

SATISFIED EMPLOYEES: ORGANIZATION'S KEY TOWARDS ACQUIRING A COMMITTED WORKPOOL???

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ABSTRACT-

Globalization and open economies have thrown open the gates of opportunities for manpower to find a suitable employment in almost any part of the world. There are negligible physical boundaries. In the present age of cutting-edge technologies and strategic business world, loyal or committed employees are a very rare phenomenon. Competition has become very tough and in order to remain alive and kicking in the economy, organizations need to find ways to retain their existing talented employees. Lots of manpower, money and most importantly, time is spent in training the employees to get optimum productivity. Losing talented and trained manpower to competitors is a big blow to any organization. Lots of researches and efforts are being devoted towards finding the solution to this very BIG problem – How to make your employees loyal and committed to your organization? Job-satisfaction is being touted to be one big factor towards achieving this goal. This paper is an attempt to understand the importance of committed employees to any organization, benefits of a satisfied workforce and the methods by which organizations can ensure the commitment and satisfaction of its employees. The central theme of the paper is to review the previous researches done to find out the relationship between job-satisfaction and employee commitment and draw a conclusion as to whether keeping your employees satisfied with their jobs will make them committed towards your organization or not.

Keywords- employee retention, job-satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational behavior.

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Introduction-

In the post-recession era, both the employers and employees have become cautious. Competition is fiercer, there is less job-security and market is skittish. Everyone is in search of greener pastures. Gone are the days of Japan-like organizations where the employees start and end their careers from the same organization. These days it is very common for employees to change their jobs every 2-3 years. Job-hopping is the new phenomenon. Talented candidates are lured by competing organizations via irresistible package offers and the employees are eager to take them in order to advance their careers. It has become a matter of concern for the organizations as it is quite costly to replace the existing employees with fresh ones. Turnover has both direct as well as indirect costs for the organization. Earlier human resource practices were not given much consideration, but with passage of time, nowadays manpower is considered as one of the most important assets for any organization. If any organization has the capability to boast of a committed work-pool, it can always be considered as having an extra edge over its competitors. Organizations are spending a huge amount of resources to find out the magic combination which would give them more committed employees. A crop of loyal and committed employees will always be ready to put extra efforts towards completing the organization's goals and objectives.

The objective of this paper is to find out that if the employees are satisfied with their jobs, will it make them more committed to the organization or not? Job satisfaction can be said to be one of the most researched topics of organizational behaviour. It is the most widely studied attitude related to job, as well as one of the most enquired into subjects in Industrial/organizational psychology (Judge and Church, 2000). In layman's words, it is the contentment which an employee gets from his/her job. In business world, it can be defined as contentment or lack of it, arising out of interplay of employee's positive or negative feelings towards his or her work. Even though this feeling may differ from person to person as everybody perceives satisfaction in his/her own way. But, whatever may be the perceptions, overall job satisfaction affects the performance of the individual employees. Hence, it becomes very important to identify the causes of satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Commitment, on the other hand, is the feeling of attachment the employee has for the organization. Organizational commitment can be defined as "the strength of the feeling of responsibility that an employee has towards the mission of the organization"

(BusinessDictionary.com). It can also be defined as “multi-dimension in nature, involving an employee’s loyalty to the organization, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, degree of goal and value congruency with the organization and the desire to maintain membership.” (Batemen and Strasser, 1984).It can also be viewed as an employee’s psychological attachment with the organization and it has a great impact on the fact whether an employee is going to stay in the organization or not and his zeal for his work is also dependent on this very emotion (Porter et al, 1974).

The various concepts of organizational behavior are always affecting each other on minor or major level. The question to be considered in this paper is that if it holds true for job- satisfaction and employee commitment or not. On the basis of the various researches done in this regard, an effort will be made to analyze the effect; level of satisfaction has, towards generating the feelings of commitment in an employee.

Why is a committed work pool important??

After the Hawthorne studies in the 1930’s, the concepts related to human resource management started to evolve. Earlier an employee was just considered a means to an end. He was supposed to work and be productive. There was no space for considerations for the human or emotional needs of the employees themselves. But, gradually all these values and beliefs started to change. In the present scenario, employees are considered as one of the most valuable assets of the organization. Special efforts are made to ensure that the employees are emotionally satisfied as well.

An employee may feel attachment or commitment to the organization because of many reasons. According to Meyer and Allen (1984), there is a form of commitment when the employee identifies with the values and beliefs of the organization and starts getting attached to and involved with the work. This form of commitment is popularly known as the affective commitment. Continuance commitment is the extent of attachment of the employee because of the costs which he associates with his leaving the organization. Sometimes, the employee feels obliged to stay with the organization as a way of “paying back” for the benefits which he has reaped from the organization. Such feeling of commitment is called normative commitment

(Meyer and Allen, 1991). Hence, an employee stays in the organization either because he wants to, he needs to or he feels he should stay.

Committed employees have ideally been described as an important instrument for improving the performance of the organization. Commitment leads to better communication, lesser industrial illness, makes an employee an active participant in the change processes and leads to new and innovative ideas. It depends a lot on the kind of colleagues an employee has as well as the style of management.

Employee commitment is also linked with sustained productivity. Improvement of sustained productivity of an organization depends heavily on the organization's human assets, their knowledge, their skills and their individual attitude as well as social vibes generated within the organization (trust and confidence, values, teamwork and communication etc.) (Tolentino, 2004 and Dixit and Bhati, 2012). Mowday, Porter and Steers (1980) illustrated at least five major consequences of commitment, based on their own research works as well as some related researches by other academics. Commitment has been found to be correlated with job-performance, even though weak but still statistically consistent. It is because commitment affects the amount of effort an employee puts into his work. Highly committed employees are also willing to stay with the organization and thus have longer tenure. Absenteeism also shows a favorable relationship with commitment. Committed employees are more expected to be present for the job, even though there may be several other factors at play as well. If an employee is committed towards the organization, his job attitude will consist of positive behaviors and reporting for work on time is one of them. Thus, commitment is inversely and strongly related to tardiness. The fifth consequence related to commitment is related to turnover intention. It has been established that committed employees have longer tenure and with time, the attachment grows. Committed employees are less likely to leave the organization in comparison to employees having lower commitment levels. They forge a connection between their individual values and beliefs with the organizational values and goals and are willing to work towards achieving them.

Employees with higher level of commitment are also expected to show innovative behavior. It has been found that when the employees are more committed towards their work, they tend to find ways to improvise their work (Xerri and Brunetto, 2013). But, employee commitment is not

a one-way concept. It needs efforts and investments from the employer as well. In order to retain quality employees, the employer must give them reasons to stay in the current organization. Employers must take steps towards forging psychological ties between the employee and his work. Eliciting such feelings might not be an impossible task but are expensive. The organization's culture, process of socialization and the extent to which it fulfills the employee's expectations are the factors which can spark such feelings and create ties (Romzek, 1990).

How to satisfy the employees?

Post Globalization, consumers have become very discriminating because of a wide array of choices available to them. Post evolution of Human resource practices, Employers are facing hurdles like never before. They have to maintain not only productivity and profitability, but also keep their employees engaged, satisfied and happy. It is the responsibility of the leaders to keep their employees engaged and satisfied with their jobs. If they fail to do so, there is big chance that the organization will lose its top talented employees to the competitors. In the post-recession era, employees might not be that quick in switching jobs. But, if not satisfied and happy with their jobs, they may decide to stay with the organization but in the process loose interest in it. Employees stay but they "quit" mentally. This may lead to lesser involvement in the job and low level of commitment.

In order to avoid situations mentioned above, the management can take several precautionary measures. Steps can be taken to avoid employee dissatisfaction. Some of the factors which help in keeping the workforce satisfied are discussed in the following paragraphs. Theorists have researched this topic very thoroughly and have identified few key factors. Maslow's need hierarchy (1943) identified five levels of needs consisting of physical, safety, social, self-esteem and self-actualization needs. According to him, when one level is satisfied, an employee moves to another one. The management policies should target towards fulfilling these needs. According to Herzberg and his two-factor theory, there are motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators like Achievement, Recognition, Work itself, Responsibility and Advancement are responsible for keeping an employee satisfied. On the other hand, the availability of hygiene factors (salary, working conditions etc.) can ensure the absence of dissatisfaction only (Herzberg et al. 1959). Alderfer (1972) refined the Maslow's approach and identified three levels of needs for the job-satisfaction: Existence, Relatedness and Growth

needs. But, according to him, these levels are not water-tight levels and may overlap and the frustration of higher level needs may be the reason for higher satisfaction by achieving lower level needs. Theory X assumes that human beings are by nature lazy and only force can motivate them to work hard whereas Theory Y lays down that if provided with sufficient motivation for achievement of self-esteem and self-actualization needs, it is very easy to motivate employees and satisfy them (McGregor, 1960). McClelland et al. (1958) stated that some people have higher ambitions and their need for achievement and recognition drives them. Some theorists have given preference to values and expectancies for achieving employee's satisfaction. Adam's Equity theory lays down that an employee always compares his input-output with other's input-output. If he feels there is any discrepancy, it will affect his performance and satisfaction (Adams, 1965). Hence, there should be proper reward and recognition system in place and the rewards must be those which are valued and perceived as equitable by employees (Perry et al. 2006). Vroom's theory also works on somewhat same lines. In order to make an employee satisfied, the work must be perceived as worthy by him. He must have a strong preference for the work and believe that that a particular act will provide him with a specific response and the outcome must be expected by him (Vroom, 1964). Porter/Lawler's expectancy model suggests that satisfaction of an employee does not depends on the performance but on fair and indiscriminate rewards and recognition (Wehrich and Koontz, 1999).

Thus, on the basis of the pointers laid down by the experts as mentioned above, some of the major factors can be narrowed down. In order to increase the level of satisfaction of employees, the management can design their policies incorporating those points, in order to provide maximum benefits and satisfaction to the employees. It is not necessary that bad market conditions mean lower satisfaction for employees as well. The management can ensure satisfaction even during these times by following the guidelines of the experts. The management must ensure that the employees are being provided with a positive work environment, which might mean sometimes going over and beyond the designated policies in order to fulfill the needs of the employees. A solid reward and recognition system should be in place. Rewards need not necessarily be in cash only, it can be any number of things, however small, which would make the employee feel important and needed by the organization. The organizational system should run in such a way that the employee's suggestions and views are taken into account. The

employees must feel involved and engaged as it gives them a sense of ownership and pride. Proper training and development system should be there as well-trained employees understand the business in a better way. Such employees are more capable and need less supervision. They will complain less and hence, be more satisfied. An open communication system is needed to build shared trust and understanding. Job enlargement, job rotation and job enrichment also go a long way towards making an employee happy and satisfied. A continuous evaluation system should be in place to check the progress and mold the policies accordingly.

How is job-satisfaction affecting employee commitment?

It has been established that it is very important for any organization to keep its employees happy and to devise strategies to retain them. But the question arises that will keeping an employee happy and satisfied, help the organization in making them more committed? Numerous researches have been done in various fields to find the connection between a satisfied employee and his resulting commitment for the organization. Kaplan, Ogut, Kaplan and Aksay(2012) and Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) conducted researches in the healthcare services and concluded that affective and normative commitment are strongly and positively correlated with job-satisfaction but not continuance with satisfaction. It laid down that in the service industry, satisfied and committed employees are more motivated towards their work and will extend more efforts towards achievement of organizational goals. In order to ensure this, the organization should have an open communication system, objective reward and recognition system, fair wage plan and supportive culture. Similar findings were reinforced by Tsai, Cheng and Chan (2010) and Silva (2006) for the hospitality industry. In the Tourism industry, interesting work, development opportunities and job security are important factors for satisfaction and commitment. Satisfaction towards salary and good supervision increases the attachment which an employee has with his organization (Yew, 2010).

In the Banking Sector, Hashmi and Naqvi (2012) tried to elaborate the effect of both intrinsic and extrinsic components of job satisfaction on the level of commitment displayed by an employee. The paper concluded that there exists a positive and significant relationship between these two. It suggested that if the organization wants its employees to be committed towards his goals and visions, it must provide them with such working conditions which make the employee feel satisfied with his job like autonomy in work, feeling of skillfulness, perception of

meaningful tasks etc. It recommended that the policies should be modified in such a way that the employees must have the feeling of a desirable corporate culture which will motivate them and instill the feelings of commitment as well. Performance based bonus system and better pay scales should be introduced. Mohamed, Kader & Anisa (2012) examined the relationship between the concepts of commitment, trust and job-satisfaction and concluded that job-satisfaction is positively correlated to all three types of commitment. A regular and wide assessment of employee's job-satisfaction, commitment and trust should be carried out by the leaders and managers. Such an assessment must be followed with appropriate actions to improve on the required areas. Positive inter-departmental relations and inter-disciplinary respect should be encouraged. Saeed, Lodhi, Saeed, Riaz, Mahmood and Ahmad (2013) checked the effect of job satisfaction and leadership style on organizational commitment of employees and concluded that both these factors are a positive influence on an employee's commitment. It suggested that banks should take steps to control these factors as they are directly related to the commitment of an employee, increased productivity and reduced turnover. Job satisfaction and good leadership were identified as two crucial factors affecting the commitment of an employee.

The notion was also investigated for Public offices and it was concluded even though the culture in public offices is very different from Private offices but if the employee is satisfied with his work, he will become more committed towards his organization. It will increase the quality of the services as well. But, if they are not satisfied, they will either quit the job and if that is not possible, they will stay but loose interest in it. (Ko et al, 1997). Public institutions can ensure more satisfaction and the resultant commitment from employees by means of Job-enlargement. But, if the workload is more than what the employee can handle, it will lead to negative results. Exhaustion and tiredness may make them less satisfied and this extra work and fatigue may damage their attachment with the organization as well. (Raza and Nawaz, 2011).

Research conducted on teachers to identify the inter-relationship between factors of professional identity comprising of job-satisfaction, organizational commitment, self-efficacy and change in the level of commitment, concluded that the commitment level is also affected by the teacher's satisfaction with their colleagues, support received and feeling of competence. All the factors are related to each other and affect the corresponding behavior of individuals (Canrinus et al. 2012). Individual perceptions also play a very important role. If the individual feels that the

organization has discriminating policies, it will affect his over-all organizational behavior. It will lead to decline in his job-satisfaction and hence, further negatively affecting his commitment level. The management must keep track of these perceptions by continued use of assessment tools like focus groups, exit interviews opinion surveys etc. These can be easily assessed and managed without causing any critical damage to the business(Ensher et al. 2001). Ethical behavior should be followed in the organization as the level of ethics maintained by co-workers and managers along with the various facets of job-satisfaction affects the commitment of the employees (Fu, Deshpande and Zhao, 2011).

Hence, Job-satisfaction is strongly correlated to Employee Commitment. More satisfied the employee is with his work, more will be the commitment displayed by the employee. He will be more enthusiastic towards his work and ready to put extra efforts into it. Different aspects of job-satisfaction have varied relationship with different forms of commitment. A specific form of commitment can be ensured by satisfying the different factors of job. Achievement, work hours and career opportunities have a strong relationship with affective and normative commitment whereas continuance commitment is affected by Pay, responsibility and the work itself. (Lipinski, 2008).

Conclusion-

In a nutshell, it can be safely concluded that job-satisfaction of the employees is one of the antecedents of employee commitment. Job satisfaction is simply defined as the contentment of an employee from his job. There might be several factors contributing towards this contentment. Sometimes it is the salary which keeps the employee happy or the fair rewards and recognition system of the organization which gives him the feeling of being duly appreciated. Training programs, job security, positive work environment and open vertical as well as horizontal communication channels also contribute healthily towards this contentment. If the employee feels that his opinions are valued by the management and he is being considered as an integral part of the system, these things will automatically raise his happiness and satisfaction. On the other hand, commitment is defined as the attachment of the employee with his organization. Due to this attachment, he is ready to put extra efforts toward the organization's goals and missions and his chances of staying with the organization increases. This attachment may be of several types. Sometimes the employee gets attached to his job and stays or his calculated cost of leaving

the organization is high and that's why he has to stay or he might get the feeling of "paying-back" the organization for all the benefits received and hence, is obliged to stay.

It has been established that it is very important for any organization to have a committed crop of employees. It is very expensive for any organization to time and again go through the process of hiring and then training etc. Committed employees take more innovative approach towards their work, they are ready to put extra efforts, have higher level of job performance, lower absenteeism, are more open to communication, have lower turnover rate, decreased tardiness etc. Among all the factors affecting the commitment level of the employees, job-satisfaction is found to be having huge effect. The fact cannot be ignored that a satisfied employee is a more committed employee. In order to procure commitment from its employees, the organizations have to put some serious efforts. Commitment is not a "one-way" thing. The initiative has to be taken by the management whereby it designs its policies keeping in mind the needs and beliefs of the employees. Providing the employees with a positive working environment, taking and respecting the employee's opinion while formulating some policies, communicating freely, paying a competitive salary and ensuring that all the efforts are fairly rewarded and recognized, are some of the methods popular factors of job-satisfaction. Once an employee is satisfied with his work, he will start getting attached with the organization. If the values and mission of the organization are in line with the individual's values, a bond is forged between the individual and organization. The employee will start taking more interest and invest more of his efforts on his work. This will lead to his further stay with the organization. Thus, leading to a cause and effect relationship between Job-satisfaction and Employee Commitment.

But, the organization must not misuse the continuance (when the cost of leaving the organization is higher and hence, the employee stays) and normative (when the employee stays to "pay-back" the organization) commitment of employees. Rather than using the weaknesses of the employees to make them stay with the organization, a more positive approach needs to be taken. Efforts should be made towards increasing the affective component of commitment where the employee is committed due to his genuine feelings of attachment for the organization. Whenever an employee experiences positive emotions related to his work, it will lead to actual feelings of contentment with his work and hence, affective commitment. Such employees are much more

passionate towards their work. Retaining an employee is important, but he must not be made to stay forcibly. He must stay willingly because he wants to stay.

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