

An Analysis of Employee Motivation in a Multinational Context in Sub Saharan Africa

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How to cite this article: Acha- Anyi, P.N. & Masaraure, R. (2021). An Analysis of Employee Motivation in a Multinational Context in Sub Saharan Africa. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 10(2):575-591. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-119>

Abstract

This study assesses motivational preferences of employees in a multinational context in Sub Saharan Africa. Using the Grundfos group operating sites in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa as a case study, the study explores quantitative data on possible differences in employee motivational factors based on selected variables such as location, length of service and managerial status. Questionnaires were employed in collecting data from 131 participants from the three locations of Grundfos Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). Results of the study reveal that the factor “equal treatment of employees” is considered most important among the respondents. It is also noted that there were no significant statistical differences among the participants based on the examined variables. Policy and practical implications of the findings of this study are discussed, particularly around the development and implementation of Human resources policies that address employee perceptions of equity. This study makes a contribution to existing literature on employee motivation in multinational settings.

Keywords: Employee motivation, motivational factors, multinational context, Sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

It is a common truism that motivated employees play a pivotal role towards the attainment of organisational goals (Nabi, Islam, Dip & Hossain, 2017; Ganta, 2014). This explains why companies strive to keep their employees as motivated as possible, where it is hypothesized that high employee motivation positively correlates with productivity and business performance (Mudor & Tooksoon, 2011). The significance of employee motivation is premised on the fact that all corporate activities require either direct or indirect human effort to be realised. This implies that the implementation of a business idea or strategy requires both professional skills and personal attributes such as knowledge, skills, and willingness or motivation (Adeola & Adebisi, 2016). Research on employee motivation spans many decades and has been widely associated with employee motives and needs (Maslow, 1943), employee productivity (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017) and business performance (Ganta, 2014). Malik and Basharat (2013) describe employee performance as a combined product of individual ability and motivation. In fact, one of the key challenges that managers are faced with is the ability to keep employees motivated to the extent that they perform at their optimum (Adeola & Adebisi, 2016). Aruma and Hanachor (2017) describe work motivation



as the set of internal and external forces that initiate work-related behaviour and determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration. Three important components of motivation have been noted in this definition, namely: the influence of environmental forces such as organizational reward systems and the nature of the work, the existence of forces inherent in the person such as individual needs and motives and the impact of work-related behaviour.

In the advent of globalisation and heightened competition for business space, human resources management and performance has emerged as a decisive factor in providing companies with the competitive advantage (Ganta, 2014). However, Mishra and Gupta (2009) assert that understanding employee motivation is complex and challenging, not least because various factors motivate employees differently. Moreover, while some employees are motivated by intrinsic rewards (Adeola & Adebisi, 2016), others are inclined to extrinsic rewards (Rogelberg, 2017). The task of understanding employee motivation is further compounded in the case where a company has offices and operations in multiple countries. In addition to ensuring that employee motivation is optimised, multinational companies are further challenged by the imperative to ensure equitable employee motivation across various sites of operation. This explains the motivation of this study to compare employee motivation across the operating sites of Grundfos group in Sub Saharan Africa, namely in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa.

Cognisant of the strategic importance of employee motivation, Grundfos Group undertakes an annual Employee Motivation Survey (EMS) across all its companies around the world. In conjunction with a designated consultant company, Grundfos group's human resources department undertakes a survey of employee motivation and satisfaction, where employees can provide feedback to managers with 100% anonymity (Grundfos Insight, 2018). In this regard, EMS results for Grundfos SSA for 2016, 2017 and 2018 were 65%, 69%, and 67%, respectively, falling significantly short of the company's employee motivation target of 78% earmarked for 2025 (Grundfos, 2019). Regardless of such low levels of employee motivation, Grundfos SSA experienced growth in sales and productivity from 2015 to 2017. Prompted by this apparent incongruence, this study was conducted at Grundfos Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) offices in South Africa (GZA), Ghana (GGH) and Kenya (GKE) with the objective of gaining insight into possible differences in employee motivation between the three sites.

Literature review

The nature of motivation

Hegar (2011) posits that the word motivation originates from the Latin word movere which means "to move", with the suggestive inclination that hard-working people are noticed by their movements. From a similar perspective, Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, Du Plessis and Ngalo (2011) refer to motivation as intentional and persistent behaviour aimed at achieving a goal. Colquitt, LePine and Wesson (2011) take a more introspective view by describing motivation as a set of energetic forces rooted both within and outside an employee with a physical manifestation that is evident in work-related effort. Within this paradigm, motivation is perceived as a determinant of the direction, intensity and persistence that the employee exerts towards the accomplishment of a given task (Colquitt et al., 2011). Elnaga (2013) assert that in a work context motivation is the force that pushes employees to attain defined personal goals, as well as organisational targets. According to Taboli (2012), motivation is the desire to strengthen the effort to achieve a goal or objective. Adeola and Adebisi (2016) analyse the concept of motivation from an intrinsic and extrinsic perspective. The authors (Adeola & Adebisi, 2016) argue that while intrinsic motivation involves the satisfaction that employees derive from doing their job, extrinsic motivation is derived from



factors that are outside the individual. Hence, benefits such as bonuses, promotions, and performance incentives form part of the extrinsic motivation (Ganta, 2014, Yudhvir & Sunita, 2012). Helen (2011) posits that companies derive important benefits from both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation because motivated employees tend to work more independently. This explains why corporates and ordinary businesses invest substantial resources in employee motivation as studies (Yudhvir & Sunita, 2012; Ganta, 2014; Ezigbo, 2012) have illustrated the link between motivation and hard work, team spirit and the attainment of organisational goals. In the same vein, Sandhya and Kumar (2011) postulate that employee motivation is central to increased productivity, greater efficiency and employee retention.

Factors affecting employee motivation

Rogelberg (2017) asserts that the organisational or corporate image plays a pivotal role in brand promotion and has the potential to stimulate employee motivation. This is supported by Fombrun and Van Reil (2004) who argue that a good company image attracts potential employees. Abd-El-Salam, Shawky & El-Nahas, (2013) emphasise that corporate image and reputation are critical factors in the overall evaluation of any organisation. Rogelberg (2017) reiterates that a good organisational image creates a conducive working environment for employees, hence, many people will prefer working for such an organisation. On the other hand, there is another construct of image, which is organisational reputation. Organisational image is related to organisational reputation. Rogelberg (2017) highlights the difference between image and reputation by pointing out that reputation refers to more stable shared perceptions of how the general public regards an organisation, whereas image reflects an individual's perceptions of the organisation. Walker (2012) concludes that a strong reputation attracts talented employees.

Management attributes and employee motivation

If employees are included in decision-making they become highly motivated (Yudhvir & Sunita, 2012; Elnaga, 2013). The behaviour and decisions made by the group management will have implications on the motivation of employees. According to Beer (2003), employees become demotivated when top-level management fail to deliver as per their promises. Beer (2003) adds that consistent behaviour must be maintained by the executives to ensure transformation and future success of the organisation. This implies that inconsistent behaviour from group management will cause employees not to believe in them, leading to demotivation. Fowler (2015) adds that management can facilitate the creation of great motivational company outlook by engaging employees in decision-making processes. Ganta (2014) emphasised the need for management to have a firm grasp on organisational behaviour and psychology, as this will enable them to understand why their employees behave in a certain way. Effective management is essential for employee motivation. Managers should allocate more time in trying to understand what motivates their direct subordinates (Ezigbo, 2012). This is because employees are motivated in different ways (Abbah, 2014). Managers should ensure that they both know and understand all the employees under their leadership. Nohria, Groysberg and Lee (2008) have meanwhile emphasised that the perceptions of employees towards their immediate managers are an important element in workplace motivation. They further indicate that supervisors who maintain good working relations with employees under their supervision tend to foster highly motivating work environments. Nohria, Groysberg and Lee (2008) point out that supervisors who are more supportive of autonomy and less controlling of their subordinates demonstrate higher levels of intrinsic motivation.



Working together ensures healthy competition among employees that leads to high productivity, improved employee attitude, and motivation (Joseph, 2017). It is important for organisations to ensure that different parties (whether colleagues or departments) put their differences aside, and concentrate on achieving the company objectives. According to Walker (2012), for organisations to maintain teamwork, rewards should be put in place. Kosfeld and Von Siemens (2011) add that it is imperative for employees to cooperate, as this enhances productivity. They further emphasis that some employees are only willing to cooperate if their colleagues do the same. Chalotra and Andotra (2015) add that cooperation as a whole or the end result of cooperation is that it promotes peace and harmony and brings oneness which otherwise is very intricate to achieve.

Employees are highly affected by the convenient working conditions which has an impact on their overall motivation (Abbah, 2014). According to research carried out by Mishra and Gupta (2009), employees’ satisfaction is significantly influenced by working conditions. Managers take responsibility to ensure that they provide an environment that is conducive to performance. Supranowo (2017) differentiates between physical and non-physical work environments, where the non-physical environment is considered to be constituted by the conditions of the working relationship with supervisors or subordinates. The physical environment includes, among other aspects, workstation set-up, furniture and equipment design and quality, building design, temperature, lighting, noise and space (Elnaga, 2013). Improvement in job content often leads to motivated and satisfied employees, where employees will be presented with work they enjoy doing (Robbins & Judge, 2017). The job content is best described by Haile and Belayneh (2015) job characteristic model, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: The job characteristic model

Characteristic	Description
Skill variety	The range of skills and talents the job requires.
Task identity	The degree to which a job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work— that is, doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome.
Task significance	The degree of impact that a job has in people’s lives, and the contribution that the job makes.
Autonomy	The amount of freedom and independence that the job present to individual, in making decisions about doing their work.
Job feedback	The results received from doing the job regarding the individual’s performance.

Source: Adapted from Robbins and Judge (2017).

According to a study conducted by Ali, Said, Yunus, Kader, Latif and Munap (2014), Hackman and Oldham (1976) job characteristic model confirms the relationship between job characteristic and job satisfaction which is reflected in employee motivation. The model aims at emphasising the importance of designing jobs so that they become meaningful and valuable to employees. Ezigbo (2012) claims that the content of a job has a significant effect on employee satisfaction, where employees become more productive if they are satisfied with their job content. This means that there should be job enrichment, job enlargement, and job rotation (Lunenborg, 2011). Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2015) advance the view that job enlargement ensures that there additional challenges or responsibilities are attributed to the employee’s current job. Job rotation as postulated by Noe et al. (2015) and Ganta, (2014) reduces boredom and increases motivation.

In terms of pay and its effect on employee motivation, many researchers (Robbins & Judge, 2017; Zubair, Bashir, Abrar, Baig & Hassan, 2015; Taleghani, Salmani & Taatian, 2010) have emphasised the importance of pay in driving employee motivation. Research carried out by Valencia (2008) indicates that managers perceive pay to be one of the best



motivators for employees. Rynes et al. (2004) went on to point out that although pay is a powerful potential motivator, it is not the only essential motivator.

Job security and its effect on employee motivation

Job security has also been identified as an essential and valuable factor in employee motivation (Tan & Waheed, 2011). Hence, it is commonplace for employers to offer job security in exchange for worker’s skills, productivity, job performance and organisational commitment (Ye, Cardon & Rivera, 2012). According to Kraimer, Wayne, Liden and Sparrowe (2005), job security is a psychological state in which workers vary in their expectations of future job continuity within an organisation. Assuring employees about their job security will result in organisational citizenship behaviour, and, subsequently, impact performance and motivation. Artz and Kaya (2014), in their research point out that job security, is associated with job satisfaction. A satisfied employee will likely be more productive and motivated than an unsatisfied one.

Theories associated with employee motivation

The intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of motivation provide an array of avenues for its contextual association with a number of theories. As Table 2 below illustrates, extant literature alludes to a nexus between motivational theories and organisational performance (Ezibgo, 2012; Tan & Waheed, 2011). The following section therefore delves into the relationship between motivational theories and organisational performance in order to provide a context to the motivational variables tested in this study.

Table 2. Theories associated with employee motivation

Theory	Reference	Motivating connection/link
Motives and needs	Maslow (1943)	Hierarchy of needs: psychological, safety, social, ego, self-actualisation
Expectancy	Vroom (1964)	Work effort leads to performance and rewards
Equity and justice	Adams (1963)	Employees strive for equity between themselves and other employees
Goal setting	Locke and Latham (1990)	Specific and difficult goals consistently lead to better performance than easy goals or no goals
Cognitive evaluation	Deci (1971)	External elements affect intrinsic needs, intrinsic rewards and satisfaction
Work design	Hackman and Oldham (1976)	The five important job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback, autonomy
ERG Theory	Alderfer, C. P. (1969)	basic human needs may be grouped under three categories, namely, existence, relatedness, and growth. Existence corresponds to Maslow’s physiological and safety needs, relatedness corresponds to social needs, and growth refers to Maslow’s esteem and self-actualization.
Two-Factor Theory	Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959)	“hygiene” factors which form part of the context in which the job is performed, as opposed to the job itself and motivators are factors that are intrinsic to the job, such as achievement, recognition, interesting work, increased responsibilities, advancement, and growth opportunities.
Reinforcement	Skinner (1953)	Managers should positively reinforce employee behaviours that lead to positive outcome

The volume of empirical evidence linking motivated employees to organisational performance has simultaneously encouraged research interest on theories of motivation. Based on a summary of the motivational theories often associated with employee motivation (Table 3), this section undertakes a critical review of three of these theories that are of direct contextual relevance to this study, namely: Maslow’s theory of motives and needs, the two-factor theory by Herzberg and Adam’s equity and justice theory.



Maslow's motives and needs theory is among the most cited motivational theories (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). Maslow posits that there are five levels of needs in a hierarchical order that workers strive to satisfy, ranked from basic survival or physiological needs at the bottom, then safety, social, ego and self-actualisation being the optimum (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow's theory, the motivation to acquire a higher-level need is only aroused by the attainment of the lower-level need. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is applicable to workplace motivation in the sense that achievements in the workplace have the potential to drive the employee up Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Ganta, 2014). Despite its popularity, Maslow's theory has been criticised, *inter alia*, for not adopting any credible scientific method in reaching its conclusions (Trigg, 2004) and ignoring the prominence of social connections as evident in the current global society (Rutledge, 2011).

Herzberg, on the other hand, views motivation as a two-way stream; with motivators on the one side and hygiene on the other (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). In Herzberg's view, intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, growth and the job itself serve as motivators, whereas extrinsic factors such as company policies, supervision, relationships, work conditions, remuneration, salary and security constitute the hygiene or business environmental elements. While Herzberg's theory has been appreciated for providing insight on factors that keep employees motivated and the value of job enrichment (Malik & Basharat, 2013), it has attracted criticism for being inconclusive in the sense that Herzberg's study focused largely on accountants and engineers at the expense of other professionals (Behling, Labovitz & Kosmo, 1968). Further to this, the methodology employed by Herzberg has been called into question due to the fact that the respondents were required to indicate whether the choices they were presented with were "exceptionally good" or "exceptionally bad". Critics consider this approach prone to subjectivity and bias (Manjunath & Urs, 2014).

Adam's theory of equity and justice has also made a significant impact in the study of motivation theory. The theory states that workers expect equity or equal treatment between themselves and other employees performing the same tasks in the organisation (Adams, 1963). Perceptions of unequal treatment among employees could result in a state of paralysis and tensions in the workplace. Arshad, Safdar, U-Din, and Ellahi (2012) argue that although the relevance of the equity and justice theory is well established, its uptake and application in the workplace has been limited. Based on the foregoing review of literature on employee motivation and theories associated motivation, this study retains the following variables as instrumental to employee motivation: company image, group management, immediate manager, teamwork, work conditions, job content, pay, job security, training opportunities, development opportunities, leave days, challenging tasks, communication, flexible working hours, monetary incentives, promotion, equal treatment, employer compliments, work from home and respect among employees. These factors therefore constitute the nucleus of the data collected at three sites of Grundfos SSA, namely Ghana, Kenya and South Africa.

Materials and methods

The study adopted a case study approach by focussing on Grundfos Sub Saharan Africa. The research design was cross-sectional as data was collected from the three Grundfos SSA sites in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa. Following a convenience sampling method, respondents who consented to participate in the study were handed the questionnaire to complete on the basis of anonymity. Grundfos Sub Saharan Africa conducts operations in three countries, namely: South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. The combined workforce across the three sites stands at 168, with South Africa having the largest staff component at 134, followed by Kenya at 19 and Ghana at 15 (Grundfos, 2019). Therefore, all employees of Grundfos SSA



constituted the population of this study (N=168). Given the relatively small size of the study population, the total population sampling was adopted (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016; Sharma, 2017). This meant that a purposive sampling approach was adopted thereby giving every employee of Grundfos SSA equal opportunity to participate in the study. However, considering the purpose of the study to compare employee motivation in the multinational context of Grundfos SSA, the sample was further stratified based on the company site. Stratifying the sample was also necessitated by the unequal number of employees at each of the Grundfos SSA sites (Table 3).

Table 3. Workforce distribution at Grundfos SSA

Country of location	Population	As a percentage Grundfos SSA workforce
South Africa (GZA)	134	80%
Kenya (GKE)	19	11%
Ghana (GGH)	15	9%
Total Grundfos SSA workforce	168	100%

Source: Grundfos, 2019

The questionnaire used in the study was the outcome of a comprehensive literature review on motivational theories associated with employee motivation and adaptation of questionnaires developed for similar studies by Iguisi (2009), Rawat et al. (2015) and Rozman et al. (2017). The questionnaire was divided into two parts; with the first part aimed at gathering information on the demographic characteristics of respondents and the second section collecting data on perceptions of the respondents on specific employee motivational factors. Questions in section A of the questionnaire were open-ended with respondents having to indicate the characteristic that best describes them, while questions in section B were structured in the form of a Likert scale with respondents having to select from a range comprising of “strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). In order to ascertain the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, it was piloted among 24 randomly selected employees of Grundfos SSA based in South Africa. The selected employees all availed their email addresses as this was the mode of delivery of the questionnaire. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires, some sentences were restructured for clarity, while some words that seemed to create ambiguity were changed and noted language errors corrected. In preparation for the data collection, the Grundfos SSA Human resources (HR) officers in South Africa were approached for access to employee emails. This process was fairly easy considering that the Management of Grundfos SSA (as the gatekeeper) had already granted permission for the study to be conducted within their business space. The refined and validated questionnaire was sent by email to all employees of Grundfos SSA with the respondent consent form. A cut off period of 30 days was given for the return of all completed questionnaires. At the end of this period the response rate was as follows: South Africa 80%, Kenya 63% and Ghana 80%. The data collected was captured in a Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet and imported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. However, before subjecting the three data sets to statistical scrutiny, it was deemed appropriate to test for reliability of the scale. The results obtained are displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Data reliability

Data source	Cronbach's Alpha
South Africa	.815
Kenya	.785
Ghana	.823
All 3 data sets combined	.855



The results reveal Cronbach’s Alpha values high above the .7 acceptable level suggesting a very good degree of internal consistency reliability for the scales used in this study (Pallant, 2013). Following this validation, the study proceeded with both the descriptive and exploratory analysis of the data sets.

Results

The descriptive statistics presented in table 5 below reveal that most of the respondents in this study were male (61%), aged between 31 – 35 years (29%) and relatively new in the company with a duration of four years or less (59%). In terms of management status, most of the participants work in general operations (41%) with little or no direct individual decision-making authority. It is also evident from the descriptive data that most of the respondents work in the sales and marketing department (47%) and work at the South African company site (82%). The high percentage of participants from the Grundfos company site in South Africa can be explained by the comparatively large study population size (80%) of the company’s Sub-Saharan African operations (Grundfos, 2019:1).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for respondents from Grundfos SSA

Demographic attribute	Category	Frequency	Percentage
gender	female	51	39
	Male	80	61
Age (years)	Below 25 years	2	2%
	25 – 30	32	24%
	31 – 35	38	29%
	36 – 40	26	20%
	40+	33	25%
Length of service (years)	≤ 4	77	59
	5 – 9	34	27
	10 – 14	14	11
	15 – 19	3	2
	20+	3	2
Management status	General operations	54	41
	Technical staff	41	31
	Middle management	29	22
	Executives	7	6
Department of operations	Sales and marketing	62	47
	Administration	13	10
	Services	17	13
	Logistics	20	15
	Production	9	7
	General labour	10	8
Country of operation in Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana	12	9
	Kenya	12	9
	South Africa	107	82

Respondents assessment of the impact of motivational factors

A comprehensive review of the extant literature on employee motivation revealed twenty factors with a high propensity for employee motivation. The twenty factors were retained for further exploration and testing in the current study. The respondents were requested to rate the degree of importance of each of the factors to their motivation. Descriptive results obtained from the respondents are presented in Table 6 below. It is evident from the results that most of the respondents (90%) perceive “equal treatment” of employees as “important” or “very important”. The same degree of importance (90%) is attributed to effective communication from group management. However, it is worth noting that 75% of the respondents consider “equal treatment of employees” to be a “very important” motivating factor, putting it 14 percentage points above the “communication” factor (61%). The results



in Table 5 also indicate that factors such as “Professional skills of immediate manager, job description, personal development, promotion, respect among employees” have a high motivational impact of 88% each among the respondents.

Table 6: Factors affecting respondents’ motivation in Grundfos SSA

Motivational factors	Degree of importance				
	Not important	Less important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
How important are the following factors in keeping you motivated at Grundfos SSA?					
Company image	2	3	11	36	48
Leave days	4	8	20	41	27
Group management	2	2	18	44	34
Challenging tasks	0	2	15	54	28
Immediate manager	2	2	8	33	55
Communication	0	2	8	29	61
Team work	2	2	11	32	54
Flexible working hours	3	6	22	37	32
Job content	2	1	10	46	42
Personal development	1	2	9	31	57
Working conditions	2	5	12	34	47
Monetary incentives	2	4	15	34	45
Pay	2	2	14	28	54
Promotion	2	2	9	35	52
Training	2	2	12	32	52
Equal treatment of employees	2	2	6	15	75
Compliments from the employer	2	8	23	33	34
Job security	0	3	11	21	65
Working from home	9	13	24	32	22
Respect among employees	3	2	8	22	65

The purpose of this study was to explore potential differences between the factors motivating employees at Grundfos group sites in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa. To achieve this goal, data collected from employees at the three sites were subjected to an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test for significant differences in the mean values employee motivational factors based on employee location (country of operation), longevity of service, management status and gender.

Country of operation

A one-way between groups ANOVA test was conducted on the dataset to explore the possible country-effects on employee motivational factors among employees of Grundfos group in Sub Saharan Africa. In this vein, the three countries were grouped as follows: group 1: South Africa (n=107), group 2: Ghana (n=12) and group 3: Kenya (n=12). Table 7 below reveals the results obtained from the analysis.

Table 7: Results of ANOVA between employee country of base and motivational factors

Employee location in Sub Saharan Africa	1. South Africa (n = 107)		2. Ghana (n=12)		3. Kenya (n=12)		p-value
	Mean	Std Deviation	Mean	Std Deviation	Mean	Std Deviation	
Employee motivation factors							
Company image	3.08	1.55	3.83	1.12	3.08	1.51	.27
Group management	3.52	1.27	3.33	1.56	3.75	1.36	.74
Immediate manager	3.36	1.52	4.00	1.28	2.92	1.83	.22
Team work	3.47	1.38	3.83	.72	3.92	1.31	.4
Work conditions	3.26	1.46	3.92	1.24	2.92	1.44	.22
Job content	3.28	1.47	3.75	1.14	3.33	1.30	.56
Pay	3.38	1.43	3.50	1.24	3.42	1.31	.96
Job security	3.46	1.51	3.75	1.22	3.25	1.66	.71



Training opportunities	3.07	1.50	3.75	1.14	3.00	1.28	.3
Development opportunities	3.29	1.45	3.42	1.56	3.42	1.56	.93
Leave days	3.88	1.00	3.67	.99	3.33	1.44	.21
Challenging tasks	4.06	.74	4.33	.65	4.08	.669	.46
Communication	4.48	.78	4.50	.52	4.58	.515	.89
Flexible working hours	3.88	1.02	4.17	.72	3.67	1.37	.49
Monetary incentives	4.15	.97	4.33	.78	4.25	.754	.78
Promotion	4.28	.96	4.58	.52	4.25	.622	.53
Equal treatment	4.56	.91	4.67	.49	4.25	1.06	.46
Employer compliments	3.93	.99	4.08	1.17	3.67	1.07	.59
Work from home	3.29	1.22	3.58	1.08	3.42	1.24	.7
Respect among employees	4.53	.90	4.42	.67	3.67	1.30	.01
Total mean	3.71	1.20	3.97	0.99	3.61	1.18	0.5

Based on the motivational factors investigated in this study, the respondents from the Grundfos site in Ghana exhibit the highest motivational potential with a mean value of 3.97. This is followed by the respondents in South Africa (3.71) and Kenya (3.61). The respondents from Ghana and South Africa consider “equal treatment of employees” to be the greatest motivating factor with mean values of 4.67 and 4.56 respectively while their counterparts in Kenya place greater importance (4.58) on effective communication from management. However, results from the data analysis revealed no significant statistical differences between the motivational factor preferences of the three groups of employees as the value of $p=0.5$ is above the recommended value of $p=.05$ or below (Pallant, 2013).

Longevity of service and preference of motivational factors

The study thought it worthwhile to explore the data for possible differences among respondents based on the duration of service to the company (Grundfos Sub Saharan Africa). Five age groups were defined as follows: group 1= 0-4 years (n=77), group 2=5-9 years (n=36), group 3 = 10-14 years (n=14), group 4=15-19 years (n=2) and group 5=20 years or more (n=2). Table 8 below reveals the results of the data analysis.

Table 8: ANOVA between employee longevity of service and motivational factors

Employee longevity in company (years)	0 – 4 years (n1 = 77)		5 – 9 years (n2 = 36)		10 – 14 years (n3=14)		15 – 19 years (n4=2)		20+ years (n5=2)		P-value
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Employee motivation factors											
Company image	3.01	1.59	3.22	1.38	3.86	1.35	3.50	2.1	2.00	1.4	.29
Group management	3.42	1.32	3.56	1.34	3.93	1.00	4.50	.71	3.50	2.12	.56
Immediate manager	3.22	1.68	3.42	1.31	4.00	1.24	4.50	.71	3.00	1.41	.37
Team work	3.53	1.32	3.64	1.34	3.71	1.27	2.00	.00	2.50	2.12	.37
Work conditions	3.23	1.50	3.28	1.45	3.71	1.27	3.00	1.41	3.00	1.41	.84
Job content	3.09	1.45	3.56	1.38	3.79	1.31	5.00	.00	3.50	.71	.12
Pay	3.25	1.51	3.72	1.26	3.64	1.01	2.00	.00	3.00	.000	.24
Job security	3.39	1.53	3.61	1.46	3.64	1.34	4.50	.71	1.50	.71	.27
Training opportunities	3.01	1.46	3.36	1.40	3.64	1.39	1.50	.71	1.50	.71	.08
Development opportunities	3.13	1.53	3.67	1.33	3.57	1.28	4.00	.00	1.50	.71	.12
Leave days	3.78	1.11	3.83	.94	4.07	.83	3.50	2.12	3.00	1.41	.68
Challenging tasks	4.03	.76	4.17	.70	4.07	.62	4.50	.71	4.50	.71	.69
Communication	4.45	.79	4.47	.74	4.71	.47	4.00	.00	5.00	.00	.51
Flexible working hours	3.94	1.01	4.00	.93	3.57	1.09	3.50	2.12	2.50	2.12	.21
Monetary incentives	4.23	.96	4.19	.86	4.14	.86	2.50	.71	3.50	.71	.10
Promotion	4.39	.92	4.17	.94	4.29	.73	4.00	.00	4.00	1.41	.74
Equal treatment	4.56	.97	4.56	.74	4.43	.94	5.00	.00	4.00	1.41	.83
Employer compliments	3.94	1.03	3.81	1.06	4.00	.78	5.00	.00	4.00	1.41	.59
Work from home	3.23	1.19	3.53	1.23	3.57	1.02	2.50	2.12	2.50	2.12	.42
Respect among employees	4.40	1.06	4.53	.88	4.43	.65	4.50	.71	4.50	.71	.98
Total	3.66	1.23	3.82	1.13	3.94	1.02	3.68	0.74	3.13	1.17	.45

M=Mean; SD= Standard deviation.



The results revealed no statistically significant differences were found between the various groups based on the duration of service with the company. The sig. value was found to be at $p=.45$, above the maximum required sig. value of $.05$ (Pallant, 2013: 262). However, notable similarities and differences were observed between the groups with regards to motivational preferences. For instance, while respondents within groups 1 and 2 (0-4 years and 5-9 years) considered “equal treatment of employees” to be the greatest motivational factor (4.56), those within group 3 (10-14 years) and 5 (20+) prioritised effective communication from management (4.71 and 5.00 respectively), and respondents within group 4 (15-19 years) considered job content to be very important (5.00).

Employee management status and motivation factor

Further analysis was undertaken to ascertain if there were any differences in employee motivational factors based on the management status of the respondents. In this regard, four groups were constituted as follows: group 1: general operations (n=54), group 2: technical staff (n=41), group 3: middle managers (29), and group 4: executive management (10).

Table 9: ANOVA between employee management status and motivational factors

Employee age group (years)	General operations (n1 = 54)		Technical staff (n2 = 41)		Middle managers (n3=29)		Executive management (n4=7)		P-value
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Employee motivation factors									
Company image	3.00	1.48	2.98	1.65	3.52	1.43	3.86	1.07	.233
Group management	3.56	1.25	3.22	1.44	3.83	1.20	3.86	.9	.228
Immediate manager	3.30	1.60	3.00	1.58	3.97	1.27	3.71	1.25	.064
Team work	3.70	1.34	3.12	1.54	3.79	.98	3.71	.76	.109
Work conditions	3.15	1.52	3.17	1.52	3.62	1.32	3.71	.76	.410
Job content	3.20	1.43	3.07	1.57	3.69	1.20	4.29	.76	.079
Pay	3.33	1.43	3.44	1.55	3.69	1.11	2.43	.79	.185
Job security	3.69	1.46	2.93	1.59	3.90	1.21	3.14	1.46	.024
Training opportunities	3.13	1.47	2.85	1.51	3.72	1.19	2.29	1.38	.032
Development opportunities	3.35	1.42	3.20	1.66	3.48	1.21	3.00	1.63	.800
Leave days	3.94	1.11	3.76	.97	3.62	1.08	3.86	.900	.585
Challenging tasks	4.00	.82	4.15	.57	4.10	.72	4.29	.76	.665
Communication	4.52	.82	4.46	.711	4.52	.688	4.29	.488	.874
Flexible working hours	3.81	1.12	4.00	.98	3.79	.98	4.14	.900	.701
Monetary incentives	4.09	1.09	4.39	.771	4.21	.82	3.43	.54	.066
Promotion	4.28	1.02	4.51	.711	4.14	.915	4.00	.816	.262
Equal treatment	4.50	1.10	4.66	.69	4.45	.83	4.57	.54	.773
Employer compliments	3.91	1.07	3.95	.97	3.90	.98	4.00	1.56	.991
Work from home	3.30	1.25	3.15	1.30	3.62	.98	3.43	1.13	.440
Respect among employees	4.54	1.02	4.46	.93	4.24	.912	4.43	.79	.611
Total	3.72	1.24	3.62	2.20	3.89	2.18	3.72	2.32	0.41

M=Mean; SD= Standard deviation.

Data from Table 9 above reveals no significant statistical difference between the groups as the p-value is 0.41. However, a close examination of the mean values reveals minor differences between the groups. For instance, respondents from the middle management group (3) rate the motivational factors higher (3.89) than any other group. Surprisingly, apart from the technical staff group (2) and the executive group (4) who perceive equal treatment as motivating them the most (4.66 and 4.54 respectively), the other two groups identify different factor as giving them the greatest motivation, with the employees from general operations opting for respect among employees (4.54), middle managers choosing communication (4.52).



ANOVA between gender and motivational factors

A final ANOVA was conducted to find out if there were any significant differences between perceptions of the motivational factors between females and males. As seen in Table 10, the female respondents were identified as group 1 (n= 51) and male respondents as group 2 (n=80).

Table 10: ANOVA between gender and motivational factors

Employee gender	Female (n1 = 51)		Male (n2 = 80)		P-value
	Mean	Std Deviation	Mean	Std Deviation	
Employee motivation factors					
Company image	2.78	1.47	3.39	1.51	.03
Group management	3.53	1.35	3.53	1.27	1.00
Immediate manager	3.33	1.56	3.40	1.53	.8
Team work	3.78	1.30	3.39	1.34	.1
Work conditions	3.10	1.54	3.41	1.38	.2
Job content	3.16	1.39	3.44	1.45	.3
Pay	3.31	1.30	3.45	1.45	.6
Job security	3.57	1.49	3.40	1.50	.5
Training opportunities	3.08	1.48	3.16	1.46	.8
Development opportunities	3.29	1.46	3.33	1.47	.9
Leave days	3.92	1.04	3.74	1.05	.3
Challenging tasks	4.04	.662	4.11	.76	.6
Communication	4.67	.622	4.38	.79	.03
Flexible working hours	4.04	1.10	3.79	.98	.2
Monetary incentives	4.06	.988	4.25	.89	.3
Promotion	4.29	.944	4.31	.88	.9
Equal treatment	4.61	.940	4.50	.87	.5
Employer compliments	4.04	.937	3.85	1.06	.3
Work from home	3.63	1.17	3.14	1.20	.02
Respect among employees	4.67	.653	4.30	1.08	.03
Total	3.75	1.18	3.71	1.20	0.4

The results revealed a p-value of 0.4, hence indicating no significant statistical differences between the perceptions of female and male respondents on the motivational factors. Female respondents scored an overall mean value of 3.75 on the motivational factors while the males had a slightly lower mean value of 3.71. Another difference emerged from the fact that the female participants indicated that the factors “respect among employees” (4.67) and “communication” (4.67) motivated them the most, the male respondents opted for “equal treatment” (4.50).

Discussion

This study set out to explore employee motivation in a multinational context using Grundfos group operating sites in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa as a case study. Within the subject of employee motivation, the study was guided by two objectives, namely: i) To gain insight into the factors that should be prioritised in employee motivation in a multinational context such as Grundfos group in Sub Saharan Africa; and ii) To understand if significant differences exist in employee motivational preferences based on business location, longevity of service, managerial status and gender. The following section discusses key findings that emanate from the results of the analysis of data gathered in the study. Firstly, results from the descriptive analysis conducted on the dataset highlight major preferences among the respondents with regards to factors that should be prioritised in employee motivation. It is evident that perceptions of equal treatment of employees and effective communication from management could be game changers in employee motivation. The high percentage of respondents who considered these factors important suggests that they could be effective



instruments in employee motivation. This finding is validated by previous studies (Rajhans, 2012; Rozman et al., 2017; Adeola & Adebisi, 2016) which emphasised the importance of fairness in organisational processes and warned against employee perceptions of biased organisational practices. Secondly, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) between the country of operation and motivational factors reveals that although there are no significant statistical differences based on employee location, there are, however, slight differences in employee preferences. For instance, respondents from the Grundfos group site in South Africa rate equal treatment and respect among employees higher than other factors, while employees in Ghana consider equal treatment and promotion opportunities to be more important. However, their counterparts in Kenya perceive effective communication and monetary incentives to have a greater motivating effect. Thirdly, results from the ANOVA between longevity of service and motivational factors indicate that there are no significant statistical differences between the length of time the respondents have served in the company and factors that keep them motivated. This finding aligns with similar studies by Gurland and Lam (2008), Parvin and Kabir (2011) and Abbah, (2014) which found that there is no correlation between length of service and motivational factors. However, in their study on motivation and employee satisfaction Rožman, Treven and Čančer (2017) found that older employees are more motivated by flexibility in the workplace, autonomy and good interpersonal relationships.

Further analysis on the relationship between the management status of the respondents and perception of motivational factors revealed no significant statistical differences. In their study on responsible decision-making for sustainable motivation Blašková, Figurska, Adamoniene, Poláčeková and Blaško (2018) came to a similar conclusion that managerial responsibilities do not alter motivational preferences. From a gender perspective, the study interrogated the possible effects of gender on perceptions of motivational factors. Once again, there was no significant statistical difference based on gender and employee consideration of the motivational factors. This finding follows a number of studies (Chung & Chang, 2017; Adeola & Adebisi, 2016, Lawrence and Kacmar (2016) that have found that gender has no significant effect on motivation.

Implications and conclusion

The findings, discussions and conclusions from the study suggest a number of policy and practical implications on employee motivation. Contributions to the literature on employee motivation are also noteworthy. At the level of policy, this study brings impetus to the issue of equity in the workplace. This calls for sensitivity to employee perceptions of equity or the absence thereof. Company policy needs to be adjusted accordingly, particularly in a multinational environment where employees are spread across a number of countries. In addition, given the prominence of effective communication between managers and other employees, company policy should be adjusted to adopt a multimodal communication system to ensure that information is disseminated appropriately and effectively to all employees. At a practical level, some implications of this study can be noted. Considering the fact that employees who participated in this study exhibit divergence in motivational factors, it therefore implies that the “new” manager should be agile and dynamic in order to meet the expectations of his/her subordinates. This study has also revealed that monetary incentives on their own are no longer sufficient to motivate employees. Employee perceptions of fairness, respect and dignity have gained importance. This implies that the manager must exercise a high degree of emotional intelligence. Finally, the findings and discussions in this study have implications with regards to the literature on employee motivation. The fact that remuneration is no longer a stand-out factor in employee motivation indicates a paradigm shift in literature on employee motivation. Hence, this study advocate for a more holistic



approach to studies on employee motivation. The noted contribution of this study can be seen in its highlight of the importance of aspects such as perceptions of equality, communication and respect among employees in motivation. The study was limited to Grundfos Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, caution is advised in generalizing its findings to company operations outside this area. The results of the study represent the views expressed by the employees of Grundfos Sub-Saharan Africa who participated in the study.

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