



Full Length Research Paper

Retention of administrative staff of the Ghana Education Service in the Northern Region of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to examine the factors that influenced the retention or otherwise of administrative staff of the Ghana Education Service in the Northern Region of Ghana (ASGES). The study used the exploratory and descriptive research designs. Purposive as well as stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select a sample of 63 respondents, consisting of 45 current and 18 former ASGES. Primary data for the study were obtained through focus group discussion and individual questionnaire administration, using interview guides and questionnaires respectively, while secondary data were sourced from the Statistics Department of the GES Regional Education Office. The data were analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16. The study revealed that the main reasons why ASGES left GES were: unattractive remuneration; inadequate motivation for staff; lack of appreciation of staff efforts, inadequate working logistics; poor working conditions; and limited or no promotion. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made: the government should review the conditions of service of the administrative staff of GES; management of GES should also review the existing housing and car loan schemes to ensure that a greater number of ASGES benefit from it; and a career structure must be carefully worked out together with compensation packages, to ensure continuous loyalty of the ASGES.

Keywords: Administrative staff, GES, motivational and environmental factors, retention.

List of acronyms

ASGES: Administrative Staff of the Ghana Education Service; B.Com: Bachelor of Commerce; B.Ed: Bachelor of Education; CRS: Catholic Relief Services; DBS: Diploma in Business Studies; GAT: Ghana Accounting Technician; GCE: General Certificate of Education; GES: Ghana Education Service; HND: Higher National Diploma; IPM: Institute of Personnel Management; M.Ed: Masters in Education; MESS: Ministry of Education Science and Sports; NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations; SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences; TEWU: Teachers and Educational Workers' Union; TMA: Tamale Metropolitan Assembly; TUC: Trades Union Congress

INTRODUCTION

The greatest resource of every organization or nation is its human resource. There is no denial of the fact that the Ghana Education Service (GES) plays a vital role in the

socio-economic development of Ghana. The GES trains the people of Ghana before they enter tertiary institutions. Thus, those who do not pursue courses beyond the senior secondary school largely rely on formal training from the GES to contribute their quota to national development. The role of GES is in line with the objectives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MESS), which seeks to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels, irrespective of gender, tribe, religion and political affiliations (GES, 2007). In fulfilment of the above, the roles of MESS are to provide: basic education for all; education and training for skill development with emphasis on science, technology and creativity; higher education for the development of middle and top level manpower requirements; and functional literacy to the local citizens so that they are self reliant (GES, 2007).

There are two main categories of professionals in the GES, namely: the teaching; and non-teaching staff. The latter includes the Regional, Metropolitan and District Directors of Education, Accountants/Bursars, Internal Auditors and Administrative Clerks. However, by far, the group with the largest presence in the GES is the teaching staff. While the teachers can be said to be professionals, all other staff are either academically trained individuals or learned on the job. It is a fact that the attainment of the goals of GES is dependent on all categories of staff mentioned and not on the teachers alone. Thus, both teaching and non-teaching staff are involved in the crucial issue of human resource management practices such as recruitment, induction and orientation, training, placement, re-training, promotion, motivation and retention in GES. The changing trend of events in this computer age makes such human resource management practices prominent.

According to Okumbe (1998), human resource management in educational management is the process by which educational managers identify, develop and effectively release the maximum potential of employees for the benefit of both the organization and the individual. He categorizes human resource in educational institutions to include workers and students. The combined effort of workers and students, he says, enhances teaching and learning. Preparing people to do their jobs well is a specialized and very practical form of education (Sperber and Lerbinger, 1982). Sperber and Lerbinger (1982) stress that when companies change the designation of their personnel department into department of human resource; they indicate an awareness of the need for employee training. Such companies also refer to this function as investment in human capital and assign great importance to it. The quality of education, which is dependent on the quality of human resource, thus, plays a very important role in the socio-economic development of a nation. The GES has a major role to play in Ghana's development effort as enshrined in the Vision 2020 document.

In an effort to achieve the Vision 2020 goals, the government has introduced a number of new educational reforms in the basic schools as follows:

- Capitation Grants-where government subsidizes the fees of school children;
- School Feeding Programme-where school children are fed once at school;
- Provision of a model school in every district capital; and
- Free school bus ride for school children in some selected regional capitals in the country.

Generally, for any organization to succeed in attaining its objectives, it must have quality personnel. For any manager, regardless of the size of the organization or its activities, a capable, committed, and loyal team of staff is important if his organization is to succeed. No matter the level of automation in the organization, the output of the

organization would ultimately be dependent on the efforts of the staff. It is in this light that organizations seek to employ well-qualified and competent people to maximize efficiency. As far as the effective delivery of education in Ghana is concerned, the administrative staff of the Ghana Education Service (ASGES) play a crucial role.

Like their teaching counterparts, a lot of concerns have been raised regarding the high attrition rate of the Administrative Staff of the Ghana Education Service (ASGES). For instance, it is an open secret that a number of ASGES who go on study leave do not come back. It is believed that such people seek greener pastures elsewhere because the conditions of service of GES are not good. The ASGES complain of undue delay and cumbersome procedures in seeking promotion, transfers and retirement benefits, among others. This notwithstanding, another school of thought argues that the plight of ASGES, on the whole, is not as bad as that of the teaching staff because most of the former are either on top positions or in the accounts section where they have easy access to money. In October, 2006, District directors and bursars/accountants with their heads, appeared before the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament for a number of financial misconducts. As to whether ASGES are satisfied and, therefore, stay for long remains an empirical question.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the factors that influenced the retention of administrative staff of the GES in the Northern Region of Ghana. The specific objectives were to:

- Identify the factors that influenced the retention of ASGES in the Northern Region.
- Examine the views of ASGES on the advantages GES has over other jobs.
- Examine the views of ASGES on the disadvantages of GES over other jobs.
- Determining the factors that accounts for why ASGES leave GES.
- Find out the measures to be taken to retain ASGES.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature review

Theoretical Review

Retention

The attainment of organizational goals does not solely depend on the high calibre of personnel recruited, but, most importantly, retaining them in the organization. From the literature several factors help to retain staff in

organizations. Prominent among them are; salary, job satisfaction, training, job description, promotion and other motivational factors. Locke (1976), cited in Wagner and Hollenbeck (1998, p45) defined job satisfaction as “a pleasurable feeling that results from the perception that one fulfils or allows for fulfilment of one’s important job values.” He stressed that job satisfaction is built on three important components: values; importance of values; and perception. He defined values in terms of “what a person consciously desires to obtain” or what he referred to as “subjective requirements” that exist in the person’s mind. The second component identified by Locke (1976) is importance, which, in his words, implies that people differ not only in the values they hold, but also in the importance they place on those values. The third and the last component is perception. He argues that employee satisfaction is based on the organization’s perception of the present situation in terms of its values.

Locke (1976) further argues that job satisfaction is closely related to employee retention. He identifies seven working conditions that lead to job satisfaction for most people, as follows:

- Mentally challenging work with which the individual can cope successfully;
- Personal interest in the work itself;
- Work which is not too tiring physically;
- Rewards for performance which are just, informative, and in line with the individuals personal aspirations;
- Working conditions which are compatible with the individuals physical needs and which facilitate the accomplishment of his work goals;
- High self-esteem on the part of the employee; and
- Agents in the workplace who help the employees to attain job values, such as interesting work, pay and promotions, and whose basic values are similar to his own, and who minimize role conflict and ambiguity.

On his part, Rebore (2001) suggests a number of activities aimed at retaining employees on the job. These include: staff development, appraisal, rewards and collective bargaining. He notes that staff development is an activity to which each school system must commit human and physical resources in order to attain a viable and knowledgeable staff. On appraisal, he contends that the business of appraisal should cover all personnel. This is in view of the integral relationship between all employees and because one employee’s performance can affect the performance of other employees. He argues that the establishment and the implementation of an appraisal process are aimed at fostering the self-development of each employee, helping to identify a variety of tasks that an employee is capable of performing, helping to identify staff development needs, helping to improve performance, helping to know if an employee should be retained in the school district, helping to determine the amount of a salary-increase the employee should be given, and finally helping to

determine the placement, transfer or promotion of an employee.

Okumbe (1998) has outlined the following as objectives of appraisal:

- It helps in determining the strength and weakness of individual workers so that remedial measures can be taken to improve productivity;
- It enables management to determine training needs of workers as individuals or as groups;
- It provides the basis for promotion, transfers or dismissal;
- It helps in increasing job satisfaction of workers by developing their potentials through a proper feedback mechanism;
- It is an important tool for human resource planning;
- It is an important source of feedback on the effectiveness of selection and training; and
- It helps educational researchers to carry out research in the most crucial areas in order to provide solution to educational problem.

The concept of motivation

Various researchers and authors have put forward several theories of motivation. Lahey (1995) views motivation as an internal state that activates and gives direction to our thoughts. On their part, Desmone and Harri (1998) define motivation as a psychological process that causes arousal, direction and persistence of voluntary action that are goal oriented. DeCenzo and Robbins (1996) narrow the scope of their definition to employee motivation. They view employee motivation as an individual’s willingness to exert effort to achieve the organization’s goals, conditioned by the efforts and ability to satisfy individual needs. Cole (2002) describes motivation as a behaviour caused by some stimulus that is directed towards a desired outcome.

Steer and Porter (1983) have identified three important components of any definition of the concept of motivation. The first component refers to energetic forces within individuals that “drive” them to certain types of behaviour. The second component refers to goal orientation, with behaviour being directed towards something. The third component is concerned with forces within the individuals and within their environment that reinforce the intensity of their decisions and the direction of their energy.

Theories of motivation

In his hierarchy of needs theory, Maslow (1954) suggests that people in organizations are motivated to perform by a desire to satisfy a set of internal needs. Maslow identifies five basic needs, which are organized into successive levels of importance. These are: Physiological

need; Safety/Security Need; Social/Belonging Need; Esteem or Ego Need; and Self Actualization Need.

Maslow's framework has three basic assumptions:

- People are Beings whose needs influence their behaviour, and that only unsatisfied needs can influence behaviour. Satisfied needs are not motivators;
- A person's needs are arranged in order of importance from the most basic (food and shelter) to the complex (ego and achievement); and
- A person advances to the next level of the hierarchy or from basic towards complex needs only when the lower need is, at least, minimally satisfied.

The implication of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is that organisations cannot, therefore, apply uniform measures to all employees, as one form of motivation cannot stimulate all employees at the same time.

In his contribution to Maslow's need theory, Herzberg (1966) conducted a research to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity, and came out with a two-factor theory to motivation, that is, the satisfiers (motivators) and dissatisfiers (Hygiene factors). He concluded that there are extrinsic job conditions whose absence or inadequacy brings about dissatisfaction among employees. However, if these conditions are adequate, it does not necessarily mean the employees are motivated. He termed them as dissatisfiers or hygiene factors and classified them to include job security, salary, working conditions, status, company policies and quality of technical supervisors, among others. The study also came out with what he termed satisfiers or motivators (i.e. factors that motivate employees or people to perform). According to Herzberg (1966), in a job environment, the presence of factors, such as recognition, job challenges, advancement and growth, is motivational. However, when they are absent, the level of satisfaction is almost non-existing. Job satisfiers are called motivators because they fulfil an individual's need for psychological growth.

Herzberg's findings imply that worker motivation can be improved by changing the nature of the job through job enrichment. Management should, thus, make it possible for staff to have maximum control over the mechanisms of the task performance. Workers' jobs should be designed in a way that would enable them to experience a feeling of accomplishment of assigned duties. Hence, institutional managers and administrators should see to it that staff are given direct, clear and regular feedback on their performance in particular and the organizational performance in general. Furthermore, institutional managers and administrators should provide an enabling working environment to motivate workers to learn new and different experiences on the job.

Henne and Locke (1985) are of the opinion that, when workers are not satisfied, it creates a workforce who is more likely to exhibit high turnover, high absenteeism, low corporate citizenship, more grievances, strikes, poor mental and physical health. Terborg and Miller and

(1978), cited in Stoner and Freeman, (1989), are also of the view that factors, such as fringe benefits, overall salary system, allocation of status, openness of communication, good degree of interaction and interdependence and cooperation may, at times, affect an individual's satisfaction and decision to perform.

Empirical review

In this section, we do a review of similar empirical studies on employee retention. The first to be reviewed is by Naris and Ukpere (2010). The main objective of the study was to find out the main reasons why staff at the Polytechnic of Namibia resigned after attending staff development programmes. The study involved 130 respondents including academic and administrative staff, Heads of Department (HODs) and sectional heads. The methods of data collection also involved the administration of closed ended questionnaires staff, a semi-structured interview guides to the HODs and sectional heads. Naris and Ukpere (2010) found that the major reasons why staff resigned from the polytechnic were dissatisfaction with job, financial rewards and lack of career development. They found that between 2001 and 2008, 56 staff members that had benefitted from the staff development programme left the institution. Specifically, 57% of the respondents disagreed that the institutional climate enabled staff to apply their new knowledge. Also, there were virtually no retention strategies in place. The respondents stressed that even though there was promotion opportunity, the period was so long that staff were not benefitting from it. Furthermore even though staff members, who obtained a vertical higher qualification, were eligible for a notch increase, the increment was not enough. Explaining the reasons for the unattractive retention strategies in the institution, the management of the polytechnic explained that their subvention from government was minimal, compared with that of other institutions, hence their inability to offer competitive motivational package for their staff.

In a similar study by Shoab et al. (2009), the objective was also to find out the determinants of employee retention in the Telecom sector in Pakistan. However, the difference between Shoab et al.'s (2009) study and that of Naris and Ukpere (2010) is that the former used the econometric approach, involving correlation and regression analyses. They established a positive and significant relationship between employee retention on one hand and career development opportunities, supervision support, working environment, rewards and work-life policies on the other.

Mba and Ikemefuna (2012) were specific in testing three hypotheses related to job satisfaction, namely; satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with nature of work and satisfaction with supervision. The study involved 300 permanent employees of Total Nigeria PLC, mainly

senior staff, as well as middle and senior management. They excluded the expatriates and junior staff with the reason that they were focusing on those who had higher chances of leaving the job. All the three null hypotheses were rejected, meaning that all of them had negative correlation with employee turnover. In other words the higher the staff's level of satisfaction with their salaries, the nature of the work and supervision, the lower their chances of leaving the job.

The study by Kyndt et al. (2009) offers the most comprehensive approach with respect to finding out the factors influencing employee retention, in the sense it considers both personal and organizational factors. Specifically, the study sought to find out the relationship between: (1) the perception of the learning and working climate and employee retention; (2) a high potential and employee retention; (3) and personal characteristics (such as level of education, number of children, seniority, age and gender) and employee retention.

The study involved 349 employees from 57 different companies. Factor analysis as well as the multiple stepwise linear regression were employed to determine the factors that determine employee retention in the study area. Kyndt et al. (2009) found that work climate, including appreciation and stimulation positively affected staff retention. Also self-perceived leadership skills and seniority positively related to employee retention. For example, respondents who had worked longer in the company tended not to leave. However, the level of education as well as the readiness and initiative of staff negatively affected employee retention. In summary, Kyndt et al.'s (2009) study shows the importance of considering both personal and organizational factors when investigating employee retention.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that quite a number of studies have delved into the determinants of employee retention, bringing out a number of factors. However, we know that these factors are not only country-specific; they are job and staff-specific. It is against this backdrop that in this present study we seek to contribute to the already laid down tools used to analyze the reasons for the retention or otherwise of staff in an important organization like the Ghana Education Service.

Conditions of service for the non-teaching staff of GES

The conditions of service for the non-teaching staff of the GES were promulgated on 23rd June, 2000 between the Ghana Education Service (Employer) and the Teachers and Educational Worker's Union (TEWU) of the TUC (Ghana) (Union) and became effective from 1st April, 1999. According to the conditions and scheme of service document for staff of Ghana Education Service (Non-teaching), promotions shall be made according to merit

and in accordance with the scheme of service. It is also mentioned that in determining an employee's claim for promotion, account shall be taken of qualification, experience, efficiency, seniority, sense of responsibility, initiative, general behaviour, and where relevant, powers of leadership and expression and requisite attendance of in-service training courses. It is also a policy that senior officers shall be considered for promotion after a minimum of three years' satisfactory service and on passing the prescribed interview. Promotion out of turn for exemplary conduct/excellent performance shall be upon recommendation by the Director-General to the GES Council. All recommended personnel shall be subjected to interview.

The Appointments and Promotions Board of GES shall recommend the effective date of promotion. These interviews shall be conducted in the northern and southern sectors, depending on the category and number of officers due for promotion. In the case where a promotion test is required, no employee shall be promoted unless he passes the test. However, after two unsuccessful attempts but with a satisfactory service and having attended and passed an interview the employee may be promoted. For the teaching staff members of the Ghana Education Service as well, all the above conditions, such as academic/professional qualification, years of satisfactory service and conduct before promotion and application accompaniments, apply in their equivalence of ranks (GES, 2000).

Remuneration - salaries and allowances

In Ghana, the salaries, allowances, fringe benefits and working conditions for non-teaching personnel of GES are spelt out in their conditions of service. Articles 12 and 13 of the statutes shed light on salaries and allowances. Article 12 states that salary scale appropriate to each grade of the service shall be determined by the Ghana Education Service, acting on behalf of the Government in consultation with the Teachers and Educational Worker's Union representing employees of the Service. The policy states further that all employees shall draw their salaries from the date on which they assume duty. The point of entry of a newly appointed or promoted employee shall be determined by the Ghana Education Service or any other authority appointed to do so.

On allowances, Article 13 of the Scheme of Service states, among others, that Maintenance and Mileage/Kilometric Allowances shall be paid to all members of the service who are entitled to and own means of transport at rates to be determined by management and union from time to time. The policy also mentions that Night Allowance shall be paid to employees travelling on duty at rates to be determined by Management and Union from time to time. By the

scheme of service, Tools Allowance shall be paid to artisans who use their own tools at the rate to be determined by Management and Union from time to time. Drivers of Divisional/Regional/District Directors, Boarding institutions and Heads of Institutions of the Ghana Education Service shall be paid monthly overtime allowance.

On Acting Allowance, the policy indicates that, where an officer performs the duties of a higher officer under circumstances where acting allowance is not applicable, a charge allowance of 15% of his basic pay per month shall be paid to him during the period of performance of such duties. According to the conditions and scheme of service, all categories of staff who have their own means of transport shall be paid commuted travelling allowance and also all heads of units (including the Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Accountant and the Chief Internal Auditor) shall be paid Responsibility Allowance.

Article 19 of the conditions and scheme of service document stipulates that, an employee, who qualifies under existing regulations, shall be paid overtime allowance for approved official duties undertaken outside and in excess of the employee's normal working hours. It is also the policy of the service to pay all categories of junior employees, including watchmen's overtime in accordance with existing regulations as follows;

- Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays – Double Time

- Mondays to Friday – one and a half
Study leave, maternity leave and sick leave

Article 15 (D) (i-vi) of the conditions of service states that:

- Study leave with pay may be granted by the Service to employees who have served for minimum period of three years for approved courses leading to the improvement of their professional and academic qualifications;

- The grant of study leave with pay shall be governed by regulations relating to courses, duration, qualification, etc, as may from time to time be laid down by the Director-General, in consultation with the Union;

- Employees granted study leave with pay shall be required to enter into bond to return to the service;

- The Period spent on study leave with pay shall count for service and shall be increment earning subject to satisfactory work and conduct during the service;

- Employees who do not qualify under the prevailing regulations or who wish to undertake courses not approved for grant of study leave with pay may, at their own request, be granted study leave without pay; and

- Period of study leave without pay shall earn increment and shall count as service, provided the course is considered relevant to the service by the Director-General and is completed within the normal period.

On the issue of maternity leave, the conditions of service provides in Article 15 (F) (I-V), the following provisions:

- An employee is entitled to three months maternity leave on full pay on becoming pregnant on the certification of a medical officer or recognized medical practitioner;

- If on the expiry of the maternity leave a medical officer or recognized medical practitioner certifies that the employee concerned is not fit to assume duty, she may be granted an extension of the maternity leave up to three months but this period will be without pay;

- Maternity leave shall be additional to annual leave entitlement or leave earned in the year;

- Women employees shall be permitted, at their own request, to take additional unpaid leave of up to one year after child birth without loss of employment or of rights resulting from employment;

- On resumption of duty from maternity leave, female employees will be given the opportunity for the first six months to take two hours off duty each working day to enable them nurse their babies.

Housing and working conditions

With regards to housing, Article 17 (A-C) makes the following provisions:

- Housing loan may be granted to an employee subject to availability of funds to enable him own a house provided that such an employee has done not less than five years continuous service; and

- Rent advance of one million old Ghana Cedis (or hundred Ghana Cedis) may be granted to an employee to enable him rent a decent accommodation. This would be "subject to availability of funds.

The study area

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly is located at the centre of the Northern Region and shares boundaries with four districts as follows: East-Gonja District to the south; Central Gonja District to the south-west; Tolon/Kumbungu District to the west; Yendi to the East; and Savelugu/ Nanton District to the north (TMA, 2009). It occupies approximately 750km sq, which makes up 13% of the total land area of the Northern Region. Owing to its central location, the metropolis serves as a hub for all administrative and commercial activities in the region, doubling as the political, economic and financial capital of the region. The centre of Tamale hosts regional branches of Ghana's financial institutions and a considerable number of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), CARE International, Action Aid and World Vision, so much, so that Tamale is often referred to as the NGO capital of Ghana.

The metropolis experiences one rainy season, starting

from April/May to September/October with a peak season in July/August. The mean annual rainfall is 1100mm within 95 days of intense rainfall. Consequently, staple crop farming is highly restricted by the short rainfall duration. The dry season is usually from November to March. It is influenced by the dry North-Easterly (Harmattan) winds, while the rainy season is influenced by the moist South Westerly winds. The mean day temperatures range from 33°C to 39°C, while the mean night temperatures range from 20°C to 22°C. The mean annual day sunshine is approximately 7.5 hours.

The majority of the people in the metropolis are Dagombas, who constitute about 80% of the total population of 386,985, with females constituting 50.1%. Most of the inhabitants practise Islam. The major festivals of the people are Fire, Damba and Yam festivals, celebrated annually to showcase rich traditions of the people. The economy of the people is dominated by agribusiness, including services and small-scale industries. Major crops cultivated are maize, rice, sorghum, millet, yam, cassava, groundnut and soyabeans. Livestock, such as cattle, sheep, goats, birds and dogs, are reared in almost every household in Tamale Metropolis.

Tamale is the principal centre of education in the North of Ghana. Currently there are a total of 531 schools within the metropolis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of respondents

Age –Sex Distribution of respondents

Table 1 shows the age-sex distribution of the respondents. The mean age for the group was 41.5 years, while that for the males and females were 40.9 and 41.7 respectively. Thus, on the whole, the female respondents were about a year older than their male counterparts. The highest percentage of respondents (33.3%) was within the 31-40 age group. The implication is that a large number of respondents could work with GES for a long time, if well motivated.

Educational background of respondents

In terms of the educational backgrounds of the respondents the greatest percentage of current ASGES had GCE ordinary Level (26.7%), followed by HND (20.0%), DBS (15.6%) and B.Ed (13.3%) with 8.9% of the staff having M.Ed. In the case of the former staff, the greatest percentage of respondents had HND (66.7%), followed by B.com (22.1%) and Diploma or Teachers' certificate (5.6%). It can also be observed that, unlike the current staff, no former staff had a qualification higher than a Bachelors' degree.

Designation of respondents

The highest percentage of current staff was in the Administrative Officers/Clerks Category (40.0%), followed by the categories of Internal Auditors (20%), Accountants (17.8%), Directors (11.1%) and Typists (11.1%). In the case of the former staff, the highest percentage was recorded by Typists (47.1%), followed by Internal Auditors (26.5%), Administrative officers (20.6%) and Accountants (5.8%). It can be observed that none of the former staff reached the designation of directorship.

Work experience of respondents

The work experience of the staff is an important factor in the organization. The average number of years that the respondents had worked with GES was 17.4. However, the figure for the current staff (20.3) was almost twice that of the former staff (10.5).

Respondents' level of happiness with the Ghana Education Service

The current staff were asked to indicate their level of happiness with GES. Generally, staffs were happy with the organisation. While 77.8 percent of them indicated they were happy, the remaining 22.2 percent said they were not quite happy. The percentage (81.8%) of female members of staff who were happy with the organization was greater than that of their male counterparts (76.5%).

Respondents' preparedness to leave the Ghana Education Service

Asked whether they were prepared to leave the GES, 55.6 percent of the respondents were not ready to leave the Service). This is consistent with the earlier observation that the majority of staff members were happy with GES. However, while 24.4% were prepared to leave the Service, 20.0 percentage were undecided.

Respondents' preparedness to retire in Ghana Education Service

Not only were the majority of current staff happy with the organization, but they were also prepared to retire at GES. While 55.6 percent of the staff said they were prepared to retire at GES, 26.6 percent were unprepared to do so and 17.8 percent did not take a firm decision on whether or not to retire in the service. The main reasons given by the respondents for their preparedness to retire at GES were flexibility, less work pressure and job security associated with GES.

Table 1. Age-Sex Distribution of the respondents

Age-group	Males		Females		Total	
	No	%	No.	%	No	%
21-30	9	18	1	7.6	10	15.9
31-40	15	30	6	46.2	21	33.3
41-50	12	24	4	30.8	16	25.4
51-60	14	28	2	15.4	16	25.4
Total	50	100.0	13	100.0	63	100.0
Mean (\bar{x})	40.9		41.7		41.5	

Source: Field survey, 2008

Table 2. Respondents' views on why some ASGES Leave the Ghana Education Service

Reason	No.	%
Low motivation/morale	25	22.7
Low remuneration	38	34.5
No clearly defined staff development policy	9	8.2
Poor management–staff relationship and victimization	10	9.1
Inequity between teaching and non-teaching staff	2	1.8
Poor working environment	8	7.3
Lack of logistics	8	7.3
Late reimbursement of staff	8	7.3
To gain experience in other jobs	2	1.8
Total	*110.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2008 *More than the number of respondents because of multiple responses

Advantages of the present work of former staff over GES

On the advantages that their present jobs had over GES, 23.5 percent of the former staff indicated that the remuneration package in their current jobs was far better than that of GES. Similarly, 20.6 percent said they were having a better working relationship with their colleagues and management in their current jobs than they had in GES. Furthermore, while 14.7 percent said the working conditions in their present jobs were far better than that of GES, 11.7 percent indicated that their present jobs had a more comfortable office and better work environment. The other advantages were as follows: Appreciable level of motivation for staff (8.8%); Opportunity to advance in career (7.8%); Attractive staff welfare (5.9%); Current job related to profession and experience (2.9%); and current job at almost at par with GES (2.9).

Advantages of GES over the present work of former staff

Even though the former staff bemoaned the poor conditions of service in GES, they equally pointed out some of the advantages of GES over their current jobs as

follows: little or no pressure in GES (35.3%); Opportunity for study leave with pay (35.5%); Job Security (11.7%); Large area of operation (5.9%); Flexible policies (5.9%); and Noble profession that will be rewarded by God (5.9%). It must be recalled that as many as 50% of former ASGES indicated they had benefited from study leave at GES. In GES, a staff qualifies for study leave with pay after serving for three continuous years in a rural area (deprived) or five continuous services in an urban area. However, many private companies are not willing to grant their staff leave of absence as that would mean the recruitment of another person to fill the vacancy and this will increase the cost of operation. Furthermore, 11.8 percent of the respondents cited job security as an advantage that GES has over their present jobs. This is particularly so when compared with some Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which have a very short lifespan, and therefore, render their employees redundant after the phasing out of their projects.

Respondents' views on why some ASGES leave Ghana Education Service

Table 2 shows respondents' views on why ASGES leave the GES. The most identified reasons were low

Table 3. Measures to Retain Administrative Staff in Ghana Education Service

Measures	No	%
Non-discriminating study leave with pay and flexible bond for staff	4	3.0
Provision of regular in-service training for staff	16	12.1
Attractive motivational packages for staff	17	12.8
Improved conditions of service and remuneration for staff	52	39.4
Equity, respect and appreciation of staff efforts	15	11.4
Empowerment of lower level staff	1	0.8
Job security	2	1.5
Regular conduct of promotion examinations and interviews	12	9.1
Provision of working logistics	5	3.8
Enhanced welfare and retirement benefits	8	6.1
Total	*132	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008. *More than the number of respondents because of multiple responses

remuneration (34.5%), followed by low motivation (22.7%), poor management / staff relationship and staff victimization (9.1%) and no clearly defined staff development policy (8.2%). In the focus group discussions, there were some similarities and differences between the views of the senior staff and those of the junior staff. For instance, while both groups cited 'low remuneration' and 'low motivation' as the main reasons, the junior staff cited no 'clearly defined staff development policy' and 'poor management-staff relationship and victimization' as the third and fourth most important reasons respectively. However, 'poor working environment' and 'lack of logistics' were mentioned by the senior staff as the third and fourth most important reasons respectively.

It can be deduced from the results of the study that economic reasons are the main reasons why administrative staff leave the Ghana Education Service. This is consistent with the findings of many studies (Mba and Ikemefuna, 2012; Navis and Ukpere, 2010); Kyndt et al.; 2009; Mano et al., 2004; Griffeth et al., 2000). For instance, Mano et al. (2004) showed that people quit from their organizations due to economic reasons. Similarly, Griffeth et al. (2000) noted that salaries and salary-related variables have a great effect on employee turnover. Apart from good remuneration and motivational packages, the respondents were also concerned about their career opportunities and advancement. Navis and Ukpere (2010) also found that job content, financial rewards and lack of career opportunities motivated the Polytechnic staff of Namibia to leave. According to them, while three members of the teaching staff lamented that there were no clear opportunities for them within the institution, six administrative staff said they were not given any opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge they had gained on the jobs, hence their dissatisfaction with the institution. Also, one academic ex-staff member

explained that he had to apply for a promotion, but resigned because the process was too long.

Measures to retain ASGES

The respondents were asked to suggest measures that should be taken to retain ASGES at GES. As indicated in Table 3, the main measures suggested were: the conditions of service must be improved (39.4%); attractive motivational packages must be given to staff (12.8%); staff must be given regular in-service training (12.1%); and there should be equity, respect and appreciation of staff efforts (11.4%).

In the focus group discussions, while both junior and senior staff stressed 'improved conditions of service and remuneration' as a way of retaining ASGES, the former were particularly also concerned about 'ensuring equity, respect and appreciation of staff efforts' as well as 'empowerment of lower level staff'. The senior staffs were also particularly concerned about attractive motivational package for staff as well as provision of working logistics. Lastly, with respect to whether the conditions of service were being adhered to, the consensus was that this was not the case. Participants cited some specific ones such as delay in promotion; low allowances, non-payment of rent advance and housing loans; and non-cordial relationship between some directors and junior staff.

On the measures to retain staff, Onogri (2007) recommends that management must compensate employees adequately. However, Onogri was quick to add that employees must be paid, based on their performance, and, in addition, they should be given employee incentives such as individual bonus and lump sum bonus. Shoaib et al. (2009) also found career opportunities, supervisor support, work environment and

reward as well as work life policies as positively correlated with employee retention in the Telecom sector of Pakistan. Similarly, in the study by Moseley et al. (1996), the factors that could lead to the retention of nurses were identified as: the need to respect and recognize the achievement of staff; the valuing of expertise; the influence of flexible working and shift options; and the issue of adequate financial reimbursement. Lastly, in connection with management/staff relationship, Whitebook and Sakai (2004) found the following: staff should be made to feel valued and respected for their contributions; lines of authority must be clarified and team decision-making encouraged; and management should make available to all employees salary schedules, job descriptions, and evaluation and promotion procedures.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study was to examine the factors that influenced the retention or otherwise of ASGES in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study used the exploratory and descriptive research designs. Purposive as well as stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select a sample of 63 respondents, consisting of 45 current and 18 former ASGES. Primary data for the study were obtained through focus group discussions, using interview guides and individual questionnaire administration. The data were analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 11) Software. The results were presented in frequency tables and percentages.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. The ASGES in the Northern Region were generally satisfied and were not prepared to leave the organisation. They were willing to retire at GES;
2. The working conditions of GES were generally perceived to be poorer than those of other jobs. However, the former had advantages, such as little pressure, the opportunity for staff advancement and job security;
3. The poor nature of the working conditions was the main reason why ASGES left the Service;
4. To retain staff in GES, it was suggested that, among others, the GES working conditions are bettered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order that ASGES are retained, the following specific

recommendations, based on the conclusions, were made:

1. The government should review the conditions of the ASGES. The government should be committed in ensuring equity in the salaries and conditions of service through the implementation of the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS) to reduce the attrition rate of GES professionals. This move will help attract the best quality personnel who will be willing to stay to give off their best;
2. The management of GES should review the modalities on promotion and study leave with or without pay. A board should be constituted to that effect. This board should be well resources in order to effectively carry out its mandate;
3. The management of GES should encourage the two-way communication line which gives feedback on job satisfaction, working conditions, in-service training, and motivational needs of employees;
4. Management of GES should also improve upon the work environment, management/staff relationship and ensure equity in its dealings with ASGES; and
5. Regular surveys should be conducted by the MoE to update it on the motivational factors of ASGES. This will serve as a guide for the formulation and implementation of new policies to ensure job satisfaction;
6. In view of the findings and the limitations associated with this research, the following are recommended for further research: the use of comprehensive data for the computation of the attrition rate of ASGES; and the factors that militate against the full implementation of the conditions of service of the ASGES.

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