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THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION ON ORGANISATIONAL OUTPUT – A CASE STUDY ON UNILEVER ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

Human capital is a vital part of every organization employees that are satisfied reflect a brand loyalty of their organization. Organisations output can perceive the positive attitude when interact with motivated employees. The aim of this study is to determine the employees' motivational levels in a multinational company, Unilever Arabia. This study focuses on the influence of employee motivation towards the final output of an organisation. This study used both qualitative and quantitative research method to gather the primary data through questionnaire survey and electronic interview. There are 200 employees of Unilever Arabia have successfully completed the questionnaire survey and the interview was conducted with the brand manager, marketing manager as well as the director of category operation and customer development. The finding of this study show that majority of the employees in Unilever are motivated and happy with their work and are committed to work at Unilever. The organisation management need to always aware the satisfaction and motivation of employee and provide them with proper information which will help them develop themselves.

INTRODUCTION

Employees are at the heart of the organization and more organizations are recognising them to be directly linked to the improved quality and performance thus driving productivity. Organizations often do not look at making capital expenditures to drive performance and quality but to the investing in their employees to drive quality and performance [1, 2]. The organization effectiveness is related to the manner in which it is able to achieve its goals and this is often driven with a spirit of co-operation within

the employees and with the management as thus drives commitment and dedication. Motivated employees are vital for the performance of an organization and thus it is important to keep employees motivated across different departments and functions. Organizations use a variety of ways to keep their employees motivated so that organizational goals are achieved [3]. Each organization has its unique culture and thus it should formulate its own rules, policies and structures. This will provide employees the ability to perform their roles and responsibilities in the most effective manner and provide for the organization to recognise their contribution and achievements thus leading to the growth of the organization [4].

Job satisfaction and employee motivation can describe as the feelings, attitude and/or preferences of employees regarding their work [5]. A number of different theories have developed with the progression in the industrial psychology field that have elaborated on employee motivation and job satisfaction and they have vital information about the various elements [6]. One of the most important theories was related to employee motivation and job satisfaction is the Motivation-Hygiene theory developed by Herzberg [7], where Herzberg has suggested that factors that lead to employee motivation and satisfaction are markedly distinct to those that lead employee job dissatisfaction.

There is a link between the level of job satisfaction and the scope for growth professionally for an employee [8]. The scope for growth provided the employee with a certain degree of enthusiasm towards their job and enabled them to give their best. Employee motivation and job satisfaction is seen to be high in organizations that have a strong process where management and line managers provide feedback [3]. Clearly defined job roles and responsibilities make the employees have a higher level of job satisfaction [9]. Providing on job training is perceived by employees as a positive step by the organization towards their development [10]. This results in higher level of job satisfaction and employee motivation. Appreciating employee efforts and recognising them for them for it results in higher level of job satisfaction and employee motivation. It is important that managers should be aware that they have to appreciate the efforts of the employees as it will also act as a motivator [6].

Motivated employees, especially in the service industry are responsible for the quality of the service and there exists a strong relationship between the quality and the customer satisfaction. It was highlighted by Conca and Scarpa (2004) that in order to drive customer service, there should be strong interlink between the quality required by the customer, the planned quality that will be delivered by the employee and how it will be delivered [11]. This is only possible if the employees are motivated.

The attitude of the employees and their behaviours is a key determinant on whether an employee is motivated or not. An unhappy employee will never be motivated, an employee with domestic problems that are impacting his/her work life might not be motivated to perform and thus this impacts their satisfaction and motivational levels at their jobs [12].

Despite the various ways to keep employees motivated and performing, there is not much understanding on which of the various tools are most effective in motivating employees. This study will focus on the process and observance of the factors related to empowering employees and their recognition as they lead to employee motivation and thus to organizational effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is completely explanatory with the aim to determine the relation between two different variables which is the employee motivation and the other is the organisational output. This study will show the relation between the two variables which are employee motivation and organisational output in Jeddah.

Methods of Data Collection

This study classified as deductive since the research moves from general to specific conclusion based on the topic. The research method used is mix quantitative and qualitative where the primary data were collected through survey and interviews.

Location

The survey and interviews were conducted at Unilever Arabia which is a multinational company that operates in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Sample Size

There are about 300 employees from different departments in Unilever Arabia participated in this study but only 200 employees successfully completed the survey and interviews. Therefore, the total sample size is 200 employees which consisted of males and females and of different ages, professions and designations.

Data Collection

Data collected for this study was done in different ways using various resources:

This study used EBSCO journals by accessing the Effat University library. These articles were based on employee motivation and organisation output and these were used as secondary data materials for the literature review to study about the topic and identify the gaps.

A questionnaire survey was structural designed consists of 15 questions with a set of five different answer choices. The survey questionnaires were distributed to different departments in Unilever to employees around 300 employees. Only successfully completed questionnaire result is used in this

study. The collected data will be analysed and discussed further. The data collected by using questionnaire survey method is also known as quantitative data collection method.

Besides the questionnaire survey, interview part was conducted via emails and telephone with the employees of Unilever Arabia from different departments. There are five questions were designed regarding the employee motivation and organisational output. The data collected through the interviews is considered as qualitative data collection methods.

Result And Discussion

Unilever Arabia is an organisation that hires both males and females and it is difficult to get into the Unilever since the hiring process is very long and required step by step. Table 1 shows that majority of the participants are male about 75%. Unilever Arabia hires different age group members to work at different levels. Table 1 shows that majority of the participants are age between 30 to 35 years old by 65%. It is very important to have a wide range of people and mostly from different cultures but majority of new replacements and recruitments are all Saudi nationals due to the new rule of Saudization.

Table 1. Demographic of the participants

Characteristics	Categories	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	75
	Female	25
Age Group	25-30	15
	30-35	65
	35-40	5
	40-45	10
	45 and above	5

Questionnaire Survey

There are total of 13 questionnaire questions regarding the topic of employee motivation and organisational output in Jeddah. There are 200 employees completed the questionnaire survey.

Do you and your group plan work together; is everyone's efforts recognized?

The graph in Figure 1 shows that 80% strongly agree and 20% strongly disagree that when they and their groups plan work together everyone's effort is counted. This shows that the understanding among employees in Unilever is good and the employees are motivated to work in groups and this gives out a good output as the productivity and team work is done well.

As an employee of Unilever are your decisions used to solve problems at Unilever?

The graph in Figure 1 shows that 40% strongly agree and 30% agree that their decisions are used to solve problems at Unilever. The variation can be due to the work level of employees and also it can be based on what type of decision they gave and if it was valid to be used or not. Overall employees feel satisfied and motivated to give decision that can help solve problems.

Do you feel that Unilever as an organisation shares information about all events and situations within your work group?

The graph in Figure 1 shows that all participants agree that Unilever as an organisation shares information about all events and situations within their work group. The employees have stated that it is one of the best practices that is done and shared on Unilever by the top management. Employees are motivated to take part in such events and situations and managers are asked to encourage their subordinates.

As an employee of Unilever do you feel responsible for meeting the objectives and goals successfully?

The graph in Figure 1 shows that 40% strongly agree and 20% agree that they are responsible for meeting the objectives and goals successfully. The participants answer this based on their experiences and work commitment. They do deliver on time and are successful when it comes to goals and objectives as this is when they are rated and recognized in the company.

As an employee are you able to respond to unusual work demands placed at any time?

The graph in Figure 1 shows that 60% strongly disagree and 30% disagree that they are able to respond to unusual work demands placed at any time. This shows that the work is planned ahead every day and during the week and it is very rare that such situations take place and even if it does employees are happy to do it as they are aware of the reason behind it.

As an employee do you have confidence and trust in Unilever as an organisation?

The graph in Figure 1 shows that 20% strongly disagree that they have confidence and trust and this is due to the new laws and labour regulations that are now being implemented in Saudi Arabia while around 80% still have trust and confidence in Unilever as an organisation. The only reason for such a strong answer and responses is only that employees are really motivated and recognized within Unilever.

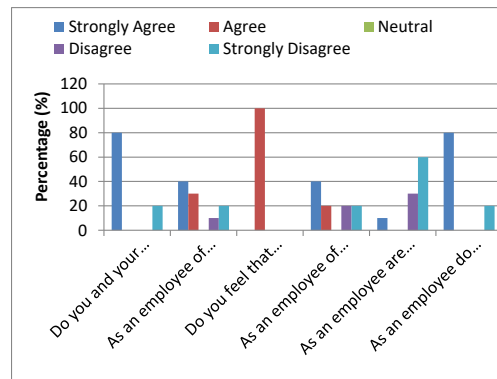


Figure 1 Participant's feedback for question 1 to question 6

Do you feel that your line manager plays an active role within your department and motivates you as an employee?

Unilever as an organisation trains its employees and top management and many times the managers are sent for different trainings. The graph in Figure 2 shows that 70% of the employees have strongly agreed that their line manager plays an active role and keeps them motivated while the rest 30% have strongly disagreed. The reason for this variation in responses can be based on the manager that is in charge for the employee.

Are you motivated to work at Unilever?

The graph in Figure 2 shows that 70% have strongly agreed that they are motivated and would like to continue working at Unilever while around 30% have strongly disagreed with this. The reason for this could be because they do not see themselves being promoted or satisfied with their job role or are not able to meet their goals and objectives.

As an employee are you satisfied with the work environment at Unilever?

Employee satisfaction is only possible when employees are happy and they feel they are needed in the organisation. Motivation plays a major role in this as when the employees feel that they are motivated they are satisfied also. The graph in Figure 2 shows that around 80% of Unilever employees strongly agree that they are satisfied with the work environment at Unilever while around 20% feel they are not satisfied.

As an employee are you satisfied internally with the progress you have made at Unilever?

The graph in Figure 2 shows that both strongly agree and strongly disagree are 40% each, while agree and disagree are 20% each regarding the satisfied internally with the progress they have made at Unilever. This can be based on how they work, their commitment, meeting the goals and objectives and their relation with the manager and top management and also their employee rating.

As an employee are you satisfied with the talent management program at Unilever?

It is very important for organisations to invest in their employees as when employees are motivated and satisfied they do better and the overall productivity output is successful. Unilever as an organisation performs talent management program based on which the employees are rated and then promoted. This is done for each and every employee. The graph in Figure 2 shows that around 75% of them strongly agree that they are satisfied with it while around 25% of them strongly disagree as they feel it doesn't meet their progression deadlines as the talent management program goes step by step.

Do you feel strongly committed to working at Unilever?

Employees working at Unilever have different feelings toward this questions as many employees have been working there for 15 years while there are people who have left the organisation on 1 year so it depends on employee to employee and one of the main reason for them to stay is motivation. The graph in Figure 2 shows that around 70% of the employees strongly agree that they feel committed to work at Unilever while the rest 30% strongly disagree and are the employees that will be leaving the company soon due to different reasons.

As an employee do you represent Unilever as a brand?

It is very important for employees to present themselves as well as their organisation as a brand since the competition is so tough in this world and every organisation competes with each other. . The graph in Figure 2 shows that around 80% of the employees strongly agree in representing Unilever as a brand which shows that the employees are highly motivated and are happy while only 20% of the employees said they wouldn't represent Unilever as a brand and these could be the less motivated ones.

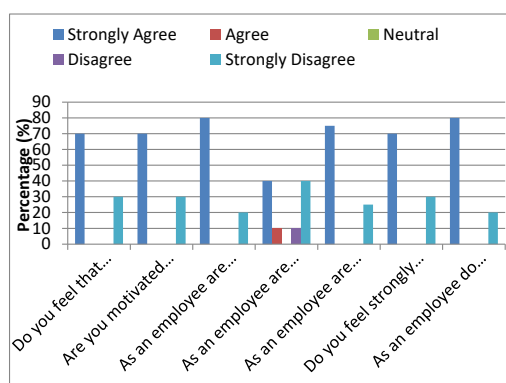


Figure 2.Participant’s feedback for question 7 to question 13

Interview Analysis

The interviews were conducted with 3 employees of Unilever. There were 5 questions and each question was based on employee motivation and organisational output. The interviewees that were interviewed were a brand manager, marketing manager and director of category operation and customer development through telephonic interviews and interviews via email.

Do you think that Unilever practices motivation and support of employees?

All three of them agreed that the company ensures that its employees are motivated. The company has recognised the strength of its human assets, among one of its key strategic driver is the organizational objective to grow employees so that they can grow the market. There is a yearly review of employee performance, where each employee is ranked on the basis of their performance versus agreed goals and KPIs. The ranking that an employee gets from this appraisal process is a strong indicator of the potential of the employee for further progression within the organization. The organization also organizes team building activities and days out along with the families. It also provides a lot of other benefits like health insurance and children education allowances to support its employees beyond their work.

Do you have policies and procedures that allow the managers to motivate and rate the employees at the organization?

There is a very open and friendly culture in the workplace and this was echoed by all three members that were interviewed. There are accepted norms that provide a lot of scope for motivating subordinates it can be getting an outing together or even empowering them with additional responsibilities. These are often done in agreement with the line manager but none of them were very sure that there were policies that governed this. All three of them were aware of the organization's talent management program that recognises the efforts of employees and puts them on a fast track leadership program. There are established policies for ranking of employees, it usually involves a complete 360 degrees assessment and the feedback for the employees can be from different functions of the organization that the employee interacts with. It's done electronically through email and the company HR assessment portal. Training is also provided to employees based on their roles and often this is done in conjunction with the HR department and this motivates employees.

What is your role as a manager towards these policies?

A manager need to ensure that each employee that reports to you is appraised without any bias, the feedbacks are discussed with the employees, strong areas are highlighted and areas of improvement are discussed. The need for training can also be determined and discussed in the feedback session. These sessions pertain to a discussion of how the employee has fared based on the agreed KPIs that were set out by the business for them.

Based on what KPI's is an employee promoted?

The KPIs are agreed on a yearly basis through a process called “3+1”, here both the line manager and employee discuss the KPIs and there is a sign off by both. At the end of the year the KPIs are discussed along with the 360 degrees feedback of the employees. The outcome of the review of the KPI is the ranking of each employee and marking them as potential promotable candidates or highlighting the improvement that are needed to develop them further.

Do you feel that it is a challenge to find out whether or not the employee is motivated or not or do Unilever as an organisation has its own ways?

They do agree that knowing whether an employee in a department or all employees working at Unilever are motivated or not is really a big challenge for them. In fact, they feel that it is a challenge for all big and small organisations these days. Employees have different moods on daily basis and there are times when they really give their best while there are times when they are bored due to the same routine and same work. They do not have any method to deduct whether an employee is motivated or not but they can see it in their body language, their work, the final output at the end of each quarter, goals and objectives met or not and there are many other such factors that help them know more about the employee. It is not an easy task to keep everyone happy at the same time but they as an organisation will do their best in keeping them abreast of everything and making sure that they are developing professionally.

Overall Discussions

Employee motivation is an important tool that is used in most of the successful organisation worldwide. The key to have good productivity and organisational output is to keep the employee motivated while ensuring that they are working and doing their best. There are times when employees and the organisation may not have good days but still the top management should keep the line manager motivated and the line managers should keep the employees and lower staff motivated. It is challenge for employers and organisation to keep their employees motivated and at the same time it is difficult for manager and the organisation to know and understand what motivates employees and what type if internal organisational setting and culture helps to keep employee motivated.

Unilever as an organisation has set skills and standards that they practice and follow worldwide. This ensures that all employees are treated equally and fairly and there is no bias towards them. As it can be seen from the analysis of the questionnaire it is clear that majority of the employees are satisfied that work at Unilever and it also shows that Unilever as an organisation ensures that the keep their employees motivated.

CONCLUSION

Based on the obtained questionnaire survey and interview result, this study concludes that employee motivation is an important aspect of every organisation and for its output. The employees in Unilever are motivated and some of them are really happy with their work and are committed to work at Unilever. Unilever is a multinational company that has its rules and regulations based on the corporate business ethics and they ensure that these all are followed and also follow the legal requirements of the country in which they operate. The organisation needs to make sure that all employees are satisfied and are motivated at every level and also provide them with proper information which will help them develop themselves.

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