

Research Article

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Satisfaction with work life under scrutiny: An evidential account of Colleges of Education Employees in Ghana

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Abstract: Career satisfaction of employees of colleges of education in Ghana was the main focus of this study. Being underpinned by the pragmatism philosophy and directed by Two factor theory of Herzberg in 1959, this research employed mixed methods (embedded approach) methodology to obtain data from the members of staff. A sample of 210 members of staff was selected through a multiphase sampling technique to provide quantitative data by filling surveys, whereas 5 heads of the institutions (principals) were selected by means of a purposive sampling technique for qualitative data. Out of a study population of 443 employees, 215 of them were selected. Descriptive statistical analysis tool (mean and standard deviation) with the support of Statistical Package for the Social Science (IBM SPSS) was utilised to do the analysis of the statistical data; however, the non-statistical data was transcribed and analysed thematically. It was found by the current research that the employees in the study institutions had a high level of happiness in their work (mean of overall means =3.38). On the whole, staff members were found to be highly satisfied with dimensions of job satisfaction such as work it-self (mean values of 3.67) and working conditions (mean value of 3.67), but they were dissatisfied with their pay/benefits (mean value of 2.64). The study recommends that the Ghana Government, through its agencies like the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), should run workshops for colleges' officials about the relevance of career contentment and the need to enhance staff satisfaction. Colleges should also design suitable policies concerning the rapid payment of fair allowances and remuneration.

Keywords – Academic staff, Colleges of Education, Dimensions of job satisfaction, Job satisfaction, Non-academic staff

1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of employee satisfaction in the organisational and sociological settings of the school cannot be overstated. Being a crucial part of an organisational system, personnel are to be supported, cared for and resourced to facilitate their high productivity and the establishment of positive socio-psychological link with the organization, hence the need to attach critical importance to occupational satisfaction. Occupational satisfaction is considered as one of the key determinants for institutional success and as such, it needs to be handled with all the seriousness it deserves (Panda et al., 2025), otherwise it can degenerate into job dissatisfaction with the consequences of developing counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) (Yean, Johari, Yahya & Chin, 2022; De Clercq et al., 2019).

Evidence from literature points to the fact that career dissatisfaction and its counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) are disturbing attitudes that have negative impact on organisational reputation, performance, employee

morale and behaviour, as well as their intention to stay and work for the organisation (Sayeed & Nazir, 2019; Nawaz et al., 2018). These damaging and repulsive behaviours can be corrected by the introduction and enhancement of conditions which boost the occupational pleasures of employees.

Satisfaction of job can be considered as exciting and positive feelings as well as helpful relationships experienced by workers such as employees in educational settings with respect to their roles, duties, and functions that enhance their acceptance to work (Rosli & Ibrahim, 2021). Hence, those who are content about their work have positive inner joy and high socio-psychological fulfilment for their career. In the words of Baxi and Atre (2024), job satisfaction is the extent of happiness obtained by the workforce concerning different aspects of their jobs, and this feeling of happiness is very important for employee well-being and occupational efficacy because a happy workforce is dedicated and loyal to their organisations. For their part, Arifin and Mardikaningsih (2022) expounded that happiness from one's career is the magnitude of joy the individual experiences with regard to performance and output which includes factors in the areas of pay, working environment, opportunity for employment advancement, relationships among colleagues, as well as administrative and management style of the leaders of the institution. In a similar vein, Lestari et al. (2020) asserted that job satisfaction can be conceptualized as a form of emotional, affective and sentimental reaction demonstrated by workers to the executed job.

It is clear from the above deliberations on job satisfaction that career satisfaction among members of staff in colleges of education can be considered as happy, pleasant, and enjoyable moments of working life where the members of staff experience quality physical, mental, and inner joy and comfort as a result of a quality working environment and output achieved. Therefore, if the colleges of education provide supportive factors such as enhanced salaries, a positive enabling environment, resources for work advancement, and good working relationships, then workers would feel highly connected with the colleges, hence improvement in satisfaction in the colleges.

Workers who are happy about their occupation display higher levels of loyalty and devotion to their work and institutions. Yustina and Valerina (2018) revealed that in situations where workers, such as those found in colleges of education are content with their job, it becomes less stressful and work becomes more like playing moments. Job satisfaction makes it enjoyable for employees to go to work every day, and it generates a positive influence on performance of work, psychological wellness, motivation, enthusiasm, and physical health. Thus, workers who are content with their career are committed to working for a lifetime with their institutions to improve their efficiency and reduce the tendency of staff leaving the organisation.

Studies have shown that career contentment of workers can be boosted through dimensions or factors such as salary, remunerations, prospects for promotions, supervision, interactions among co-workers, conditions of work, nature of work and being acknowledged for job done (Cheng et al., 2024; Kumar, 2021; Muskat & Reitsamer, 2020), and this is in tandem with Herzberg Two-factor Theory (1959) which stipulates that work satisfaction consists of two different factors- motivators which include responsibility and promotion (advancement), as well as hygiene factors that comprise inter-personal relations and working conditions.

Studies conducted on employees' career satisfaction have established levels of job satisfaction of workers which are high, moderate and low levels. The presence of high level of job satisfaction among workforce in institutions such as colleges results in high productivity, efficiency, unity at work, dedication and punctuality among members of staff (Yuan et al., 2022; Katsantonis, 2019). Bowling, Sessa and Notari (2021) observed that members of staff who have a high level of career satisfaction demonstrate positive and acceptable behaviours which include enhanced performance, less absenteeism and better college environment. These positive inner feelings and behaviours have the tendency to increase in the employees of the colleges of education the enthusiasm to accept additional responsibilities, improve quality performance, forge cordial relation and prefer to remain in the colleges for a life time.

Conversely, according to literature, the existence of low level of happiness in employment among members of staff is disastrous and has a negative effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of personnel in the colleges. For

example, workers who have difficult situations and are affected by negative motivators display abnormal behaviours in the college. These behaviours which are classified as counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) may include turnover intentions, low productivity, slowness, partial involvement in college activities, and absenteeism (Yean, Johari, Yahya & Chin, 2022). These characteristics can be very threatening to the success and survival of colleges of education.

However, employees with moderate job satisfaction are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This category of workers are possibly inspired to partake in the activities in the colleges but may not exert too much effort in accomplishing work.

From the foregoing discussions on career contentment and its likely effect on workers' comfort, safety, and productivity, it has become appropriate for institutions such as educational institutions to learn about their employees and provide them with more care in order to enhance their motivation and satisfaction for efficient output in the institutions.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Colleges of education are educational institutions of higher learning that train teachers academically and professionally to offer quality teaching delivery to learners in basic schools. Both academic and non-academic staff members of these institutions carry out many and diverse functions, and more especially, as colleges have been migrated into tertiary status, their work duties have been increased. These staff members, particularly, the academic staff are expected to increase their workout and quality in the areas of teaching, research and publications, supervision of students' project work, offering professional guidance and support in teaching practice (on-campus and off-campus) to their students, offering community service and performing other official duties as deemed fit by their colleges and other educational agencies. Despite the rise in the responsibilities and roles of these staff members, it appears the commensurate conditions and factors that will enhance their performance level are not adequate; hence, there is a need to investigate the provision of these needed conditions/factors, and how these conditions have impacted their satisfaction level for efficiency, effectiveness, and quality delivery.

Also, it appears most of the research investigations conducted on these study variables were done in developed countries; as a result, there is a paucity of studies on these study variables, particularly within the situations of colleges of education in Ghana, especially in the Eastern Region. In Ghana, it seems that research in connection with the employment satisfaction of personnel in educational institutions (Frimpong et al., 2016; Baffour-Awuah, 2015) was focused on teachers, but failed to include non-teaching staff. Moreover, it appears many of these studies have concentrated on senior high schools, polytechnics, and universities to the neglect of colleges of education (Akosah & Akosah, 2022; Frimpong et al., 2016; Baffour-Awuah, 2015). The present research investigation, therefore, aims at investigating the level of occupational happiness with its dimensions or factors that impact the happiness of workers in these educational institutions. The major focus of this research was to investigate the job contentment level of staff members of the colleges of education in Ghana. The following research question guided the study. What is the career satisfaction level of employees in colleges of education in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

3. LITERATURE SURVEY

3.1. Theoretical framework

This study was underpinned by the Two-factor Theory introduced by Frederick Irving Herzberg in 1959. This theory, which emphasises the motivator-hygiene factors and conditions, tries to describe how satisfaction or dissatisfaction in organizations increases or derails the productivity of workers. The Herzberg theory concentrates on the working results that are achieved as a result of happiness or unhappiness obtained by an employee in an institution. The theory stipulates that some dimensions of an occupation cause happiness in workers (motivators), while some other dimensions of it cause unhappiness and frustration (hygiene factors).

According to Herzberg (1959), factors that increase subordinates' happiness in an employment (motivator elements) include factors like accomplishment, recognition for job done, responsibility for work, prospects for promotion (advancement), as well as the job itself. Conversely, the factors that bring unhappiness to employees (hygiene factors) include supervision, organisational policy and administration, wages, job security, inter-personal relations, and working conditions (Ihensekien & Joel, 2023). Herzberg maintained that motivators are linked to the job contents, but hygiene factors are associated with the job context. Therefore, happy workers attribute their happiness to inherent (internal) factors, while workers who are unhappy assign their behaviour to external (extrinsic) factors.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that it helps to explain how certain features of work can lead to the achievement of job satisfaction, while other aspects of the job can result in job dissatisfaction among members of staff. It can be inferred from this theory that, in colleges where there is an enriched provision of motivators such that the subordinates are given support for promotion, are recognised for work done, and are provided with resources for undertaking their work efficiently, their job contentment is expected to be high.

However, if the subordinates are made to experience poor hygiene factors such as non-payment of allowances, deprived working conditions, and poor inter-personal relationships, then staff frustration may occur which may lead to staff dissatisfaction. Therefore, the reverse of factors and conditions may contribute to the reverse of staff members' satisfaction.

3.2. Dimensions of job satisfaction

Job contentment of employees is found to be affected by varied dimensions or factors which have the propensity to either increase or decrease it. Ogueyungbo et al. (2023) opined that job satisfaction which is the extent of desirable or undesirable feelings of a worker about his/her career, is impacted by factors such as remuneration, leadership, acknowledgment of staff for work done, work setting, and institutional culture. Raza et al. (2023) seem to share a similar perspective with Ogueyungbo et al. (2023) when they argued that dimensions that influence job satisfaction include remuneration, promotional prospects, supervision, colleagues, nature of work, participation in decisions, and autonomy. Again, dimensions of career contentment include payment of salaries, work security, freedom, and working conditions (Wang et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024).

Linh (2018) accentuated that factors or dimensions that influence occupational contentment of subordinates can be categorised into personal conditions, internal conditions, and external conditions. Conditions that are specifically linked to the features of the job, for instance, responsibility and nature of the job can be termed as internal conditions, but conditions that are associated with work settings, for example, the environmental conditions of the work, wages, prospects for promotions, inter-personal relationships are known as external conditions, whilst personal conditions are socio-demographic traits of the workers such as sex, level of education and status of marriage. Meanwhile, most of these conditions can be classified as conditions of the environment and personal conditions (Pan, Shen, Liu, Yang & Wang, 2015).

As a way of assessing occupational happiness of academic and non-academic staff members in the study institutions, the current research adapted some portions of job satisfaction dimensions as used by Linh (2018) and Raza et al. (2023). Some changes were made to the adapted dimensions to make them more suitable and fitting to the current study. The dimensions of career satisfaction adapted in this study are responsibility, nature of work, promotion, recognition, supervision, colleagues/ interpersonal relationships, working conditions, college and administrative policies, as well as pay (benefits).

3.3. Empirical review

This study is supported by the following empirical review on researches conducted on the study variables. For instance, Akosah and Akosa (2022) conducted a research investigation into the assessment of career contentment of public universities' workers in Ghana, with the focus on Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) members of staff. The researchers collected data from 310 workers through a questionnaire which was analysed with the Chi-Square test of independence. It emerged from the study that the workers were happy in their jobs. Furthermore, the study indicated that factors which contribute to the satisfaction of staff were work itself, achievement, a comfortable relationship with colleagues, advancement, and responsibility.

Nguyen, Pham and Nguyen (2025) conducted an empirical investigation into the association of employee satisfaction, work, and devotion among workers in Vietnam's travel agencies. The study utilised the software of SMARTPLS 4 to analyse survey data from 390 employee respondents. The findings revealed that the workers were moderately happy in the organization.

In a study conducted by Gazi, Yusof, Islam, Amin, and Senathirajah (2024) in which the researchers analysed the data on the effect of career contentment on employee behavior in industries, the findings revealed that staff satisfaction was high, which positively affected performance.

Nanyeale and Yeboah (2025) did a case study research on motivation and occupational happiness in institutions of higher learning, with the focus on a private university in Ghana. The study employed a census technique to collect quantitative data from the respondents using a closed-ended questionnaire, and the analysis was done with regression, means, and standard deviation. The study found that the workers were not very happy with the institution's incentives, especially with regard to overtime compensation and official transportation.

Domie, Tagoe, Dodzi and Newton (2024) concentrated their study on investigating factors that bring happiness to healthworker in the District of North Gonja in the Savannah Region of Ghana. The researchers utilised the census method, and with the use of a questionnaire, data were collected from 204 respondents. After analysing the data with descriptive statistics, regression, and correlation tests, the study revealed that 75% of healthcare workers were dissatisfied with their careers. Further, the research findings showed that crucial factors that contributed positively to job satisfaction included prospects for professional growth and manager relationships, but unfriendly institutional culture, poor remuneration and benefits, unreliable balance of work-life, and poor internal employment fulfilment were some of the elements that produced employment dissatisfaction with workers.

Masuku, Esterhuyzen and Ramajoe (2025) found in their study that examined the causes of employee occupational commitment and contentment in South Africa that administrative officers had a relatively high level of job satisfaction.

In an empirical study conducted by Anning (2024) into the inter-relationship between self-efficacy, contentment, and work involvement of educators of STEM educational institutions in Ghana, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach, specifically multiple case studies with semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather qualitative data from 10 STEM teacher educators (participants) from three colleges of education. The data was analysed thematically, and it emerged from the study that STEM teacher educators in Ghana were satisfied with the job they do. The teachers were specifically happy with the positive school culture, supportive professional development opportunities, the work itself, and colleagues in the college. The findings further revealed a high linkage among self-efficacy, contentment, and work involvement.

In a quest to contribute to the intellectual discourse on occupational contentment and factors impacting individuals' career contentment, Wang (2024) conducted a systematic review of various studies conducted on work satisfaction. The study revealed that dimensions such as institutional environment, pay and benefits, occupational planning, and leadership/management styles are positively associated with employee happiness. It was suggested by the researcher that, for institutions to improve staff gratification on the job, there is a need for limiting power detachment, establishing a mentor/mentee scheme, and organising regular meetings for employees' voices to be heard.

In order to determine which factors enhanced job satisfaction of workers, Lee, Yang and Li (2017) carried out a study into the effect of occupational satisfaction on turnover intentions. A stratified random sampling method was employed to sample 418 early-career employees from whom quantitative data were obtained by the use of a questionnaire, which was analysed statistically. The study found that individual personal growth had the maximum effect on worker satisfaction, before remuneration, welfare, work itself, inter-personal relationship, and leader behaviour.

Sam (2018), in an attempt to examine job satisfaction and productivity of the workforce in certain financial institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis, employed a descriptive research design to gather data from 74 employees. After the analysis with frequency tables, mean and standard deviation, and multivariate regression, it emerged from the findings that dimensions such as reward and remuneration, advancement in work, interrelationships, and safety at work were crucial for the enhancement of job satisfaction and productivity of workers.

In Tanzania, Lukosi (2015) conducted a study into employees' job dissatisfaction and organisational performance. The research investigation employed a case study design, and by employing a simple random sampling technique and stratified random sampling techniques, 125 respondents were sampled for both quantitative and qualitative data which were analysed with content analysis, frequencies, and percentages. It emerged through the findings that job dissatisfaction was caused by factors such as salaries and bonuses, prospects for promotions, institutional policies, achievement, conditions at work, quality of supervision, recognition, and responsibility. The respondents indicated that their allowances were inequitably paid, policies regarding salaries were unclear, and promotions were unfairly carried out.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study utilised the mixed methods approach, particularly the embedded approach, where data was obtained with the use of close ended questionnaire and an interview guide. Much statistical data and few non-statistical data were collected concurrently from the colleges, analysed separately, and compared to determine if the findings confirmed or disconfirmed each other (George, 2025; Creswell, 2014). The embedded mixed methods were utilised to offer the opportunity to get in-depth knowledge and understanding of the research problem (Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah, 2018).

Again, a descriptive survey design was utilised by the present research investigation which offered an opportunity to contact many employees of the study institutions for data through the use of a questionnaire and interviews in order to examine the career satisfaction level of the workers and the dimensions that enhanced or impeded their satisfaction (Creswell, 2014).

The heads of the study institutions (principals), teachers, and non-teachers of these institutions (five colleges) constituted the accessible population of the present study, with a population size of four hundred and forty-three (443). These study institutions are Abetifi Presbyterian College of Education, Kibi Presbyterian College of Education, Presbyterian College of Education, Presbyterian Women's College of Education, and Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) College of Education. As espoused by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a population of 440 in a quantitative study should have a sample size of 205. However, for the purpose of improving upon the generalisability of the present research, a sample size of 210 was selected for the quantitative aspect. The selected sample for the quantitative aspect comprised (Abetifi Presbyterian College of Education = 41 staff; Kibi Presbyterian College of Education = 38 staff; Presbyterian College of Education = 51 staff; Presbyterian Women's College of Education = 37 staff; Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) College of Education = 43 staff). The sampling technique employed in the quantitative aspect of this study was multiphase sampling (simple random sampling, proportionate sampling, and stratified random sampling), but for the qualitative aspect, purposive sampling was used.

In this regard, the study institutions were selected by utilising the simple random sampling technique. Afterwards, the members of staff were apportioned among the colleges through the use of proportionate sampling, after which, the departments were selected through stratified sampling. Lastly, the samples were selected from these departments through the use of simple random sampling.

In connection with the qualitative aspect of the study, 5 principals were selected from the study institutions through the use of purposive sampling because the principals are part of the individuals who could provide appropriate data to help address the research problem under investigation (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Hence, the total population for the study was 215.

Survey instruments (questionnaire and interview guide) were used for gathering the statistical and non-statistical data, respectively. For the questionnaire, a rating scale with five points which counted as follows: “Neither Agree nor Disagree” = 1; “Strongly Disagree” = 2; “Disagree” = 3; “Agree” = 4, and “Strongly Agree” = 5 was used. Analysis of the statistical data was done with descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation), but the non-statistical data was transcribed and analysed thematically. Means and standard deviation were chosen to analyse the statistical data because the data were measured on an interval scale with normal distribution, and the responses were measured numerically (Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah, 2018).

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Data analysis

5.1.1. Research question: What is the career satisfaction level of employees in Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

This research question was addressed by the use of both statistical and non-statistical data. The responses (data) from the respondents and participants were analysed by employing statistical and non-statistical data analysis tools (means and standard deviations, and thematic analysis). In the analysis, mean values above 3 ($(1+2+3+4+5)/5 = 3$) indicate that most of the employees agreed with the statement, whereas a mean figure of less than 3 signifies that most of the employees were not in agreement. Table 1 presents the summary of the responses.

Table 1: Career Satisfaction Level of Employees in Colleges of Education

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Responsibility		
I have a responsibility towards my work.	4.53	.54
I am not accountable for my actions in the college.	2.60	.69
I am responsible for planning my work each day.	4.36	.64
I do not have the freedom to make my own decisions at work.	2.92	.85
My principal does not back me up if I want to do something for the college	2.65	.76
*Overall Mean	3.41	
Nature of work		
I am provided with the opportunity to use a variety of skills in my work.	4.31	.63
My work in this college is important to help student- teachers succeed.	4.50	.55
My work does not provide me with the chance to develop new methods.	2.70	.73

My work is interesting.	4.32	.56
My work encourages creativity/imagination.	4.36	.64
I am indifferent/uninterested towards my work.	2.51	.67
The work I do in this college is pleasant.	4.21	.68
Sometimes I feel my job is meaningless.	2.48	.71
*Overall Mean	3.67	
Advancement/Promotion		
My work provides me with the opportunity for advancement/improvement.	4.30	.59
Staff members are given the opportunity to fill higher positions when positions become vacant.	4.12	.75
I am not getting ahead in my present job position.	2.88	.76
I am provided with opportunities/ support for promotion.	4.17	.73
My work provides limited support for advanced studies and training.	2.82	.84
*Overall Mean	3.66	
Recognition		
I receive recognition when I perform a satisfactory job.	4.10	.86
My principal praises good work by staff members.	4.23	.74
I feel my work is unappreciated.	2.80	.76
No one tells me that I am good at the job.	2.81	.76
*Overall Mean	3.49	
Supervision		
The college has a fair performance appraisal system for members of staff.	3.98	.83
The college provides me with assistance/support when I need it.	3.94	.71
Every member of staff is treated equally by my principal.	3.83	.91
My principal is not willing to listen to suggestions from staff.	2.60	.69
My college provides me with the materials needed to do my work.	3.88	.85
My principal shows too little concern in the challenges of members of staff.	2.72	.81
My principal turns members of staff against one another.	2.40	.66
My principal makes me feel uncomfortable.	2.49	.67
*Overall Mean	3.23	

Colleagues/ Interpersonal Relationship		
I get along well with my colleagues at work.	4.36	.57
I like the people with whom I work in college.	4.24	.56
My colleagues stimulate me to do better in college.	4.02	.66
My principal is unfair to me.	2.56	.69
I am provided with suggestions by my colleagues about how good I do my work.	3.98	.63
I do not receive support from my colleagues at work.	2.80	.68
I do not seem to like my colleagues at work.	2.48	.63
I have made lasting friendships among my colleagues.	4.06	.66
*Overall Mean	3.56	
Working Conditions		
Working conditions in this college can be improved.	4.35	.52
Working conditions in my college are comfortable.	3.81	.77
Working conditions in my college could not be worse.	3.59	.90
The physical surroundings in my college are unpleasant.	2.72	.69
Working conditions in my college are good.	3.90	.76
*Overall Mean	3.67	
College Policies and Administration		
The policies in my college are not clearly defined.	2.97	.80
I make the effort to know the policies of my college.	3.98	.60
I mostly have the feeling that I do not know what is happening in my college.	2.91	.79
I am not interested in the policies of my college.	2.56	.63
*Overall Mean	3.11	
Pay/Benefit		
I am content with the benefits I get from the college.	2.19	.90
The benefits this college offers me are equally as good as what other institutions offer.	3.40	1.06
The benefit packages in this college are equitably distributed among members of staff.	3.47	1.01
There are sufficient rewards for staff members who work in this college.	2.25	.91

The college provides me with benefits that are due to me.	2.28	.98
I am convinced that my efforts are rewarded rightly.	2.22	.90
*Overall Mean	2.64	
Mean of Overall Means*	3.38	

Source: Field Data, 2024

From Table 1, the results indicate that, for responsibility, most of the employees did agree to the statements, “I have a responsibility towards my work” (Mean = 4.53, SD = .54) and “I am responsible for planning my work each day” (Mean = 4.36, SD = .64). However, it can be observed that members of staff disagreed to the statements such as “I am not accountable for my actions in the college” (Mean = 2.60, SD = .69). Judging from the overall mean (3.41), it can be argued that respondents were satisfied with the responsibilities placed on them in the colleges.

With regard to nature of work, most of the employees indicated their agreement to the assertions that “My work in this college is important to help student- teachers succeed” (Mean = 4.50, SD = .55) and “My work encourages creativity/imagination” (Mean = 4.36, SD = .64). On the other hand, respondents disagreed to statements such as, “Sometimes I feel my job is meaningless” (Mean = 2.48, SD = .71). Considering the overall mean (3.67), it can be observed that, the employees were happy with the nature of work prevailing in the colleges.

With the issue of advancement/promotions in the colleges, most of the subordinates were of the opinion that their work provided them with the opportunity for advancement/improvement (Mean = 4.30, SD = .59) and also, they were provided with the opportunities/ support for promotion (Mean = 4.17, SD = .73). Conversely, it emerged from the study that respondents were not in agreement with the statements like “I am not getting ahead in my present job position” (Mean = 2.88, SD = .76). The overall mean (3.66), indicates that respondents were satisfied with their advancement or promotional opportunities in the colleges.

With the issue of recognition in the study institutions, most of the respondents agreed that, their principals praised good work by staff members (Mean = 4.23, SD = .74) and when they did a satisfactory job, they received recognition (Mean = 4.10, SD = .86). However, the respondents disagreed that, their works were not appreciated (Mean = 2.80, SD = .76). It can be ascertained from the overall mean (3.49), that respondents were satisfied with the recognition they received in the colleges.

In relation to supervision in the institutions, most of the employees indicated their agreement to the fact that their colleges had a fair performance appraisal system for members of staff (Mean = 3.98, SD = .83), and that, the colleges provided staff with assistance/support when they needed it (Mean = 3.94, SD = .71). On the contrary, it is clear that, principals did not make staff to feel uncomfortable (Mean = 2.49, SD = .67). The overall mean (3.23), indicates that the respondents were slightly satisfied with supervision.

Considering the issue of colleagues and interpersonal relationship, the respondents agreed to the statements that “I get along well with my colleagues at work” (Mean = 4.36, SD = .57) and “I like people with whom I work in the college” (Mean = 4.24, SD = .56). But in a sharp opposition, it is revealed that members of staff disagreed to the statements such as “My principal is unfair to me” (Mean = 2.56, SD = .69). Judging from the overall mean (3.56), it can be observed that respondents were satisfied with colleague/inter-personal relationships that they enjoyed in the colleges .

It is said that every worker wants better working conditions to stay happy on the job, and with this demand of working conditions, most of the workers believed that their working conditions in the college could be improved (Mean = 4.35, SD = .52) and that their working conditions were good (Mean = 3.90, SD = .76). However, they disagreed to the statement that the physical surroundings in their colleges were unpleasant (Mean = 2.72, SD = .69). In view of the overall mean (3.67), it can be said that the respondents were satisfied with their working conditions.

On the issue of college policies and administration, the staff agreed that they made the effort to know their colleges' policies (Mean = 3.98, SD = .60), but they disagreed that their colleges did not clearly define their policies (Mean = 2.97, SD = .80). It can be judged from the overall mean of (3.11), that the respondents were slightly satisfied with college policies and administration.

Lastly, with reference to pay and benefits, most of the members of staff agreed to the statements that "The benefit packages in this college are equitably distributed among members of staff" (Mean = 3.47, SD = 1.01), and "The benefits this college offers me are equally as good as what other institutions offer" (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.06). On the contrary, members of staff indicated their disagreements to the statements such as "I am content with the benefits I get in the college" (Mean = 2.19, SD = .90), and "There are sufficient rewards for staff members who work in this college" (Mean = 2.25, SD = .91). It can be inferred from the responses on pay and benefits that, members of staff were dissatisfied when it comes to their pay and benefits issues with the overall mean of 2.64.

As it can be inferred from Table 1, the Mean of the overall means is 3.38, which is higher than the standard mean of 3.00. This result indicates that the teachers and non-teachers in the study institutions had a high level of career satisfaction.

The researcher wanted to delve deeper into the responses of the participants concerning their level of career satisfaction and which dimension/factors resulted in high or low job satisfaction in the employees. Hence, interviews were conducted to that effect. The interviews revealed diverse levels of career satisfaction among different employees in different colleges. In some colleges, most of the teachers and non-teachers were content with their careers, but in some other colleges, some of the employees were discontent with their jobs. Yet, in a certain college, the subordinates shared mixed reactions in contentment with their job. The study institutions who had many of their workers been happy recorded the following responses from the subordinates:

Now....I can confidently mention that I'm happy. For the past decade I've worked here.. (smiles)... however, my most happiest time is now, about three years ago.. Absolutely..in this college I've served under three principals but this is the first time of my happiness. I was unhappy with the past principals, hence,my decision to quit my job. But thankfully, this principal came in. As at now, my office has received refurbishment and I have the official equipment to undertake my duties. My office is duly acknowledged and recognised and I'm involved in management decisions of my college. (48-year-old male non-academic staff member, College E)

A different employee had this to say:

I am very happy with the job because I have all that I want to work with and this helps me to meet my job demands on time. Eehh.. I am satisfied because the principal motivates us and encourages us. He gives us respect and what is due us. We are treated well and so if I am to rate it, I will say that I am 80% satisfied. (47 years old female non-academic staff member, College B).

For the colleges that had staff members experiencing low career satisfaction, these are some of the reactions from their subordinates:

My brother... some of us have not been treated well at all. I have not been treated fairly. I have some bitterness in me but all the same I thank God that I have only about one and half years for retirement. That alone can help me, but for treatment on this campus, since the principal came, in-fact a lot of us are victims in terms of harsh treatment. I attended the funeral of my late sister with the permission I sought from the administration, and when I returned, my principal said even though I sought permission I had overstayed (2 weeks) and a whole lot of issues happened, but to me I am not bothered because it is a human institution. (58 years old male academic staff member, College D).

The principals of the various institutions were contacted to obtain their opinions on how happy their subordinates were. A principal shared his views as:

(smiles)...my staff members are so happy such that when I need them to assist me to do something for the college, they do it with much pleasure. They know that, their efforts are rewarded.... they will not disappoint me. (50-year-old principal)

Another principal retorted:

They are very happy but I know that the lazy ones would not be happy with how I do my things. You know..... I am a principled person and even though they may be unhappy, they perform their duties well too. (49-year-old principal).

As shown in Table 1, the outcome of the study indicate that the college workers had high levels of occupational happiness on dimensions such as work it-self (3.67), quality of working conditions (3.67), promotional prospects (3.66), and inter-personal relations and interactions among workers (3.56). The narratives from the subordinates in the form of interviews confirmed these findings.

One subordinate commented:

I'm so happy in the college. You see... I've been given an accommodation on campus and it has reduced some of my burdens (31 years old male non-academic staff member, College E)

A 51-year-old male teaching staff in College B added this:

I recall the time our Transitional Support Fund (TSF) was paid, the principal didn't take any amount from it for himself, but he gave all of the funds to us for conducting research and publications that would support our promotions. I am very happy...mmmhh!

Meanwhile, Table 1 indicates employees' disappointment with their pay/benefits (2.64). This finding was corroborated by participants during the interview. One participant had this to say:

I took the sports team of the college on different times to partake in inter-colleges sporting activities. We were at the place for some days, and after the events, when we came back, I was told by the college to complete a form for night allowance. I did fill the form but the college did not honour the payment up to date. It's really hurting. (58-year-old male academic staff member at College D).

5.2. Discussions

Generally, it was found that the employees of the study institutions expressed high level of career satisfaction. Nonetheless, a number of staff in some of the institutions indicated discontentment in some dimensions of jobs.

Akosah and Akosa (2022) conducted a study into assesement of job satisfaction of public universities' workers in Ghana and found that, the employees were happy with their career. Also, Masuku, Esterhuyzen and Ramajoe (2025) found in their study that examined the causes of employee occupational commitment and contentment in South Africa that, administrative officers had relatively high level of job satisfaction. Again, it emerged from an empirical study conducted by Anning (2024) into the inter-relationship between self-efficacy, contentment and work involvement of educators of STEM educational institutions in Ghana that, STEM teacher educators in Ghana were satisfied with the job they do.

On the contrary, Domie, Tagoe, Dodzi and Newton (2024) found in their study that investigated into dimensions of jobs that bring happiness to healthworker in the District of North Gonja at the Savannah Region of Ghana that, 75% of healthcare workers were dissatisfied with their jobs.

The results of this study further indicated high staff satisfaction on dimensions of career like work it-self, advancement/promotional prospects, and recognition for work done (which are elements of motivators). Moreover, the findings revealed high satisfaction level of employees on quality of conditions of work, inter-personal relationships among workers and quality of supervision (features of hygiene factors). Raza et al. (2023) posited that dimensions that infleunece job satisfaction include promotional prospects, supervision, colleague workers, nature of work, participation in decisions, and autonomy. Linh (2018) observed that, factors or dimensions that influence occupational contentment of subordinates is categorised into personal conditions, internal conditions and external

conditions. Internal conditions include responsibility and work-itself, whereas external conditions include such conditions as working conditions, prospects for promotion, and inter-personal relationships.

In contrast, employees of the colleges indicated job dissatisfaction with their remuneration/pay/benefits. The outcome of employees' unhappiness about their remuneration/pay/benefits is in support of Lukosi's (2015) study findings, which indicated that job dissatisfaction was caused by factors such as salaries, allowances, and promotional opportunities.

The results of the present study, therefore, support the Two-factor Theory by Herzberg of 1959. According to this theory, some features about a career (motivating features), for instance, prospects for promotion and work itself, bring about happiness of workers, while some other features about a career, such as remuneration, salaries, and policies of the institution (hygiene conditions) bring about occupational discontentment.

It is clear from the outcome of the present study that the elements of motivators alone do not elicit happiness among employees in an occupation of employees. However, when the hygiene conditions are enriched, they can similarly produce happiness in an employment. Hence, in a situation where an organisation desires the attainment of complete career contentment of workers, it is necessary to improve the motivating factors and hygiene conditions.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study has many implications to offer. First, colleges of education should continuously do their possible best at ensuring that staff members always have high job satisfaction. Colleges need to implement strategies to measure the career fulfilment of workers.

Authorities, together with other officials in colleges, should continue to spearhead the creation of a working environment where workers have challenging work roles with enough resources to undertake them. Again, for workers of educational institutions such as colleges to give out their best in performance of their duties for these institutions to thrive, these establishments should assist their employees to obtain promotions, have quality inter-personal relationships, acknowledge them for their inputs, and establish sound policies for swift payment of remuneration and allowances. Furthermore, the Ghana Government, through its agencies like the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) should run workshops for colleges and their officials on the relevance of occupational happiness and the need to enhance worker satisfaction.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of the present research have relevant contributions to the scientific community. Through the findings, there can be refinement in the Two-factor Theory by Frederick Irving Herzberg of 1959. The Two-factor Theory espouses that some dimensions of work (motivating elements), including recognition for work done, responsibility of work, prospects for promotion, and nature of work, enhanced worker happiness, but other factors (hygiene factors), for instance, supervision, organisational policy and administration, inter-personal relations, and working conditions, caused worker dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, this study has revealed that hygiene factors (supervision, organisational policy and administration, inter-personal relations, and working conditions) cause satisfaction in employees. These revelations highlight the relevance of enhancing hygiene factors to ensure total job contentment of workers. Moreover, this study has employed mixed methods research approach to reveal many conditions that enrich or derail employee contentment at work and how these conditions can effect employee behaviour. Furthermore, the results of the present research investigation have contributed to enriching the empirical review of the research variables. Hence, future researchers can conduct scientific studies that focus on other institutions and contexts by using the current study as a guide or reference point.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study assessed the career satisfaction level of employees in colleges of education in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The present research recommends that further studies should be done in other colleges of education, both private and public, in the other regions of Ghana, to broaden the discussions on the issue for extensive findings.

Moreover, members of staff in the current study, on some occasions, cited non-payment of allowances, or payment of an inequitable amount of allowances and benefits as some of the factors that caused dissatisfaction in them. In relation to this, it is recommended that subsequent studies concentrate on studying job dissatisfaction and conditions that cause employment dissatisfaction among workforces in the colleges of education in Ghana. This can reveal comprehensive outcomes for a holistic solution to the issue.

Again, this study sought the views of members of staff and principals to obtain data for the analysis. The study recommends that future researchers solicit the views of students as well to increase the data and the scope of the study for generalization purposes.

9. CONCLUSION

Conclusion can be drawn that employees in the study institutions had high occupational satisfaction, especially with the dimensions such as work-itself, good conditions of work, prospects for promotion, and quality inter-personal relationships. Nevertheless, these employees were dissatisfied with their pay and benefits because they felt that the colleges were neither rewarding them appropriately nor providing them with their due benefits and allowances, and this issue of dissatisfaction can negatively affect the productivity level of the workers.

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