

Motivational Factors for Expatriates Teachers in Saudi Arabia: An Empirical Presentation

Raj Bahadur Sharma

Department of Accounting, College of Business Administration
Salman Bin Abdul Aziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
rbsharmaji@gmail.com

Abstract: Saudi Arabia is a member in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). It has the largest underground oil reservoir in the world. Hence, economic recession has never been a problem for Saudi Arabian economy. In fact, the budget of the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia has increased significantly as the price of the oil increased in the last couple of years. There are a number of depressive factors for expatriates working in Saudi Arabia such as strict enforcement of the laws, dust storms, high degree of temperature during summers, conservatism, death punishment, labor exploitation etc. Even then, more than 5 million foreign workers are employed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The largest percentage of expatriates is in educational industry of Saudi Arabia. The present study examines the factors motivating and encouraging the foreign teachers to work in Saudi Arabia. It has been concluded that visit of holy mosques (Muslim pilgrimage), along with a number of personal gains such as overseas job opportunities, tax free salary and perquisites, infrastructure, low living cost, peace, health care facilities etc are the main motivational factors for expatriates to work in Saudi Arabia. [Raj Bahadur Sharma. **Motivational Factors for Expatriates Teachers in Saudi Arabia: An Empirical Presentation.** *J Am Sci* 2013;9(12):15-18]. (ISSN: 1545-1003). <http://www.jofamericanscience.org>. 3

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1. Introduction

Higher education in Saudi Arabia has undergone a tremendous growth over the past decade. This encompasses the university and college study levels that leads to degrees of Associate, Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate. Ministry of Higher Education is the supervising organization on higher education institutions and sublevels. There are 52 universities and colleges in the kingdom, funded by government and private sectors. In 1932, when kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established, was a poor country, and there was a small educational program comprising 12 schools with 700 students. This situation changed dramatically after 1938, when oil was discovered in huge amounts in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, by 1950 there were 365 schools educating 42,000 students (Simmons & Simmons, 1994). In 1954, the Ministry of Education was established; it includes all educational levels in Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, the education was offered to males only, and there were not schools offering education for female. In 1957, there was a need to open a university to educate Saudi students instead of sending them abroad for education, therefore, King Saud University was established and inaugurated in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. In 1959, King Saud discussed the issue of educating women in Saudi Arabia, and he sought support from religion's scholars to start education for girls. In 1960, the first school for girls started in Riyadh (Al -Rawaf & Simmons, 1991). Thus, there were schools which separated boys and girls on all educational level until now. Higher

education in Saudi Arabia has undergone a tremendous growth over the past decade. The higher education system, which is based on diversification, has expanded to include: 23 Government Universities, 18 Primary Teacher's Colleges for men, 80 Primary Teacher's Colleges for women, 37 Colleges and Institutes for health, 12 Technical Colleges, 33 Private Universities and Colleges. Despite the fact that private institutions started in the last decade, there is a good number of private institutions which provide higher education, and their number is increasing consistently.

Teaching is one area in the kingdom where there is a perennial shortage of skilled staff. There are two types of employment contracts for expatriate teachers. The first one is a direct contract between the employer and the employee. The employer is responsible for paying the teacher the salaries and all other benefits. The second type of contract is through an agent who acts as an intermediary between the employer and the employee. In this type of contract, there is no direct relationship between the two. Both types of contracts are legally allowed and are quite common in the kingdom.

2. Expatriates in Saudi Arabia

Many foreign workers, estimated at over 5 million, are employed in Saudi Arabia, a country in the Arabian Peninsula. The 2010 edition of the Central Intelligence Agency's World Fact book estimated that non-nationals represented 5,576,076 out of a population of 25,731,776 in Saudi Arabia.

However, a 2011 estimate by the newspaper Al Riyadh suggested that roughly 31 per cent of the nation's population is made up of foreign nationals. The United Nations breaks down the country's foreign population as follows: Indian: 1.3 million, Pakistani: 900,000, Egyptian: 900,000, Yemeni: 800,000, Bangladeshi: 500,000, Filipino: 500,000, Jordanian/Palestinian: 260,000, Indonesian: 250,000, Sri Lankan: 350,000, Sudanese: 250,000, Syrian: 100,000 and Turkish: 100,000. In 2007 there were around 100,000 Westerners in Saudi Arabia. The results of the 2004 census indicates that only about 15 per cent of foreign workers are in the skilled category, with the remainder mostly working in agriculture, cleaning and domestic service. Country of origin has been an important factor in determining foreign workers' occupational roles in Saudi Arabia. Saudi businesses have traditionally adopted an ethnically defined hierarchical organization. For example, a recent academic study of a Danish manufacturing company's Saudi subsidiary noted that a manager had to be European, a supervisor had to be Egyptian, Filipino employees often had technical roles, with Indians, being lowest in the hierarchy, working in production. Foreign workers' presence in Saudi Arabia tends to be transitory: only 3% remain in the country for more than six years.

Statement of the Problem

There are a number of depressive factors for expatriates working in Saudi Arabia such as strict enforcement of the laws, dust storms, high degree of temperature during summers, conservatism, death punishment, labor exploitation etc. Even then, more than 5 million foreign workers are employed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The largest percentage of expatriates is in educational industry of Saudi Arabia. This study was an effort to find out the factors affecting motivation and to identify the factors responsible for encouraging foreign teacher work in Saudi Arabia. The main objective was to come up with the recommendations for the improvement of motivational level of teachers.

Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were as under:

- To identify the factors responsible for motivating expatriates teachers.
- To find the socio—economic factors affecting the motivational level of teachers.

Significance of the Study

This study is of great importance for not only foreign teacher but also for those who are interested to make career in teaching in Saudi Arabia.

The motivational factors help in the enhancement of teachers' motivation. This study may help the foreigner, teachers and those are the basic role players in an educational system.

Methodology of the Study

The population of the study included the college level teachers of Riyadh region. A random sample of 10 colleges was taken for the purpose of research and 50 teachers were selected for the study. In order to collect the data, a structured questionnaire was developed, which consisted of 7 items i.e. Religion, Tax Free Salary & Perquisites, exchange rate, furnished accommodation & Facilities, traveling opportunities, Health Care facilities and End of Services Benefits, and had been designed to seek information and opinions about the factors affecting the motivational level of teachers. The questionnaire was distributed to the teachers and collected from them after 07 days. The responses were analyzed and interpreted on percentage basis.

Motivational Factors in Saudi Arabia:

The research problem based on Maslow's theory of needs, the purpose of the research was to investigate factors to improve faculty motivation in order to raise the profitability of the academic program and create value for academic investment. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation theories provided the theoretical framework to analyze the motivation type. Interviews and surveys were conducted with 50 expatriates Teachers from different colleges of Riyadh regions. A phenomenological analysis was conducted on the questionnaire and interview data and finds the contributed factors to faculty motivation; intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Results were used to document that there were following motivational factors attract to the foreign faculty members work in Saudi Arabia:

(a) Religion:

A Muslim has five obligations, called the Five Pillars of Islam. First is the profession of faith; second is praying five times a day; third is zakat; fourth is fasting during Ramadan and the fifth pillar is performing the hajj, or pilgrimage, to Makkah at least once in a lifetime. The Muslim teacher are attracted and motivated by a special place in the Islamic world as the very heartland of Islam.

(b) Tax Free Salary & Perquisites:

An expatriate's teacher is entitled to get Salary, experience allowance, transportation, housing allowance, furniture allowance, paid vacations in Saudi Arabia. The Salaries are paid at the end of each month without deduction for any local taxes. Most expatriates are free from taxation on this income by the authorities in their home countries. Many

countries require minimum time away in order to qualify, and some (such as the USA) have upper limits on the amount of foreign income which may be exempted from taxation.

(c) Foreign Exchange Rate:

The salaries are quoted in Saudi Riyals, and paychecks are issued in Saudi Riyals (SAR) currency in the amount agreed. The Riyal is a very stable, internationally-recognized currency, the value of which is tied to the US dollar. The current exchange rate, which has not changed for the past 20 years, is 3.75 Riyals to the dollar. Riyals may be readily converted without restriction to other international currencies and sent out of Saudi Arabia as desired. The fluctuation of exchange rate also motivate to Expatriate Teachers to earn more.

(d) Accommodations & Facilities:

Free furnished housing, including basic cooking utensils, is provided free of charge near the college campus to all expatriate teachers. Washing and drying facilities are also provided. If the provided housing is not in the immediate vicinity of the work site, free transportation is provided before and after each work shift. In or near the housing complexes, free recreation facilities are provided, including swimming pools, gymnasiums, tennis courts, billiards, weight rooms, access to beaches, etc.

(e) Travel Opportunities

The expatriate teachers get opportunities to visit Jordan, Egypt, India, and Kenya within the smallest of budgets. In Saudi Arabia, the teachers find some interesting holiday sites inside the Kingdom, some of which can be visited on the weekends. Examples are the ancient Nebatian civilization at Medain Saleh, the old Hejaz railway built by the Turks and destroyed by Lawrence of Arabia and the forces of the Sherif of Makkah, the fantastic scenery at high elevation in the Asir National Park, some of the best scuba diving reefs in the World, and the glories of the desert at many locations.

(f) Health Care and Dependent Education

The employed expatriate teachers and authorized dependents are provided with necessary medical and hospital care at no personal cost. Limited emergency dental care is also provided. Authorized dependent children are sent at hospital expense to international schools operated in Saudi Arabia to standards established in Europe and/or the USA. There are certain limitations on this benefit regarding age and number of eligible children, so please advise your recruiter of any children who will accompany you and inquire about eligibility.

(g) Retirement benefits

The best thing for expatriates working in Saudi Arabia, apart from a tax-free salary, is the

provision of End of Service Benefits (ESB). According to University norms, At the end of service, the employee is entitled for half month salary for each year of experience for the first five years and full month salary for the remaining each year of experience.

Findings

Factors: Religion, Tax Free Salary & Perquisites, exchange rate, furnished accommodation & Facilities, traveling opportunities, Health Care facilities and End of Services Benefits

- 100% of the Muslim respondents' teachers are motivated because Saudi Arabia is a Muslim pilgrimage.
- 96 percent of the respondents motivated by tax free salary and perquisites and getting higher salary as compared to their native country. The expatriate teachers are agreed that they were motivated because there is no restriction of government on foreign remittance.
- Ninety five percent of the respondents agreed that the value of Saudi Riyal is higher than the currency of native country. The fluctuation in exchange rate is profitable for them.
- 82 percent expatriate teachers said that basic necessities of life like accommodation facilities, living cost, availability of resources etc. are easily available at nominal cost.
- 72% expatriate attracted by low cost petrol prices and enjoying long drive. The expatriate teachers agreed that low cost traveling surrounding the Saudi Arabia motivated them.
- Saudi and non-saudi teachers are getting free medical facility including family members. 60% expatriate teachers are motivated by this factor.
- Only 30% expatriate teachers agreed that they were motivated getting End retirement benefits.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded that apart from the holy place the common expatriate teacher is attract by the high & tax free salary from the native country. It is recommended that the government should be increased salary and incentives for more motivation to teachers. It will also be an incentive for other teachers and they will attract toward teaching profession. It is further recommended that there should not be discrimination in salary between Saudi and non-saudi teachers.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. R. B. Sharma
Department of Accounting
College of Business Administration

Salman Bin Abdul Aziz University
Al Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
E-mail: rbsharmaji@gmail.com

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