part of equity theory, this is the result of a contribution/compensation ratio and in the context of social exchange, the assessment by the actors of how the organization contributes to their well-being, guides their attitudes at work (satisfaction, involvement and organizational retention). Indeed, the personal characteristics, work characteristics, relationships with group and hierarchy, and organizational characteristics are generally considered to be a history of the professional development.

Our research, no matter how important, has limitations. For example, the study did not consider all the explanatory variables. Indeed, the work environment is not the only factor that influences the development. Some human resources practices (such as compensation, training, evaluations, promotion, etc.), or variables such as organizational justice could have been combined. However, we believe that the work environment is a determinant that can be quickly improved to hope for the best of the worker.

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