

Employee Satisfaction within the Leading Multinational Companies in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT: *The article investigates the relationship between employee turn-over pattern and gratification level in a number of renowned multinational companies based in Bangladesh. It stands to set the appropriate tone for human resource management, research and development departments while highlighting the status quo of employee satisfaction and expectations so that a balanced state of affairs exists in the companies. The data contributing to this article have been culled from a wide range of primary sources. It has come up with the conclusion that the existing condition of employee satisfaction is mostly directed toward negative notions rather than positive ones.*

Keywords: *Employee Satisfaction, Employee Dissatisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Affective Aspect, Cognitive Aspect, Evaluative Aspect.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction refers to the contentedness of employees with regards to their jobs. It is usually gauged on a scale consisting of the combination of affective, cognitive and evaluative concepts [6]. The satisfaction of employees also reflects the extent to which their demands are fulfilled by their employers. Researchers have broached different definitions of employee satisfaction. Overall, it has been perceived as the positive attitudes towards work and working environment [17][14]. The affective facet comes into play if employees feel emotionally connected in a positive and optimistic way to the work environment. In case of the lack of this component, there exist a pattern of frequent absenteeism and tardiness coupled with the dearth of self-motivational energy precipitating high turnover of workers. The cognitive aspect of employee gratification has also to do with the sense of fulfillment and accomplishment. The employees' perception of self-worth, self-image, psychologically rewarding strands, sociological status etc. attached to the job are the things determined as such by the cognitive component. The evaluative angle of employee satisfaction renders the entire assessment of the job on the employees' part. This component explains the workers' impression of favor and disfavor on the whole regarding their job and company. From the

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economic point of view, the multinational companies in Bangladesh play a substantial role as the country has huge potentials in the field of MNCs as far as the increasingly educated number of workforce is concerned. Recent several years have witnessed the way new talents have overtaken the top positions in the MNCs based in Bangladesh [16]. In order to emancipate companies from the turnover of highly competent employees and to successfully retain them, the MNCs relentlessly strategize their way ahead reflecting upon a great deal of weight that employee satisfaction carries. Proper acknowledgement, empowerment, responsibility with authority require to be in place.

“People differ”, observed Dunnette Campbell and Hakel ([7], “in what they view as satisfying and dissatisfying; what is one man's meat may be another man's poison. Persons also differ in what they perceive as the salient features in a stimulus configuration”. The human resource is deemed to be one of the most diversified and crucial factors in a company. Company's efficiency, productivity and profitability hinge largely on skilled set of workers. For managers, it is always a challenge to handle the workforce in the best manner possible. Since high-performing employees tend to be open to multiple job opportunities in the market at their disposal, the company more often than not is exposed to losing out these human assets to their rival organizations. In the unfortunate event of mass turnover, this void requires to be replenished with equally, if not more, capable range of employees. There again, it reinforces the exigencies of ensuring employee satisfaction in an organization which bears close relation to the rate of employee turnover. “While the economic and job dissatisfaction” wrote Mobley and et al. [12] “contributions to turnover are well established, they are conceptually simplistic and empirically deficient bases for understanding the employee turnover process”.

2. OBJECTIVES

This article focuses attention on the following as the set of ultimate objectives:

- To interrogate the state of affairs of employee satisfaction level in the MNCs at work in Bangladesh.
- To lay bare the prime movers for employee turnover in the companies.
- To demystify the idea of evaluation procedure to gauge job contentment for a better future performance visualization.

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper has been prepared predominantly on the basis of a collection of data gleaned from primary sources. For example, surveys as well as personal

meetings have been conducted with the employees and employers of eleven top ranking MNCs in Bangladesh for a large part. Besides, information from secondary sources, including scholarly journals, published books, research papers etc., have contributed to it to some extent.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

As far as employee sustainability challenge and curbing turnover rate issues are concerned, the employee satisfaction factor is inseparably intertwined to them. It also substantially deals with the communication approach between a superior and a subordinate. But communication does not necessarily imply verbal speech but also covers nonverbal ranges such as facial expression, vocal expression and pitch, body language, eye contacts etc. Dziuba, Ingaldi & Zhuravskaya [8] said, “Workers who have a high level of job satisfaction generally love their job”. Besides, subordinates tend to be more appreciative of the supervisors who appear amiable, sensitive and easily approachable. As a matter of fact, critical and fault-finding supervision, extreme surveillance makes employees feel suffocated that often result in stultification.

It is important to understand both the more visible issue of employment, for instance, job security, remuneration, promotion or remuneration, and the intangible values of work such as rapport with staff members and the nature of work itself [13]. The employees who are supremely diligent with their works look forward to having the scope of an ample amount of diversified training for shaping their skill set as well as increasing the depth of their knowledge. Scanlan et. al. [14] found out “Positive attitudes and workplace cultures are likely to promote better workplace experiences for peer workers”. Indeed, the training and workplace satisfaction have always been singled out to be two of the most indispensable preconditions for creating a healthy and sustainable working condition in a company.

In addition to training and skill development, the amount of remuneration and other perquisites that the employees of a company receive at the end of a month clearly determine the contours of their workplace satisfaction. Ayyagari and Lathabhavam ([2] said “If an organization promotes a culture of team building, employees will be motivated to work together and achieve more. This will help boost their commitment levels and create a long-term work culture harmony”. Dziuba et al ([8] said about the satisfaction of employees, “They also need appropriate superior that will provide them with this environment, but above all, he will motivate them to work in the right way, make them feel satisfied with their work”. It is evident that any study on workplace satisfaction has to apportion an ample amount of critical attention to the disinterring of key components underlying the foundation of the idea of contentedness in the office.

Kumari [10] indicated job satisfaction as the most important process and linked it with organizational communication as well, “The most important process in an organization, satisfaction is linked with communication on a personal as well as on an organizational level”. Herzberg et al. formulated the two-factor theory of job satisfaction and postulated that satisfaction and dissatisfaction were two separate and sometimes even unrelated phenomena. Intrinsic factors were found to be job satisfiers and included achievement, recognition, work itself and responsibility. Extrinsic factors which they named hygiene factors were found to be job dissatisfiers and included company policy, administration, supervision, salary [13]. Very importantly, family life and job life are closely interrelated. When employees are satisfied with their work, it has a positive effect on their personal life since employees who are motivated toward their job find it easier to carry out family responsibilities as well. The flexibility of work therefore is a substantial advantage for the workforce. It can be in terms of working from home option, reasonable working hours, rotation of responsibilities, justifying payment for overtime and so forth.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

As mentioned earlier, for the purpose of carrying out this qualitative research, data have been unearthed from the employees and employers of eleven high ranking MNCs working in Bangladesh. This sample set of the companies comprise–Unilever Bangladesh Ltd., British American Tobacco Bangladesh Ltd., Nestle Bangladesh Ltd., Arla Foods Bangladesh Ltd., Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd., MetLife Bangladesh, Marico Bangladesh Ltd., MGH Group Bangladesh, Novartis Bangladesh Ltd, Globe Pharmaceuticals Group of Companies Ltd., and Robi Axiata Ltd. When the employees from the MNCs were asked about the knowledge regarding the concept of employee satisfaction, the answer was all the same for each of the companies without exception. They all were well aware of and could connect to the question in a very certain manner.

The employees who participated in the survey ranged variously from executive, senior executive, channel executive, marketing director, manager, chief legal officer, compensation and benefit manager, assistant GM to GM, performance and rewards, head of marketing–intending to unearth the most accurate information and crosscheck them on multiple levels of the organizations to get the real picture. Even though some of the high officials took part in the survey and meetings, the junior to mid-level employees of these companies, often considered the real workforce, were prioritized and made to make comments on the issue in the assurance of keeping themselves

anonymous so that the affection conditions come to light. The most important factors inducing job dissatisfaction according to the opinions of the MNC employees revolve around the issues with nepotism, miscommunication arising from favoritism of one worker over others, inefficiency in making the proper guidelines for the division of labor, the lack of acknowledgement of performance, negative feedback being faced with resistance, uneven workload due to departmental mismanagement, ambiguity in the specialization of expertise, the lack of healthy employee relations and work environment, declining brand value and the multiple chains of order. However, on the somewhat bright side, there were a few factors that were mentioned in some of the companies from the sample set such as – rewarding system, co-operative teammates, brand image in the sociological context, satisfactory salary in line with designation, extensive training and as such.

For this study to rationalize, the issue of workplace satisfaction is going to be scrutinized here through the three measures popularly referred to as three-dimensional model of job satisfaction in organizational psychology of human resource. This model is built upon three components which are comprised of affective, cognitive, and evaluative. If we draw attention to the factors breeding employee dissatisfaction and resentment eventually triggering employee turnover, we will see that they largely fall into affective and to a lesser degree in the cognitive aspect whereas the satisfying factors that came out in this research relatively exist in the region of cognitive angle. With a view to lending a perceptive insight into the impression on part of the employees on the associated MNCs, it will eventually be figured out in the 5.3 section under the evaluative aspect. We will look into each of the approaches in much larger detail in an ascending order of their importance.

5.1 Employee Satisfaction Based on Affective Aspect

The first criterion to reflect upon is the affective aspect of employee satisfaction. It deals with the work relation of employees. It is based upon whether or not the employees of a given organization are driven and committed to contribute to their fullest potentials. Two extremes may exist that result positive attitude of the employees toward their work; such as – commitment, diligence, consistency etc. reversely, negative tendencies as high absence rate, tardiness, evading duties reflect from the fact that the employees do not find the job socially demanding or psychologically rewarding. All the factors that were brought up in resonance with this facet are unanimously on the dissatisfying side as depicted by the pie chart and the following description:



Figure 01: The Impediments to Employee Satisfaction from Affective Aspect.

5.1.1 Nepotism

The highest number of responses as regards the dissatisfying factor in the MNCs was nepotism and favoritism both in the process of recruitment and in the question of promotion. Employees complained about the unhealthy culture in the organization of preference person over work. One employee remarked that the issue of nepotism is very common in any MNC, but it should not be at the expense of the work by other more qualified employees. Laker and Williams [11] opined on nepotism, “Nepotism designates real and imagined favoritism which breeds a certain form of inequity in the heart of the company. Research has spelled out employees’ routine dissatisfaction to their experiences of undergoing favoritism and inequity. The relation between nepotism and favoritism is normally taken to be symbiotic. Nepotism, therefore, entails some form of lower commitment, inequity, favoritism, employee dissatisfaction, which leads companies to incur higher labor costs in the course of time. Employees express their discontentment to organizations where nepotism thrives in one way or the other”.

5.1.2 Miscommunication Arising from Favoritism

One of the iratest responses came concerning the issue of miscommunication because of extreme favoritism. In the event where one team member is given precedence over the other member, there comes about dominance on the part of the favored employee in terms of access to information. As a result, miscommunication occurs and it badly affects the outcome. “In order to achieve empowerment, the executives must ensure that employees have the

right mix of information, knowledge, power and rewards to work more enthusiastically” [15]. When only few of the favored employees are communicated with as it comes to delegating workloads, advantages are taken by them whereas job dissatisfaction on part of the neglected employees consequently increases.

5.1.3 Unjust or Inefficient Division of Labor

Some of the employees voiced their concern as to the practice of the unequal division of labor. Again, this problem links to existing favoritism in the company to some extent in the sense that due to nepotism and favoritism, some workers enjoy an unethical amount of less share in the workload and more flexible schedule. Or in the opposite scenario, the access to information predominantly remains in the hand of the favored workers which give them the unjust power and scope to excel at work over others. Choudhry and et al. [5] said on this matter that “When justice exists, all the works are done correctly, but employee have to get their rights illegally if the justice does not exist. In fact, organizational justice is a kind of fulfillment in all activities, behaviors and tendencies of organizational individuals”. That is the availability of information which are not classified and required by all the staff must not be limited to the knowledge of a few. Because it gives them an unfair advantage over others. By the same token, work schedules; job sharing ought to be on an equal footing without any sort of partiality.

5.1.4 Lack of Acknowledgement of Performance

This limitation to successful employee satisfaction did not rank the highest but was quite common among the respondents. Employees opined that they are motivated to work more efficiently than before if their works are appreciated, recompensed and valued. This was broken down by the respondents that, not only formal and annual rewarding system is important but also a practice of mental boost-up as well as verbal appreciation should be prevalent.

5.1.5 Negative Feedback Faced with Resistance

Sometimes when negative feedback is given from the employees’ side or any recommendation is put forward, it is often waived aside, or yet worse, is encountered with resistance. According to the employees, who commented so, every employee should be entitled to a work environment where their feedback is counted and irrespective of their designation.

5.1.6 Uneven Workload due to Departmental Mismanagement

This problem is largely related to the inefficient division of labor elaborated

above with some extensions on the employees' part. Because of the diversified decisions among the departments inside the organization, it is not uncommon for the workers to be unevenly assigned with responsibilities. They also remarked that responsibilities must be entrusted with proportionate authority. Such a setting of circumstances often creates mental anguish in employees as voiced by the employees themselves. In this respect we can take note of Chaturanga and Wijesooriya [4] who said, "Employees working in different organizations face different levels of work stresses such as heavy workload, job insecurity, working for long hours, harassments, over supervision, deadline targets, risky decision makings, problems in organizational working conditions, strategies and design, process etc. stress within the organization affect the individual performance and the organizational performance in a negative way". It is evident that the unequal distribution of work responsibilities is likely to lead to employee discontentment resulting in poor performances. The tangible and intangible work factors must be striking a balance.

5.1.7 Ambiguity in the Specialization of Expertise

In the opinions of employees, along with educational expertise, their areas of interest should be taken into consideration. Sometimes, in employees' words, an employee with business educational background might be very scientifically inclined as well and vice versa. In such circumstances, even though the likes and preference of the workers are not aligned with their previous sorts of work or education, they should be given a free rein to the nature of works from time to time.

5.1.8 Lack of Healthy Employee Relations and Unhelpful Work Environment

Though unhealthy employee relation is not something the employer is directly responsible for, the employer must play a role to not add to it. In the voice of employees, it is often observed that the employees are played off against each other by the higher level in an attempt to bring out the best outcome intended which is an unhealthy approach.

5.1.9 Multiple Chains of Order

There happen to be a source of disarray in workplace when order comes down to the lower level from multiple bosses instead of being under the authority of one person. It causes a conflict of interest resulting in unwanted mismanagement in works. Even though being under the supervision of more than one authority is not an uncommon trend that is not the best way to make things fruitful in the opinions of some employees. Job satisfaction is a

product of proper and immaculate chain of command as well. It also comes with clarity of understanding for the staff in carrying out their works.

5.2 Employee Satisfaction Based on Cognitive Aspect

The cognitive element projects both the optimistic and pessimistic nature of employees' self-perception stemming from a certain kind of review, feedback or organization situation. When the employees receive a positive treatment, they interpret this as a notion of being validated by their organization. By the same token, employees are negatively impacted when they are faced with invalidating circumstances in the workplace; it implies relegation in their conception of self-esteem or self-worth. The elements that emerged from conducting this study as barriers to employee satisfaction mostly fall under the category of affective aspect as estimated rigorously above. Only one element of employee dissatisfaction from these can be attached to cognitive facet and that is declining brand value:

5.2.1 Declining Brand Value

Much as the very top ranking MNCs have been chosen to work on this research, a few of them have been facing a declining trend in terms of its reputation. This is undoubtedly a matter of concern among the employees working there in their own words. If such trend continues, the employees are reluctant to stay put their current workplaces. In other words, as things stand, the employees are weighing the option of switching to any other company showing the signs of relatively more success. Except the declining brand value factor, the other phenomena that came up under the cognitive aspect are thankfully on the upside:

5.2.2 Rewarding System

The recent trend of awarding good performances with accolades in the corporate arena proves uplifting for the employees. They have revealed that it boosts their confidence and encourages them to perform even better. In their opinion, the fact of being appreciated and acknowledged through professional awards carries a lot of weight in deciding their choice of workplace. In this respect, we can mention the quotation by Ihedinmah, Chijioke, Egbunike and Chinedu [9], "Employee rewards system refers to programs by different organizations to reward performance and motivate employees at the individual and/or the group level. In designing a reward system, the organization should specify group or organizational goals to be achieved and the specific behaviors or performance that will attract rewards. By so doing, the rewards system will help management shape behavior of employees and at the same time achieve organization's goal".

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The organizations must set a standard of performance on reaching which the employees should be rewarded. There should be a guidance that will help the employees have a grip of the best performance in their capacity while the organization needs to nurture a motivating approach.

5.2.3 Co-operative Teammates

The co-operative environment is a contributing factor to creates the scope for job satisfaction. “The more the employee will be comfortable with each, the more they will contribute toward the organizational goals and the more they will be satisfied with their work and job. It is also a key factor toward the employee satisfaction.” [1]. A healthy relation among employees creates room for a friendly work environment. For teamwork to be fruitful, it is essential that there exists a culture of co-operation. The majority of the employees I spoke to have responded with satisfaction in this regard.

5.2.4 Brand Image

Even though the declining brand value of the company is a matter of concern as voiced by several employees in the companies in question, some of the employees expressed their sense of fulfillment as regards the perceived social status that comes with the brand image.

5.2.5 Satisfactory Salary

A handsome pay instantly stirs a great deal of self-satisfaction with the job in the employees’ state of mind. Employees opined, this is one of first few things they look for when embarking on a new job and plan to continue. Most of them were not averse to the level of pay scale provided by their companies except a few who have excess family burdens.

5.2.6 Extensive Training

The employees in MNCs are provided with a range of training programs for shaping up their skill set so that they can keep pace with the ever-competitive and ever-upgrading market. In relation to employee training and development, Capelle [3] said, “Each cascading process should include three elements. One element is educational. This is the information portion, explaining to employees what is required. The second element is implementation. Each session must have an element of doing actual work, so participants begin to internalize the new approach. The third part is a feedback loop. Participants should be given feedback for their learning”.

The MNCs are in the practice formatting an impressive quantity of training and development sessions from time to time. Hardworking employees strive

for such platform to brush upon their skills and getting deep into the market trend. They look forward to and value such activities on the companies' part.

5.3 Employee Satisfaction Based on Evaluative Aspect

The evaluative approach represents how employees feel about the organization on the whole. It can be a positive, negative or neutral state of mind of the employees about their workplace. After an extensive discussion on the positive and negative elements in the light of affective and cognitive aspects, a relatively quantitative context as a whole building upon the evaluative aspect, from the employees' point of view, can be shown by the depiction in the pie charts below:

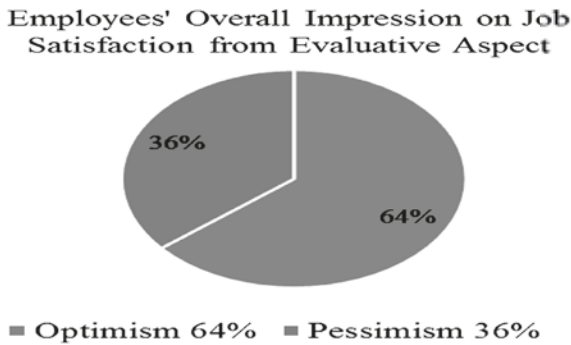


Figure 02: Employees' Overall Impression on Job Satisfaction from Evaluative Aspect.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Job gratification is not an optional subject-matter in the corporate world any more. A satisfied set of workforce always stands a better opportunity to work more dedicatedly for the interest of their company which ultimately prompts success for it whereas a lack of appreciation and acknowledgement on part of the superiors or those in authority is more likely to have a negative impact on the employees often descending into substandard performance. People in higher level jobs report significantly more positive scores on the job-related depression–enthusiasm scale (i.e. more enthusiasm, less depression) compared with those in lower level jobs, but also significantly lower scores on job-related anxiety–contentment (i.e. less contentment, more anxiety) [18].

Rewarding system is an effective way that has been commonplace in the recent years within the MNCs in Bangladesh which is a positive trend. Then again there are a lot of other contributing factors that must be well practiced in the companies. It is highly important to establish a work environment free

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from nepotism and any sort of favoritism. The miscommunication and mismanagement of talent and expertise need to be rooted out. Employees' preference for work should be taken into account. When the work is devoid of the division of labor or the proper chain of commands, it sends the employees into a dilemma to prioritize their works at the cost of their job performance. The negative feedbacks by the employees should not be encountered with rebuke. Their opinion must not be written off or counted as immaterial.

Multinational companies tend to attach great value to their brand image. It is part and parcel of the reputation of the companies. The employees working for the companies also hold the brand image in high regard as a status symbol in society. Therefore, when the brand value is threatened, it is likely to upset for the employees' as well. As for working atmosphere, the authority in charge must also act responsibly to ensure a healthy job environment. When there exists rapport among the employees, there are more chances for the teamwork to become a success.

Training and development opportunities help the employees shape their skill set. The employees who are honest with their job responsibilities are very welcoming of it. Besides, it enables them to progress in their duties, build confidence and provide deeper knowledge for the understanding of the work. An attractive salary range most certainly comes on the very first few priorities in the job for an employee. Therefore, appropriate pay in coherence with designation, accelerating timely promotions, providing financial incentives besides basic remuneration etc. ought to be dealt with immaculately.

The ultimate success of the MNCs tremendously banks on the proper management of the human resources the companies recruit. Employees come with their own set of expectations, wants and demands. Fulfilling their needs within the professional reasons should be given precedence as it is proportionately linked to employee satisfaction. When employees are gratified with their workplace, they rule out the consideration to switch their job with the result that the turnover rate drops dramatically. The study provides the employees with assessment tools to quantify in measurable terms the workplace contentment of their staff to project an outcome-oriented future for their companies.

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