

EMPLOYEES' SATISFACTION: A MOTIVATIONAL APPROACH

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Abstract

Management is the art and craft of getting things done by others. Management, an age-old concept, is invariably a goal-driven activity and man is the cynosure. Management creates a condition in which people are willing to work with interest, enthusiasm, initiative, loyalty, discipline, a sense of responsibility, belongingness, pride and confidence so that the goal of the organization can be achieved. This realisation has to be obtained through one's own duties and one will not indulge in his duties until he or she is satisfied. Thus Employees Satisfaction has always been and will ever be an important motivational approach in all the organizations.

This paper consolidates various theories, models, and publications on employee satisfaction from a range of text book based and web based sources. So many factors have been considered for measuring employees' satisfaction. An effort has been made to consolidate all the possible factors. The subsequent effect all these factors have on employee satisfaction as well as the interrelationships between them has also been investigated as according to Ticehurst and Veal, the key element behind research is the exploration of relationships between concepts [18].

Key Words: Employee, Satisfaction, Motivation

1. Introduction

Satisfaction being a continuous process starts from the day one and gets reinforced with time depending on the importance of the various factors considered to be important for the individual employee. Loyalty towards the organization starts to develop when the employees continue to get the positive reinforcements on various important aspects for the duration of the employment. His satisfaction at the work place motivates him to do his best and he gets committed to the organization with the firm faith in growing with the growth of the organization.

Job satisfaction remains a key variable in the prediction of employee turnover. This paper analyzes employee satisfaction as the dependent variable and the parameters affecting employee satisfaction as

the independent variables. The independent variables have been consolidated as employee management relationships, training and development, employee motivation and employee commitment

2. Employee-management relationship

In Dawson's study, employee-management relationship and training opportunities were identified as key constituents of the employee satisfaction of an organization. Downs and Ticehurst also identified personal feedback and relationships with supervisors to be predictor variables for employee job satisfaction [07]

This management style must evolve in order to stay in line with today's rapidly changing market - one characterized by creativity and flexibility. Contrary to managerial beliefs, it has been established that employees enjoy assuming responsibilities when supported by a nurturing organizational culture. Trust was also cited as an important factor in the employee-management relationship. Trust must be reciprocal - managers must trust their employees, and employees must trust their managers for the business to operate smoothly. The lack of trust on either end will only lead to a rise in organizational chaos [03].

Tyler cites the employee-boss relationship as the primary contributor to employee satisfaction [17]. A poor employee-boss relationship results in increased absenteeism, stress and reduced performance. Hence, focusing on improving employee-boss relationships will augment employee satisfaction. Tyler also cites the importance of the management team's interpersonal abilities - while only one out of five employees were satisfied with how management related with them, amongst 21% of employees that stated that they were happy with management, two out of three employees expressed interest in spending their entire career with that company [17]. Research has linked empathetic managerial behavior to increased respect from employees, increased productivity, and a long term positive effect on the organization's performance. Management must instill an open door policy in the organization. There are

three cited benefits to this approach. It creates a transparency between employees and management. Secondly, it nurtures a strong sense of faith in management and last but not the least; it demonstrates the respect management has for employees by granting them access to the highest levels of the organization. This in turn grows the confidence that employees have in the management team, spreads a positive culture, and develops positive employee-management relationships throughout the organization.

Feedback is most useful when specific in nature rather than general or vague, direct rather than oblique or half-hearted, descriptive rather than evaluative or interpretive, immediate rather than delayed, and declarative rather than hostile or punitive, and when offered with concern and attention[16].

3. Training and Development

Training and Development is increasingly seen as a significant contributor to job satisfaction. But according to a research done by City & Guilds Happiness Index, nearly a third of the respondents (32%) believed that more training and development programs would make their role more satisfying. Employees want training and development programs that will make them feel that companies are committed to help them become remarkable. Organizations can use this tool to produce better trained, more satisfied and more valuable employees. Training methodology was cited to be an important factor behind job training satisfaction. Employees that approved of the methodology used were more satisfied with the training process than those who were not in favor of the training methodology. The presence of an instructor with whom trainees can interact, question, and problem-solve was cited as another element of training that leads to increased job satisfaction.

Employees' satisfaction level that arises from training varies with the tenure of the employees within the organization. First year employees are significantly more satisfied with the training they receive than employees who have been working for more than a year. First year employees also received significantly more training than employees with job tenures of more than one year. This is understandable as new employees have a much higher learning curve than experienced employees.

3.1 Relationship between employee-management relations and training and development

No direct relationships were established between

these two concepts. Nevertheless, improved employee management relations will lead to a better understanding of where employees are facing difficulties in their job. This provides valuable insight into deficiencies of the training program. By engaging in double loop learning, the management team can rectify these deficiencies and provide a superior training program. Double-loop learning occurs when an error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives.

4. Employee motivation

Employee motivation plays a big role in the success or collapse of an organization. Without a motivated staff, morale, productivity, profits and service delivery suffer. To stay competitive in the market, organisations must constantly seek innovative methods of motivating employees. Different factors motivate different individuals and employees. Decades ago, employees were looked at as just another input for productivity. The turning point in changing this perception was referred to as Hawthorne Studies, which was conducted by Elton Mayo for a period of 8 years, from 1924 to 1932. The crucial findings of the study were that employees found no motivation in only money and that their behavior is linked to their attitudes. Since this study, employee motivation and satisfaction became the center force of strategies developed by managers.

The study of understanding motivation was initiated by Maslow's model of motivation. In this model, human needs are ranked in a hierarchy including physiological needs, safety needs, esteem needs, affiliation needs and lastly self-actualization needs. ERG theory by Clayton Alderfer represents a more valid version of need hierarchy. ERG Theory demonstrates that more than one need may be operative at the same time and if the gratification of a higher-level need is stifled, the desire to satisfy a lower-level need increases. The Theory of Needs by David McClelland proposed three needs - need for achievement, need for power and need for affiliation. High achievers are interested in how well they do personally and not in influencing others to do well. In Goal-setting theory Edwin Locke proposed that intentions to work toward a goal are a major source of work motivation. According to Equity Theory, employees compare their job inputs and outcomes with those of others and then respond so as to eliminate any inequities. Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory states that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the

strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual.

Using Maslow's hierarchy as a basis, Herzberg proposed the following two categories of needs: motivators (intrinsic needs) and hygiene factors (extrinsic needs). Motivators included aspects that affected the performance of the job. Hygiene factors focused on conditions of employment that are external to the job. Herzberg's research cites motivators as the primary contributors to job satisfaction whereas hygiene factors are the main cause of job dissatisfaction. Douglas McGregor's Theory X assumes that lower-order needs dominate individuals and Theory Y assumes that higher-order needs dominate individuals. According to him participative decision making, responsible and challenging tasks and good group relations maximize motivation.

4.1 Relationship between employee motivation and employee-management relations

Some of the most effective ways to motivate employees arise from establishing healthy employee-management relations where management offers praise, recognition, feedback, creates room for career advancement, encourages employees' involvement, and enriches employees' jobs. This will earn employees respect, trust, and ultimately motivate them to work harder. A strong positive correlation has been identified between the constituents of management-employee relationships and employee motivation. This correlation is prevalent in numerous articles where the issue of 'how to improve employee motivation' is analyzed. These articles focus on how management can foster employee motivation through engaging, respecting, recognizing, trusting, empowering, and communicating better with employees. As defined in the conceptual framework, these are all elements of employee management relations, whereby an improvement in any one of the aforementioned elements will lead to increased employee motivation.

4.2 Relationship between employee motivation and training and development

Training is one of several non-monetary sources of motivation available to employees. Regardless of the 'quality' of your work force, training never ends. 'Tune up' training sessions should be conducted, with help from the top employees in the company, to aid other employees acquire new skills when dealing with customers. Such training sessions tell employees the following two things: 1) management cares about employees' skill advancement, and 2) management recognizes and acknowledges strongly performing

employees. These intrinsic factors addressed by management will increase employee motivation.

5. Employee commitment

Employee commitment can be divided as consisting of two constructs – affective to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire of continuous commitment. Affective organizational commitment is "a strong belief in, and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to maintain membership in the organization." Continuous organizational commitment is when individuals do not leave a company because the cost of leaving the company would be greater than the benefits. Committed employees are essential for the success and survival of an organization since they are more productive, take more initiative, and help in creating a competitive advantage for their company. Managerial prerogative, the manager's right to manage, has historically been the way managers have approached employees' commitment. This style of management adhered closer to the protestant work ethic where the main focus was extrinsic factors such as money, incentives, and tangible rewards. This ethic also gave rise to the formal hierarchical organizations, with a chain of command, where management held the "reigns" from the top. As Brewer (1993) states, work in this ethic was deemed as an end in itself. Herzberg's notion explores an employee's sense of achievement that arises as a result of their pride, identity with the craft, job, or corporation. Work is no longer merely a source of materialistic satisfaction, but also a place where employees socialize, gain a sense of achievement, and increase their knowledge and skills[04].

When organizations concentrate on the 'human factor' at work by putting their employees first, this boosts employee satisfaction, which increases customer loyalty and satisfaction, which in turn fosters the continuous success of the organization. The more committed the employees, the longer their tenure with the organization, and the better they become at understanding its processes, products, and customers. The importance of employee commitment as an attitude is demonstrated in the Figure 1 given at the end. 5 unit increase in employee attitude (through improved employee commitment), leads to a 1.3 unit increase in customer satisfaction, which leads to a 0.5% increase in revenue growth (Focus on Employee Satisfaction).

5.1 Relationship between employee commitment and employee satisfaction

Organizational commitment is distinguished from job

satisfaction in that organizational commitment is an affective response to the whole organization, while job satisfaction is an affective response to specific aspects of the job. A positive relationship was established between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. According to Feinstein, job satisfaction is a component of organizational commitment [08]. Nevertheless, there still exists a 'chicken-and-egg' debate over the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment despite the fact that many researchers have declared job satisfaction to be a predictor of organizational commitment [08]

5.2 Relationship between employee commitment and employee-management relations

Employee commitment is an integral element in creating a competitive advantage for organizations, and is fueled by healthy Employee-Management relations. Healthy employee-management relationship assists managers in understanding workforce needs and preferences, which in turn improves employees' commitment. For instance, when it comes to rewards for employee contribution, different individuals have different preferences in the way they would like to be remunerated. A manager's understanding of his workforce is cited as a key element to promote employee attachment to an organization.

Transactional relationships between employee and management also affect their commitment to the organization. Both parties bring to the relationship psychological expectations. If the individual feels these expectations have been violated, commitment levels are likely to drop. An employee, who feels organizational promises have been met, is likely to respond with increased loyalty and commitment.

According to Brewer, managing commitment is about overcoming the fundamental conflict existing in the manager-employee relationship [04]. Consulting and improving work relationships with employees plays a strong role in minimizing the conflict between them. This in turn will lead to a more committed performance from the workforce. Moreover, increased employee participation and involvement in decision making processes leads to an increase in the level of their commitment towards their organization.

Although managers believe that such procedures are time-consuming, the risks of not involving employees can have a detrimental effect on employee commitment. In instances where they do not necessarily agree with what management asks of

them, they will only offer a half-hearted performance on the task at hand [04]

Figure 2 shows that when management executes a task without employee consent, conflict exists, and this can lower the commitment that employees show towards the organization. Conversely, if the task is carried out with employees consent, the employees feel important and involved, and this leads to higher levels of employee commitment.

Poor communications from the management, lack of appreciation towards employees, and lack of trust towards employees have all been identified strong drivers behind employee low commitment.

5.3 Relationship between employee commitment and training and development

Training is one of the key elements required to achieve a new organizational culture – a culture where employee commitment is high. NcElroy claims that organizations investing consistently on employee training create a reputation for valuing and developing employees. The investment in training demonstrates to employees that the organization is devout to the advancement and development of its employees who, in turn, will respond favorably by exhibiting a strong sense of commitment towards their organization. This view is also supported by Brewer, but she also adds that the training provided must be relevant to their job needs in order to fuel employee commitment [04].

5.4 Relationship between employee motivation and employee commitment

Employees are bound to the organization by affective commitment when they are satisfied with the content and context of the job. Such employees feel emotionally attached to their organization, are proud to work for it, and feel a strong sense of belonging within the organization. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is an example of autonomous motivation where people engage in an activity because they find it interesting, and enjoyable. Moreover, autonomous motivation at the beginning of the study predicted organizational commitment at the end, whereas initial commitment did not predict subsequent autonomous motivation. Therefore autonomous motivation is an important factor that drives employee commitment. Moreover, inspirational motivation was identified as the strongest positive predictor of affective commitment, while both charisma and inspirational motivation were equally strong positive predictors of normative commitment. Researchers examined the relationship between organizational commitment and the outcome measures of individual motivation, desire to leave, turnover, and job performance.

Organizational commitment was found to be a strong predictor for each of these outcome areas of employee motivation.

6. Conclusion

The backbone of employee satisfaction is respect for employees and the job they perform. The management also has to inculcate the faith that the organization will grow along with the growth and satisfaction of its employees. In every interaction with management, employees should be treated with courtesy and interest. An easy avenue for employees to discuss problems with upper management should be maintained and carefully monitored. Even if management cannot meet all the demands of employees, showing workers that they are being heard and putting honest dedication into compromising will often help to improve morale.

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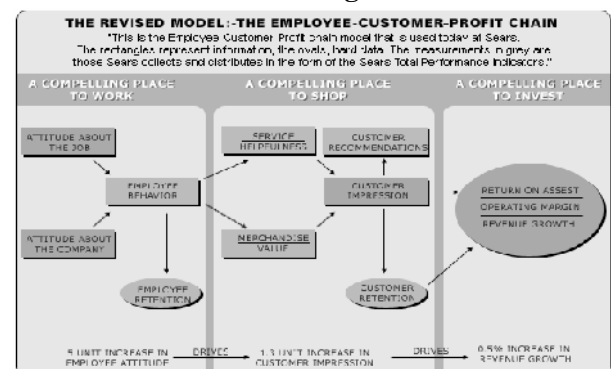
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Table 1: identifies and defines the concepts explored in this study

Concept	Definitions
Employee Satisfaction	“a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it as offering”[11].
Employee-Management relationship	A multi-dimensional construct bounded by communication with employees, camaraderie with employees, engagement of employees, respect for employees, recognition of employees, trust placed in employees, and the empowerment of employees [07].
Training & Development	‘A planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the organization.’ The Manpower Services Commission (1981)
Employee motivation	A force that drives a person to perform his or her job well [07].
Employee commitment	Relative strength of an individual’s identification and involvement in a particular organization [13].

Figure 1: The effect of employee commitment on revenue growth



Source: ‘Focus on Employee Satisfaction’ viewed on November 16th 2009,

http://www.infosurv.com/images/Infosurv_Focus_on_Employee_Satisfaction.pdf

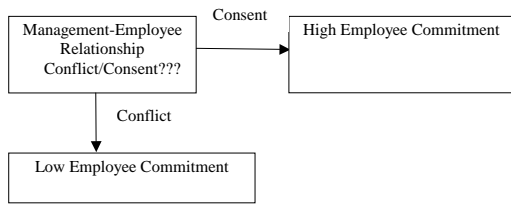


Figure 2: Relationship between employee-management relationship, conflict, and commitment.