ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

THE PERCEPTION OF POACHING IN TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS AND ITS EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE MORALE: THE CASE OF MTN GHANA

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by Ashesi University College.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out perceptions of employee poaching by employees in telecommunication firms and how these perceptions affected their morale. A survey was conducted in which 30 questionnaires were administered and 27 filled. Results showed that 92% of the population had a positive perception of poaching with 8% having negative perceptions. When a regression analysis was done on the data received, in order to test the significance of the relationship between the variables, p-value for significance did not meet the standard which implies that there is not significant relationship between the variables. According to these results, employee perceptions of poaching do not have any effect on morale.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Recruitment Practices Preceding the 21st century

In order to hire staff to fill in job positions, firms take on a number of activities to attract potential employees to apply. Recruitment can be defined as "those practices and activities carried out by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees" (Barber 1998: 5). This has been present right from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. However modern recruitment which is related to human resource practices started around the 1940's after the Second World War. According to (Sundheim, 2010), "the birth of the modern recruiting industry, did not take place until the 1940's as a result of WWII". When the soldiers were called to duty, advertisements were made to attract people to fill the positions left unoccupied by those who went to war. After the war, there was a high capacity of skilled employees on the labor market. This created room for headhunting agencies to operate by connecting employees to vacant job positions. Presently the role of headhunters in recruitment is to advertise the available job position of a firm to a specific employee who has the profile that fits into the position the firms seeks or they could find the job for a candidate, by taking the individuals curriculum vitae to different institutions. The roles mentioned are relative to the headhunter.

In some cases it could be that "Headhunters or recruiters are third-party agents who find job candidates for employers and who are paid by these employers." (Finlay & Coverdill, 1999). However, there are cases where the headhunter is paid by the job candidate.

William Finlay also explains that headhunting has its advantages because it helps to "manage the relationship between hiring managers on the one hand and human resources staff and client/customer companies on the other in order to maintain the authority of hiring managers and independence and to mitigate the sense of powerlessness, humiliation, and betrayal of the human resource staff" (Finlay & Coverdill, 1999). According to a report by Mileham, (2000) the process headhunters go through is by making a list of employees that fit into the profile prescribed by the company after thorough research, searching for the location of these employees, interviewing these employees to see their worth and finally short listing employees that will be interviewed by the firm before they are chosen.

There can be no recruitment without eventual selection, where a firm chooses the best candidate for the job. However with headhunting, the firms more or less goes to the employees to offer them the jobs giving them the option to agree or not while the normal process of recruitment deals with putting the job advert or vacancies to the public for applicants to send in curriculum vitae.

The Intense Search for Highly Skilled Employees

The functional strategy of a firm is "concerned with how the components of an organization deliver effectively the corporate- and business-level strategies in terms of resources, processes and people" (Johnson, Whittington, & Scholes, 2010). In other words, "Firms can only achieve higher productivity if they have a skilled workforce that is able to adapt new knowledge and technologies" (Muehlemann, 2008). This is a factor that is taken into consideration during the recruitment process. In some cases, employers may see employees with a specific skill that would be of value to the firm

though these employees may be under another company which could be a competitor. Thus, in order to get the best talent, some firms offer these highly qualified employees better compensation as compared to their current firms, causing employees to choose to move to the better paid firm. This act is known as poaching.' "Employee poaching" or "employee raiding" refers to the situation in which a firm targets and hires the key employee(s) of a close competitor.' (Kim, 2007)

. Depending on the context and location poaching may differ from headhunting because the raiding firm does not go in search of just any talented employee; rather there is a specific employee to be poached. Thus it only takes a matter of convincing in order for the employee to agree. In other cases both terms are used interchangeably.

The presence of poaching in the international setting is highly present in IT firms for example the Silicon Valley powers; Apple, Google, Adobe Systems and Intel were involved in a court case due to the fact that there was a no-poaching agreement between these firms where they agreed not to poach each other's employees (Mintz, 2014). According to Ganu & Abdulai, (2014), "The rampant poaching of talents in some selected industries in Ghana notably the Broadcast, Financial and the Telecommunication industries makes employer branding very relevant" this shows the high levels of poaching in these industries. Recently the news website Myjoyonline reported that Carmen Bruce Annan Head of Brand and Corporate Communication at Vodafone Ghana was poached from Zain Ghana (now Airtel). Research by Awuah, (2011) explains that the banking sector in characterized by intense competition, serious poaching and luring of personnel from one bank to another.

When the search for talent is over and the employee is recruited, the employee begins to learn to adapt to the work environment. In order to help with the process of adapting, the employer gives the employee training and orientation concerning the culture of the firm among other things. The employee in turn operates in the work place based on how he/she understands the culture of the firm.

Understanding the Work Environment

Perception can be defined as a "complex process by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world" (Berelson and Steiner, 1964: 88) as cited by Vithessonthi, (2005). Due to the fact that perception helps in understanding one's environment, it means perception of an act can affect one's behavior when it comes to issues surrounding that action. Research by Dijketerhuis & Knippenberg, (1998) shows this by explaining that the mere perception of a person or a group of persons triggers a mechanism producing the tendency to behave correspondingly. The purpose of this study is to find out how the perception of poaching by employees affects the morale of these employees. The focus of this study will be on the telecommunications industry. This perception stems from the collective understanding and acceptability of poaching in the firm.

Attitudes towards the Work Environment

Employee morale is "the degree to which an employee feels good about their work and work environment" (Mcknight *et al*, 2001). It deals with employee attitudes towards work; however this is different from motivation because motivation refers to readiness to act (Lawler, 1973). Employee morale can affect the way employees work in an organization because "it is the psychological bonding of employee with the organization which self motivates him or her to act respectively" (Saxena & Bhargava,

2012). This self motivation will have an effect on work performance. In 1987 Linkert states that "of all the tasks of management, managing the human component is the central and most important task because all else depends on how well it is done". Thus due to the fact that it is important to have employees working productively to increase organizational success, some firms find it necessary to improve employee morale (making it positively skewed) to increase productivity.

As a result of the fact that employees are an integral source of a firm's success, a lot of research has been done on the factors affecting job satisfaction and employee morale in Ghana. Research has also been done concerning employee motivation on job performance. Some of the research includes *Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction and Teacher Morale in Senior High Schools in the Dangbe West District of the Greater Accra Region* (Yeboah, 2011) The findings in this research showed that the factors affecting employee morale include teachers having lower salaries than their colleagues with the same qualification in other professions; friendly colleagues, fellow workers being pleasant, opportunities for promotions and advancement, and the fact that co-curricular activities are rewarding. Another research titled Relationship *between Motivation and Job Performance at the University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa, Ghana: Leadership Lessons* (Afful-Broni, 2012) shows that low monthly salaries and the general lack of motivation were the major factors that reduce morale for high performance at the university. When poaching occurs, the parties involved are the raiding firms, the victim firm, and the employees. It is therefore important to understand how organizations view poaching and how these views affect employee morale since

employee morale can increase or decrease employee motivation to work and productivity of a firm.

Problem Statement

The factors which affect employee morale include organization and management, immediate supervision, material rewards, fellow employees and job satisfaction (Baehr & Renck, 1958). These factors affecting employee morale emanate from the human resource practices of the firm.

Studies conducted on the impact of individual perception on employee morale include research by; Due (1992) on the costs of outsourcing, Louise (2003) who sought to find out the perception of outsourcing as and HR practice in IT firms and its effect on transitioned and retained employees, Chopade & Vidyapeeth, (2012) who's objective was to understand the perception of employees who survived the rightsizing process and also the impact of the process on these employees commitment and morale. All these studies conducted were done on IT companies and came out with similar results, one of the results relevant to this paper shows that due to the perceptions these employees had on the HR processes carried out or studied respectively, their morale dropped in their various companies. This shows that employee morale is affected by HR practices in a firm. It also shows that even though HR practices (such as downsizing which is aimed at efficiency) are meant for the good of the firm, they could have negative effects on employee morale.

In the case of Ghana, the telecommunications industry ranks as one of the industries with high levels of poaching. In the international setting, poaching is more prominent in IT companies and studies done show that HR practices aimed at improving the profit

margins of the firm could have positive or negative effects on the employee. Therefore it is important for telecommunication companies (who experience a lot of poaching) to know the possible effects of a practice such as poaching on employee morale due to the perceptions these employees have of poaching. If these effects are known, then employers can properly handle poaching without have to worry about its effects on morale, in the case where it is negative.

This paper aims at discovering the relationship between employee morale and employee perceptions in regards to poaching. The category of employees studied will be those present when a new employee was recruited via poaching. This will be based on the psychological relationship these employees have in the workplace and how they would react in order to defend their territory.

Objective

- To understand how the perception of poaching by workers in a telecommunication firm can affect the morale of these employees.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Workplace territoriality is a concept which explains that employees have a psychological relationship to different aspects of the workplace. The use of reactionary defenses as a territorial behavior is used in this study. This occurs when "The relationship between psychological ownership and reactionary defenses will be moderated by an individual's attributions about the infringement such that the relationship will be stronger to the degree that the organizational member holds the infringer responsible for the infringement". (Brown, Lawrence & Robinson, 2005:585). In terms of this study the infringer is the newly poached employee who happens to trespass on the existing

employee's space causing them to react. Some of the consequences of these reactionary defenses may result in an employee being overly protective therefore losing focus on the job at hand. Due to the fact that humans react differently, low or high employee morale may be a result of the reactionary defenses territorial behavior. This is the basis for this study.

Research Questions

- How do employees perceive employee poaching?

- How do these perceptions affect employee morale (positive/negative)?

Hypothesis

The assumption made is that:

"Employee morale increases with the positive perception of poaching."

In the latter part of this paper, this hypothesis was to be tested through the analysis of data gathered for this study. When the analysis is done, the results will show whether or not the claim is true.

However before, any data is collected or analysis was done, it was essential to look at theories and research papers done that were related in this study. Therefore a literature analysis was done in order to see possible gaps in previous studies. More on the literature is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

This paper focused on finding the relationship between the effects of the perception of poaching on employee morale. The literature review is in three parts: employee morale, perception and HR practices/recruitment and the effects of recruitment on a firm as a subset of recruitment.

Perceptions

Perception can be defined as a "complex process by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world" (Berelson and Steiner, 1964: 88) as cited by (Vithessonthi, 2005). Perception is not necessarily based on reality, but is merely a perspective from a particular individual's view of a situation (Panimalar & Kannan, 2013).

Due to the fact that perceptions help individuals understand the world around them it begins to affect their approach towards their environment. Research by Dijksterhuis & Knippenberg (1998) explains that the mere perception of a person or a group of persons triggers a mechanism producing the tendency to behave correspondingly. Therefore employee perceptions can affect their attitudes towards practices in the workplace. The Center for Advanced Human Studies in 2011 sought to discover how employees perceived HR practices, if they were more satisfied if they thought HR practices were in their favour or less satisfied if they felt the opposite. It was established that HR practices, done intentionally or not, had different effects on employee citizenship behavior, and that employees were more engaged if they perceived that HR practices were for their own good.

The fact that employees feel unsatisfied with management decisions may not be due to failure of management to do the right thing; it could simply be linked to the fact that perceptions are not the same. This in turn causes behaviours to differ. Research by Jones & Nisbett, (1971) explains that some behaviours that occur due to perception diverge because the individuals involved are either the actors or the observer. For the actor, his or her behavior is as a result of stimuli inherent in the situation. This is because the actor has detailed knowledge about his circumstances, history, motives and experiences. Thus, the actor believes his behavior is simply a response to his situation. The observer on the other hand attributes behavior to stable disposition of the actor. This is to say if an individual is lazy, he will act accordingly by not being willing to work. Thus the observer views the actor's behavior as a manifestation of character. This can often times lead to misunderstanding among individuals. Therefore in the workplace, the actor and the observer can be management and employees respectively or the other way round. In the case where management is the actor and makes decisions which are thought best for the firm, it can be seen or observed by the employee as managers taking decisions based on their dispositions. This can cause employees to feel cheated making them behave in a manner that will be detrimental to the firm simply because perceptions from both parties were in opposite directions.

Although perceptions are cultivated from within, they can affect those who surround the individual. The theory behind this was explained by Chartrand & Bargh (1999) who termed this as the Chameleon Effect. The experiments from this research showed that due to empathy individuals tend to imitate the behaviors shown by others and when this is within a circle of people a group behavior is formed. This can be used

to explain why people in a work environment may tend to share the same perceptions and the actions that follow.

Employee morale

Employee morale is "the degree to which an employee feels good about their work and work environment" (McKnight, 2001) it also measures how much the empoyee enjoys their work environment. It was noted by Baehr & Renck (1958) that factors that affect employee morale in all working sectors were organizational management, immediate supervision, material rewards, fellow employees and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the way management communicated its image to employees affected the direction in which employee morale increased. Also in terms of immediate supervision which was based on Elton Mayo's 1932 Hawthorne studies, there was a boost in employee morale in relation to the fact that they had people supervising them. Factors such as job satisfaction (intrinsic satisfaction associated with the job), employee and colleague friendliness, and material rewards also had a positive impact. In the year 2000 Whitener & Brodt, contributed to the literature explaining that if managers took into consideration the factors previously mentioned, citizenship behavior, trust, job performance and intention to quit will be affected positively. This was shown through research in credit union firms.

In the service sector of Ghana, some factors were found to affect employee morale; for teachers, salaries as compared to their peers, attitudes from fellow colleagues, promotion opportunities and co-curricular activities that were rewarding (Yeboah V. , 2011). For healthcare workers it included, work environment, feeling valued, job satisfaction, resources and pay. Research by Islam, Mohajan & Datta

(2012) studied the factors affecting job satisfaction and morale in commercial banks. Factors included personal factors; gender, age, time on job, education and religion, factors inherent in the job were;type of work, skill, occupation status, commitment and present place of work. However, the factors that could only be controlled by management included security, pay, promotional opportunity, work conditions coworkers and supervision. One can see that from the 1960's up until the new millennium,the factors affecting employee morale are virtually the same.

Due to the fact that employee morale requires ample attention, research, has been done on how it can be measured. According to (Hardy, 2009) it can be measured by (1) *direct simple item measurement*; which is simply asking the individuals questions on how they feel, (2) *Direct multiple item measurement*; which has been a popular approach to morale measurement, with a number of different approaches being adopted. The most common is to produce a series of questions and then refine them using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). One or more of the factors emerging is then labeled 'morale' and used either to measure the concept or link it to others (3) *Indirect measurement of consequences of morale*; which measures morale based on the results or consequences that occurred due to low or high morale. *Indirect measurement of antecedents of morale*; measures morale based on antecedents rather than consequences. However, as much as these may measure morale, morale in itself may be relative to the employee especially at the time of measurement.

Territoriality in the Workplace

Humans generally have some form of psychological attachment to things around them causing them to display territorial behaviours in their environment. Apart from the fact that all human beings experience territorial behaviors in their various habitats, Brown, Lawrence, & Robinson,(2005) noted that these territorial behaviours are present in the workplace, but largely overloked despite their importance. The territorial behaviours are divided in two; marking and defending. The former has to do with being psychologically attatched to things such as objects (identity-oriented marking) or work space (control oriented marking). Due to this psychological attattchment, it is explained that the employees put some form of mark or teritorial boundary, to show ownership, and this is recognised by other workers. The latter deals with the employee anticipating attempted infringments on his/her territory and begins to defend the object or space without anyone actually attacking or infringing. This defence is known as anticpatory defence. Another is the reactory defence where there is an actual infringement by another party who chooses not to acknowlege the employees boundaries, or does not know about the employees marking especially if this party is new to the work environment thus causing the employees to react.

Reactionary defence depends on the individual who will probably fight to make sure his territory is secured or recoil due to dissappointment. The positive results of these territoral behaviours is that the employee will be highly commited to the company's cause due to their psychological attachment to the firm. However if this attachment becomes an obsession, the employee loses focus therefore it will be detrimental to the firm in the case of infringement especially if the employee recoils, therefore losing morale to work.

If one observes carefully, the idea of reactionary defence is related to perception. As mentioned earlier, the mere perception of a person or a group of persons triggers a mechanism producing the tendency to behave correspondingly. Thus "behaving correspondingly" is the *reactionary defence* comes after the employee *perceives* that someone has trespassed on their territorry.

This act of territoriality is found mostly with junior workers who feel the only way to show uniqueness in the workplace is to establish their own territory. Among line managers, it is at a minimum because their job roles go a long way in highly distinguishing them.

Human Resource and Recruitment Practices

Human resource management practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human resources and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals (Schuler & MacMillan, 1984:242). Therefore the factors that affect empoyee morale are embeded in human resource management practices. One of the factors necessary for high perfomance work practices is comprehensive recruitment and selection procedures. Recruitment as defined by (Barber 1998: 5) involves "those practices and activities carried out by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees". Some strategies involved in recruitment are posting job vacancies, contracting human resource agencies to hire individuals among others. If these recruitment practices are handled carelessly, it could lead to high training and development costs to minimize the incidence of poor performance and high turnover which, could in turn, affect staff morale.

Although recruitment is important for high performance, individuals with desired skills may not be easily accessed. In the banking sector, research by Nartey (2012) explains that one challenge facing the recruitment and selection process is the availability of key talents in the job market for specialized areas within the bank. This challenge thus leads to competition for talent with other firms due to the fact that potential employees with specific skills needed are lacking within the industry. These employees are known as knowledge workers. As cited by Horwitz, Heng, & Quazi, (2003) the term knowledge worker describes "individuals who carry knowledge as a powerful resource which they, rather than the organization, own" (Drucker 1989). It further explains that in order to attract these employees most recruitment strategies (job vacancies, employee referrals) proved effective. However, the use of headhunters was relative to the organization although it was highly effective in some. The use of a headhunter involves hiring "third-party agents who find job candidates for employers and who are paid by these employers. Their clients are organizations, not job candidates." (Finlay & Coverdill, 1999). However there are cases were the clients are job candidates depending on the headhunter.

It is important for every firm to have knowledge workers in order to gain competitive advantage because this competitive advantage is increasingly coming from the particular hard-to-duplicate know-how of a company's most skilled people which include engineers, sales people, scientists and other professionals (Dewhurst, Hancock, & Ellsworth, 2013)

Effect of HR Practices on Employee morale

Similar studies have been done on the perception of HR practices and its effect on employees and employee morale/attitudes. One of these studies includes a study by Louis (2003) who sought to find out the perception of outsourcing as and HR practice in IT firms and its effect on transitioned and retained employees. It was also aimed at determining whether or not these perceptions affected the success of the HR practice (outsourcing). The success was to be measured by a high amount of positive perceptions about outsourcing. Outsourcing is the import of intermediate inputs by domestic firms (Feenstra & Hanson, 1996). In the case of Louis study it involved the transfer employees from one firm to another. The results showed that employees undergoing the outsourcing process both those in transitioning and those retained had uncertainties when it came to morale, job security among other things. This was due to the fact that their perceptions of outsourcing were negative. The results of this study are similar to a study by Due, (1992) who discovered that outsourcing had negative effects on employee morale and presented uncertainty for the future of the employees.

Another HR practice rightsizing (laying off a number of employees for the sake of cost and efficiency) was studied by Chopade & Vidyapeeth (2012), who's aim was to understand the perception of employees who survived the rightsizing process and also the impact of the process on these employees commitment and morale. The study was conducted with the hypothesis that the positive perception of rightsizing has a positive impact on continuance and affective commitment, but a negative impact on morale. Interestingly these claims turned out to be true from the results of the study because employees were found to be satisfied with their jobs and were willing to work hard in

other words they were committed to their jobs however they were uncertain about their job security.

The concept of reactionary defence as explained earlier shows how employees may either be highly committed to work or have low morale when there is perceived infringement, however with the Chopade & Vidyapeeth, (2012) study even though it was not in relation with infringement, it is quite interesting to note that low morale can exist with high commitment to work. Mcknights' definition of employee morale can be used to explain this because it has to do with the degree to which employees feel good about their work or work environment thus one's commitment to work may be due to other factors and not necesserily due to high morale.

Effects of Recruitment Practices

IT professionals are also termed as knowledge workers and are thus recruited carefully by employers. A study conducted by Schulz *et al* (2008) sought to find out how professional relationships and monetary incentives as recruitment methods had incremental effects on a firm. This is due to the fact that previous studies showed that the effect of personal relationships and networks (employee referrals) had little effect on productivity because the recommended candidates tended to be the same as employees already present in the firm thus the energy that pushed people to work was low for both newly hired IT professionals and other employees already present in a firm (Linder & Zoller, 1996) cited by Schulz *et al* (2008). It also explains that previous studies recommend that a diversified workforce, increases productivity because all employees do not necessarily think alike (Chatman et aL, 1998; Fernandez, 1991; Nemeth and Wachtier, 1983; Hoffman and Maier, 1961) cited by. Schulz *et al* (2008)

Monetary incentives on the other hand were said to be ineffective because young individuals prefer jobs that give flexible work arrangements, career development opportunities and work content satisfaction. The study by Schulz *et al* (2008) explained that the previous research did not have empirical data to base the previous facts explained. The results of their study based on research conducted shows that both practices (employee referrals and monetary incentives) were negatively associated with IT employee turnover, and had high success ratio as compared to past performances.

The existing literature has so far explained that the factors affecting employee morale somewhat depend on how employees perceive they are being treated. The factors affecting employee morale emanate from the human resource practices of the firm. It has also explained certain cases in which employee perceptions affected their morale in regards to the recruitment practices employed by their organisations.

Employee poaching or employee raiding in itself can be regarded as a form of recruitment since it is an activity carried out by a firm with the purpose of attracting potential employees. This paper will add to the literature with the objective of finding out how employees perceive poaching, if there is an actual relationship between the perception of poaching and employees' attitude towards work, and how these perceptions can affect employee morale if there is an actual relationship between the two variables. The employees in this case will be those present when management goes ahead to poach an employee from outside the organization.

The next chapter provides a guide as to how the field research was carried out. All steps taken are justified based on the conceptual framework for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology chosen for this study. It is organized as follows; operational definitions, research design, data sources, sampling strategy, methods/procedures, data collections tools, and data analysis.

Operational Definitions

Employee perceptions:

How employees choose to interpret occurrences in the work place in a way that is meaningful to them.

Poaching:

"Employee poaching" or "employee raiding" refers to the situation in which a firm targets and hires the key employee(s) of a close competitor.' (Kim, 2007)

Employee morale:

"The degree to which an employee feels good about their work and work environment" (McKnight, 2001)

Research Design

As stated earlier, one of the industries in Ghana characterized by rampant poaching and employee mobility is the telecommunication industry. This means that the study of poaching will be relevant to telecommunication firms. Therefore this study was conducted in order to analyze and give recommendations that are of relevance to these firms. Due to the fact that the research questions require answers that are more explanatory and the questions posed to the correspondents will mostly require

expressive responses, this research is therefore classified as an exploratory qualitative and quantitative study.

Sampling Strategy

The telecommunication firm studied was MTN Ghana. MTN was used in this study because among the five telecommunications firms in Ghana, it emerges as the market leader. The fact that MTN is a market leader implies that they have to invest a lot of resources in recruiting the best employees in order to beat competition in the market. Hence the probability of the effects of poaching is most likely to be present in the firm.

The sampling technique was purposive. The sample size was a total of 30 workers, 6 each from the corporate, finance, human resource, marketing and sales department. The focus of this study was on workers without managerial positions since knowledge workers are prone to have managerial or leading positions in each department. Also according to theory (reactionary defense) workers without managerial positions are the ones most likely to exhibit territorial behavior and in turn can either have low morale or become highly competitive when they perceive a new employee (a poached employee) is infringing on their space. Note that the fact that some of these employees become highly committed to working does not mean that morale will be high. Junior workers in this case were supposed to be determined based on autonomy, the number of individuals they happen to supervise. However the respondents were not strictly workers without managerial positions because the questionnaires were not administered directly by the researcher but by the human resource manager. Due to this limitation, the results of this study may have been affected by some form of social

desirability. In any case responses from workers without managerial positions still received a lot of attention in this study.

Research Design Matrix

Table 3.1 below is a matrix showing the design for this research.

Table 3.1: Research design matrix.

Who	Where	Data collection tools	Sample size	Findings expected
Workers in telecommunication firms	MTN Ghana	Online surveys and questionnaires	30 individuals from Human resource, Corporate, Finance, Sales and Marketing	Workers perception of poaching of knowledge workers. How Morale is affected by these perceptions

Data Collection tools and Instruments

An online survey link as well as hardcopy questionnaire forms were sent out to 30 respondents. Each individual had the chance to either take part in the study through the online survey or fill the hard copy form. Questions asked were both open and closed ended, based on the theory *reactionary defense*, on how employees will react to new members of their firm being poached employees. The questions were themed in subsections;

- Employee view on recruiting Knowledge workers
- Employee relationship with work environment

The questions in the first section were designed to understand and extract the respondents' perception on poaching. The second section on the other hand was designed to understand how their morale will be affected by poaching. It also shows if the employee exhibits territorial behavior where employee morale and their perception

of poaching are concerned. For further illustration, from the points listed below, employees are supposed to identify the options that show how they relate to their work environment. The first four show territorial behavior, and the remaining two show non territorial behavior.

- My work environment is my space thus I will protect that space if threatened
- If my work environment is threatened by a new knowledge worker I may lose morale to work
- Threats from new knowledge workers in my workplace will spur me to work harder
- The presence of a new knowledge worker in my workplace will encourage me to work harder.
- I will be committed to my job even though my morale reduces
- My work environment is simply a place I work to earn a living thus I have no emotional connection with it
- I do not mind new knowledge workers in my work environment/space

Data Analysis

With the use of the software PSPP, data was analyzed using cross tabulation. This was used to describe the relationship between significant variables in relation to this study from the responses acquired. The variables in this study include; perceptions of poaching knowledge workers and employee morale with the latter dependent on the former. In this effect, responses from the first section on the questionnaire were compared to the second section in order to show the possible relationship between these responses and the level of significance. The results found from this analysis were then tested with the hypothesis for this study. Also a binary logistic regression analysis was done to test the hypothesis and the significance of the proposed relationship between the variables.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter summary

This thesis seeks to understand how employees perceive poaching and how these perceptions affect morale. This chapter contains the demographics of the study and findings from data collected from the telecommunication company. It also includes the various analysis conducted on the data. Information collected and analysis of data will be represented in form of tables, graphs and charts. This analysis will then be discussed in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework for this study.

Demographics

As mentioned earlier, MTN Ghana was the focus of this study, individuals from the corporate, human resource, finance and marketing took part in this study. A total of 30 questionnaires were sent out of which 26 were filled, giving a response rate of 86%. Due to the fact that the researcher had no influence upon the distribution of the questionnaires, there was a mix of individuals who took part in the study, thus the ratio of individuals with managerial positions to those without is 52% to 48%.

Findings on the Total Population

As mentioned earlier the objective of this research is to find out how the *perception of poaching employee poaching* can *affect morale*. The findings in this study will be under three sub headings, perception of poaching, effect on morale, the relationship between the perception of poaching and employee morale, and employee morale and territorial behavior and findings from workers without managerial positions. The findings are based on the objectives and research questions for this study.

Perception of Poaching

In order to measure how the respondents perceived poaching, the question was asked

"How effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your in industry?" The options given to the respondent were; not effective, fairly effective, moderately effective, highly effective, and extremely affective. The first three show negative perceptions while the last two show positive perceptions. Out of 27 respondents, 26 gave responses to this question. The results of the responses are in the figure 4.1 below

Figure 4.1 **Employee perception of poaching in regard to effectiveness**
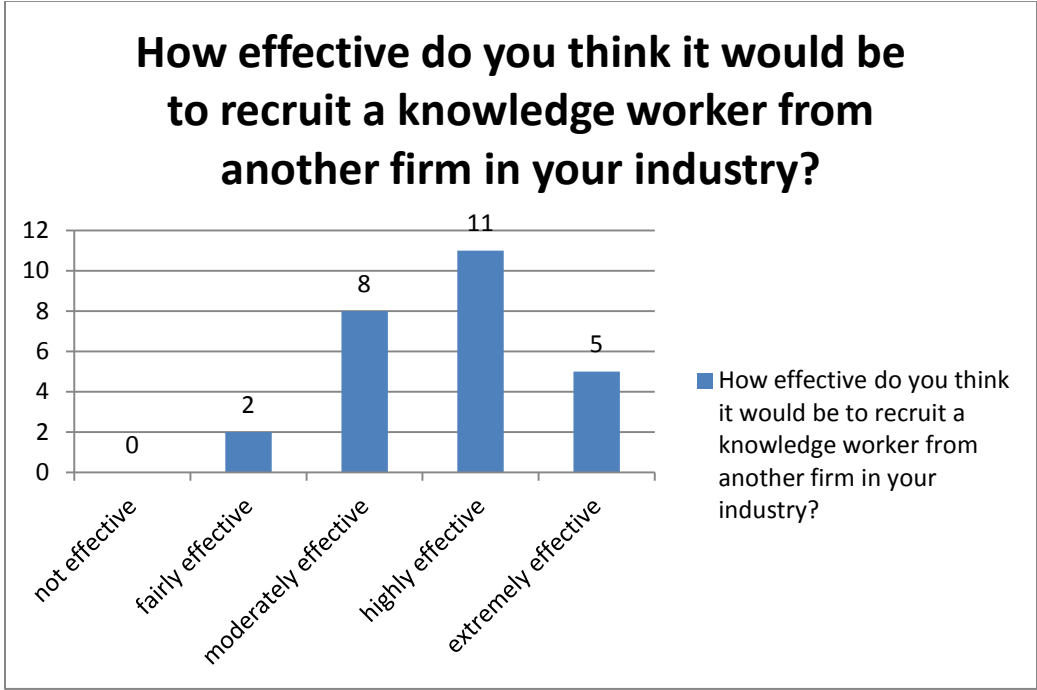
Source: Field data

From the bar chart above out of 26 responses, 5 respondents found poaching extremely effective, 11 found it highly effective, 8 found it moderate, 2 found it fairly effective while no respondent though it was not effective.

To further check their positive or negative view of poaching, respondents were asked if they would recommend poaching to other firms. The responses are represented in figure 4.2 below:

Figure 4.2: **Perception of poaching**

Source: Field data

There were 24 respondents who agreed that they would recommend poaching to another firm, 2 disagreed.

When asked to explain the reason for the options chosen in the last question, 21 individuals responded. Most responses were similar and were thus put into different themes. The two themes drawn include experience and organizational culture and promotion from within. These themes are tabulated in table 4.1 below.

In order to find out the relationship between the employees perception of the effectiveness of poaching and whether or not they would recommend it to other firms, a cross tabulation analysis was done as shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.2: Perception of poaching- Effectiveness vs Recommendation

	Would you recommend this form of recruitment to any other firm?			
How effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your in industry?	yes	No	Both	Total
Fairly effective	2	0	0	2
	100.00%	0%	0%	100.00%
	9.52%	0%	0%	8.33%
	8.33%	0%	0%	8.33%
Moderately Effective	5	2	1	8
	62.50%	25.00%	12.50%	100.00%
	23.81%	100.00%	100.00%	33.33%
	20.83%	8.33%	4.17%	33.33%
Highly Effective	10	0	0	10
	100.00%	0%	0%	100.00%
	47.62%	0%	0%	41.67%
	41.67%	0%	0%	41.67%
Extremely Effective	4	0	0	4
	100.00%	0%	0%	100.00%
	19.05%	0%	0%	16.67%
	16.67%	0%	0%	16.67%
Total	21	2	1	24
	87.50%	8.33%	4.17%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	87.50%	8.33%	4.17%	100.00%

Source: Field Data

From the table above, 100% of individuals who perceived poaching as a highly effective and extremely effective strategy also agreed that they would recommend poaching to other firms. 62.5% of the respondents who chose moderately effective agreed to recommend poaching to other firms while 25% disagreed to recommend poaching to other firms. Due to the fact that moderately effective is an option which puts the effectiveness of poaching on the average, respondents who chose this option were

expected to either be skewed to a negative or positive perception of poaching.

Therefore the question of recommending poaching to another firm showed their position of these respondents with 62.5% having positive perceptions and 25% having negative perceptions. On the whole 80.77% of the respondents can be said to definitely have a positive perception of poaching while 7.69% are sure to have a negative perception of poaching. Much cannot be said of individuals who found it fairly effective and still recommended poaching to other firms.

Employee Morale

Respondents were asked to answer yes or no concerning whether they were motivated to work harder when a poached employee worked in their department. There was a total of 25 responses to this question, in which 84%answered yes while 16% answered no.

Figure 4.3: **Responses on Morale**

Will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry was recruited into your department?

yes
no
16%
84%

Source: Field Data

When employees were asked to give the reasons for their responses, 19 respondents gave explanations which were classified under three themes; avenue to learn, no

competition and ability of knowledge worker to understand and get along with co

workers.

Table 4.3: Reason for Motivation

Themes	avenue to learn	No competition	ability to understand
responses	15	3	1

Source: Field Data

Most respondents who chose *yes* as their option to the previous question explained that

working with a poached knowledge worker was an opportunity for them to learn and this

made them feel good about their work environment. Those who explained that the

knowledge workers were not a source of their motivation happened to chose the *yes*

option concerning their motivation to work harder. One employee explained that there

would be no motivation to work harder because poached workers will not understand

the work environment as compared to one who was promoted from within and thus

chose the *no* option.

Cross Tabulation of the perception of poaching and employee morale
The table below shows the cross tabulation showing the relationship between the

perception of poaching and morale.

Table 4.4: **Perception vs Morale**

How effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your in industry	Will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry was recruited into your department		
	Yes	No	Total
Fairly effective	2	0	2
	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	10.00%	0.00%	8.33%
	8.33%	0.00%	8.33%
Moderately Effective	5	3	8
	62.50%	37.50%	100.00%
	25.00%	75.00%	33.33%
	20.83%	12.50%	33.33%
Highly Effective	9	1	10
	90.00%	10.00%	100.00%
	45.00%	25.00%	41.67%
	37.50%	4.17%	41.67%
Extremely Effective	4	0	4
	100.00%	0%	100.00%
	20.00%	0%	16.67%
	16.67%	0%	16.67%
Total	20	4	24
	83.33%	16.67%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	83.33%	16.67%	100.00%

Source: Field Data

Total respondents for this section were 25 in which 100% of respondents who chose fairly effective agreed that they will be motivate to work harder, 62.5% of respondents who chose moderately effective agreed that they would be motivated while 37.5% disagreed. For highly effective and extremely effective respondents who chose yes were 90% and 100% respectively while 10% of respondents who answered highly effective disagreed that they would be motivated.

Employee Morale and Territorial behavior

In the second section of the questionnaire the employees were asked to chose the options that best described their relationship with their work environment, the following are the option employee were expected to chose from.

- My work environment is my space thus I will protect that space if threatened
- If my work environment is threatened by a new knowledge worker I may lose morale to work
- Threats from new knowledge workers in my workplace will spur me to work harder
- The presence of a new knowledge worker in my workplace will encourage me to work harder.
- I will be committed to my job even though my morale reduces
- My work environment is simply a place I work to earn a living thus I have no emotional connection with it
- I do not mind new knowledge workers in my work environment/space

The graph below shows employee responses in this section. They were allowed to choose more than one option. The alphabets are in the order of the options listed above.

Which of the following describes the Relationship you have with your work environment
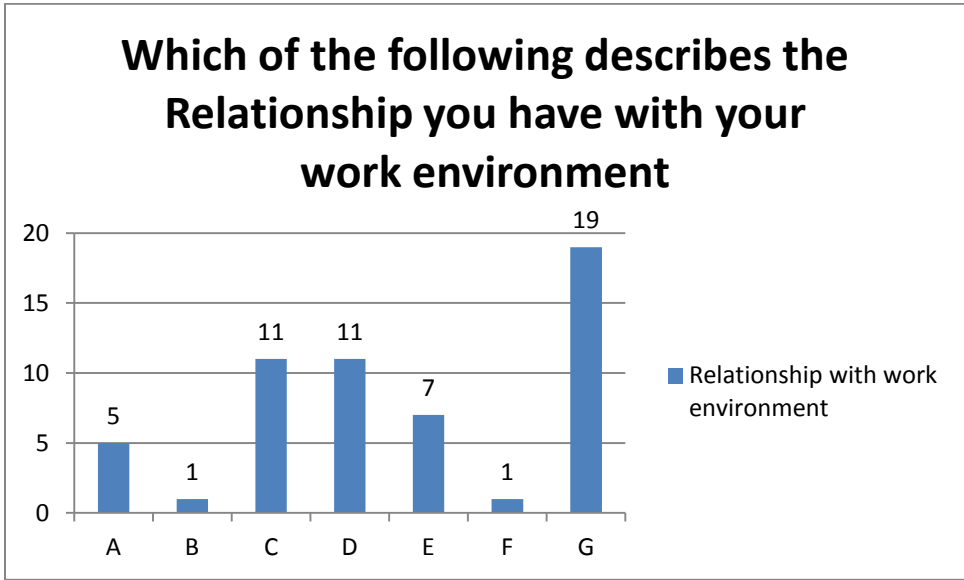
Source: Field Data

The top two options out of seven that were chosen by respondents included; "I do not mind knowledge workers in my work environment", "The presence of a new knowledge worker in my workplace will encourage me to work harder". Also the option "My work environment is my space thus I will protect it if threatened" was mostly chosen by individual who had negative perceptions of poaching and low morale. A cross tabulation done comparing these options to the respondents perception of poaching are shown in Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11.

Table 4.5: Employee morale vs relationship G

Will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry was recruited into your department	I do not mind new knowledge workers in my work environment/space		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	15	5	20
	75.00%	25.00%	100.00%
	83.33%	83.33%	83.33%
	62.50%	20.83%	83.33%
No	3	1	4
	75.00%	25.00%	100.00%
	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%
	12.50%	4.17%	16.67%
Total	18	6	24
	75.00%	25.00%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	75.00%	25.00%	100.00%

Source: Field Data

With 24 responses, a large percentage of individuals (75%) who agreed that they would be motivated to work harder with the presence of a knowledge worker did not mind the new knowledge workers in their workspace while 25% did not chooses this option. On the other hand 75% of individuals who disagreed that they would not be motivated with the presence of a knowledge worker said they did not mind the presence of a knowledge worker. The remaining 25% did not choose this option.

Table 4.6: Employee morale vs Relationship D

Will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry was recruited into your department	The presence of a new knowledge worker in my workplace will encourage me to work harder		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	11	9	20
	55.00%	45.00%	100.00%
	100.00%	69.23%	83.33%
	45.83%	37.50%	83.33%
No	0	4	4
	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	0.00%	30.77%	16.67%
	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%
Total	11	13	24
	45.83%	54.17%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	45.83%	54.17%	100.00%

Source: Field Data

Out of 24 respondents in this section 45% who responded that they would be motivated agreed that if the presence of knowledge workers will motivate to work harder while 55% did not choose this option. Those who responded that they would not be motivated did not choose this option.

Table 4.7: Employee morale vs Relationship A

Will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry was recruited into your department	My work environment is my space thus I will protect that space if threatened		
	yes	1	Total
Yes	3	17	20
	15.00%	85.00%	100.00%
	60.00%	89.47%	83.33%
	12.50%	70.83%	83.33%
No	2	2	4
	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
	40.00%	10.53%	16.67%
	8.33%	8.33%	16.67%
Total	5	19	24
	20.83%	79.17%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	20.83%	79.17%	100.00%

From the above table, one half (50%) of the respondents who agreed that their morale

will be reduced in the presence of a knowledge worker also agreed that they would

protect their work environment which shows signs of the possibility of exhibiting

reactionary defense. However, those who agreed that they would be motivated to work

harder and still would protect their work environment if threatened amounted to 15% of

the population of motivated employees.

Findings on Respondents without Managerial Positions

The theory of reactionary defense explains that worker without managerial positions are

most likely to exhibit territorial behavior in the work place. Thus the findings in this

section will focus on this category of employees. Out of 26 respondents, 23 mentioned

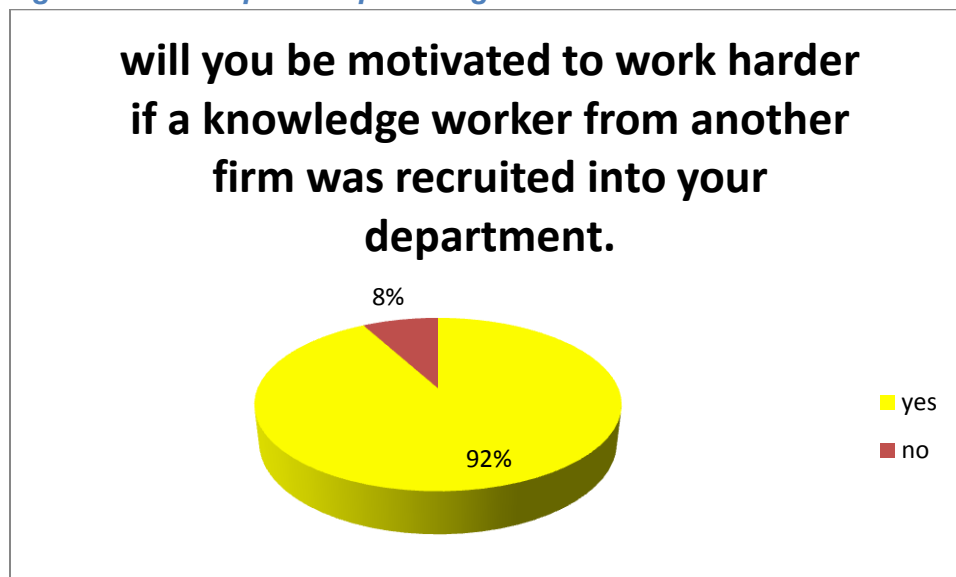their job roles which constituted of 52% junior workers and 48%workers with managerial

positions.

Questions concerning their perception of poaching are represented in the bar chart and

pie chart in figure 4.11 below:

How effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry?

Source: Field Data

Figure 4.6: Perception of poaching

will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm was recruited into your department.

Source: Field Data

From the bar chart 83% (10 people) of the population had positive perception of poaching while the question represented in the pie chart showed that 92% of the population had positive perceptions of poaching.
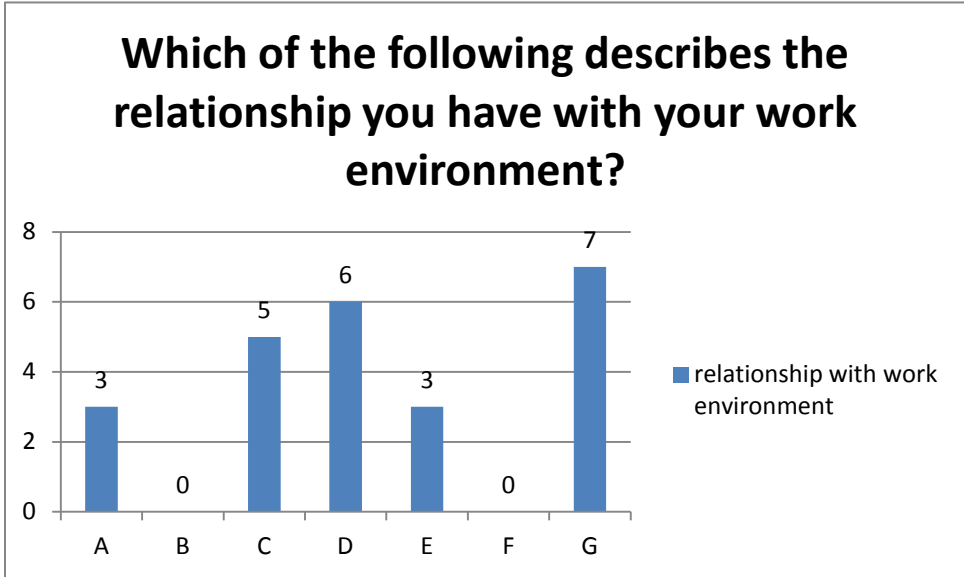
A cross tabulation table generated to show the percentage of individual who had positive perceptions of poaching and high morale with the presence of a poached worker showed that 74% with positive perception also showed high morale while 16% with negative perceptions showed low morale. However the p value (p=0.676) from the chi square, shows that there is no significant relationship.

Table 4.8: Employee perception vs Employee morale (junior workers)

How effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your in industry	Will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry was recruited into your department		
	Yes	No	Total
Fairly effective	2	0	2
	100.00%	0%	100.00%
	18.18%	0%	16.67%
	16.67%	0%	16.67%
Moderately Effective	4	1	5
	80.00%	20.00%	100.00%
	36.36%	100.00%	41.67%
	33.33%	8.33%	41.67%
Highly Effective	3	0	3
	100.00%	0%	100.00%
	27.27%	0%	25.00%
	25.00%	0%	25.00%
Extremely Effective	2	0	2
	100.00%	0%	100.00%
	18.18%	0%	16.67%
	16.67%	0%	16.67%
Total	11	1	12
	91.67%	8.33%	100.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	91.67%	8.33%	100.00%
Table: Chi-square tests.			
Statistic	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.53	3	0.676
Likelihood Ratio	1.88	3	0.598
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.19	1	0.662
N of Valid Cases	12		

Source: Field Data

Which of the following describes the relationship you have with your work environment?

Source: Field Data

Just like the previous section, the top three options chosen were "I do not mind knowledge workers in my work environment", "Threats from new knowledge workers in my workplace will spur me to work harder", "The presence of a new knowledge worker in my workplace will encourage me to work harder".

Summary of Findings

From the total population, 80.77% of the respondents can be said to definitely have a positive perception of poaching while 7.69% are sure to have a negative perception of poaching. Most of these employees do no mind knowledge workers in their work environment. For employees who do not have managerial positions, 83-92% of the population had positive perception of poaching while the 8% were sure to have negative perceptions of poaching. Also 74% with positive perception also showed high morale while 16% with negative perceptions showed low morale.

Discussion

The first research question that guided this study was "how do employees perceive poaching". From the results both in the mixed category of employees and those who did not have managerial positions, the percentage of employees in this firm who had positive perceptions of poaching were not less that 80%. However this does not mean that all employees had positive perceptions of poaching because 8-16% of the population had negative perceptions of poaching. The fact that most employees had positive perceptions of poaching can be attributed to the term "chameleon effect" discussed in chapter two. As explained by Chartrand & Bargh in 1997, chameleon effect occurs because due to the empathy of individuals, who tend to imitate the behaviors shown by others and when this is within a circle of people a group behavior is formed.

Also in this category one of the questions asked "how effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry" received positive responses. The word "recruit" was used instead of "poach" in order to prevent bias responses. However the word recruit could have registered a milder meaning in the mind of the respondent and not emphasized on how intense the process would have been in the case of poaching. It could be possible that if the word "take" was used, it would have shown the intensity that comes with the process and also prevent bias.

The second research question was "How do these perceptions affect their morale". The theoretical framework for this study was taken into consideration in answering this question.

From the theoretical framework for this study (reactionary defense) the expected results were that those employees that had a positive perception of poaching would have high morale and those with negative perceptions will result in low morale. This is because those who happened to view a knowledge worker as a threat were expected to also have negative perceptions of poaching and then exhibit reactionary defense by either having low morale or working hard to protect their space from the knowledge worker.

From the results of the responses from the percentage of individuals who had positive perceptions of poaching and in turn had high morale were 76% out of 92% who had positive perceptions of poaching, while 20% had negative perceptions of poaching and low morale out of the 8% who had negative perceptions of poaching.

These percentages when looked at separately could imply that there is a possible significant relationship between the variables however, when a binary logistic regression was generated to show the significance of the relationship between these variables, there was no such relationship. Below are the results.

Table 4.8: Binary Logistic Regression results

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
How effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your in industry	-0.72	0.69	1.09	1	0.297	0.49
Constant	0.9	2.36	0.14	1	0.705	2.45

Source: Field Data

With a regression analysis, the null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between the two variables and if there is, the level of significance should be below 5% which is $p < 0.05$. From the table above the column that shows the level significance has the

figure 0.297 which is greater than 0.05. This shows that there is no significant positive

or negative relationship between the variables in this study. Therefore the perceptions

of these employees in the case of poaching cannot be said to have an effect on morale.

Comparing these results to that of a similar study from the literature conducted by

Chopade and Vidyapeeth, (2012) who studied the effect of the perception of rightsizing

on existing employees commitment and morale, had an hypothesis which stated that

"survivors' perception of rightsizing has negative impact on their morale". The

significance level after the hypothesis was tested was below 0.05 and showed that there

was indeed a relationship between the variables stated and that a perception of

rightsizing had a negative effect on morale.

The analysis also implies that the results of this study do not follow the theory of

reactionary defense

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the study was to understand how poaching is perceived by workers in telecommunications and how these perceptions of poaching by workers can affect their morale. This was due to the fact that previous studies that dealt with the perception of human resource practices by employees and its effect on their morale showed that despite the fact that these practices were for the well being of the firm, employee morale was affected negatively. In Ghana employee poaching happens to be highly used by telecommunication firms as a form of recruiting the best knowledge workers. Employee poaching can as well be regarded as a human resource practice and due to the fact that it is quite relevant in telecommunications, it was important to find out if perceptions of poaching by employees who had to work for knowledge workers poached into their firm affected their morale.

With this realization research was done on MTN Ghana only due to time constraint. A sample size of 27 individuals took part in this survey from the human resource, corporate, finance, marketing and sales department. These individuals were a fair mix of workers with and without managerial positions in these departments.

The general perceptions from respondents of this study concerning poaching were positive, but there were still individuals who had negative perceptions. Furthermore, when an analysis was conducted on the data gathered, results show that there was no significant relationship between the variables; perceptions of poaching and employee morale. Therefore employee perceptions of poaching could not affect their morale in this case. However, even though there is no relationship, the fact that there is a negative

perception of poaching means that there is a possible effect on something other than morale.

These results cannot be generalized for the whole population of individuals in all telecommunication firms, thus further research can be conducted on other firms in Ghana with the objective of this study for proper generalization and recommendations. Also a study can be conducted to find out the possible effects of the negative perceptions of poaching in the workplace.

LIMITATIONS

Social desirability: Due to the fact that the questionnaires were not given to the employees directly by the researcher but by the HR manager employees may have felt the need to give responses that they thought were appropriate for the study.

Selection of Participants: The participants of this study were not selected by the researcher; instead it was handled by the HR manager. This could have been a possible effect on the social desirability of respondents.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Form

<u>INFORMED CONSENT</u>

Thank you for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this study is to know more about the recruitment strategies present in telecommunication firms. Should you feel uncomfortable filling this survey, you are free to withdraw at any point in time. Be assured that any information you give will be confidential and useful for learning.

This study and consent form has been reviewed by Ashesi IRB for Human Subjects Research. For further information contact the committee through irb@ashesi.edu.gh.QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to understand recruitment practices in your company and how it affects employee morale.

1. Job Role

   _____

Section A: Employee view on recruiting Knowledge workers

Note; Knowledge workers are individuals whose skills are indispensible and crucial to the success of a firm.

This section is on what the respondent understands to be the recruitment process in their firm.

2. What are the top 3 rare job roles in your company? (please specify the department also)

   _____

_____

_____

3. Which of the following is an effective means of recruiting individuals for these crucial roles? (tick as many as possible)

○ Using a head hunter

○ Outsource to an HR recruitment firm

○ Continue with job ads

○ Employee referrals

○ Other (please specify); _____

4. How effective do you think it would be to recruit a knowledge worker from another firm in your in industry?

○ Not effective

○ Fairly effective

○ Moderately effective

○ Highly effective

○ Extremely affective

5. Will you recommend this form of recruitment to any firm?

○ Yes

○ No

6. Please explain the reason for your answer

_____

_____

_____

7. Will you be motivated to work harder if a knowledge worker from another firm in your industry was recruited into your department?

    ○ Yes

    ○ No

8. Please explain the reason for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

Employee relationship with work environment

Note: Morale in this section deals with the degree to which the employee enjoys their work environment.

9. Which of the following describes the relationship you have with your work environment? (you can choose more than one option)

    ○ My work environment is my space thus I will protect that space if threatened

    ○ If my work environment is threatened by a new knowledge worker I may lose morale to work

    ○ Threats from new knowledge workers in my workplace will spur me to work harder

    ○ The presence of a new knowledge worker in my workplace will encourage me to work harder.

    ○ I will be committed to my job even though my morale reduces

    ○ My work environment is simply a place I work to earn a living thus I have no emotional connection with it

    ○ I do not mind new knowledge workers in my work environment/space