

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Strategies to retain and motivate employees in Africa: Examining the case of the ministry of education in Zambia**

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**This research paper analyzes the employee's perception on incentives and motivation for the employees of the ministry of education (MOE) in Zambia. Concerns about educator turnover and attrition are reported widely as a global phenomenon. The study mainly followed a qualitative and was supplemented with quantitative designs. A self administered questionnaire was distributed to a sample of (n = 436) employees in the ministry of education. The results showed that a large portion of the respondents 308 (70.6%) perceived their job as routine and less satisfying. Perception of recognition programs and rewards, in terms of pay checks, benefits and non-monetary rewards seemed to be high among the respondents, 336 (77.0%) agreed to the use of recognition programs as a form of retention. The paper highly recommends that policy makers during the policy making process should carry out consultations in form of dialogue among identifiable employee groups. Each category of workers should come up with proposals concerning the forms of recognition and rewards they would want to receive. By so doing, employees will feel motivated and own the decisions through the bottom up approach.**

**Key words:** Zambia, Ministry of education, retain, motivate, incentives.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In order to meet the challenge of employee retention that confronts the ministry of education (MOE) in Zambia, it is essential to provide a congenial working environment for all its employees. MOE employees in this study include those working at the head quarters, province, district, school level and the teachers. All employees need to be motivated to continue working for the ministry, when an employee is satisfied with their working conditions they are most likely to stay with the organization. In this same light, MOE managers have to be aware that different employees have different needs and the causes of attrition can be different depending on what an employee values. However it is a known fact that most employees would stay in an organization if they are being paid well

but yet money is not the only thing that can motivate employees to stay. Money may attract people to the front door but something else is needed to keep them from going out the back door. The other things needed maybe non financial incentives such as rewards and recognition programs. This paper will zero in on non financial incentives because the ministry has little control on financial incentives such as salary increments. The government which is the employer controls who gets what and when. Salary increments for example are granted depending on the prevailing economic situation.

Employees may leave the ministry in many ways and it can be attributed to many causes. It is therefore essential that the education system takes cognizance of this and takes steps to address this situation proactively before it reaches grave extents. Concerns about educator turnover and attrition are reported widely as a global phenomenon. According to BBC online news, Britain's education attrition is reported as a national crisis.

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Santiago (2001) reports that the situation is worsening in Sweden, Germany and New Zealand. In the USA, teacher shortages as a result of turnover are widely reported in many states (Lynch, 1995; Leigh, 2001; Ingersoll, 2002). The Canadian Teachers' Federation reports on teacher shortages resultant from teacher attrition in Ontario and Australia (Thomas, 1998). In most African countries teacher attrition is associated with the poor condition of service and also the HIV/AIDS epidemic especially sub-Saharan countries. MOE has continued to lose employees through resignation, migration and other natural causes as death due to HIV and AIDS. Moreover, attrition increases when employees feel they are being paid less than what they are worth. Employees evaluate their pay relative to the pay of other employees. Social scientists have studied this kind of comparison and developed equity theory to describe how people make judgments about fairness (Frazee-Robinson, 1999). Employees who are being paid less than they deserve leave the organization and join the ones which will appreciate them more in terms of income. The President of the Gambian Teachers' Union reports a massive exit of teachers from the profession due to, amongst other reasons, a lack of adequate salaries, allowances, housing and promotion (Kamara, 2002; Markely, 2001).

In the ministry of education in Zambia, research has consistently shown that the dominant factors contributing to teacher wastage or attrition are the material incentives represented by salaries and conditions of service. Virtually all teachers, whether they leave the system or remain in it, feel that the salaries they receive are insufficient to enable them to live in a way that befits their status. Ministry of Education (1996) states clearly that the dissatisfaction with conditions of service relates to; lack of proper accommodation; lack of a housing scheme to prepare teachers for retirement; inadequate provision of loans; absence of a health scheme for teachers; inadequate provision of in-service training; poor promotion prospects and lack of clear guidelines on promotion; concern that there is corruption in promotions and selections for in-service training; and difficulties in communications with the employer, with a sense that teachers' problems are disregarded. It is evident that the quality and effectiveness of an education system depends heavily on teacher quality. They are the key persons in determining success in meeting the system's goals. The educational and personal well-being of children in schools hinges crucially on their competence, commitment and resourcefulness (Ministry of Education, 1996).

According to Ministry of Education (1996), the national educational policy document, teacher wastage occurs in two forms. The individual who was trained as a teacher may not begin teaching and so may never enter the profession; alternatively, having entered, he or she may leave teaching after some time. More wastage, of both forms, occurs with university graduates than with

those who have passed through the other teacher-education programs. The rates of wastage though lower now than in the past, are sufficiently high to deprive a large number of schools of the graduate teachers they require. Very approximately, the current need is for some 3,000 university graduate teachers, which is the equivalent of the total output from the University of Zambia's School of Education since its inception, but only about half this number is actually in the schools (MOE, 1996).

Exogenous motivational factors such as rewards, regulation and economic incentives are perhaps the most important devices that managers can use in the public sector service (of which employees in the MOE belong) to retain its employees. The government of Zambia has introduced and is implementing a retention package to employees in MOE. The package includes both financial and non financial incentives. However, financial incentives are failing to achieve the desired results (retain and motivate employees) because of inflationary environment in the country. Some incentives include low interest loans, housing allowances (for employees not accommodated in institutional houses) and educational allowances. Non financial incentives being offered to employees include; confirmation of staff that had acted in senior positions over many years, professional advancement leave and recognition of higher qualification in the case of teaching staff. Other incentives include; vehicles and accommodation. In addition to current rewards, civil servants usually can count on receiving a pension and/or a lump-sum gratuity.

The MOE is using bonding as a strategy of retaining staff. However bonding cannot be reliable because employees can be willing to forfeit their terminal benefits. Penalty for defaulting bonding agreements can be surpassed by offers for prospective jobs. Other writers have highlighted some key retention strategies as being. 1) Offer performance feedback, praise good efforts and results. 2) Involve employees in decisions that affect their jobs and the overall direction of the company whenever possible. Recognize excellent performance, and especially, link pay to performance. 3) Demonstrate respect for employees at all times. 4) According to research by the Gallup organization, encourage employees to have good, even best, friends, at work (Croasmun, 2002).

Rewards to encourage good performance are uncommon in developing country civil services. But examples do exist. In Singapore, employees receive an annual bonus -- depending on national economic growth. Chinese civil servants receive an annual bonus; but due to the difficulty in assessing individual performance accurately, virtually the same amount has been paid to each employee. In Thailand, each year 15% of officials in each grade can be awarded one extra increment for exceptional performance; but there is some skepticism about the reliability of how staff performance is evaluated

(Croasmun, 2002). In a recent World Bank survey, public officials in sixteen countries were asked whether organizations who had been rewarded for good performance in the preceding twelve months. In all countries surveyed, the majority of civil servants reported not knowing of any rewards for good performance (Mukherjee, 2001).

The significance of this paper is to provide some analysis to policy makers and human resource executives to consider when planning a reward and recognition program. The paper will be significant for decision-making and practice for other government ministries as it fills a significant gap in the literature. Unfortunately little has been written about reward and recognition programs for employees in MOE Zambia and this poses both a limitation and an opportunity for the practical outcomes that may emerge from this study. As for MOE being a government ministry, this research should help draw political will from the government in supporting the implementation of the strategies to retain and motivate employees.

### **Theoretical basis for motivation and research**

The study of human motivation has a broad history that must not be ignored. The contributions of past theories are important as many current views of human motivation evolved based on principles identified by earlier theories. There are many theories on motivation and the effectiveness and efficiency of reward and recognition programs that have been written with regards to worker motivation. A number of expertise in the field of worker motivation include among others; Abraham Maslow, Frederick Herzberg, Burrhus Frederick Skinner, Richard Ryan, Elton Mayo, Frederick Winslow Taylor, Edward E. Lawler, W. Edwards Deming, William Glasser and Edward Deci. For this study we will zero in on Maslow, Herzberg, Skinner and Lawler's theories of behaviorist and humanist. The study of these theorists will make a good foundation of employee motivation and reward and recognition programs.

The study of motivation can be traced as far back as 18th century, especially when the humanists and behaviorists debated the role of the environment and the control of human behavior (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). This debate set the stage for research on rewards and intrinsic motivation. Two other factors occurred: the computer revolution gave way to another field of thinking known as cognitive psychology, and learning theory's claims were challenged by social psychologists who believed that a relationship between rewards and attitude existed. Social psychologists encouraged queries and examination of behaviorist theory, and claims that rewards decreased intrinsic motivation. As a result of these disputes, another school of thought emerged during the 1950's and 1960's in the form of humanism

(Chaika, 2002).

Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers are part of the humanists. They describe humans as basically good by nature, seeking growth, fulfillment, and meaningful relationships with others. Self-actualization and positive social relationships could only be achieved. According to these experts if people become aware of, and express their inner experiences (perceptions, thoughts, feelings, sensations) so could they move towards self-actualization (Chaika, 2002). Humanists strongly disagreed with the concepts suggested by behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner who argued in favor of the environment to explain human and animal behavior. He believed that humans could shape the behavior of others, which then in turn shaped the future behavior of the subject (Chaika, 2002). During the early 1960s, William Glasser's Choice Theory helped to explain human motivation, in which he suggested that people are intrinsically motivated to satisfy needs for belonging, maintaining a sense of power and having fun (Hiam, 2003).

This research led the way to many theories attempting to understand human motivation. As mentioned earlier, Humanists Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, behaviorist Skinner's behavior theory and Lawler's theory will show that although work and lifestyles have changed significantly since the development of these early theories, factors contributing to employee motivation then are relevant today (Herzberg, 1968; Schein, 1999; Emmet 2006)

One of the most frequently cited theories of human motivation is Maslow's hierarchy of human needs theory (ILO, 1991). This theory maintains that people have five levels of human need: physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization. The tenet of this model suggests that, only after each need in the hierarchy has been adequately met, would individuals be motivated to move on to higher – level needs. Herzberg, (1968) making an argument for both physical and psychological needs in a pyramid structure put in a hierarchy, with physiological needs at the bottom and self fulfillment at the top. Maslow's theory of human needs shows how the needs of employees have to be fulfilled or satisfied at work in order to have a motivated work force. When a lesser rank of need is fully met, then will a worker be motivated by the chance of having the next need up in the hierarchy satisfied? For example, an employee who has no accommodation will be motivated to get a wage or income that will enable him pay for accommodation or work for an institution that will provide him with a house to live in before worrying about having a secure working environment or the respect of other work mates. Incentives should be given to workers in order to help them fulfill each need and thus to advance up the hierarchy. Supervisors should also differentiate incentives from employee to employee, because humans are unique and their needs differ. In addition, not all employees move up the hierarchy at the same pace. Therefore

superiors or managers have to offer a slightly different set of incentives to meet employees at their points of need.

The modified Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that in the past, meeting basic needs of food and shelter were enough to motivate people; however, Creech (2001) suggests that in society today these basic needs are generally satisfied and employees are yearning for higher-level motivators such as creative and mind-expanding work. Although Freez (1999) agrees with the general principle of this hierarchy, he suggests that "money in connection with motivation becomes far more of an issue when the top three layers of the hierarchy (belonging, self-expression and self-fulfillment) are deficit or failing" this is clearly demonstrated by Bowen (2003) who maintains; For the welfare to-work employee and minimum wage earners, money is a basic need, not a motivator. In reality, motivation is an inside job, money may influence behavior, but it is no substitute for motivation. People require a greater sense of achievement and self-actualization. Maslow referred to non-actualizers as those who had not yet grown into their mature or full humanness and were yet to fulfill their basic nature (Schaffer, 1990). Consequently, non-actualizers were still motivated to reach successive levels of the pyramid. Those who do realize and satisfy all needs, Maslow termed self-actualizers. Having achieved self-actualization, humans then, are no longer motivated to achieve the basic needs, and instead are motivated by "higher" purposes, which he termed "metaneeds," and the intrinsic motivation to achieve them, "metamotivation" (Naukrihub, 2007).

In the 1950's and 1960's when Herzberg was researching employee motivation he "discovered a dichotomy that still intrigues (and baffles) managers: the things that make people satisfied and motivated on the job are different in kind from the things that make them dissatisfied" (Hiam, 2003). The second part of Herzberg's motivation theory explains the work employees can actually accomplish while on the job. The motivators are achievement, recognition, development or advancement and interest in the job. Motivators such as interesting and challenging work and greater responsibility, lead to increased employee motivation as demonstrated by Herzberg (2003).

Although Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory does not have specific bearing on Herzberg's theory, it does reinforce the notion that extrinsic factors have a limited impact on motivation. Motivation can only be valued if it is also intrinsically valued. For instance, giving a person who is not concerned with survival more, food, warm clothes, or shelter will have little to self-actualize and they will be more apt to be motivated (Employee Recognition survey, 2002; Souvorov, 2003; Spitzer, 2002).

Frederick skinner a psychologist in the year 1974 turned to the environment to explain human behavior. He rejected the concept of intrinsic motivation that was put forward by Humanist theorists. Overall skinner rejected

the humanist theories. Skinner's Behavior Theory emphasizes the relationship between actions and consequences as the reasons for motivation, rather than cognitive action. Chaika (2002) indicates that Skinner viewed operant conditioning as a means to control behavior through the use of rewards and punishment. Behavior that is reinforced, followed by rewarding consequences tends to be repeated. Skinner concluded that, the effects of operant reinforcement are often represented as Inner states or possessions. When we reinforce a person, we are said to give him a motive or incentive, but we infer the motive or Incentive from the behavior.

Within the foundation of Maslow, Herzberg, and Skinner's theories lies the concept of control. Humanism is grounded in freedom and autonomy while behaviorism values an opposing set of beliefs, calling for behavior that is primarily determined by stimulus inputs, of which we are largely unaware, while our conscious thoughts as to why we do what we do are essentially unimportant and not worthy scientific study (Schaffer, 1998).

Literature has mainly focused on historical and latest studies on worker motivation and incentive. We have showed that this is relatively an old discipline which has gone through some modifications to suit the new emerging trends. Abraham Maslow's theory has been central in this review.

### **Statement of the problem**

During the past two decades the Zambian economy has experienced serious difficulties which have limited its expansion; the critical problems have included the failure to diversify the structure of the economy and the internal imbalance evidenced by the high rate of inflation. The economy has been vulnerable to exogenous changes in the price of copper; a characteristic that remains unchanged today when copper still forms the backbone of the economy. The economy's decline has made it difficult for the government to meet its social and economic obligations. As a result government ministries have also been affected. In order to meet the challenges that confront MOE in these times, it is necessary to provide a friendly working atmosphere for all employees. The education sector must compete with other sectors of the economy for the scarce resources in terms of finance and human resource. The ministry should be able to draw and retain talented individuals. Therefore this paper aims at analyzing the strategies that MOE has put in place to retain and motivate its employees and give suggestions of strategies that can be used to further reduce the number of employees leaving the ministry.

Many teachers are reportedly leaving the profession for greener financial pastures in the other countries like Botswana, South Africa and even gone to western countries. Employees resignations are as a result of poor

conditions of service are common. Data shows that, experts and teachers of mathematics and sciences are leaving the ministry of education fast and several departments and schools are battling to fill their positions. The situation regarding workers turnover and attrition in Zambia seems complex due to different dynamics at play. Among others include, the need for rationalization, decentralization and widespread resignations from the profession. Other employees within MOE are happier to leave the ministry through resignation to other organization or on secondment (attachment) to other government ministries or department. These employees never return to the MOE. The number of employees leaving the ministry on secondment has been on the rise since 2000 (MOE, 2007).

Teacher attrition in Zambia's public schools is increasing becoming a source of concern. According to the Zambian country report, those who remain are underpaid, poorly housed, demoralized, poorly deployed, provided with little support in the field and given little instructional time. Yuki (2002) employee attrition manifests itself in many ways and is attributed to many causes. It is therefore imperative that the education system takes cognizance of this and takes steps to address this situation proactively before it reaches critical proportions. Country report from Mozambique recognized the need to make the teaching profession more attractive and saw the low teachers' salaries and bad working conditions as the important to improve.

## Aim

The present research paper investigated strategies that are being used by the MOE to retain employees. This study was designed to answer questions regarding employee's perception of rewards and recognition programs, employee incentives and sources of motivation for employees. It attempted to determine factors that are most important to employees for them to continue working in the ministry. Understanding these factors could help human resource executive, administrators at district and province level, school managers and decision makers with information to address these important factors as well as information to consider when planning a reward and recognition program.

## Specific objectives

**Related to the broad aims, the study had the following specific objectives:**

1. To identify possible strategies that could contribute to retention of MOE staff.
2. To determine employee perception on incentives.
3. To identify employees perception towards rewards and

recognition.

4. To identify factors that motivates employees in MOE.
5. To identify factors that can be utilized to increase MOE employee retention.
6. To suggest measures that will improve strategies to retain and motivate employees in the ministry.

## Research questions

The following are the research questions addressed:

1. What are the social-demographic characteristics of selected employees with respect to gender, age, education qualification, position at workplace, marital status, and number of years working with the MOE?
2. How do MOE employees perceive their level of satisfaction?
3. How do MOE employees view recognition and rewards?
4. What strategies are being used or should be used to retain employees?
5. Do the MOE employees perceive incentives as important to stay in the organization?
6. What sources of recognition are important for employee's satisfaction in MOE?

## Research paper hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses framed:

1. Recognition from immediate supervisor is positively related to employee satisfaction.
2. Respondents who are older are more likely to hold positive attitudes towards recognition and rewards.
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of rewarding exceptional performance on an ongoing basis between female and male respondents.
4. Education qualification has no effect on the respondent's perception of recognition of work done to stimulate motivation.
5. There is no significant difference between female and male respondents perception on training.

## Justification for the research paper

Employees are continuously leaving the ministry of education in search for high paying jobs. Employees in the ministry are presently demoralized and lack motivation due to their inadequate salaries which are sometime not paid in time. Such conditions are unacceptable in that you need to have a workforce that will be efficient and effective. Large shares of the educational budget are for employees salaries, but even so they are not enough and this is very crucial in getting a

quality education for the citizens of Zambia. At present the teaching profession is not an attractive choice to recruit and also retain experienced employees in the occupation. The poor working conditions are the strategic areas that need to be improved so that retention of employees is made easy. Reward and recognition programs have to be incorporated in the education system because they are cheaper. For example praise does not cost the manager anything but motivates the employee to even perform better since his or her performance is being recognized. To be able to do a good job employees in the ministry need possibilities, encouragement, good working conditions and competitive salary. Otherwise they may opt to leave. Research from education institutions found five main reasons of employee turnover and attrition these are retirement, school staffing action, family or personal, pursuit of other jobs and dissatisfaction (Osborne, 2002; Finn, 1999; Catalyst, 2003).

Results of this research paper would serve to provide human resources personnel's and the managers in the ministry with how to design retention strategies which will be effective. It is hoped that findings and generalizations drawn from a local region could be used to other regions where people have the same plight; furthermore the recommendations will be of values to the ministry and the government as the employer.

## METHODOLOGY

This study provides an insight into the way data concerning motivation and retention of employees in the Ministry of Education (MOE) was collected, processed and analyzed. This study attempted to examine the relationship among / between recognition programs, Incentives, job satisfaction and reduced employee turnover in the ministry. This paper has five distinct goals (1) to identify the working practices of education professionals in Zambia that may influence their retention in the ministry. (2) Identify possible strategies that could contribute to retention of employees of staff and have a positive impact on the problem of the brain in Zambia. (3) To identify teachers' perception towards recognition and / reward. (4) To find out the source of motivation and performance for the workers. (9) To investigate sources of recognition as an important action to retain employees. (6) Finally, to examine employee incentives that is highly valued.

### Research design, population and sample

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis comprising of telephone interview and self administered questionnaires. The participants were drawn from the ministry of education employees, in Lusaka. A self- administered questionnaire was distributed to the sample. A sample (n = 463) was randomly drawn from Lusaka district. A systematic random sampling was used. This is based on the selection of elements at equal intervals, starting with a randomly selected element on the population list.

In order to find out the level of satisfaction in relation to employees work in the MOE in Zambia, the employees were asked to give their opinions of their job itself; that is the job; 1) Routine 2) Satisfying and 3) Good. Forms of recognition programs that were included are the following; a) recognition for work done; b)

paychecks and benefits as the only form of recognition; and c) paychecks and benefits as well as non monetary rewards should be used as a form of recognition. This study used literature searches (published and unpublished) on human resources in education. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher. A pilot study was then conducted using 10 foreign students studying in China and working in the ministry of education from their respective countries. The pilot study was conducted to test comprehension, phrasing, sensitivity and length of the questions. In addition the pilot study was able to provide "the researcher with ideas, approaches and clues you may not have foreseen before conducting the pilot study: such ideas and clues increase the chances of getting clearer findings in the main study (Meriwether, 2001).

The study tool was adjusted and administered to 500 employees of the ministry of education. The purpose of the study was to communicate to all participants, who were assured that the questionnaires were to be treated with confidentiality and the information was to be used for policy change so as to help retain employees in MOE. No rewards or monetary incentives were given to participants included in this study.

### Social- demographic characteristics

Were measured using seven items which included: gender, age, education qualification, marital status, number of children, number of dependants and the number of years working in the MOE? The age categories were included in this survey in order to examine whether motivators are generation specific. Lancaster et al. (2002) suggest; for years people have analyzed factors like age, life style, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, educational background, thinking styles, Myers Briggs profiles and even signs of the zodiac to find ways to understand each other better. Yet somehow we have failed to recognize the form of diversity that affects every human being on a daily basis (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002).

### Motivational statements

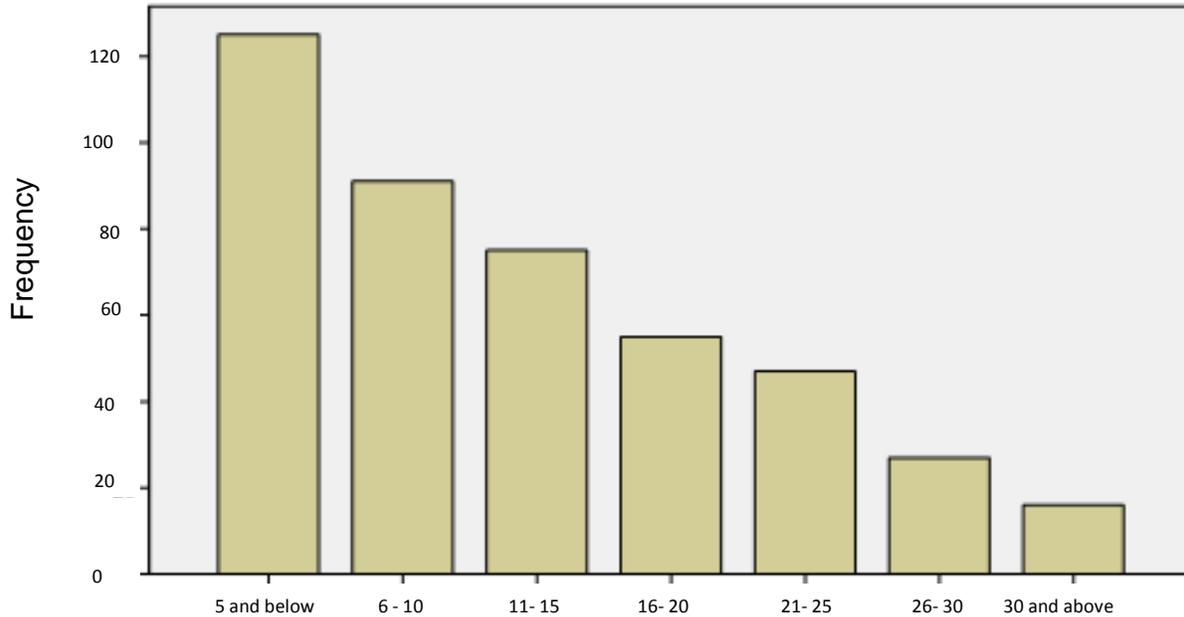
Statements with regards to various aspects that can motivate employees were included in the study, so that the respondents can give opinions of what motivates them. A five point scale was used that ranged from strongly disagree, disagree, moderate, agree and strongly agree. Table 3 is a summary of the motivation statements included in the study.

### Achievement and behavior

Individuals have different needs and values, as such their preference on what type of achievements and behaviors to be rewarded also differs. The study included different types of achievements and behaviors that can be used by the employer to reward its employees. Ministry of education employees were provided with the options as in Table 4 to choose the option that best reflects how they would want to be recognized.

### Questionnaire design

A 5 paged questionnaire was used to collect data from the field. The structure of the questionnaire was as follows: 1) section A consisted of demographic characteristics about respondents' gender, age, material status, number of children, dependants and the number of years working in the MOE. This section also included the position one held in work place; 2) section B examined the level of satisfaction in relation to their work and working environment



**Figure 1.** Number of years working for the ministry of education.

(colleagues, supervisors); 3) section C had 11 employee incentives that can be valued important to MOE employers; 4) section D had 15 statements on various aspects of motivation and performance; 5) section E covered description of recognition programs; 6) section F had opinions on who should be awarded; 7) section G consisted of sources of recognition; 8) section H measured 12 items of achievements and behaviors for which staff can be recognized and 9) section I featured statements on the preferences on how employers would like to be recognized.

#### Data preparation and analysis

For descriptive outputs, such as the total sample and related percentages, simple cross tabulations were performed to present frequencies of respondents by sex, age, residence, education qualification, position at work place, marital status and experience. Descriptive statistics was also used to analyze and discuss recognition of rewards, strategies to retain employees and on the type of incentives. For further analysis though not captured in this paper, multivariate analysis, binary logistic regression was utilized but with the same correlates categorized for descriptive analyses. Upon completion of the survey, the questionnaires were checked for consistency and completeness. Each questionnaire was given a code for data entry. A SPSS (statistical package for the social sciences) data set was then created. Finally, data cleaning and verification were conducted on the sample and new variables were created for the purpose of the analysis. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 16.0, with graphical user interface and unitary binary, tables and graphs were used to present the analyzed data

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic characteristics

**Q1.** What are the social-demographic characteristics of the selected employees with respect to gender, age,

education qualification, position at workplace, marital status, and number of years working with the MOE?

The results shows that 201 (46.1%) respondents were males and 235 (53.9%) were females. The major portion of the respondents (40.6%) was in the range 26 to 35 years, about 33.0% of the respondents were in the range 36 to 45 years, Followed by 19.0% in the range of 46 and above, and finally 7.3% were 25 and below years old.

The education qualifications of the respondents were as follows; the highest number of respondents 292 (67.0%) had certificate/diploma followed by first degree holder at 122 (28.0%), then Masters holders at 18 (4.1%) respondents and PhD holders were 4 (0.9%)

Figure 1 shows the number of years the respondents had worked in the ministry of education, the results show that, the highest frequency 125 (28.7%) respondents had worked for 5 years and below, 91 (20.9%) respondents had worked for the range 6 to 10 years, while 75 (17.2%) respondents worked for 11 to 15 years. From the results in Figure 1, it can be seen that the MOE has more employees who have worked for a shorter time. As the number of years of working with the ministry increases the number of employees reduces. This shows that employees are leaving the ministry of education as they are fewer respondents as the number of years of working in the ministry increases.

With regards to recognition in form of awards the results showed that there was a higher percent of respondents (71.3%) who answered that they had not received an award while working for the ministry of education, while (28.7%) had received an award in form of a household item. This indicates that awards are not being used as a form of motivation to the employees in

the MOE in Zambia. It further shows that awards are not differentiated according to individuals because all the respondents who answered that they had received an award were in form of a household good. There is need to differentiate rewards because individual employees are different and have different needs and values, not all employees can be motivated by one form of award. Recognition and rewards items included in the study are presented in Table 2.

### Employees level of satisfaction

**Q2.** How MOE employees perceive their level of satisfaction in terms of do: (i) pay (ii) work itself and (iii) promotion opportunities?

The results showed that 369 (84.6%) of the respondents felt their pay is less than they deserve, followed by 22 (5.0%) respondents who felt their pay was insecure and 12 (2.8%) respondents felt their pay was highly paid. While the rest of the respondents 33 (7.6%) did not decide. The MOE employees are not satisfied with their pay this is clear from the responses that 84.6% of the employees perceived pay as not satisfying.

Work itself was perceived to be routine by most respondents 308 (70.6%), followed by 65 (14.9%) respondents who perceived their work to be satisfying while 45 (10.3%) respondents perceived their work as good and the rest 18 (4.1%) respondents did not decide. The responses from employees that the job is routine means the job is not challenging and does not stimulate motivation because they are doing the same kind of work year in year out. When the work is routine it reduces job satisfaction this can result in an employee leaving the ministry to look for other jobs that can be more challenging and motivating.

With regards to promotion opportunities, a larger portion of respondents 170 (39.0%) perceived that it's a dead-end job, followed by 138 (31.7%) respondents who perceive their promotion opportunities as based on unfair policies, while 106 (24.3%) respondents perceived promotion as based on ability and 22 (5.0%) respondents did not decide. Promotions in the workplace are valued by employees because with promotion comes a higher salary and more responsibilities however in the MOE in Zambia the employees see their promotion opportunities as dead-end there is little chance of getting a promotion. The lack of promotion opportunities in the MOE makes its employees to look for other jobs that will enable them to get promotion and earn more money.

### Employees perception of recognition programs and rewards

**Q3.** How do MOE employees view recognition and rewards?

The findings on recognition programs indicate that respondents would like to be recognized for their work. 59.9% of the respondents strongly agreed to be recognized for their work followed by 26.1% who also agreed to programs that recognize work. The remainder 14.0% responded as moderate, disagree or strongly disagree

In the study respondents were also asked to rate the level of their concern on recognition programs, in relation to pay check, benefits and non-monetary rewards using a 5-point scale as can be seen in Figure 2. The results showed that a large portion of respondents 39.2% would prefer recognition programs that include both monetary and non monetary reward; 37.8% of the respondents strongly agreed to the use of both monetary and non monetary rewards. 13.3% of the respondents were moderate while 5.5 and 4.1% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the use of monetary and non monetary rewards in the recognition programs. As demonstrated in Figure 3.

### Strategies to retain employees

**Q4.** What strategies are being used or should be used to retain employees MOE?

To answer this question secondary data from the ministry of education was reviewed. MOE being a government ministry, its retention strategies are outlined in the terms and condition document issued by the secretary to the cabinet in 2003, Mr. S.L.Mbula. The retention strategies in MOE are elaborated earlier. However, the existing strategies in MOE do not include recognition and rewards. The managers are encouraged the use of recognition programs as a way to retain employees. Recognition of work can be in the form of praises or a simple thank you which does not need money. Non monetary incentives are encouraged to be used by managers in the MOE because resources are limited and scarce to use monetary incentives.

### Employee incentives

**Q5.** Do the MOE employees perceive incentives as important to stay in the organization?

The results showed that 149 (34.2%) respondents highly valued training as an incentive, 90 (20.6%) respondents indicated that they valued training while 121 (27.8%) respondents were moderate, 35 (8.0%) respondents indicated not valued and highly unvalued were 41 (9.4%) Employees in the MOE value training as an incentive that can make them stay in the organization. There is a saying among most employees who join the MOE in Zambia that they will stay in the ministry so that they can be able to further their education. Therefore training is an important incentive that can be used by the MOE to retain

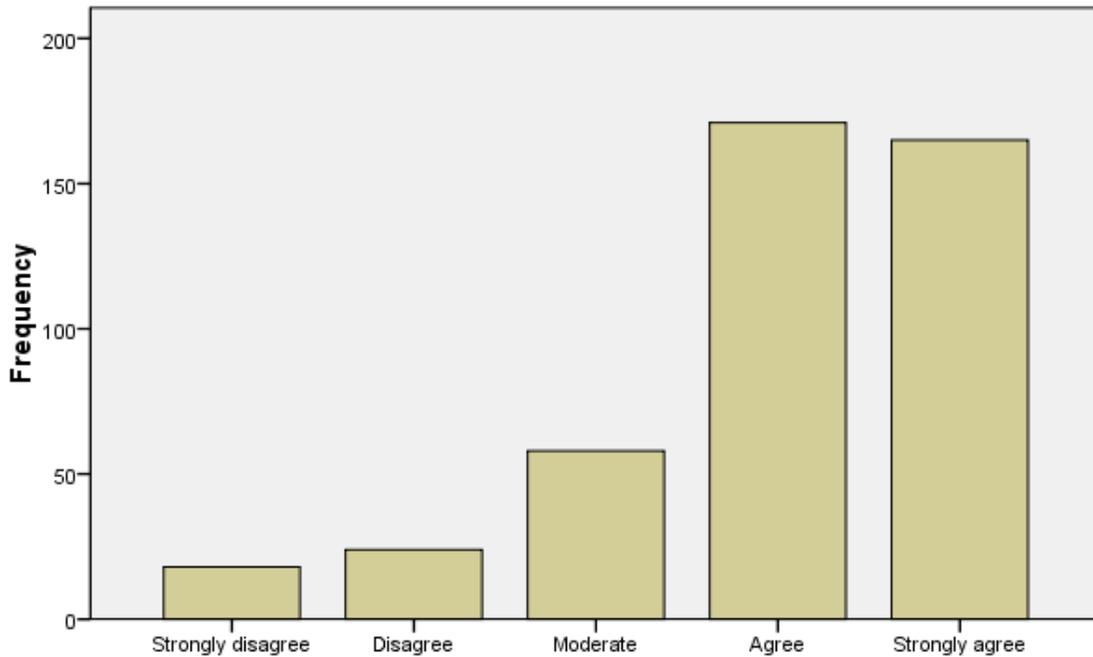


Figure 2. Recognition program, paycheck important but also non-monetary rewards.

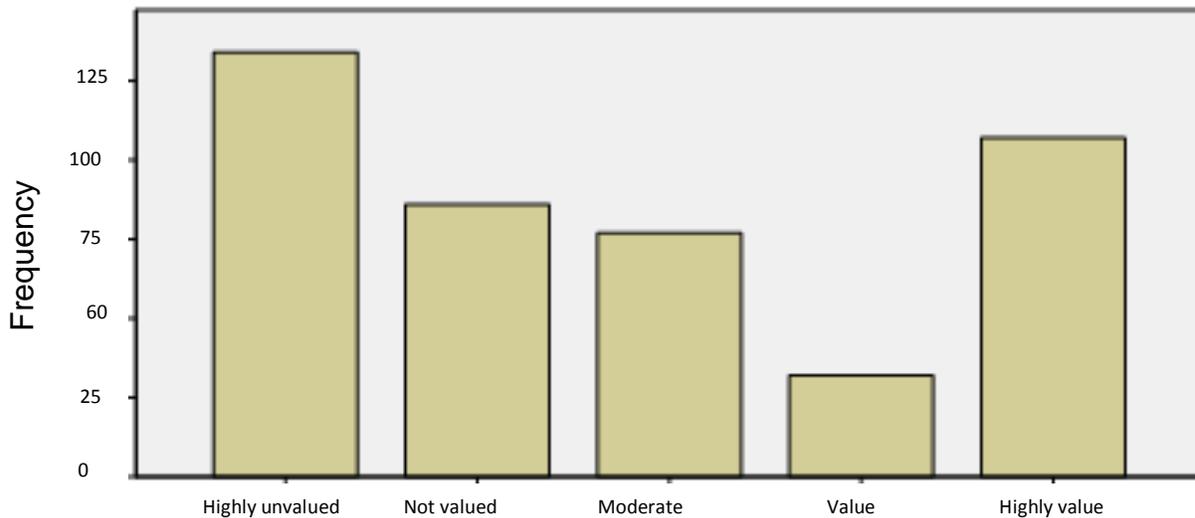


Figure 3. Incentive and accommodation.

its employees (Table 1).

Transport was another form of incentive that the respondents were asked so as to find out whether they valued transport as an incentive to stay in MOE or not. Transport in the study meant personal to holder cars or institutional cars to be used by the employees of MOE while doing their work. With reference to transport the results show that a large portion of respondents 36.2% (158 employees) highly unvalued transport as an

incentive, 17.7% (77 employees) of the respondents also indicated they did not value transport as an incentive, 15.1% (66 employees) of the respondents were moderate while 12.8% (56 employees) and 18.1% (79 employees) respondents valued and highly valued transport as a form of incentive to keep them in the MOE. Most respondents did not value transport as an incentive therefore it should not be considered as an incentive that will retain most employees in the MOE. Accommodation is one of the

**Table 1.** Incentives included in the study.

Accommodation	Transport
Training	Low interest loans
Travel rewards	Flexible work hours
Recruitment and retention allowance	Health schemes
Double class allowance	Extra duty allowance
Non monetary incentives (example, recognition)	

**Table 2.** Recognition and rewards items included in the study.

A personal "thank you" or note from my supervisor, manager, or co-worker	Acknowledgement and recognition by my clients or members of the public.
Department-wide acknowledgement in writing or at a staff meeting	A formal letter describing my accomplishments
An award, certificate, or gift from an established recognition program in my department	Participation in professional or career development opportunities (workshops, conferences, career-counseling, etc.)
Nomination for an award	Pay and benefits
Public acknowledgement for my years of service to the Ministry	An office-wide party or other fun community-building social event
The opportunity to work on an interesting assignment or project	The opportunity to improve my job-related skills or knowledge
Being asked for my input and expertise	Time off

**Table 3.** Motivational statements included in the study.

Recognition of work done stimulates your motivation	Performance- related pay would motivate employees
Pension and retirement benefits motivate your work	Attractive wage motivates you in the workplace
Promotion stimulates your motivation	Team performance in the work place depends on the work environment
The quality of the supervisor has an effect on a employee's performance	Motivation as a team member is stimulated by empowerment
The performance of an employee is influenced by the working culture	Enough information motivates you in the workplace
The institution's goal are relevant to create a high level of performance	Job security motivates your job performance
Clearly defined responsibilities motivates you	Policies stimulate your motivation as employee

basic needs of a human being and as such providing accommodation for employees of the MOE can be a good incentive for the ministry to use to retain its

employees. Accommodation meets one of the basic needs why people decide to work in the first place. However, the results from the respondents in Figure 3

**Table 4.** Achievements and behaviors to be recognized.

Creative solutions/cost savings	Public service compliments from clients
Service I have provided to my co-workers	Collaboration or support of a team effort
General on-going contributions to my department	Service I have given to the Ministry (serving on committees, task forces, etc.)
Exceptional performance on an on-going basis	Extra responsibilities or special projects above and beyond my normal duties
Outstanding attendance	Improvement in my efforts
My years of service to the Ministry	

show that the larger portion 30.1% (134 employees) of employee's highly unvalued accommodation as an incentive to motivate them to keep working for the ministry of education. The other respondents 19.7% indicated they did not value, 17.7% (77 employees) were moderate, 7.3% (32 employees) indicated they valued accommodation as an incentive and 24.5% (107 employees) respondents highly valued accommodation as an incentive to continue working for the ministry of education.

### Accommodation

Figure 3 shows the responses from the respondents. Even though a high number of respondents did not value accommodation as an incentive, a considerable number did value accommodation therefore provision of accommodation can be used to some employees of the ministry of education as an incentive to retain them.

Employees of the ministry of education perceived flexible work hours as an incentive to continue working in the ministry. Respondents were asked to value flexible work hours on a 5-point scale, with 1= highly unvalued, 2=not valued, 3= moderate, 4= valued. And 5 = highly valued. The study shows, a frequency of 88 respondents (20.2%) highly valued flexible working hours as an incentive compare to 40 employees (9.2%) who highly unvalued flexible working hours as an incentive.

In addition 130 employees (29.8%) indicated they valued flexible working hours as incentive while 41 employees (9.4%) indicated no value of flexible working hours as an incentive to continue working in the MOE and the rest 137 (31%) were moderate. Therefore the use of flexible working hours as an incentive to retain employees of the MOE can achieve its purpose because most employees valued flexible work hours as an incentive.

Recruitment and retention allowance is an allowance given to employees in the MOE who have attained a minimum qualification of first degree, respondents from MOE were asked to give their values on the use of recruitment and retention allowance as an incentive. Results in Figure 4 show that a slightly higher frequency of 102 employees (23.4%) indicated they highly valued recruitment and retention allowance as an incentive to

motivate them to stay in the ministry.

The other response were as follows; 99 employees (22.7%) indicated they highly unvalued recruitment and retention allowance; 70 employees (16.1%) indicated no value; 91 employees (20.9%) were moderate; while 74 employees (17.0%) indicated they valued recruitment and retention allowance as an incentive to work in MOE.

From the responses almost an equal number of respondents indicated they valued or did not value recruitment and retention allowance as an incentive. The reason could be the employees who are not entitled (qualifications below first degree) to receive recruitment and retention allowance did not value it as an incentive to work for the MOE while employees entitled to receive recruitment and retention allowance valued the incentive as a motivation to work for the MOE. Employees of MOE were also asked to rate their level of value attached to non monetary incentives such as recognition. The majority of the responses were moderate that is neither valued nor unvalued. Followed by 104 (23.9%) respondents who highly unvalued non monetary incentives, 78 (17.9%) respondents indicated they had no value for non monetary incentives. However 66 (15.1%) respondents and 80 (18.3%) respondents indicated they valued and highly valued non monetary incentives respectively.

The results showed that most employees were moderate on their value of non monetary incentives however a larger portion of respondents did not value non monetary incentives compared to the portion of respondents who indicated they valued the use of non monetary incentives. One of the reasons why most employees of MOE indicated they did not value non monetary incentives could be because non monetary incentives are not being used in the MOE and as such its employees do not know the value or benefits of non monetary incentives. When used and implemented correctly non monetary incentives are ideal to retain and motivate employees of MOE.

### Source of recognition

**Q6.** What sources of recognition are important for employee's satisfaction in MOE?

To answer this question, the holistic measure of value of

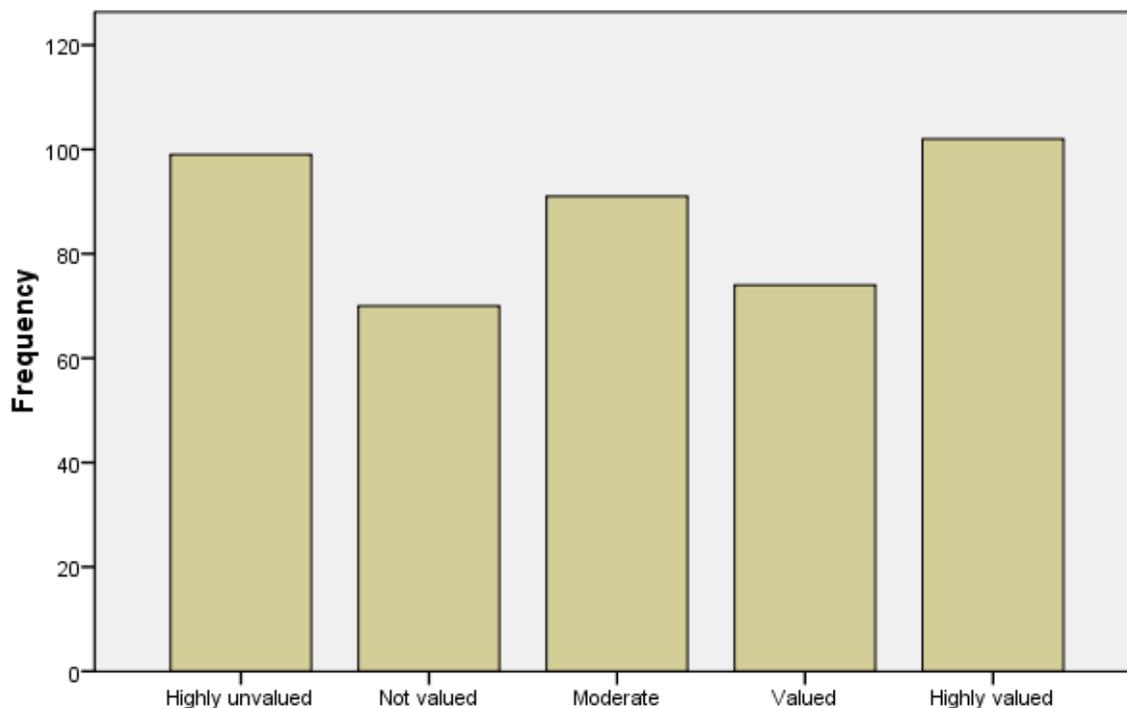


Figure 4. Incentive, recruitment and retention allowance.

Table 5. Sources of recognition and level of satisfaction.

Source of recognition	Satisfaction level					Importance to me				
	VL	L	M	H	VH	VL	L	M	H	VH
Immediate supervisor	119	110	109	55	43	24	54	113	128	117
Workmates	198	9	83	138	8	10	29	130	133	134
Public	15	19	78	113	211	31	31	103	141	130
Overall boss	12	22	94	111	197	24	29	103	158	123

Key: VL= Very low, L= low, M= moderate, H= high and VH= very high.

the sources of recognition in each of the 4 aspects: immediate supervisor, workmates, public, and overall boss was examined in relation to satisfaction level and importance of the source of recognition to the employee (Table 5). Most respondents indicate that the four sources of recognition are important to them and the results further show that the level of satisfaction from these sources of recognition is high. With the overall boss as a source of recognition scoring the highest, 36.2% respondents indicated high value while 28.2% indicated very high and 23.4% were moderate. The other 12.2% did not value recognition from the overall boss.

### Hypotheses (H) testing and discussion

To test the hypothesis, data obtained was used.

**H<sub>1</sub>** – Recognition from immediate supervisor is positively related to employee satisfaction. According to the responses hypothesis 1 is rejected, because a small percentage of respondents 22.5% perceived recognition from immediate supervisors as satisfying while the majority of the respondents 52.5% perceived recognition from immediate supervisors as not satisfying and 25% respondents were moderate.

This indicates that there is no correlation between job satisfaction and recognition from immediate supervisor. However this differs from the research by Net (2001), which found that about 86% of its employees valued recognition from immediate supervisor, this is because work places cannot be perceived as homogeneous, and each institution is different and possesses different culture. In the ministry of education the immediate supervisor has no direct influence on promotion and incentives.

disbursement to subordinates. Employees get promoted when he/she has served the number of years required to be promoted. This is done by the teacher training commission that sends circulars to the employees due for promotion, informing them of their evaluation. Monitoring officers from the ministry headquarters are sent to monitor the employee directly and give recommendations to the commission. The commission then offers wholesale promotion to employees who join the ministry at the same time and having the same qualification.

**H<sub>2</sub>** – Respondents who are older are more likely to hold positive attitudes towards being asked for input and expertise.

Hypothesis 2 was proved true, respondents in the age groups 36 and above year's perceived positive attitudes towards being asked for input and expertise as compared to those in the age groups below 36. In the age group 36 to 45 years 70.8% of the respondents agreed and 63.3% respondents who were 46 years and above also agreed to being asked for their input and expertise as a motivation.

There is a positive correlation between older age and being asked for inputs and expertise. Direct literature on older age as against input and expertise was not found, however some researcher like Khatri (1999), found out that age has an influence on employee turnover.

**H<sub>3</sub>** – There is no significant difference in the perception of rewarding exceptional performance on an ongoing basis between female and male respondents. Hypothesis 3 was proved true by the respondent's responses when they were asked about rewarding their performance on an ongoing basis. The male and female had a frequency of 122 and 131 representing 60.6 and 55.7% respectively. Therefore both the female and male respondents value recognition of exceptional performance.

The percentage for the female indicates slightly higher than that of the male. This could emerge from the fact that females place more value on recognition than that of male. Another factor could be, the proportion of women working in the formal sector in Africa and Zambia in particular is small therefore any higher performance put up by this little group of persons, they want to be appreciated, recognized and rewarded.

Literature was not found on rewarding exceptional performance on an ongoing in relation to gender (male or female). Most research that has been carried out in relation to rewarding exceptional performance has focused on employees as a homogenous group without taking in consideration the gender, indicating the uniqueness of this hypothesis.

It is advised that managers and employers should slightly differentiate recognitions for the male and female employees to enhance retention.

**H<sub>4</sub>** – Education qualification has effect on the

respondent's perception of recognition of work done to stimulate motivation.

Hypothesis 4 was not proved true because the results do not support the hypothesis. A mean score of 68 respondents perceived recognition of work as a motivator. Therefore irrespective of one's qualification employees in the MOE perceive recognition of work as a motivator to continue looking in the ministry.

A mean value of 68 of the education strata respondents perceived recognition of work done as a motivator. This shows that irrespective of educational attainment and tasks assigned individuals would like to be recognized. However the practice in MOE Zambia, employees are categorized according to qualifications and incentives and rewards are provided to those who have attained first degrees and above, example, retention allowance given to employees who have attained a minimum of first degree, while those below first degree have no form of rewards assigned to them. This creates a situation where motivation of the non degree holders becomes insignificant to the MOE in Zambia since they are not recognized.

The findings of the research on the employees of MOE were a mean value of 68 of all respondents of different categories of education level, does not support the practice, whereby only employees with higher qualifications are rewarded.

**H<sub>5</sub>** – There is no significant difference between female and male respondents perception on Training. The male (108) respondents valued training as an incentive and 118 female respondents also valued training as an incentive. (53.7% of males and 50.2% of female respondents). There was no significant difference on the male and female respondents who perceive training as an incentive to keep them in the ministry however there is a slight difference between the male and female respondents. The percentage of male respondents is slightly higher than that of the female. The slight difference emanates because of socially assigned roles to individual members of the Zambian society that is males and females; for the men the society expects them to seek skills that will enable them to earn income for the family whilst the female are assigned roles of domestic chores.

This Zambian culture is reflected in the responses were the males placing a slightly high value on training than women.

Generally they are few females in Zambia who have attained higher education as compared to males. This is due to family preferences of educating males, nevertheless from the data employees at MOE in Zambia support Training as a form of incentive. The male respondents had a slight higher figure than that of females indicating both males and females in MOE Zambia want training as a form of incentive to retain them. This study is supported by a study carried out on

employees of Berkeley (1995) that found that employees could be happy and willing to stay in the institution as long as they felt valued by the department. Value was defined by opportunities for professional training and other investments in their career that reinforce a long term future.

Due to the value attached to training by all employees the researcher recommends that training programs that are reflective of their job description should be given to both sexes as a form of recognizing their efforts. Secondly in-house training should be given to employees of the MOE Zambia so that females who find it harder to go for external training that would keep them away from their families (homes) can be trained at the same time attending to family needs because Zambian women are expected to perform domestic chores whilst keeping their formal jobs.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The present paper investigated employee's perception of incentives and recognition programs in the MOE in Zambia. Considering the findings of the study, it is concluded that employee's view of recognition and rewards, includes their level of satisfaction with their work and incentives as an important tool to stay in the organization. Employees in the ministry of education in Zambia tend to perceive incentives and recognition of work done as a form of motivation to enable them to continue working for the ministry. Training as an incentive was highly valued by both the males and females. A large portion of employees irrespective of the education qualification in the MOE in Zambia would like to be recognized for their work. Nonetheless, controversy still exists on whether or not rewards and recognition should be used to motivate employees (Schaffer, 1998). However from the present study it shows that employees in the MOE in Zambia would like to be recognized for the work done in order to get motivated to repeat the same behavior or strive to do even better. The study also found that there were very few employees who had worked for a long time a clear indication that the attrition was very high. Majority of the employees had only worked for less than 5 years.

### **Recommendations to the MOE national level**

The ministry of education Zambia should design a recognition program for its employees to enhance retention. During the process of designing the program, managers at all levels in the system should be involved in coming up with the types of recognition to be used because the managers have a closer contact with the employees and are in a better position to know their motivates them better. The MOE should provide training

for its employees as a means to retain them. Investment in employees in terms of education and development is important in keeping employees satisfied and also skilled employees bring about efficiency and effectiveness in the operation of the ministry.

The ministry of education Zambia has to provide additional incentives that will take in consideration age categorization in recognition of rewards for example health care will be beneficial to the older generation of employee's. Non monetary incentives such as praises of job well done and inputs and experts from the employees can be used depending on the situation.

Strategies to deal with future employee turnover trends will have to be initiated. The ministry has to have accurate and regularly updated data about how many employees are leaving the system and why they leave. The data are crucial to gauge the effectiveness of policies and understand the turnover trends.

### **Recommendations to the departments and provincial level**

The ministry of education Zambia has been experiencing high levels of turnover due to resignation and secondment of employees to other ministries or organizations. The departments and provincial level should initiate an active process of addressing employee's turnover. This process should engage all relevant levels of the system that is the human resource directorate at national, provincial levels, districts level and school level. To improve retention strategies the human resource personnel should carry out exit interview to understand why employees choose to leave and changes may be implemented based on the exit interviews (Leigh, 2001).

### **Recommendations to schools**

Organizational characteristics in schools such as immediate supervisors recognition has direct influence on the satisfaction of the employees. As a result turnover in schools in Zambia has continued because teachers are not satisfied with their job. Job entails the work itself, recognition, opportunities for growth and advancement as well as hygiene factors like better salaries, teaching recourses, smaller classes and more non-contact time. Vadim (2010) clearly points out that addressing these factors needs school managers who are well equipped to create conditions that instill intrinsic motivation for teachers and these skills can be acquired by managers if they receive training in motivation of subordinates. Research consistently validated the reality that the manager plays a significant role in influencing the employee's commitment level and retention. There are a number of manager retention practices which increase

the probability that an organization employee will remain committed to an organization over time; these retention practices represent the manager's actual behavior on the job (Nobilis, 2009).

### Recommendations to policy makers

Policy makers during the policy making process should carry out consultations in form of dialogue from identifiable groups. The employees can be grouped according to their responsibility that is the teachers, head of departments, manager's, directors and so on. Each identifiable group should come up with issues concerning them with regards to what forms of recognition and rewards they would want to be given. By involving the employees through soliciting their opinions and inputs during the policy formulation process, makes the decision making process bottom-up. Bottom up decision making enables the employees in the different groups to own the policy because it is a reflection of their opinions. Opinions from the different groups are included and no group of employees would feel left out.

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