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Article

AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS PACKAGES OFFERED TO HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN GHANA: ARE THEY COMPETITIVE ENOUGH TO RETAIN TALENT?

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Abstract: This paper investigates the competitiveness of compensation and benefits packages for healthcare professionals in Ghana to address the country's shortage of skilled medical staff. By analyzing salary structures, incentives, and benefits compared to international standards, this study examines how remuneration impacts retention and migration rates. Findings indicate that low compensation and insufficient benefits are significant factors driving emigration and high turnover among healthcare workers. Additionally, the study discusses the relevance of Total Rewards Theory and best practices in compensation to enhance job satisfaction and retention. The results suggest policy recommendations to improve salary scales, working conditions, and career development opportunities, aiming to attract and retain qualified healthcare professionals within Ghana's healthcare system.

I. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

The healthcare sector of Ghana is pivotal in the provision of indispensable services to the populace. The healthcare industry (Okyere et al., 2022) has encountered manifold impediments, notably a dearth of qualified medical personnel. The scarcity of healthcare professionals in Ghana arises from multiple factors, encompassing emigration to other nations and discontentment with the remuneration and perks accorded to healthcare practitioners within the country (Tsede & Kutin, 2013). Henceforth, it is paramount to examine the remuneration and benefits plans extended to healthcare practitioners in Ghana to establish their adequacy in fostering staff retention by stimulating their competitiveness.

The matter of remuneration and perks accorded to healthcare practitioners in Ghana has been a recurring topic of discourse over numerous years (Okyere et al., 2022). The healthcare practitioners in Ghana have been advocating for enhanced remuneration and benefits packages, comprising escalated salaries, allowances, and supplementary incentives. Agyeman et al., (2019) stated that healthcare practitioners in Ghana have been advocating for a reconsideration of their remuneration and benefits packages in order to align them with international benchmarks and enhance their competitiveness.

The healthcare sector in Ghana has been experiencing a deficit in the number of healthcare professionals. As per the findings of the World Health Organization (WHO), Ghana is currently experiencing a deficiency in its healthcare workforce, highlighted by a doctor-to-patient ratio of 1:8,000. This figure falls significantly short of the recommended ratio of 1:1,000, as stipulated by the WHO. The insufficiency of medical personnel represents a prominent concern due to its impact on the standard of healthcare services accessible to the populace.

The scarcity of healthcare professionals in Ghana has been ascribed to various factors, not least of which is emigration to alternative nations. Healthcare personnel in Ghana are emigrating to seek

enhanced prospects and remuneration packages. In accordance with the findings of Agyeman et., al (2019), it is evident that the exodus of healthcare professionals from Ghana to foreign nations is a pertinent issue due to its deleterious impact on the long-term viability of the country's healthcare infrastructure.

The remuneration and benefits schemes provided to healthcare practitioners in Ghana have been recognized as a determinative factor for the emigration of healthcare professionals from Ghana to other nations. The remuneration and benefits schemes provided to healthcare professionals in Ghana are deemed insufficient and fail to meet the prevailing global benchmarks. As reported by Agyeman et al (2019), healthcare professionals in Ghana receive lower remuneration in comparison to their counterparts across other African nations.

Furthermore, the migration of healthcare professionals is not the sole contributing factor to the high turnover rate in Ghana's healthcare industry. Dissatisfaction with the compensation and benefits packages provided to healthcare professionals is another significant issue. Healthcare practitioners are resigning from their positions in pursuit of improved prospects, which encompass more advantageous remuneration and benefits packages. As reported by Agyeman et al., (2019), the increased rate of personnel turnover among healthcare professionals in Ghana poses a significant concern as it has adverse effects on the quality of healthcare services provided to the populace.

Hence, it is imperative to conduct an in-depth analysis of the remuneration and fringe benefits provided to healthcare practitioners operating within the Ghanaian jurisdiction, with the goal of ascertaining whether the packages are sufficiently competitive to attract and maintain a skilled workforce. This study aims to analyze the remuneration and fringe benefits provided to healthcare practitioners in Ghana, encompassing various healthcare professionals, such as doctors, nurses, and others in the field of healthcare. This research endeavor endeavors to ascertain how the compensation and benefits packages extended to healthcare practitioners in Ghana compare to prevailing international norms.

Ultimately, the remuneration and benefits ranges provided to medical practitioners in Ghana have been a topic of discourse for a considerable period. The lack of healthcare professionals in Ghana, as well as their emigration to other nations, is widely attributed to the insufficiency of compensation and benefits packages provided to healthcare practitioners in the country. Henceforth, it is imperative to thoroughly scrutinize the remuneration and perks bestowed upon healthcare professionals in Ghana with a view to evaluating their ability to compete and retain a proficient workforce. This analysis aims to produce significant recommendations regarding the compensation and benefits packages extended to healthcare personnel situated in Ghana whilst also proposing effective measures to retain and nurture talented individuals within the healthcare industry.

1.2. Key problem and research questions

The compensation and benefits packages provided to healthcare professionals in Ghana may be inadequately competitive to sufficiently retain skilled personnel, resulting in a potential shortfall of healthcare professionals and a consequent degradation in the quality of healthcare provision.

Insufficient remuneration and benefit offerings for healthcare practitioners in Ghana have the potential to result in a notable rate of attrition, thereby potentially compromising the caliber of healthcare provisions rendered to the populace. The relocation of healthcare practitioners from Ghana to alternative nations could potentially be attributed to the perceived insufficiency of remuneration and benefits being provided to healthcare professionals within Ghana.

Therefore, the key questions arising from this issue are as follows:

- How competitive are the compensation and benefits packages offered to healthcare professionals in Ghana, and what are the factors contributing to their perceived inadequacy?
- What is the turnover rate of healthcare professionals in Ghana, and what are the factors contributing to the high turnover rate?
- What is the extent of the migration of healthcare professionals from Ghana, and what is the relationship between the perceived inadequacy of compensation and benefits packages and the migration of healthcare professionals?

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical framework

The study's theoretical framework is rooted in established theories concerning employee retention and compensation and benefits. This research attempt to investigate the determinants of healthcare personnel retention in Ghana and the impact of compensation and benefits schemes on the retention of competent healthcare professionals. The study looks at one of the key theories underpinning retention and workplace satisfaction, which can be critical to reducing staff turnover, especially in the health sector in Ghana.

2.1.1. Total rewards theory:

The Total Rewards Theory is a comprehensive approach to employee compensation and benefits systems that emphasizes the significance of taking into account both financial and non-financial rewards as a means to attract, motivate, and retain talented individuals within organizations (Adzei & Atinga, 2012; Ingelsrud, 2017; Tijdens et al., 2013; Winarno et al., 2022). The importance of a comprehensive remuneration package that caters to employees' varied needs and expectations is acknowledged, recognizing that their motivation extends beyond mere monetary compensation. Lawler (2019) posits that the Total Rewards Theory surpasses the conventional approach of concentrating solely on core wages and instead incorporates supplementary components such as incentives, bonuses, and benefits, as well as diverse methods of acknowledgment and initiatives promoting a work-life balance. It is acknowledged that employees possess varying levels of esteem towards their employment experience and therefore the provision of reinforcements is customized to match their priorities.

The integration of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards represents a vital aspect of the Total Rewards Theory. The concept of intrinsic rewards embodies the psychological advantages arising from occupational pursuits, including job satisfaction, significance, and the attainment of personal goals (Kaplan et al., 2018). In contrast, extrinsic rewards are comprised of concrete advantages such as remuneration, incentives, medical coverage, pension schemes, and supplementary job-related privileges (WorldatWork, 2019). The mixture of emotional and material incentives constitutes the fundamental tenet of the Total Rewards Theory, with the intention of producing a comprehensive and compelling rewards structure that caters to the diverse needs of personnel.

Figure 1 below shows the Total Reward Theory in compensation which was initially propounded by Thomas J. Boudreau and Peter M. Ramstad in their article titled "Beyond Compensation: How to Motivate Employees in the 21st Century," which was published in the Compensation & Benefits Review in 2005.

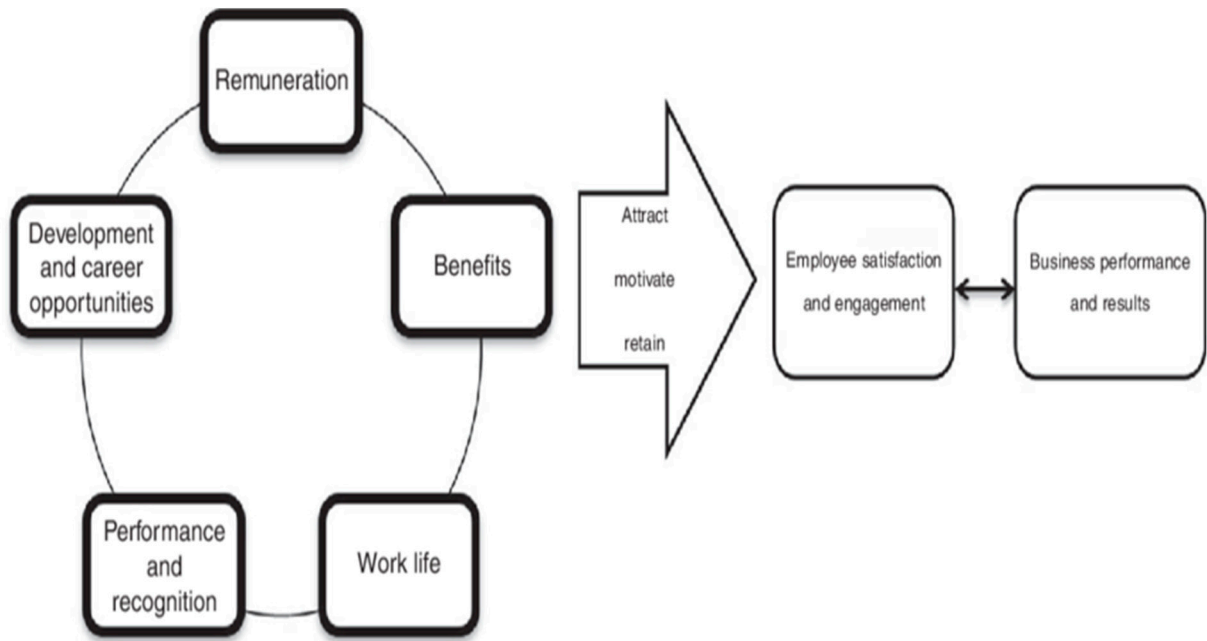


Figure 1. The total reward theory.

Source: Adopted from Thomas J. Boudreau et., al. (2005)

The Total Rewards Theory is of significant importance in compensation and benefit allocations as it has the potential to augment employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention. Lawler (2019) asserted that when employees feel that their endeavors and input are acknowledged and compensated appropriately, they are more inclined to exhibit motivation and loyalty to their respective organizations. According to research conducted by WorldatWork (2019), organizations that adhere to a Total Rewards framework observe augmented levels of employee engagement and decreased turnover rates.

Furthermore, the concept of Total Rewards Theory fundamentally acknowledges the significance of personalization and adaptability embedded within rewards schemes (Tsede & Kutin, 2013). The aforementioned statement recognizes that employees possess varying inclinations and priorities in relation to remuneration. Certain employees may prioritize initiatives that aim to promote work-life balance or opportunities for professional development over a substantially higher fundamental salary, for example. Organizations have the potential to enhance the appeal of their compensation and benefit packages by offering a diverse array of rewards options that cater to the individual preferences of employees.

Moreover, the Total Rewards Theory is in congruence with the evolving dynamics of the contemporary labor force. In contemporary times (Ronchetti, 2022), there has been an observable trend among employees to pursue an improved equilibrium between their professional and personal lives, as well as to seek avenues for developing both personally and professionally, and a sense of meaning in their daily work activities (Kaplan et al., 2018). Incorporating non-monetary incentives, such as flexible work arrangements, recognition programs, and career development opportunities, can enable organizations to address the changing needs of employees and bolster their capacity to attract and retain skilled workers.

The Total Rewards Theory provides an all-encompassing model for the development of remuneration and perk packages that extend beyond the realms of financial remuneration. To sum up, this approach presents a holistic framework for compensation design. Through the integration of both intrinsic and extrinsic reward systems, tailoring rewards to individual needs and preferences, and remaining adaptable to the evolving demands of their workforce, organizations can establish a more attractive and competitive employment value proposition. Employers who engage in this practice have been shown to elevate levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention, thereby cultivating a workforce that is highly motivated and committed.

2.2. Employee retention

The phrase "employee retention" denotes the capacity of an entity to maintain its workforce for a specific duration. The demand for skilled labor is increasingly crucial for organizations operating in sectors like healthcare, which heightens the significance of this matter (Oruh et al., 2020; Rubel et al., 2020). Elevated employee attrition rates may result in a depletion of institutional knowledge, a decline in productivity, and escalated expenses linked to the recruitment and instruction of novel personnel (Lee & Bruvold, 2003).

It is worth noting that, effective talent management is an essential component of organizational success and is intricately linked to it (Zimmerman et al., 2019). High employee turnover phenomena may lead to amplified expenditures on recruitment and training, a reduction in productivity, and depletion of organizational knowledge. Therefore, firms need to delve into diverse tactics aimed at the retention of employees, supported by research data. Some few notable strategies relevant to this study are as follows:

1. The concept of offering a competitive compensation and benefits package is a crucial aspect of modern human resource management practices. It entails providing employees with a remuneration package that is commensurate with their skills, knowledge, and experience in a given field (Adzei & Atinga, 2012). This ensures a fair and equitable distribution of resources, which fosters employee satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment to organizational goals. As such, organizations that have robust compensation and benefits packages are better able to attract and retain talented employees, which contributes significantly to their overall success and competitiveness in the marketplace (Tsede & Kutin, 2013). The provision of competitively structured remuneration and benefits is an imperative aspect of attracting and retaining high-performing personnel. Empirical studies have indicated that remuneration packages that are in tandem with market standards play a vital role in determining

employee retention rates (Cassar et al., 2020). Offering performance-based monetary bonuses, incentives, and comprehensive healthcare benefits can potentially increase employee job satisfaction and mitigate the issue of employee turnover.

2. Career development and growth opportunities are also other strategies likely to influence retention. Opportunities for professional growth and advancement are highly esteemed by employees. It has been proposed by Meyers et., al. (2019) that in order to cultivate a sense of progression and involvement among employees, organizations should offer training schemes, mentoring projects, and strategies for professional growth. Providing consistent performance evaluations and opportunities for continual skill development has the potential to enhance job satisfaction and bolster employee retention rates (Okyere et al., 2022).
3. The establishment of a favorable working atmosphere that fosters a balance between professional and personal obligations, inclusivity, and a caring ethos is of utmost importance. The results of recent research indicate that employees who hold a positive perception of their work environment demonstrate increased tendencies to maintain their affiliations with their employing organizations (Ng and Feldman, 2015). Fostering transparent communication, acknowledging employee accomplishments, and advocating for a harmonious work-life equilibrium can significantly enhance healthy professional loyalty.
4. The level of engagement exhibited by employees has a significant bearing on the degree of commitment they exhibit towards their respective organizations. According to Macey et., al. (2019), incorporating employees into the decision-making process, soliciting their feedback, and acknowledging their contributions can lead to elevated levels of job satisfaction and retention. The implementation of employee recognition initiatives, such as peer-to-peer acknowledgment and the bestowment of employee of the month accolades, can effectively cultivate a culture of gratitude and commitment.
5. Flexible work arrangements, namely the provision of remote work options or adaptable hours, have garnered significant attention in contemporary times. According to Allen et., al. (2017), research indicates that the provision of flexible work arrangements exerts a favorable influence on the retention of employees. Organizations ought to investigate malleable work policies in order to adapt to the varied requirements of their workforce.
6. The implementation of governmental and policy interventions is paramount in enhancing compensation and benefits schemes. The imperative for governance and policy reforms to be efficacious necessitates a concentrated effort toward the development of fair and equitable compensation structures, periodic evaluation of remuneration packages, and the provision of sufficient resources to address the challenges facing the healthcare sector (Agyemang et., al, 2011). The imperative to bring about constructive transformation necessitates collaboration among the government, healthcare institutions, and professional organizations.

2.3. Best practices in Compensation and benefits packages for healthcare professionals.

The recruitment and retention of skilled healthcare professionals hold significant importance in delivering high-quality healthcare services and upholding the operational sustainability of healthcare establishments. To attain this goal, healthcare entities should formulate remuneration and perks schemes that are competitive, all-encompassing, and congruent with the requirements and anticipations of healthcare practitioners. There are few best practices deemed optimal strategies for devising remuneration and benefit schemes for healthcare professionals, per prevailing conventions in academic discourse. Some known best practices are as follows:

1. **Competitive Base Salary and Performance-based Incentives:** A crucial component in the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals is the provision of a competitive base salary. In order to guarantee competitiveness, the benchmarking of regional or national salary data is recommended, as asserted by Kohl et., al. (2019). Furthermore, providing performance-based incentives that are linked to tangible objectives has the potential to inspire healthcare professionals to attain exceptional outcomes (Harrison et al., 2018).
2. **Comprehensive Benefits Package:** A comprehensive benefits package is a crucial requirement for effectively providing support for the physical and financial well-being of healthcare professionals. The provision of comprehensive benefits packages comprising health insurance coverage, retirement plans, disability insurance, and life insurance has been highlighted as a crucial component in the

recent study by Kohl et., al. (2019). Providing an array of advantages to staff members serves as an indication of dedication to promoting the comprehensive well-being of the workforce.

3. **Professional Development and Continuing Education:** The provision of opportunities for professional growth and ongoing education is fundamental in both attracting and retaining healthcare practitioners. Aiding healthcare professionals in attending conferences, workshops, and courses serves as a means of keeping up to date with contemporary advancements in their respective fields, and cultivates an atmosphere of perpetual learning (Harrison et al., 2018).
4. **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Healthcare practitioners routinely encounter rigorous work schedules and extended time commitments. According to Kohl et., al. (2019), the provision of adaptable work options, such as part-time or remote work, can contribute to the enhancement of work-life equilibrium and the augmentation of job contentment. The implementation of flexible scheduling and shift patterns may serve as a viable solution to counteract the problem of staffing shortages whilst also enhancing employee retention.
5. **Recognition and Rewards:** Recognizing and appreciating the efforts of healthcare professionals is an essential element for their job satisfaction and motivation. In order to foster a culture of appreciation, recognition programs such as employee of the month awards or other public acknowledgments can be implemented, which can have a positive impact on morale. According to Harrison et al. (2018), such programs can enhance the recognition of employees' contributions and reinforce a sense of belonging to the organization. Furthermore, non-monetary rewards such as personalized thank-you notes or public appreciation events can also be effective in boosting the morale of healthcare professionals.
6. **Wellness Programs and Employee Assistance:** Healthcare institutions ought to prioritize the wellness of their employees through the provision of wellness programs and employee assistance services. Kohl et al. (2019) assert that various interventions, such as access to fitness facilities, well-being workshops, psychological assistance, and therapeutic interventions, may be implemented as part of an organization's efforts to promote employee health and wellness. The promotion of employee well-being has been found to be positively associated with increased levels of job satisfaction and correspondingly diminished turnover rates within organizational settings.
7. **Clear Career Development Pathways:** Healthcare practitioners are frequently driven by the chance to advance and progress in their careers. It is essential that organizations create well-defined pathways for career development that include mentorship programs, tuition reimbursement, and possibilities for leadership roles as suggested by Harrison et al. (2018). By providing opportunities for professional growth, organizations can not only bolster retention rates but also attract ambitious individuals seeking to advance in their careers. Thus, it is critical for healthcare organizations to invest in their workforce by establishing career development pathways that foster a sense of growth and advancement.
8. **Open Communication and Feedback:** Establishing effective communication channels and providing regular feedback mechanisms are crucial in enhancing the satisfaction and engagement of healthcare professionals. Kohl et., al. (2019) suggests that performance evaluations, seeking input on organizational decisions, and creating avenues for employee suggestions and concerns can significantly contribute to a positive work environment.

By adopting these best practices, healthcare organizations can create compensation and benefits packages that are supportive, attractive, and tailored to meet the needs of healthcare professionals. Regular evaluation and updates of these packages are essential to remain competitive in the rapidly changing healthcare industry and to satisfy the evolving expectations of healthcare professionals. In conclusion, healthcare organizations should prioritize the implementation of these best practices to create a conducive work environment that fosters job satisfaction, engagement, and retention of healthcare professionals.

3. Methodology

This study concentrates on an analysis of the compensation and benefits packages offered to healthcare professionals in Ghana: Are they competitive enough to retain talent? by comparing monetary and non-monetary remunerations, extended to the healthcare practitioners in Ghana as opposed to other nations. The research encompasses a data-driven approach seeking to ascertain

diverse salary patterns within the healthcare workforce. The objective of this endeavor is to evaluate the competitiveness of Ghana's offerings and discern areas that have the potential for enhancement.

3.1. Research Design and Approach

1. Data Collection:

The study primarily relies on secondary data sources. These sources include government reports, international organizations' databases, academic publications, and reputable websites that provide data on health worker salaries and compensation packages in Ghana and other countries.

2. Selection of Countries:

A comparative analysis was conducted to assess the compensation packages in Ghana relative to other countries. A selection of countries was made based on relevance to the subject matter and mostly as a preferred destination for healthcare professionals in Ghana. Examples of countries that have been included in the analysis are UK and the US as most healthcare professionals in Ghana migrate to.

Data Analysis

4.1. Ghana

Healthcare workers in Ghana receive varying salaries depending on their level of experience, qualifications, and job roles. It is important to recognize that compared to the UK and the US, healthcare professionals in Ghana generally earn lower salaries. The specific profession within the healthcare sector plays a significant role in determining the exact salary figures, which can vary significantly. It is essential to study and understand the various factors that contribute to the compensation of healthcare workers in Ghana to ensure fair and equitable pay.

The table below in Fig 1, is a sample of the starting salary structure of health workers in Ghana, these figures are monthly salary figures in Ghana cedis.

Fig. Salary Structure of Healthcare Professionals in Ghana

SINGLE SPINE SALARY STRUCTURE								
EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2022								
Grade	Start Sal. Point	End Sal. Point	1 st Step	2 nd Step	3 rd Step	4 th Step	5 th Step	6 th Step
Chief Dental Technologist	1	4	4,465.31	4,541.22	4,618.42	4,696.94	4,776.79	4,857.99
Deputy Chief Dental Technologist	1	5	4,104.38	4,174.15	4,245.11	4,317.28	4,390.67	-
Principal Dental Technologist	1	5	3,586.57	3,647.54	3,709.55	3,772.61	3,836.75	-
Senior Dental Technologist	1	5	2,832.61	2,880.76	2,929.73	2,979.54	3,030.19	3,081.70
Dental Technologist	1	5	2,603.64	2,647.90	2,692.92	2,738.70	2,785.26	2,832.61
Principal Dispensing Assistant	1	6	1,679.72	1,708.27	1,737.31	1,766.85	1,796.89	1,827.43
Senior Dispensing Assistant	1	6	1,492.76	1,518.14	1,543.94	1,570.19	1,596.89	1,624.03
Dispensing Assistant	1	6	1,326.61	1,349.16	1,372.10	1,395.42	1,419.15	1,443.27
Dispensing Attendant	1	6	827.48	841.54	855.85	870.40	885.20	900.25
Superintendent Emergency Medical Technician	1	6	1,827.43	1,858.50	1,890.09	1,922.23	1,954.90	1,988.14
Principal Emergency Medical Technician	1	6	1,679.72	1,708.27	1,737.31	1,766.85	1,796.89	1,827.43
Senior Emergency Medical Technician	1	6	1,492.76	1,518.14	1,543.94	1,570.19	1,596.89	1,624.03
Emergency Medical Technician	1	6	1,326.61	1,349.16	1,372.10	1,395.42	1,419.15	1,443.27
Superintendent Enrolled Nurse	1	6	2,313.85	2,353.18	2,393.19	2,433.87	2,475.25	2,517.33
Principal Enrolled Nurse	1	6	1,827.43	1,858.50	1,890.09	1,922.23	1,954.90	1,988.14

Consultant	1	4	6,691.98	6,805.75	6,921.44	7,039.11	7,158.77	7,280.47
Senior Specialist	1	5	6,151.06	6,255.63	6,361.97	6,470.13	6,580.12	-
Specialist	1	4	5,847.73	5,947.14	6,048.24	6,151.06	6,255.63	6,361.97
Chief Medical Officer	1	5	5,375.05	5,466.42	5,559.35	5,653.86	5,749.98	-
Deputy Chief Medical Officer	1	4	5,109.98	5,196.85	5,285.20	5,375.05	5,466.42	5,559.35
Principal Medical Officer	1	5	4,696.94	4,776.79	4,857.99	4,940.58	5,024.57	-
Senior Medical Officer	1	5	4,104.38	4,174.15	4,245.11	4,317.28	4,390.67	-
Medical Officer	1	4	3,901.97	3,968.30	4,035.77	4,104.38	4,174.15	4,245.11
Senior House Officer	1	5	3,030.19	3,081.70	3,134.09	3,187.37	3,241.56	-
House Officer	1	5	2,832.61	2,880.76	2,929.73	2,979.54	3,030.19	3,081.70
Chief Optometrist	1	4	4,465.31	4,541.22	4,618.42	4,696.94	4,776.79	4,857.99
Deputy Chief Optometrist	1	5	4,104.38	4,174.15	4,245.11	4,317.28	4,390.67	-
Principal Optometrist	1	5	3,586.57	3,647.54	3,709.55	3,772.61	3,836.75	-
Senior Optometrist	1	5	2,832.61	2,880.76	2,929.73	2,979.54	3,030.19	3,081.70
Optometrist	1	5	2,603.64	2,647.90	2,692.92	2,738.70	2,785.26	2,832.61
Consultant Pharmacist	1	5	5,847.73	5,947.14	6,048.24	6,151.06	6,255.63	6,361.97
Senior Specialist Pharmacist	1	5	5,109.98	5,196.85	5,285.20	5,375.05	5,466.42	5,559.35
Specialist Pharmacist	1	5	4,465.31	4,541.22	4,618.42	4,696.94	4,776.79	4,857.99
Chief Pharmacist	1	4	4,465.31	4,541.22	4,618.42	4,696.94	4,776.79	4,857.99
Deputy Chief Pharmacist	1	5	4,104.38	4,174.15	4,245.11	4,317.28	4,390.67	-
Principal Pharmacist	1	5	3,586.57	3,647.54	3,709.55	3,772.61	3,836.75	-

Source: Fair Wages and Labour Commission-Ghana 2022

Doctors: The average annual salary for doctors in Ghana ranges from GHC 40,000 to GHC 120,000 (approximately \$6,900 to \$20,700).

Nurses: Nurses in Ghana earn an average annual salary ranging from GHC 12,000 to GHC 40,000 (approximately \$2,070 to \$6,900).

Pharmacists: The average annual salary for pharmacists in Ghana is around GHC 36,000 to GHC 96,000 (approximately \$6,200 to \$16,600).

4.2. United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, remuneration for healthcare workers is customarily established by the National Health Service (NHS) pay scales. The pay scales are contingent upon various job roles and grades within the NHS. The NHS endows a well-defined framework for ascertaining salaries, taking into account multiple factors, including but not limited to work experience, qualifications, and job responsibilities. It is noteworthy that the NHS pay scales are subject to modification, which is determined by the NHS Pay Review Body. The review concentrates on the remuneration levels of NHS staff and is conducted independently.

Doctors: In the UK, the average annual salary for doctors varies depending on their level of experience and specialization. Junior doctors can earn around £27,000 to £47,000 (approximately \$37,000 to \$65,000) per year, while senior doctors and consultants can earn significantly higher, ranging from £79,000 to £150,000 (approximately \$108,000 to \$206,000) or more per year.

Nurses: The average annual salary for nurses in the UK can range from £24,000 to £45,000 (approximately \$33,000 to \$62,000). Specialized nurses or those in senior positions may earn higher salaries.

Pharmacists: Pharmacists in the UK earn an average annual salary ranging from £35,000 to £60,000 (approximately \$48,000 to \$82,000).

4.3. United States

The remuneration of healthcare professionals in the United States demonstrates a significant disparity, influenced by various factors such as geographical location, level of expertise, academic qualifications, and the specific nature of healthcare. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) offers inclusive information regarding employment and wages in the occupational domain within the USA.

Doctors: The average annual salary for doctors in the US varies significantly depending on their specialization. Primary care physicians typically earn an average of \$200,000 to \$250,000 per year, while specialists can earn substantially more, with average salaries ranging from \$300,000 to \$500,000 or more per year.

Nurses: Registered nurses (RNs) in the US earn an average annual salary of around \$70,000 to \$80,000. Advanced practice nurses (APRNs), such as nurse practitioners or nurse anesthetists, can earn higher salaries, ranging from \$100,000 to \$150,000 or more.

Pharmacists: Pharmacists in the US earn an average annual salary ranging from \$110,000 to \$130,000.

5.0. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the presented salary figures and comparison, it is possible to make certain inferences about the competitiveness of the compensation and benefits packages offered to healthcare professionals in Ghana regarding talent retention. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that any conclusion drawn considered additional factors beyond remuneration, including working conditions, prospects for career growth, and general job contentment. These variables are likely to play a significant role in the decision-making process of healthcare professionals when it comes to selecting or continuing with an employer.

1. **Salary disparities:** The data about remuneration reveals that healthcare practitioners in Ghana tend to receive less substantial pay in comparison to their colleagues in the United Kingdom and the United States. The statistics indicate that doctors, nurses, and pharmacists in Ghana have an inferior annual average salary as compared to their peers in the aforementioned countries. Such disparities in compensation may have an impact on the quality of healthcare delivery in Ghana.
2. **Retaining Talent:** Retaining talent in an organization is of paramount importance, and a crucial way to achieve this is by offering competitive compensation and benefits packages. However, it is worth noting that remuneration is not the only determining factor for talent retention, and other elements such as job satisfaction, career advancement prospects, work-life balance, and the quality of healthcare services provided are equally significant. Therefore, it is imperative that organizations take a holistic approach toward talent retention and ensure that all of these determinants are optimized to create a conducive work environment for employees. Only then can an organization achieve optimal performance, employee satisfaction, and retention.
3. **Challenges in Talent Retention:** The retention of highly skilled healthcare professionals in Ghana may be impeded due to comparatively lower salaries. This may give rise to the possibility of healthcare professionals seeking opportunities abroad, where they may have access to better resources and infrastructure and potentially earn higher salaries. As such, the challenge of retaining healthcare professionals in Ghana may have implications for the country's healthcare system and access to quality healthcare services.
4. **Improving Competitiveness:** In order to bolster the competitive edge of compensation and benefits packages in Ghana, it may behoove decision-makers to contemplate augmenting the salary scales, granting incentives for specialized skills and experience, and enhancing the working conditions and resources. Furthermore, it could be expedient to allocate resources toward professional development programs and providing prospects for career progression, which can further buttress talent retention. Taken together, these measures could potentially create a more enticing and compelling work environment that would attract and retain the best and brightest talent in the marketplace.
5. **Comprehensive Approach:** Retaining skilled healthcare workers in Ghana is a complex task that involves addressing various factors beyond financial incentives. A comprehensive approach is required that encompasses professional development opportunities, a conducive work environment, and overall job satisfaction. By fostering a supportive and fulfilling work environment, healthcare facilities in Ghana can succeed in both attracting and retaining talented healthcare professionals.

6. Recommendations

To enhance the attractiveness of compensation and benefits packages extended to healthcare professionals in Ghana, as well as to improve the retention of skilled personnel, it is recommended that the following measures be taken into account:

1. **Salary increase:** To address the issue of healthcare professionals leaving Ghana for opportunities abroad, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive review of their salaries and consider increasing them to align with global standards. This measure could serve as a powerful incentive to attract and retain skilled professionals who might otherwise seek employment opportunities elsewhere. By

enhancing the competitiveness of their remuneration packages, Ghana can strengthen its healthcare workforce and improve the quality of care delivered to its citizens.

2. **Performance-Based Incentives:** The introduction of performance-based incentive programs which provide compensation to healthcare professionals for their outstanding work, accomplishments, and quality of outcomes is a possible strategy to encourage and retain top-performing individuals. By doing so, healthcare organizations can foster a culture of excellence in patient care. This method motivates employees to strive for excellence and continually improve their job performance, resulting in higher levels of patient satisfaction and better health outcomes.
3. **Professional Development Opportunities:** Investing in continuous professional development programs and training initiatives is crucial for organizations in the healthcare industry. The provision of such opportunities can enable healthcare professionals to improve their knowledge and skills, which in turn can lead to greater job satisfaction and bolster the appeal of the compensation package. By prioritizing ongoing professional development, healthcare organizations can also demonstrate a commitment to their employees and position themselves as leaders in the industry.
4. **Career Advancement Pathways:** Establishing unambiguous career advancement pathways for healthcare professionals, which encompasses prospects for promotion, leadership development, and specialization, can significantly enhance job satisfaction and encourage professionals to remain within the Ghanaian healthcare system. Clearly outlined paths for progression within the healthcare sector can also serve as incentives for professionals to strive for excellence and attain higher levels of education and training, which in turn can lead to improved patient outcomes. Moreover, robust career advancement opportunities can bolster the capacity of the healthcare system to attract and retain top talent, which is essential for the provision of high-quality care. As such, Ghanaian policymakers must prioritize the development of effective frameworks for career advancement and progression within the healthcare sector.
5. **Improved Working Conditions:** Improving the operational circumstances in medical establishments, encompassing personnel levels, equipment, and infrastructure, is an imperative measure to undertake. An optimistic and encouraging occupational milieu is of paramount importance for the preservation of skilled labor. Mitigating factors such as workload, balancing work and personal life, and furnishing indispensable resources can significantly augment job contentment. Therefore, the administration must take adequate measures to enhance the working conditions of healthcare facilities for the betterment of society.
6. **Comprehensive Benefits Package:** Healthcare organizations should provide a comprehensive benefits package that extends beyond mere monetary compensation. This package may encompass various employee benefits such as health insurance coverage, retirement plans, paid leave, and other similar benefits. The provision of such benefits enhances the overall well-being and job security of healthcare professionals. By prioritizing the provision of these benefits, healthcare organizations can attract and retain top talent in the industry.
7. **Recognition and Appreciation:** Instituting initiatives aimed at acknowledging and lauding the endeavors and inputs of healthcare practitioners is a crucial undertaking. Such measures may encompass consistent recognition of achievements, hosting of events to appreciate employees, and avenues for peer acknowledgment. The sense of being esteemed and valued can have a marked effect on both job satisfaction and retention rates. Therefore, it is imperative that healthcare organizations prioritize the implementation of programs aimed at recognizing and appreciating the efforts of their professionals.
8. **Collaboration and Engagement:** Encouraging a collaborative and team-oriented culture, along with ensuring employee engagement, is crucial for enhancing the efficacy of healthcare professionals. It is imperative to foster an environment where healthcare professionals can actively participate in decision-making processes and have a say in shaping policies and practices. Such an approach can not only strengthen their commitment to their profession but also instill a sense of ownership, thereby augmenting their overall job satisfaction and retention. Creating effective communication channels and gathering feedback are essential elements that can further reinforce these efforts.
9. **Research and Data-Driven Approach:** It is of paramount importance to maintain constant and thorough vigilance over healthcare labor market tendencies, both at a local and global scale. To this end, it is necessary to carry out regular surveys and research aimed at gathering feedback from healthcare experts in relation to their compensation and benefits preferences. The insights gleaned

from this data can then be applied to the development of effective and adaptable compensation and benefits strategies. It is through such proactive measures that the healthcare industry can remain competitive and attract the best talent available.

By adopting the suggested measures, Ghana can strive towards establishing a more competitive remuneration and benefits program for healthcare practitioners, which can ultimately aid in the retention of proficient individuals within the Ghanaian healthcare structure. This, in turn, can significantly contribute to the overall enhancement of the quality of healthcare services provided in the country. Therefore, the implementation of these recommendations can prove to be a crucial step towards achieving a more efficient and effective healthcare system in Ghana.

Appendix

1. Salary structure of Ghana Health professionals: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aGmcLfRkMPU8FHlmA58X2S51kgObpRo2/edit#gid=1964483126>
2. Average salary of Healthcare professional for other OECD countries: <https://www.qunomedical.com/en/research/healthcare-salary-index>
3. <https://www.nhsemployers.org/system/files/2022-08/Pay-and-Conditions-Circular-MD-3-2022.pdf>

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