



REWARDS: MOTIVATION OR DEMOTIVATION FOR NEPALI PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS?

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Abstract:

The optimal and efficient reward management system makes possible for workers to play a positive and productive role in an organization. Considering the motivation through reward management, this study aims to explore the perception of Nepali private schools' teachers of Kathmandu district towards their rewards. This study uses the phenomenological approach to describe the common meaning for a purposeful sample of four participant teachers on their lived experiences on reward management through semi-structured interview. From the analysis of evidences, the researcher generated the six themes about the reward management perceived by the teachers. The themes are interpreted based on the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. From the perspectives of the participant teachers, the teachers necessarily believe on the financial and non-financial rewards as motivating factors. They are not motivated with the current reward management, for example, the schools provide on time-base rather than performance-base. Despite the teachers' demotivation, they expect positive changes in their schools in future.

Keywords: reward management, motivation, needs, teachers, private schools

1. Introduction

The optimal and efficient reward management system makes possible for workers to play a positive and productive role in an organization. In line with this argument, several researchers such as Ngwa et al. (2019), Emelianova (2019), Adil and Fatima (2013) and others have revealed the beneficial influence of incentives on the performance of employees. Constant and sincere commitment and cooperation on the part of its workers is highly expected in order to ensure the successful achievement of every goal or initiative of an organization. One way to encourage workers to improve work habits and key behaviors to benefit an organization is the employee reward and recognition program

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(Sabir, 2016). In other words, desirable job habits on the part of the workers contribute significantly to achieving an organization's desired objectives and goals through effective management of reward. Emelianova (2019), for instance, revealed incentives in both forms: extrinsic and intrinsic increase and maximize the efficiency of employees.

In connection to the reward system of Nepali private schools, theoretically they are supposed to provide the rewards satisfactorily as the schools have good academic performing (Khadka, 2017). However, it seems different that the complaints and dissatisfactions of teachers are flooded in print or social media that drew my attention to carrying out a study on exploring the perception of teachers towards the reward management in Nepali private schools.

2. Reward Management in Organizational Setting

In this study, 'reward' simply refers to the financial or non-financial facilities provided by an organization to its employees in return to their services. Reward is perceived in different ways such as financial or non-financial, intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, performance-based versus membership-based rewards and the like (Luthans, 2011). Reward is managed in different forms, as stated in Hellrigel et al. (1998), the following six types of rewards are commonly used:

Material reward that includes pay, pay raises, stock options, profit sharing, deferred compensation, bonuses/bonus plans, incentive plans, expenses accounts. Supplemental benefits are company automobiles, health insurance plans, pension contributions, vacation and sick leave, recreation facilities, child-care support, parental leaves. Status symbols are also a form of rewards which involve corner offices, office with windows, carpeting, paintings, watches, rings, private restrooms. Social/Interpersonal reward involves the praise, developmental feedback, smiles, pats on back, and other nonverbal signals, request for suggestions, invitation to coffee or lunch, wall plaques can be enlisted in this reward. Rewards from the tasks that involves sense of achievement, job with more responsibility, job autonomy/self-direction, performing important tasks. Self-administered rewards generally are self-congratulation, self-recognition, self-praise, self-development through expanded knowledge and skills, and greater sense of self-worth lie in self-administered rewards (p. 140).

Decenzo and Robbins (1998) illustrate a tree chart for reward types. Major two types of rewards are intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic reward includes participation in decision making, greater job freedom and discretion, more responsibility, more interesting work, opportunities for personal growth, diversities of activities. Extrinsic rewards include financial rewards and non-financial rewards. Financial rewards include piece work, commission, incentive plans, performance bonus, merit pay plans, cost-of-living increases, labor market adjustment, time-in, rank increase, profit sharing, pay for time not work, service and prerequisites. Non-financial rewards involve preferred office furnishing, preferred lunch hours, assigning parking spaces, business cards, own secretary, impressive title etc. Extrinsic reward is classified by financial and non-financial rewards. Financial reward is further categorized into performance-based,

implied membership-based and explicit membership-based which includes several components (p. 263).

In school organizations, some defined and undefined, direct or indirect rewards in different names are managed. All the teachers of Nepali schools are supposed to get salary, leaves, safety health, life insurance or gratuity in line with community (government) school teachers as sated in education act and regulation, 1971, rule 12, 7 (*chha=h*) (GON) (2017). Different incentives or benefits can be managed by school-self at local levels. In addition, in exchange for the commitment of the teachers, school managers and leaders may include incentives such as prizes, motivation, assessment components. It is very little known whether a private school teacher is getting all these forms of incentives mentioned above and motivated with them. The existing literature on this concern shows that the lack of opportunities for advancement and low level of satisfaction with the benefits perceived by private school teachers as compared to government school teachers (Thadathil, 2017). Majority of private school teachers have not been paid on time that was the agenda of teachers' organization for the upcoming agitation (The Himalaya Times, December, 2020). These few evidences indicate that the teachers are not getting the rewards up to the mark.

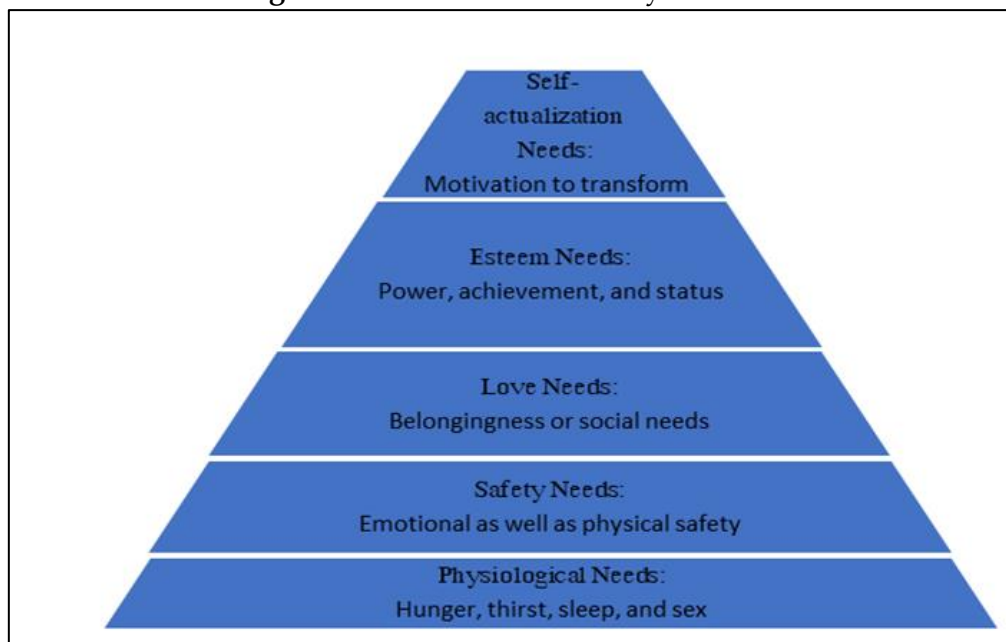
But some questions are not adequately answered that how the teachers perceive reward management of private schools of Nepal, and at what level they are in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This study will explore on it and use 'Maslow's hierarchy of needs' to describe the teachers' perception towards the reward management of private schools of Nepal.

2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's of hierarchy of needs explains the following five levels of needs: Physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs (in figure 1) (Luthans, 2011). The hierarchical arrangement suggests that the five levels of needs are arranged in order of increasing importance, starting with lowest level of physiological needs. According to him,

"In the hierarchy, the physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, sleep, and sex and the like are at the most basic level, usually referring to the unlearned primary needs. The second level needs are safety needs that are similar to the need for protection. The third type of hierarchy of needs is love needs which is also said to be affection and affiliation needs. In other words, they are the needs of belongingness or social needs. Fourth level of needs is esteem needs that are equivalent to needs related to power, achievement, and status. The highest level of human's needs is self-actualization that a kind of motivation to transformation, self-concepts or self-fulfilled."

Figure 1: Maslow's of Hierarchy of Needs



(Source: adapted from Luthans, 2011)

This study analyzes level of the teachers' needs is in private schools of teachers from the perspective of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

3. Research Method

For fulfillment of the purpose of this study, as stated by Creswell and Poth (2018), this study requires an exploration of a single phenomenon (reward management of private schools) and uses the phenomenological approach to describe the common meaning for participant teachers as their lived experiences of reward management in private schools. This study employs the qualitative research in which a purposeful sample of four participant teachers of private schools located in Kathmandu district are taken for the interview for evidence collection in the year 2019. Out of four teachers, two teachers were taken from secondary level and other two participants from basic level. In this study, two rounds of semi-structured interviews in the premises of reward management in their private schools were conducted. Before taking interview, informed consent was received from them. The interview was conducted in Nepali language and recorded in audio-visual mode, and then, it was transcribed and translated into English version. In the process of evidence analysis, the researcher generated the themes from the analysis of significant stated experiences of teachers, and the result was interpreted based on the Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

4. Evidence Analysis

In this study, I selected four teachers from two Private English Medium Boarding Schools located in Koteshwor, Kathmandu. Two of them were basic level named Udaya and

Upasana (Pseudonyms), teaches English and Nepali respectively, and other two were Rachana and Rajesh (Pseudonyms) of secondary level of Accountancy and Mathematics respectively. All the teachers have at least five years of teaching experiences in different private schools of Nepal.

The teachers were very busy in the schools, and it was difficult to manage time for them for interview. So, they managed Tiffin time or leisure period taking permission from their principals for the interview. First, I made clear about why they were selected for the interview and what I wanted from them. I assured them about confidentiality so that they could feel comfortable to express their experiences openly. They also accepted recording their version in my movie-camera. Around 35-40 minutes times was spent for the interview with each, and in second round, 15-20 minutes time was consumed for it as 'member checking to validate the findings' (Creswell & Poth, 2018). From the cross-case analysis of teachers' experiences, the following six themes were drawn:

4.1 Teaching as an Inspiring Factor of Job Selection

The participant teachers were inspired by their own teachers and themselves. They love their profession, Udaya says, *"I used to like my one teacher's teaching style in school very much and there was no one to guide my future career. So, I had decided to be a good teacher since then"*. Having the same inspiration, Rajesh says that in the beginning, his motivating factor was his accountancy teacher in college and he was influenced by his art of attracting pupils in the classroom. He was really inspired by them and decided to join teacher's job. Upasana adds in connection to this profession, *"I wanted to be an independent financially and this job (teaching) was easier than others for me. Consequently, I entered into this field."*

There are many motivating factors so that people are attracted by those factors such as nature of job, condition of work, nature of financial and non-financial reward etc. Psychologist Victor Vroom says a person's motivation to exert some level of effort is a function of three things: person's expectancy, instrumentality and valence (Suciu, Mortan & Lazăr, 2013). People are simply inspired by the expectation of an individual, perceived connection between successful performance and actually obtaining the rewards and the perceived value the person attaches to the reward. But, in this case, the teachers are motivated by their own school and college teachers to select their job and it was also easier to get it.

4.2 Salary as a Determinant of Satisfaction

The important matter what they emphasized that salary should be based on performance with certain scale and they disagreed with the present pay system which is based on the time and seniority. Their argument is more meaningful because they need certain level of minimum pay scale so that they could sustain their life and further, they demand additional rewards to exert the high performance. Udaya had an experience for nearly two years in other two previous schools and there his salary was based on the experience and time, so, he disliked it. Rajesh agreed with the argument of Udaya about payment system and described that the salary/payment should be based on their performance and

it shouldn't be less than pay scale of community school teachers at any cost and it was the responsibility of the managers.

In present salary pay provided by the schools, the teachers have similar opinions that they are not satisfied. In responding to my question about satisfaction towards the salary, Upasana says, *"Ha ha ha..., I am not satisfied with money or salary that I am getting from this school and nor I was in previous schools because this salary is based on time and experience rather than performance"*. Similarly, Rachana says, *"What I am getting as salary pay, actually, I am not satisfied"*. In line with others, Rajesh says, *"Nahunu Mama Bhandana Kano Mama Niko (something is better than nothing). The salary pay should be based on the agreement between the employers and the employees, and it needs to be on the basis of 'Give and Take' and timely payment is necessary"*.

In practice, there is no uniform in paying system either based on performance or working hour that keep the employees satisfied. Dessler (2008) states that a company or an organization provides reward on the basis of competitions and performance (p. 450) and according to Luthans (2008), base wages and salary is the amount of money that an individual is paid on an hourly, weekly, monthly, or annual basis (p. 96). It is a matter of controversy that what type of salary payment is universally accepted. If it is observed from the perspective of Herzberg's two-factor theory, the hygiene factors (company policy and administration, supervision, technicality, salary, interpersonal relations, supervisor, working conditions) seem to be important in preventing dissatisfaction but do not lead to satisfaction (Luthans, 2008, p. 172-173).

4.3 Benefit as a Motivating Factor

Employee expects additional considerations on the top of their compensation that will enrich their life. It includes health insurance, retirement plan, off time payment, execute benefits like telephone, rental service etc. to be provided by the schools. Regarding benefits, Rachana expresses that

"Yah... I have, I have many chances to improve my personality, to uplift my career. I have got chances to attend meetings, different workshops and short period trainings. Every day, I get at least one new idea. I am learning something new that is required to develop my personality. Even though these opportunities help me to develop my career, we are given very negligible benefits that cannot motivate to better performance and those are also limited within the school premises."

Udaya states in similar way about the benefits he receives,

"Nowadays they have started very few programs for our career development which are significantly less. Regarding other benefits, some teachers are getting extra facilities like free ship for their children's education. I am single; in return, I am not getting anything. But, sick leaves, vacation are given. But it has no meaning because we have to come on holidays, even on Saturday and we cannot entertain our leisure time."

As stated by Shrestha (2004), there are various factors to motivate people. Among them, benefits also play an important role in motivation. In this study, teachers, in average, are not motivated with the present provision of benefits. Rachana is quite dissatisfied, she argues about the injustice in comparison to those teachers who had school children and were getting benefits more than her. She says, "*Managers might have the thoughts they have provided benefits satisfactorily and it is equitable, but it is affecting negatively and has created dissatisfaction among the team members.*" which indicates a severe issue of demotivation.

Luthans (2011) states that several types of benefits such as traditional or newer benefits: federal government–mandated benefits, life, disability, and health insurance, pension benefits, time-off benefit, wellness programs, life cycle benefits and other benefits are provided. Unfortunately, out of these many types of benefits, the private school teachers get very limited benefits that is not up their satisfaction level.

4.4 Recognition as a Dignity of Teachers

During the conversation, another important factor 'recognition' emerged as a motivating factor besides the material reward. Some of the questions were related to whether recognition was the determinant of satisfaction for them. The teachers agreed with the recognition as one of the determinant factors of satisfaction, but they value the recognition differently. In Upasana's Words, "*As a reward, I haven't got any kind of recognition yet. Nobody praises me, nobody appreciates my work. I do my work sincerely, yet nobody recognizes me.*" In line with Upasana, Udaya says, "*My school administration is responsible for this matter. Praising or rewarding teachers doesn't mean the increment of salary; they can use words-thanking, recognition programs or respecting anything else that is lacking in this school.*" But Rajesh was satisfied with the recognition what he was getting. He says, "*I am getting enough recognition. It helps me to gain a kind of social status since I joined here. The managers sometimes call me for tea and invites for dinner etc. However, I am guided by the principle as 'Take and Give'.*"

Most employees certainly appreciate monetary rewards for a job well-done. In addition, some employees may be satisfied with only the recognition of their hard work. This ensures a focus on recognizing the efforts of employees. To this end, although the recognition may have a monetary value such as a luncheon, gift certificates or plaques, and money is not given to recognize performance. Recognition can take a variety of forms like breakfasts, yearbook, recognition boards etc. Luthans (2008) highlights the recognition as an organizational reward that whenever people are asked what motivates them most; money is always prominently featured on their list. However, both formal organizational recognition and social recognition used systematically by supervisors and managers is very important to their employees and their day-to-day behavior and effectiveness in performance. Hellrigel et al. (1998) include praise, developmental feedback, smiles, pats on back and others non-verbal signals, request for suggestions, invitation to coffee or lunch, wall plaques in social or interpersonal rewards as important tools of recognizing people.

4.5 Equity as a Work Motivation

In the course of conversation, they were asked whether there was equitable environment in their organization, they have the feeling of equally treated by the school managers. Udaya sadly explains that,

“If the hard workers or teachers who work very hard and those who speak more and do less, are treated equally by the administration, the laborious and hard-working teachers are demotivated because they need to work hard and spend more time for the betterment of institution. If they are not rewarded or treated equally, it is not fair and brings dissatisfaction.”

In the same concern, Rajesh says that,

“In the sense of dissatisfaction, I get low pay and there aren't many facilities in comparison to my other co-workers in my schools and same level teachers in the neighboring schools. I have taken just four/five days as leaves for four years. But the organization hasn't paid for my about 60 days of the saved leaves. I feel discrimination where as an irregular teacher gets payment timely but the one who has never been absent, is not getting regular payment.”

No one likes to be paid less than they deserve. So, equity, both external and internal, is crucial to promote the level of satisfaction. When employees notice the inequalities in the paying system, recognition or other facilities, disappointment and conflict will result and salary inequalities can trigger a big response (Dissler, 2003). In such case, the teachers want to be treated fairly. It is realized that equity is a personal belief that requires to be treated fairly in relation to others. It is also a perception derived from the social comparison process. More common, however, is the case of people who feel under paid (outcome) or overwork load (input) in relation to other teachers in workplace or market environment and it is perceived as an organizational justice or distributive justice. It is important to note that how workers in an organization are hurt by their administrators or managers. The statements led to the dissatisfaction due to the unfair judgment and inequitable rewarding system. It looks fair that when a hard-working teacher who gets great results from his or her students is to be paid more than a clock-punching teacher. A belief emerges that they expect equitable behavior from their managers and also demand the practice of fair and effective reward and punishment system. As stated by DeCenzo, Robbins and Verhulst (2010), employees want compensation that is equal. They will act to remedy the inequity if workers perceive a difference in their efforts-reward ratio to any comparable norm.

4.6 Mobility as a Reflection of Demotivation

Udaya has worked in three different schools in the past and he is of 25 years. Rajesh has changed two schools in seven-year time, and he is around of 30 years. Udaya says, *“If the school doesn't recognize my work and doesn't promote along even after increasing my*

qualification, I must search for another school." And Rajesh says, *"It is their organization; they do as they wish. If I get significantly higher salary and attractive facilities, I can easily change the work place, but I don't change the job of teaching."* For the participant female teachers, both have not changed their schools, and has no plan to change it. Despite their dissatisfaction, they have no other options. But the participant male teachers give first priority to their study and accept the current job as secondary work. They are uncertain in the roadmap of their life, where they go if they don't get promotion in the present institution. They believe on "Wait and see". On the other hand, they have little hope of positive changes in their career development in the present place, but it is not sure. They don't have belongingness to school; they perceive the school as the managers' property. When there is no belongingness in any organization, they don't see their secure life.

People define their life in different ways where they are living; they search the meaning of their life and they are hopeful for the betterment of their future life. There might be various factors that drive the employees to change the workplace. From the interview with the participant teachers, two factors: career development and pay system are found as the driving factors to change the workplace. Dessler (2008) says that the career planning process means matching individual strengths and weaknesses with occupational opportunities and threats. Further, he states that many people make the mistake of changing occupations (or of remaining unhappily in their present jobs) when they could be happier without making a big career change. As described by Dessler (2008), simply, the teachers, in this study, are not intending to change their occupation; they want staying in the same work place if they get promotion and additional facilities.

5. Reward Management: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

This study partially agrees with the argument of *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. According to Maslow, there is no longer a need if a need is met and the need transforms into higher level (Ololube, 2006). But, in this study, the participant teachers are not motivated by physiological needs however they are motivated by the needs of affiliation. The teachers have desire 'for to be loved and wanted in the group' (Ololube, 2006) of teachers. The participant teachers of private schools are at different states of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Mostly they are struggling for their basic needs- physiological needs- that they are not getting the survival reward in return to their service. They, especially male teachers, feel little secure in their jobs and the schools have not ensured the secured environment for them so that the teachers wonder for better options as the high degree of their mobility justifies it. The teachers except are not motivated by the needs of security, recognition besides physiological needs. They are demotivated at different levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs that would have effect on the teachers' belongingness and the school's overall performance.

6. Conclusion

The concern of this study was to study that whether the reward managed by the Nepali private schools motivates the teachers. From the perspectives of the participant teachers, the teachers necessarily believe on the financial and non-financial rewards as motivating factors and they are dissatisfied with the current reward management that focuses on time base pay rather than performance pay. It is natural phenomena that everyone wants to fulfil their basic needs which the schools lack. However, a little effort on fulfilling other needs such as security, love, esteem needs is possible in the schools. As perceive by the teachers, 'a single cup of tea' might be high degree of motivating factor for them but there is lacking of such symbolic incentives to them. The schools are not fair to treat the teachers. The teachers sensitively take such inequitable behaviour within the organization which brings serious dissatisfaction. Despite the demotivation of teachers, they expect positive changes in their schools in future.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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