

Motivation of Avian Medicine Personnel in Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers in Spain: Creating the Conditions for Happy and Productive Staff.



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Abstract

Motivation and recognition of employees and volunteers in Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers are a challenge. Managers in these centers are not always aware of the reasons that motivate employees to stay and a good recognition program to keep volunteers feeling happy. Unhappy and unproductive staff is the source of a considerable loss of time and resources. Authors tried to develop and test an instrument for identifying performance motivation incentives for the staff of avian rehabilitation centers in Spain.

Introduction and Objective

Conventional human resources theories, developed 50 years ago by Maslow and Herzberg (HERZBERG F. 1966) suggest that satisfied employees tend to be more productive, creative and committed to their employers.

Motivation is an internal physiological process that leads to arousal and direction of voluntary behaviour to satisfy a need (NELSON B. 1996). Recognition is the motivation that creates a positive, emotional response and increases self esteem, inspiring the recipient to repeat the ideal behaviours and actions resulting in a lasting improvement in performance (SYMONOWICZ et al. 2006).

There are 65 Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers in Spain, and avian patients are the species that makes the largest number of patient admission. Most centers belong to local, regional and national public administrations and they have at least one veterinarian with exclusive dedication. Most of the centers also have volunteers working daily in avian care and rehabilitation.

There is a great volume of literature available regarding "employee motivation and recognition" (CHICK JF. 2006). However, these theories have not been explored enough in the wildlife veterinary medicine field, focusing in Rehabilitation Centers.

The purpose of this study was to develop and test a reliable and valid instrument for investigating and identifying motivational factors of staff working with avian patients in Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers in Spain.

Material and Methods

A methodological exploratory design was performed, by surveying staff and volunteers involved directly or indirectly in avian care in a wildlife rehabilitation centre (GREFA) to determine motivating job characteristics and incentives-recognitions these workers would like to receive. This methodological exploratory design consisted of three parts:

a) Part I- Item generation by the use of generation of statements reflecting employee motivation and incentives. This strategy eventually identified 14 studies about instruments for heterogeneous populations (health care, nurses) and 2 for specific job populations in the laboratory animal science (SYMONOWICZ et al. 2006; CHICK JF. 2006). Questionnaires and scales used in these studies were the basis and inspiration for constructing the current instrument. The survey included two questions, one with 10 characteristics that could make the staff more motivated in a position working with birds (motivation). The second question with 14 characteristics the staff would like to receive from managers and supervisors for feeling more motivated working at their current positions (recognition). The survey also included questions on gender, age range, role in the job position (current position), educational background (academic formation), avian knowledge, years of experience and weekly time working with birds.

b) Part II- Construction of a preliminary test instrument (readability testing). Experts with experience in avian medicine, not all of them working full time, and several others with experience in management and supervision of staff in veterinary services in wildlife rehabilitation centers reviewed the first draft of the instrument. They were individually asked to judge the questions for appropriateness, clarity and completeness and the instrument in its entirety for appearance, question sequence and completion time. Similar items were identified and were condensed to decrease the number of characteristics that might form part of the instrument (See Figure 1).

c) Part III- It consisted of evaluation of item instrument reliability with a target population (volunteers and staff in one wildlife rehabilitation center in Spain: GREFA). This survey asked the same demographic questions tested in Part I (see previously). The instrument was available online (www.encuestafacil.com) and difficulties completing the questionnaire were explored. Furthermore this would increase validity control through constant observation of the surveys and results.

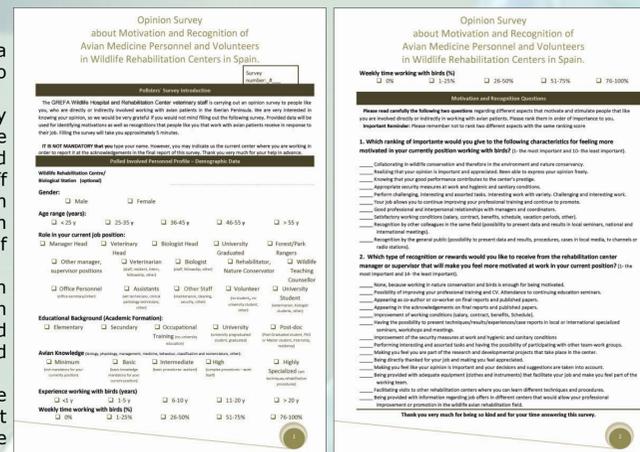


Figure 1.

Results

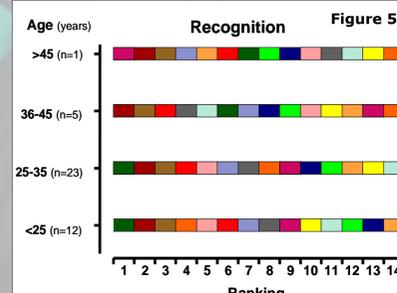
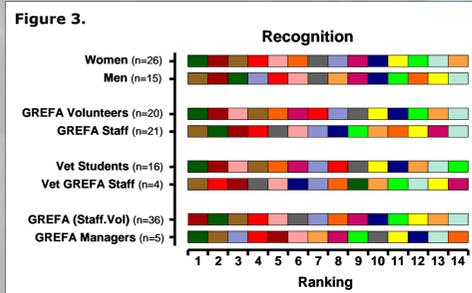
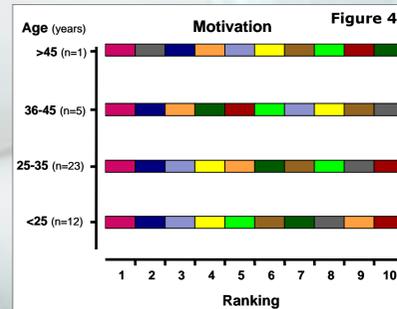
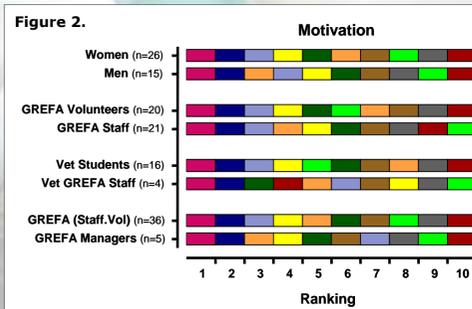
Table 1.	Part I Group	GREFA Group
Overall demographic data		
Surveys n (%)	7 (100%)	50 (100%)
Gender n (%)		
Male	3 (42.9%)	15 (30%)
Female	4 (57.1%)	35 (70%)
Age Range years, n (%)		
<25	0 (0%)	12 (24%)
25-35	5 (71.4%)	23 (46%)
36-45	2 (28.6%)	5 (10%)
46-55	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
>55	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Role n (%)		
Manager Head	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Veterinary Head	1 (14.3%)	1 (2%)
Biologist Head	0 (0%)	3 (7%)
Univ. Graduated	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other managers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Veterinarian	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Biologist	4 (57.1%)	5 (10%)
Rehabilitator	0 (0%)	4 (10%)
Wildlife Counsellor	0 (0%)	3 (7%)
Office Personnel	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
Assistants	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Other Staff	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Volunteer	0 (0%)	5 (10%)
University Student	2 (28.6%)	16 (32%)
Elementary	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Occupational Training	0 (0%)	3 (7%)
University	5 (71.4%)	31 (76%)
Post-doc	2 (28.6%)	6 (15%)
Avian data	Part I Population	GREFA Population
Total Surveys n (%)		
Total	7 (100%)	50 (100%)
Valid	7 (100%)	41 (82%)
Not Valid	0 (0%)	9 (18%)
Avian Knowledge n (%)		
Minimum	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Basic	0 (0%)	4 (10%)
Intermediate	1 (14.3%)	14 (34%)
High	3 (42.9%)	9 (22%)
High Specialized	3 (42.9%)	13 (32%)
Experience years, n (%)		
<1	0 (0%)	8 (20%)
1-5	0 (0%)	20 (49%)
6-10	6 (86%)	10 (24%)
11-20	1 (14%)	2 (5%)
>20	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Weekly time working with birds (%)		
0	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
1-25	2 (28.6%)	10 (24%)
26-50	2 (28.6%)	4 (10%)
51-75	1 (14.3%)	10 (24%)
76-100	2 (28.6%)	7 (17%)

Table 2.

Motivation Items	Survey Part I (n=7)			Survey GREFA (n=41)		
	Score 70 (100%)	Media (SD)	Rank	Score 57.4 (100%)	Media (SD)	Rank
Collaborating in wildlife conservation and therefore in environmental and nature conservancy.	68 (97.14)	9.7 (0.8)	1	387 (94.39)	9.4 (1.6)	1
Realizing that your opinion is important and appreciated. To be able to express your opinion freely.	47 (67.14)	6.7 (2.4)	4	208 (50.73)	5.1 (2.3)	6
Knowing that your good performance contributes to the center's prestige.	38 (54.30)	5.4 (1.4)	5	211 (51.46)	5.1 (2.4)	5
Appropriate security measures at work and hygienic and sanitary conditions.	26 (37.14)	3.7 (1.7)	8	162 (39.51)	4.0 (2.4)	8
Perform challenging, interesting and assorted tasks. Interesting work with variety. Challenging and interesting work.	61 (87.14)	8.7 (0.5)	2	237 (79.76)	8.0 (1.4)	2
Your job allows you to continue improving your professional training and continue to promote.	47 (67.14)	6.7 (2.0)	3	280 (68.29)	6.8 (2.3)	3
Good professional and interpersonal relationships with managers and coordinators.	30 (42.86)	4.3 (1.8)	7	244 (59.51)	6.0 (1.9)	4
Satisfactory working conditions (salary, contract, benefits, schedule, vacation periods, others).	35 (50.00)	5.0 (2.6)	6	122 (29.76)	3.0 (2.2)	10
Recognition by other colleagues in the same field (possibility to present data and results in local seminars, national and international meetings).	24 (34.29)	3.4 (1.7)	9	171 (41.71)	4.2 (1.9)	7
Recognition by the general public (possibility to present data and results, procedures, cases in local media, tv channels or radio stations).	9 (12.86)	1.3 (0.5)	10	144 (35.18)	3.5 (2.5)	9
Recognition Items						
	Score 98 (100%)	Media (SD)	Rank	Score 57.4 (100%)	Media (SD)	Rank
None, because working in nature conservation and birds is enough for being motivated.	21(21.43)	3.0 (4.9)	14	271 (47.21)	6.6 (5.7)	9
Possibility of improving your professional training and CV. Attendance to seminars and education seminars.	58(59.18)	9.7 (3.6)	5	437 (76.13)	10.7 (3.5)	1
Appearing as co-author or co-worker on final reports and published papers.	35(35.71)	5.8 (2.8)	10	208 (36.24)	5.1 (3.3)	12
Improvement of working conditions (salary, contract, benefits, schedule).	61(62.54)	10.2 (3.1)	2	252 (43.9)	6.1 (3.8)	10
Facilitating the possibility to present techniques/results/experiences/cases reports in local or international specialized seminars, workshops and meetings.	51(52.04)	8.5 (3.0)	7	331 (57.67)	8.1 (2.5)	6
Improvement of the security measures at work and hygienic and sanitary conditions.	34(34.69)	5.7 (3.3)	11	207 (36.06)	5.0 (2.9)	13
Performing interesting and assorted tasks and having the possibility of participating with other team-work groups.	71(72.45)	10.1 (3.4)	3	428 (74.56)	10.4 (2.6)	2
Making you feel you are part of the research and developmental projects that take place in the center.	72(73.47)	10.3 (3.1)	1	415 (72.3)	10.1 (2.8)	3
Being directly thanked for your job and making you feel appreciated.	59(60.2)	8.4 (2.8)	8	311 (54.18)	7.6 (3.5)	7
Making you feel like your opinion is important and your decisions and suggestions are taken into account.	60(61.22)	10.0 (2.6)	4	381 (66.38)	9.3 (2.9)	4
Being provided with adequate equipment (clothes and instruments) that facilitate your job and make you feel part of the working team.	24(24.49)	4.0 (3.3)	12	174 (30.31)	4.2 (3.1)	14
Facilitating visits to other rehabilitation centers where you can learn different techniques and procedures.	66(67.35)	9.4 (3.8)	6	358 (62.37)	8.7 (3.8)	5
Being provided with information regarding job offers in different centers that would allow your professional improvement or promotion in the wildlife avian rehabilitation field.	46(46.94)	6.6 (3.6)	9	285 (49.65)	7.0 (4.1)	8

Table 4.

Generation of statements and the construction of a preliminary test instrument were performed by five doctors in veterinary medicine with experience in avian medicine. The preliminary test instrument was tested by seven subjects with different experience in the wildlife field. The final shortened version was pilot-tested in GREFA, using a random sample of 50 employees and volunteers. The instrument was evaluated in 43 valid surveys (Tables 1-2). Results of this preliminary instrument showed that staff and volunteers' motivation and incentives working with avian patients determine the job characteristics that motivate them (Tables 3-4 and Figures 2-5).



Discussion and Conclusions

Most of the volunteers in wildlife rehabilitation centers in Spain are veterinary pregraduated students. Therefore, staff motivation and expected incentives in working with avian patients in wildlife rehabilitation centers are a shared responsibility for managers and veterinary staff supervisors. There is a considerable interconnection between motivation and recognition (SYMONOWICZ et al. 2006). Keeping and increasing staff (employees and volunteers) motivation and recognition continues to be an important management function that is yet not completely determined (CHICK JF. 2006), especially in wildlife rehabilitation centers. This instrument should be a useful tool for wildlife rehabilitation center managers as they identify job-related factors that motivate staff and volunteers working directly with birds. Further studies using this developed instrument regarding motivation and recognition incentives are being performed in other centers in Spain and therefore, future reports are guaranteed.

This study reports on the development and psychometric testing of an instrument for measuring what motivates employees in the avian wildlife rehabilitation centers sector in Spain. This constitutes the first stage of a broader study underway, aiming to identify factors that motivate workers and lead to increased job productivity in the Spanish Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers. Within a long-term perspective, this information could help hospital management increase overall performance, both individual and organizational.

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