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Introductory Chapter: Job Satisfaction and Career Development

Josiane Fahed-Sreih

1. Job satisfaction and employee engagement

Job satisfaction is considered as the amount or degree of gratification and contentment that an employee fosters towards his/her overall job, factoring into that equation his/her satisfaction with the job itself, the peers at the job, the supervisors, and the policies at work [1]. Various research studies have highlighted the importance of focusing on the issue of employee job satisfaction, as it plays a critical role in overall firm success or demise. Additionally, the importance of employee job satisfaction has been largely emphasized in the literature because of its positive affect on employee job performance. The productivity of the work force, in any organization, is a major driver which leads to achieving organizational goals. This stresses on the importance of further focusing on job satisfaction as an essential concern for family firms and large corporations equally [2].

Recently, organizations have focused on maximizing productivity in order to maintain their competitive stance and better deal with emerging trends such as globalization. Nowadays, the general direction which firms take when expanding is into international markets that reveal potentially rewarding new opportunities. However, whether it is answering to customer needs or developing and growing on its own, a company needs to ensure that its workforce is as productive as possible, and in order for the workforce to perform at its utmost productivity, employees must feel a satisfaction relating to the nature of the work they are performing.

In order to achieve this ultimate productivity, it is suggested that organizations should define major issues that might actually affect the level of employee job satisfaction and attempt to tackle these occurrences which hinder an employee's level of satisfaction at work. For instance, Inuwa [2] discusses in his writings how job satisfaction is related to performance. The results of his analyses showed how an employee's motivation towards being productive at work will increase the more the employee is satisfied with the job, leading to the achievement of the overall organizational goals. If not, the employee will be demotivated, and in turn, this will impact the overall achievement of the predetermined organizational goals.

Furthermore, whenever the factors in the organizations that affect employee's motivation are managed, better employee outcomes and performance are created. Therefore, the more the employee motivation, the better the outcome of employee performance. This sheds light on the highlighted relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Results of multiple studies show that the more engaged the employees are, the higher their job satisfaction is. This is due to the fact that employees who feel engaged at work will have better, more efficient, and more productive working behaviors, attitudes, and motivations [3, 4]. On the other hand,

job dissatisfaction can have serious consequences on the productivity of the firm, one of which is employee turnover. Turnover is when the employee decides to leave the organization [5].

Job satisfaction is important for employees to stay in the organization. Understanding generational differences among different generations and their perception of job satisfaction is of huge and utmost importance [6]. Organizations must know what actually satisfies a person to stay in the organization, since a satisfied employee will work for the interest of the organization, which in turn leads to better overall work performance. Moreover, based on the findings of a research study conducted by Acharrya [7], there are four aspects which contribute to the satisfaction of millennials: training, commitment of the organization to developing employees, career development, and career opportunities.

2. Job satisfaction and career development

Companies must also consider career development as a new key to retain their employees especially that in the next 10 years, millennials would be representing the bulk of the workforce. Career development is the ongoing process of learning, developing, and moving towards one's goals. Moreover, career development has its own advantages, one of which is the fact that it reduces turnover and increases employee motivation. Career development is in the interest of all generations, yet it is mostly sought after by the millennials, and thus, it plays a major factor in their job satisfaction. Career development includes extensive training, in specific, with respect to the areas the employee wants to develop. Having mentioned job satisfaction and career development and the importance of the effect of one on the other, it is time to discuss the relationship between these two variables.

Career development contains structured, dignified, and deliberate exertion of effort, in order to accomplish a state of evenness between the organization's objectives and strategies and the employee's career goals as well as the progress that he/she seeks [8]. The proper career preparation and career supervision will lead to the best results of career development. McDaniels and Gysbers [9] mention that career development is the collection of mental, sociological, informative, corporal, financial, and unplanned factors that are shared to form the career of any targeted employee.

Career development depends on the organization's decision to transfer employees from their traditional work, and the tasks that are common to them, to more challenging work that is enriched with initiatives for self-development and organizational effectiveness. An effective career development plan helps the organization to benefit from its internal talent by corresponding the experience and skills gained by the employees and linking them to the organization's needs, while also motivating and engaging the employees to give more effort by the compensation and succession plans given for the sake career development [10].

Lee [11] mentions that companies who participates in career management are going to enhance their employees' job satisfaction. Gregson [12] mentions that job satisfaction is the state of emotion that the employee feels fulfillment in after his performance management review and experience in the organization. Chay and Bruvold [13] state that job satisfaction is the positive reaction of the employee to different phases of the job. Job satisfaction happens after the employee experiences emotions of self-actualization in his/her career [14].

Career development programs were found to have a positive inspiration on job satisfaction, professional development, and productivity in a research conducted by Chen, Chang, and Yeh [15]. Moreover, in a research study conducted by

Schein [16], it was found that career development plays a major role in employee effectiveness and creativity over the long term. Moreover, a well-organized career development will allow employees to pursue improvements in their career that will actually lead to the employees' job satisfaction [16]. Moreover, Schein [16] adds that employees will have different career developments according to their preferences, goals, and, most importantly, the external factors such as global business changes. Schein [17] elaborates more to state that employees have different work needs at each stage of their career path and organizations should take into consideration the career needs of their employees in each stage to satisfy their career development and increase the organizational effectiveness and cope with its needs as well. Each specific stage of career development has different goals and different mission from the next one [18].

Furthermore, organizations should be responsive and open to career developments of their employees because modernization and improvement is the field where each company differentiates itself from its competitors and, at the end, it is the responsibility of the employee to gain the knowledge through his/her experience when everything is provided to him/her by the organization [19]. Although the managers with the guidance of the human resources departments set the career development plan for the employee, each employee enters the company with a career development plan in his/her mind that he/she wishes to obtain through his/her experiences within the organization. In fact, many career plans suggested by the employees are considered by the managers and are accepted to be beneficial for them [20].

Additionally, any company that implements career development plans for its employees will, in fact, reduce its employees' turnover rate [20]. Hoon [19] mentions that career planning, management, and development that are respective with human resources guidance influence employees' job satisfaction. Robbin [21] mentions that if there exist a gap in the career needs of the employee there will be stress and anger between coworkers, which in fact impacts the job satisfaction level in employees. Chen, Chang, and Yeh [15] study in their research the relationship between job satisfaction and the gap that exists between career development programs and career needs. In the case of Taiwan, where organizations are working to increase their competitiveness and become more involved in high tech production and development, the gaps existed between career development programs and expected career needs of production, and development has improved the job satisfaction in R&D employees [15]. However, widening the gaps between career development plans and employee career needs will lower job satisfaction in R&D employees [15]. Moreover, the gap changes in each career stage influences the job satisfaction differently [15]. In addition, as the gap widens, employees that are on the establishment stage of their career will get lower job satisfaction, and those that are on the maintenance stage will get higher job satisfaction than those on any other career stage [15].

Several changes in the company such as downsizing, rightsizing, and flattening affect the career development of employees in the company for the future. Moreover, employees are more satisfied with their jobs and give it their best when they sense well-organized developmental career plans that support their development and advancement to reach high levels and learn more through this career path [22]. In addition, career development for employees aids in the competitiveness of the company in the market by addressing the organizational needs of employees when developing them [22]. Companies that implement a person-environment theory tend to have the best career development of their employees and foresee employees' needs as much more important in order to know how to improve the interaction of the employee with his work environment [23, 24].

Potgieter, Coetzee, and Ferreira [25] mention in that the person-environment fit is essential for the sake of a workers' job embeddedness and career. Moreover, the person-environment fit is determined by the employee satisfaction with his position in the company, culture, and work environment. Also, it is determined by the career development and employee expectations [22, 23]. The authors Potgieter, Coetzee, and Ferreira [25] mention that the result of their research that is facilitated by the person-environment fit theory is the embeddedness of employees in their career development, which will help the employee to acquire job satisfaction of his position and career. Thus, accomplishing employees' career needs to develop will play a huge role in the job satisfaction of the employee [25].

Furthermore, hopes for improvements in jobs were increased by 20% when the term career development was initiated [26]. There are specific career counselors in many organizations that are known for career development; now career counselors are included in the tasks of the human resources development department [27]. The importance of the link between career development and job satisfaction was attracting the researchers [26]; a link between the two conducts was first detected by Gregson [12]. The results of the research conducted by Pearson and Ananthram [28] are that those organizations that fail to accomplish employee satisfaction will experience a nonstop of employee crisis. Moreover, employees retained in organizations that gave them the opportunity to be engaged in their career development plan. Most importantly is that young employees doing their job and attaining career development make their job more than just a job [28]. Career development boosts the young employees' efforts in the organization and makes them stick to the company. The authors highlighted on the importance of the link between job satisfaction and career development in increasing job retention and boosting effort of employees [28]. Career development will result in job satisfaction and especially in younger employees [28].

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