

# The Role of Motivation in the Retention of Employees: Evidence from Christian Service University College, Ghana

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**Abstract:** The study investigated the role of motivation in employee retention using Christian Service University College (CSUC) as the study area. The study adopted quantitative survey and randomly sampled 108 staff of CSUC. The findings indicated the institution currently operate relatively 'enviable' motivational schemes including salary, commuting allowance, free family medical care among others and its impact on employee motivation and retention is seemingly significant although with regard to non financial motivation, management has not pay much attention to it. The researcher therefore recommends that any retention strategy to be adopted by Christian Service University College should encompass both financial and non-financial elements of motivation in order to guarantee employee retention. The institution should work towards building better employee relationship; improving on the bonuses and allowances of staff and ensure equity and fairness. Finally, staff's personal and professional development must be given priority to ensure quality delivery of service to improve retention.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Staff, Retention, CSUC, Ghana, Satisfaction

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## 1. Introduction

Organizations all over the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are compelled to operate in a constantly and rapidly changing and complex global milieu. It is therefore very important for organizations to consciously engage or recruit the right calibre of qualified employees in order to survive in the current dispensation. As a result, most organizations/companies are searching vigorously for the most qualified and skilled employees from different areas, thereby, making human resource a highly competitive 'commodity' or factor that needs to be considered when managing a business or a corporate entity (Ljungberg & Larsson, 2005).

According to Arthur (2001), when Saratoga Institute Surveyed forty-five (45) Fortune 1000 Organizations across the United States, over 89% indicated that their organizations viewed employee retention as a strategic business issue. Other past studies have also indicated that attention has

gradually shifted from monetary reward systems towards the individual employee's welfare (The Economist, 2006). This, from the leader's point of view, according to Jacobsen & Thorsvik, (2002), could be a strenuous quandary which requires organizations to balance both job output (production) and the employee's needs in order to be successful. This means that employees are today very much aware of their intrinsic value.

The labour market today does not look like it used to be. Voluntary turnover is a huge problem for many organizations (Mitchel *et al*, 2001). Therefore, retention has become a very important topic for leaders in tackling the problem of job hopping. Organizations are finding other means of motivating their employees other than financial rewards in order to retain them towards the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. In this regard, Christian Service University College, the target organization for this study is no exception as it requires the loyalty and commitment of its personnel to significantly promote its functionality,

development and credibility.

The driving force behind the successes at Christian Service University College is its highly skilled manpower. However, these enviable achievements by Christian Service University College, both nationally and internationally, are gradually being plagued by a relatively high turnover rate in recent times. Although the institution currently operate relatively 'enviable' motivational schemes including salary, commuting allowance, free family medical care among others, its impact on employee motivation and retention is seemingly insignificant. This situation has therefore become a point of concern for the Management of the institution as it has the potential of incapacitating its efficiency and effectiveness. Hence, the importance of employee motivation and retention cannot be over emphasized. The ability to retain core employees of Christian Service University College stands the chance of lowering recruitment, replacement and training costs, and significantly improving on morale and productivity. Therefore, retaining key staff for organizational development can be a source of competitive advantage, (Siegler, 1999). Though salary still remains a crucial factor for employers in retaining their employees, is it the only way by which employees can be motivated to stay? Could employers do more or go beyond financial rewards in order to retain their employees? What roles does leadership style plays in eliciting commitment and loyalty from core employees and make them stay with a particular organization?

Seemingly, several research works have been conducted on the subject matter internationally, but Christian Service University College, as a unique private institution, with its own cherished values and traditions, have had little or no research work in this area of study. This situation appears to be inhibiting great efforts by scholars to deal with the current relatively high employee turnover rate it is grappling with.

Whereas some key stakeholders believe this phenomenon is due to effects of globalization, others attribute it to inadequate internal structures and measures such as failure of leadership to adopt the right managerial strategies to halt the trend. The main challenge, therefore, facing Christian Service University College today is how to retain its personnel for functionality, development and success.

Hence, the purpose of this research work is to investigate and analyze the relationship between leadership style and employee motivation as they relate to employee retention strategies within the institution. This study is also intended to use Christian Service University College as a case organization within the private institutions, to test the validity of information from previous research works in order to demonstrate how retention strategies work in practice.

## 2. Literature Review

Motivation is a big challenge for most managers as it emanates from within employees and significantly varies from person to person. This challenge dates back to pre-industrial era. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several

scholars including FW Taylor, Maslow and Herzberg propounded several theories regarding motivation (Martin, 2001). There are different approaches towards retaining employees. One of them is called continuance commitment, which is an attempt to influence the employee's affections. With regards to salary, this continuance commitment amounts to fairness. In order to increase retention therefore, salary levels should be reviewed and compared with other employers regularly, and ensuring that there is a clear link between performance and reward and that PRP (Performance Related Pay) systems are well developed. These factors are the basis for a successful retention of an employee. A competitive wage within the external labour market in contrast to fairness within the internal market to obtain a successful maintenance of employees is very important (Curtis and Wright, 2001). As contained in O'Connell (2001), workers who believe that they are fairly paid in relation to others within the organisation are more committed. Sigler (1999) also states that organisations must provide a competitive wage so that employees are paid fairly if they are to comply with organisational practices. Mulvey et al (2002) states that satisfaction with the process used to determine salary is more important in determining retention than the satisfaction with the actual amount of salary received. Shields (2007) went a bit deeper in the discussions of fairness. He states that employee perceptions about fairness of human resource management practice will have a major impact on how employees relate to their organisation. The outcome of an employee's reward must be assessed with fairness compared to the employee's effort and qualifications. Employees who feel that their outcome is either lower or higher than the ones they compare themselves to, will have a feeling of reward inequity. This lack of equity may, according to equity theory, take six different courses of action where the first one is to leave the organisation for a more rewarding position elsewhere.

It is believed that changes in reward systems are dependent upon generation shift (O'Malley, 2006). With reference to research done by Maritz, Inc., the new generation Y are more likely to change jobs since they are continually searching for new challenges and experiences, which forces employers to try new and innovative solutions to motivate this group of employees. This generation needs an effective reward and compensation package in order to create a new retention process that suits this generation. The differences in remuneration-methods until now have been within the group of age: an older work-force appreciates non-cash benefits, while younger members have been more impressed with immediate rewards (O'Connell, 2001). Thus, even though younger workers have been substantially more interested in money than the elder, this trend is now beginning to change.

Employee retention is a key challenge for both private and public organizations and is crucial to the long-term health and success of organizations. Although some may consider retention of the best employees within the organization a costly decision, they must understand that it may be more costly to recruit and train new employees than to retain

existing ones. Private firms and organizations have the advantage of lateral entry that helps prevent them from suffering employee shortages, while lateral entry is not common in Christian Service University College. Public sectors use this advantage by recruiting anybody, anytime, and at any level. However, with few exceptions, CSUC does not accept lateral entrants since the hierarchy and the job experience depends heavily on seniority. Therefore, it is far more important for the institution to retain people for at least a certain amount of time.

In addition to that, it is more costly to recruit and train people in the institution than in any other private organizations. While the primary costs for private organizations occur in advertising, recruiting, and on-the-job training, CSUC incurs advertising, recruiting, instructor and facility costs, and the opportunity costs of hiring higher quality individuals. Based on this, keeping the separation rate low is an important aspect of cost savings for CSUC.

The primary factors affecting a CSUC staff's retention decision do not differ by unit of the institution. The main factors are related to economic reasons, such as better job options with higher earnings and better living locations in the private sector. As recent developments have forced members to deploy more frequently and for longer periods, the desire to stay in a stable location has increased. Also, higher education gained by the staff during their service makes them more marketable and valuable to the private sector. This increases the chance that they will seek other alternatives. Another aspect of the retention decision depends on psychological reasons. Every individual graduates from school with great enthusiasm and is ready to serve for a lifetime career in any organisation. However, this enthusiasm decreases over the years with various incidents and problems occurring in the organisations. Some of which might be due to seniors' lack of leadership abilities; others are related to less effective and low quality subordinates. Unfortunately, these bad experiences cumulate over time and can lead to unwillingness to stay in CSUC. All of these reasons contribute to a low retention and can create manning shortages of experienced personnel. Eventually, low retention increases the level of required accessions and costs for CSUC and negatively affects the operational efficiency of personnel.

During the twentieth century, managers and researchers in HRM have had concerns about voluntary employee turnover (Lee & Maurer, 1997). In HRM literature, one of the main issues is that employers should retain human resources in order to obtain competitive advantage (Storey, 1995; Poole, 1999; Lindmark & Örnevik, 2006). There are many reasons for this to be true but two main factors can be initially mentioned. First, knowledge workers are relatively scarce in quantity. Second, the knowledge and expertise workers possess are vital for firm's competitiveness. Therefore, it is not unexpected to view retention as being of strategic importance because of the potential return on employee's expertise in the long term (McGovern, 1995). Treating staff as a long term resource accords with what Storey characterises as soft HRM, which focuses on carefully

nurturing and investing in human resources to make them committed and thereby successfully retaining their knowledge. This stands in contrast to hard HRM that views human resources as an expense of doing business instead of the "only resource capable of turning inanimate factors of production into wealth" (Storey, 1995).

In this brave new world of information, organizational profitability and individual well-being are connected to how well knowledge can be refined into creating competitive advantage. The perception of the employee's current job in relation to alternatives affects a person's propensity to change jobs (Coff, 1997). This statement indicates that retention is highly dependent on either developing a motivating work environment or decreasing alternatives. The latter is not achievable and the focus should therefore be on developing retention strategies. Frank and Taylor (2003) argue that there is no issue of greater importance than employee retention and is a growing concern for many employers.

In order to figure out how to keep employees from leaving, leaders and HR units spend large amounts of time, effort, and money. Reasons for people to leave are often unrelated to their jobs, where unexpected events or shocks can be the cause. Employees can on the other hand stay in their jobs because of attachments to the company, or the sense of affiliation (Mitchell *et al*, 2001). Therefore, it is extremely important for leaders to have a well-developed retention plan for each of their employees, in order to make them stay in the organisation and to help them motivate themselves to do a good and inspiring job. There are a few secrets to minimizing turnover according to Boyens (2007) and include: the proactive management of rewards, respect, and requirements of turnover (the three R's of turnover); Creation of a culture where all employees can thrive; implementation of proactive, consistent, and clear communication; knowing what motivates each employee and acting promptly and accordingly as well as doing a better job in recruiting/hiring the right employees.

Employee retention is increasing in importance as the competition for talent is high and still growing. The solutions to improve retention management are usually assumed to hinge on assessment, selection practices, and on increasingly comprehensive HR programs and services. Competitive salaries, comprehensive benefits, employee services, incentive programmes, and similar initiatives are important when attracting and hanging on to employees but pay and programmes are at risk of becoming commodities. It is not hard for a competitor to compete with individual elements of employment such as salaries and benefits (Taylor, 2002).

Boyens (2007) focuses on the reasons of involuntary turnover, voluntary turnover, and promotion for employees to leave a particular organisation. Furthermore, he says that the two types of turnover are the most devastating for organizations. The effect of voluntary turnover includes loss of performance, knowledge, expertise, relationship, and loss of the time and resources that it took to train the employee. Employees will balance the organizational themes rewards, respect, and requirements of turnover in their decision to

remain in a company, which Boyens calls the three “R’s” of turnover. *Rewards* are considered as base salary, commission, benefits, education opportunities, vacation time, and retirement plans. The employee needs to be *respected*, meaning the way they are treated, work environment, personal and professional growth opportunities, recognition and, implementation of their ideas. The *requirement* of having clear defined job duties, realistic goals, and expectations makes the employee feel affiliation to the organization.

Organisations that successfully reduce turnover align goals and expectations invest in their employees and professional development of their people. Input on a regular basis should be asked from employees, as well as consistently review any potential source of dissatisfaction.

Employee retention is one of the biggest unmet opportunities in organizations today (Taylor, 2002). When retention is a core value in the organization, good things happen to customers, employees, and the company. Through an integrated strategy you achieve the best results. The biggest recompense of a retention strategy is development of a culture that recognizes people as individuals. People need to be treated individually and be understood for their uniqueness in order for the organisation to be successful.

### 3. Methodology Adopted for the Study

The target population for the research comprised personnel of CSUC. A total figure of one hundred (108) respondents including Management, Senior Staff as well as Junior Staff were selected and sampled from all the units. This was done in order to have a more representative view of both senior members and subordinates without compromising on different working environments and cultures that exist in these services. The stratified random sampling technique was used. Due to the existence of heterogeneity in the research population, as reflected by Christian Service University College as well as rank or status within the institution, it was necessary to select a number of sampling units from each ‘stratum’ in order to ensure better representation of views from all the relevant segments. Samples therefore were proportionately allocated to various units and rank taking into consideration the population within each segment. The data collection instruments used was mainly questionnaires and it was directed to the respondents to solicit their views on their perception of motivational packages put up by Christian Service College and their influence on staff retention.

The study pre-tested the question items with personnel from the Garden City University College and Ghana Baptist University College. The rationale behind this exercise was to ascertain the level of understanding of the items in the questionnaire. Also it was to find out whether the replies provided the type of information needed or whether the respondents were misinterpreting any of the questions. After this exercise some of the items in the questionnaire were deleted and others were improved upon.

Completed questionnaire responses from the field were

edited and coded appropriately to make meaning out of them. Editing was done to correct errors, check for non-responses, accuracy and corrects answers. Coding was done to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the data. To arrive at the intended analyses, the participants’ responses were keyed into SPSS and several sets of statistical analyses were performed: frequency tables, percentages, mean point value, and median.

### 4. Data Analysis and Discussion

The paper seeks to investigate the role of motivation in the retention of employees using Christian Service as the study area. There was the need to analysis the demographic profile of the respondents used for the study since such analysis will help the researchers know the age, educational background, marital status and gender of these respondents. Such analysis was also very important since depending on how these demographic variables are skewed, they can affect the outcome of the research. Data collected through the questionnaire instrument shows the demographic profile of the respondents as represented in Table 1 below:

*Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.*

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	53.7
	Female	50	46.3
Age Group	20-30	19	17.6
	31-40	27	25.0
	41-50	34	31.5
	51 and above	28	25.9
Educational Level	University Degree	57	52.8
	Diploma	35	32.4
	Certificate A	3	2.8
	Other	13	12.0
Unit	Academic	29	26.9
	Non Academic	27	25.0
	Administrative	25	23.1
	Others	27	25.0
Position	Senior Member	31	28.7
	Senior Staff	44	40.7
	Junior Staff	28	25.9
	Others	5	4.6
Marital Status	Married	72	66.7
	Single	17	15.7
	Widow/Widower	8	7.4
	Others	11	10.2
Period with CSUC	4 years and below	17	15.7
	5-15years	72	66.7
	16-26years	12	11.1
	27-37years	7	6.5
Gross monthly salary	199 and below	2	1.9
	200-400	31	28.7
	401-601	32	29.6
	602 and above	43	39.8
Average monthly expenditure	199 and below	10	9.3
	200-299	28	25.9
	300-399	37	34.3
	400 and above	33	30.6

N=108

A total of 108 workers of CSUC were sampled for the study of which males form a little over half with 53.7%. There were no workers below 20 years of age. About a third (31.5%) of the respondents was within the age group of 41-50 while about a quarter each fell between the age group 31-40 and above 50 years with 25.0% and 25.9% respectively. Majority (52.8% of the employees are holders of degrees and only 2.8% hold certificates while 12.0% have other certificates. From the various units came 26.9%, 25.0%, 23.1% and 25.0% representing academics, non-academic and administrative, respectively.

Senior staff was the majority with 40.7% with 25.9% being junior staff. About two-third (66.7%) of the

respondents were married. Majority of the workers (84.3%) have over four years of working experience at CSUC. Only a few (1.9%) earns below Gh¢ 200.00 as gross salary while about 39.8% earns over Gh¢ 600.00.

It is obvious that one of the factors that retain employees is management's ability to provide self development opportunities so that employees can achieve their self actualization motive as propounded by Abraham Maslow. In line with this, the researchers through the questionnaire instrument wanted to find if the provision of self development opportunities motivates them to be loyal to their organization and Table 2 shows the results of the respondents.

**Table 2.** Independent T-test of Self-development Opportunities among Staff.

Variables	Position	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig (p=0.05)
I am satisfied with my job	Junior Staff	3.11	1.257	2.83	0.006
	Senior Staff	2.36	.967		
I am satisfied with the personal development	Junior Staff	2.14	1.407	0.99	0.324
	Senior Staff	1.86	.979		
I have been sponsored by my employer for further studies	Junior Staff	2.36	.678	-2.99	0.004
	Senior Staff	2.93	.950		
I am satisfied with the level of training given to me	Junior Staff	2.64	1.283	0.17	0.863
	Senior Staff	2.59	1.168		
Considering my qualification I have to receive higher salary than this	Junior Staff	2.14	.705	-3.72	0.001
	Senior Staff	3.27	1.500		
I am satisfied with the professional development	Junior Staff	1.54	.576	-3.97	0.001
	Senior Staff	2.52	1.229		

(N=108; 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Satisfied a bit, 5 = Very Satisfied).

Table 2 presented some level of significant difference in the level of satisfaction as with senior and junior staff. Junior staff turn to be relatively more satisfied with their jobs than the senior staff (M: Junior staff = 3.11, senior staff = 2.36;  $t=2.83$ ,  $p<0.006$ ) and the level of salary associated with qualification as the senior staff were more dissatisfied with their salaries. (M: Junior staff = 2.14, senior staff = 3.27,  $p<0.001$ ) whereas the senior staff were relatively more satisfied with their professional development (M: Junior staff = 1.54, senior staff = 2.52;  $t= -3.97$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and the sponsorship

for further studies (M: Junior staff = 2.36, senior staff = 2.93,  $t= -2.99$ ,  $p<0.004$ ).

In relation to working environment which can comprise of several factors, the researchers wanted to find out how they correlate with job satisfaction which intends influence the ability of employees to be loyal to their organization, correlations analysis was performed based on the data retrieved from the questionnaire and the results of the analysis can be seen in Table 3 below:

**Table 3.** Relationship between Working Environment and Job Satisfactory.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 NEE	1	.153	-.057	.130	.138	.090	.241 <sup>b</sup>	-.226 <sup>b</sup>	-.057	.007	.235 <sup>b</sup>	-.185	-.241 <sup>b</sup>	-.358 <sup>a</sup>	-.117
2 EDBS		1	-.121	-.184	.092	-.112	.171	.038	.138	-.047	.030	.029	.110	.115	.225 <sup>b</sup>
3 EEP			1	-.050	.005	.133	.002	-.073	-.030	-.042	-.085	-.076	-.134	-.017	.234 <sup>b</sup>
4 ECWE				1	.106	.178	.227 <sup>b</sup>	-.188	-.169	-.056	-.098	-.084	-.163	.151	-.138
5 EBE					1	-.040	-.052	-.085	-.171	.059	.118	-.176	-.045	-.057	-.117
6 CSS						1	.238 <sup>b</sup>	-.243 <sup>b</sup>	.107	-.085	-.083	-.146	-.183	.074	.000
7 WP							1	-.505 <sup>a</sup>	-.142	-.051	.088	-.184	-.094	-.328 <sup>a</sup>	-.050
8 CSMW								1	.295 <sup>a</sup>	.076	.045	-.030	.342 <sup>a</sup>	.225 <sup>b</sup>	.118
9 CHW									1	-.102	-.167	-.010	.132	.174	.286 <sup>a</sup>
10 WNM										1	.314 <sup>a</sup>	.103	-.198 <sup>b</sup>	.106	.001
11 MAE											1	-.048	-.099	-.211 <sup>b</sup>	-.204 <sup>b</sup>
12 RWE												1	.138	.140	.275 <sup>a</sup>
13 SWS													1	.131	.160
14 SLS														1	.382 <sup>a</sup>
15 SCP															1

1-5: (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). 9-15: (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied).

NEE	The nature of environment for employees	CHW	Considering my salary, I am always happy when working
EDBS	I work in an environment that I deserve better salary	WNM	I am supplied with needed materials
EEP	The environment enhances my productivity	MAE	Management appreciate my effort at the University College
ECWE	Employees complain about their working environment	RWE	My responsibilities are well explained to me
EBE	The environment that I work is far below expectation	SWS	I am satisfied with the welfare scheme of the institution
CSS	Considering the work I do, I am satisfied with the level of my salary	SLS	I am satisfied with the leadership style of my supervisor
WP	I am well paid	SCP	I am satisfied with my current position in the University College
CSMW	Considering my salary level, I do more work than I should		

From Table 3, it was clear that management appreciation of employees effort correlate positively with what is described as good working environment. An inverse relationship exist between welfare scheme ( $r= -0.241$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ) and the satisfaction with the leadership style of superiors. Comparatively, employees are satisfied with their current position in the University in relation with their environment ( $r= 0.234$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

Since organizations provide different motivational strategies to ensure the retention of their employees, the researchers wanted to find out the respondents level of satisfaction in relation to the motivational strategies provided by the organization under study and their influence to remain in the organization. The results based on the data obtained from the questionnaire distributed to the respondents can be illustrated in Table 4 below:

*Table 4. Mean Rating of Employee Motivational Strategies.*

	Variables	Mean	SD
1	I am able to balance my work with my family or private life	3.70	1.262
2	Monetary reward motivates most of the employees of the University College	3.53	1.256
3	I receive adequate support from my superiors and co-workers	3.37	1.308
4	I am given incentives that motivate me to give out my best	3.31	1.249
5	I am always given enough support by my welfare scheme when in trouble	3.22	1.292
6	There is a good relationship among the entire staff members	2.98	1.339
7	I share my problems with my colleagues	2.87	1.208
8	I intend to stay with my current employer	2.80	1.221
9	I am highly motivated by other things apart from money	2.78	1.179
10	Monetary motivation enhances performance	2.65	1.194
11	There is a cordial relationship among employees	2.40	1.143

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

From the study, it was realized that there are various motivational strategies that employees could explore. Most of these identified strategies however received very low mean ratings in a 5-point rating, suggesting that employees do not enjoy these opportunities and even if they do, not to any satisfactory degree. From Table 4, employees to some appreciable extent have been able to balance work with family and private life ( $M=3.70$ ;  $SD= 1.262$ ). Whiles monetary reward is seen to relatively motivate workers ( $M= 3.53$ ;  $SD = 1.256$ ), it does not necessarily enhances performance ( $M= 2.65$ ;  $1.194$  Employees receive some support from their superiors and co-workers ( $M= 3.37$ ;  $SD = 1.308$ ) and from the welfare scheme when in trouble despite its low rating ( $M=3.22$ ;  $SD= 1.292$ ). On the other hand, there is an anticipated high level of employees turnover evidence from the fact that, the intention to stay in Christian Service University attracted just a rating of  $M=2.80$ ;  $SD= 1.221$ .

### 5. Conclusion

The research seeks to establish the role of motivation in the retention of employees by finding out self-development opportunities that are available to workers, the relationship between working environment and job satisfaction and the factors which motivate workers using Christian Service

University College as the study area. It can be concluded based on the findings of the study that self-development opportunities that are common to workers in the study organization are personal development and company sponsored programmes and they correlate positively with employees’ ability to be loyal to their organization. Again the study has also proved a positive correlation between good working environment especially the provision of welfare schemes and adaptation of appropriate leadership style and retention of employees in the study organization. From the above conclusions, it is clear that retaining employees is not beyond the control of organizations since there is a chance for employers to provide motivational packages to help discourage losing their intangible assets to competitors.

### Recommendation for Further Research

Because of the stipulated period for the study, the research was limited to one organization and therefore it is suggested that, further research be done to cover other tertiary institutions to aid generalization of the results. Any new study should tackle very specific areas of employee retention and motivation and should also address the pull and push factors that drive employee turnover in the tertiary institutions.

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