

Conceptions on Low Motivation of Engineers in Engineering Workplace of Pakistan

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Abstract

Motivation plays paramount role for engineers at workplace in order to increase workplace productivity of organizations. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether engineers of Pakistan are motivated to perform workplace jobs effectively at workplace. Thirty engineers from two engineering organizations of Pakistan participated in this study. Data were collected through questionnaire survey and semi structured interviews. Purposive sampling method was used for data collection purpose since respondents were drawn on specific criteria of engineers with minimum 5 years work experience. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to draw percentages for agreement and disagreement of engineers for low motivation at workplace. Qualitative data were analyzed using data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification method as suggested by (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Open coding (Richards, 2005; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Patton, 2002) and content analysis approach was used (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The results of the study indicated that engineers face low motivation at workplace. The findings of the study can be used as a guideline to motivate engineers in order to increase workplace productivity of organizations.

Keywords: Low motivation, engineers, engineering workplace

1. Introduction

The rapidly growing global economy has led engineering organizations to focus its workplace productivity. Thus, modern engineering organizations tend to focus employee motivation to change them into profit oriented organizations. In fact, low motivated employees have long remained concern for organizations. This is because increased workplace productivity heavily relies on motivated employees. Engineering organizations need to provide motivating environment to engineers' to crease workplace productivity of organizations. No doubt, the success of any organization largely depends on employee motivation because motivation is considered an important aspect of any successful profit oriented organization. In other words, motivation and employee job performance have become interrelated and interdependent upon each other in this modern age of industrialization. Additionally, it will not be an exaggeration to add that motivation is an important attribute of an engineer because motivated engineers play significant role to increase workplace productivity of engineering organizations. The major purpose of this research is to assess low motivation of engineers at engineering workplace of Pakistan.

2. Review of Literature

Motivation is an important aspect of any successful organization and it assists organizations to achieve its organizational success. Modern organizations employ different types of strategies to increase its workplace productivity and employee motivation tends to be one of those strategies. It is a well established fact that motivated

employees bring various financial benefits for organizations. Conversely, poor motivated employees' tend to be less productive and bring poor profits for organizations (Shahzad & Bhatti, 2008). Taking this into consideration, employers usually look for motivated engineers who can contribute towards profitability of organizations. Researchers' associate motivation with workplace productivity (Grant, 2008) and it has become one of the powerful predictors towards organizational success. There can be numerous reasons that can affect employee motivation at workplace for instance poor communication between upper management and lower management, absence of appreciation, poor job promotions and lack of non technical skill trainings including communication skill trainings. Truly speaking, communication skill trainings increase motivation and confidence among employees and directly or indirectly it impacts on health of organizations. Researchers have found that employees are motivated by appreciation, better trainings and compensation (Greenberg et al., 2010; Parker et al., 2010; Durkin, 2010).

Employees should be motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. If we draw a line of demarcation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation we can articulate that intrinsic motivation comes within the engineer and extrinsic motivation comes outside of the engineer in terms of job promotions, advance increments and other monetary benefits. Interestingly, researchers believe that recognition is more motivating than rewards (Demos, 2010; Smith, 2010) and it does not cost any financial burden on revenue of organizations. In this perspective, employers should never hesitate to motivate employees with rewards in terms of appreciation letters and some little amount as a token of appreciation. Unfortunately, this practice tends to be missing from government organizations of Pakistan. There can be numerous reasons but still there is old concept of subordination since colonial rule. In addition, this tends to be a tragedy with government organizations that if any organization achieves certain success the whole credit is given to the upper management. Unfortunately, a general perception has been generated in government organizations of Pakistan that it is mainly due to dynamic efforts of the boss ignoring the fact that it is the result of collective efforts of all employees.

In order to generate a motivating environment it is necessary that managers should possess motivational skills to encourage employees to work with full devotion and dedication to increase workplace productivity of organizations. It is a well known fact that managers spend major time communicating with employees at workplace. Thus, managers' motivation skills play paramount role for organizations to increase its workplace productivity. Managers should possess ability to motivate employees (Maccoby, 2010) since there is strong correlation between motivation and employee job performance. A professionally sound manager or engineer shall be better able to motivate employees to perform workplace jobs efficiently. In this perspective, organizations should assess motivation skills of managers or senior engineers if they want to increase its workplace productivity. No doubt, organizations that fail to provide motivating environment to its employees fail to achieve its organizational success at local as well as global level. As a result, they bear heavy financial losses that they do not overcome so easily. There can be certain reasons for poor work environment of organizations but lack of communication between upper management and lower management is one of the reasons. In view of this, employers should motivate employees with rewards (Maccoby, 2010) and involve them in the success of an organization (Heath & Heath, 2010). Additionally, managers should share mission of organization with employees (Barber, 2010; Dunlap, 2010) and realise them that if they toil hard they can promote business of organization at global level. Low motivated employees are never in the interest of organizations and usually they do not stay longer in one organization. Thus, employers should arrange trainings for engineers to prepare them valuable engineers for the organization. Chang (2007) found a way to motivate employees that is training and development. Engineers desire trainings but organizations avoid employee trainings because it costs financial expenditures for them.

Motivated employees contribute towards financial benefits for organizations. On the contrary, low motivation can lead employees for cheating and fraud (Baker, Jensen & Murphy, 1988). Thus, engineers' job performance depends on motivation that they exhibit for jobs at workplace. Shahzad & Bhatti (2008) illustrated that motivation is highly correlated with organizational profitability and an increase in employee motivation could bring profitability for organizations. Research over the years indicates that compensation and benefits can positively influence employee motivation (Milne, 2007; Shahzad & Bhatti, 2008; Udechukwu, 2007). Motivation affects efficiency and productivity of employees that will ultimately change organization's competitive advantage in increase or decrease of profits (Monopolopoulos, 2008; McAuliffe et al., 2006; Rampersad, 2006).

Schmid and Adams (2008) conducted an online survey of 115 certified project managers and utilised the constructs

of pay, advancement, recognition, management support and autonomy to assess how project managers perceive their ability to motivate team members. Researchers found that clear communication and member involvement were perceived to be important factors for motivation among project managers. In another survey, Monolopoulos (2008) conducted a study of 1,000 workers in public sector organization in Greece using the constructs of pay, promotion, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, nature of the work and communication. The results of the study revealed that extrinsic motivational tools are extensively used in Greece but employees tend to be more motivated through intrinsic motivation.

Shahzad and Bhatti (2008) focused on pay and benefits on motivation and organizational profitability in textile industries of Pakistan. These researchers concluded that basic, indirect, variable and social pay each have a positive impact on employee motivation in Textile industry of Pakistan. Hung et al. (2010) conducted a study on government employees. This researcher found that motivated employees were more willing to sign more job contracts with employers. Cateeuw et al. (2007) conducted studies on 1,000 professionals. Researchers found that 54% professionals were not motivated to complete tasks effectively. Moreover, Gulf Talent et al. (2009) conducted a study on professionals in the Middle East. The results of the study indicated that 21% professionals were highly motivated with their jobs, 50% were dissatisfied, 85% were over stressed, and 75% were in the mood to change the job.

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology employed for this study was mixed methods research based on quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative method contained questionnaire survey and qualitative methods included semi structured interviews with engineers.

3.1 Sample

Thirty (30) engineers from 2 engineering organizations of Pakistan participated in this study. Among these engineers 2 engineers voluntarily participated in semi structured interviews. Purposive sampling method was used since respondents were drawn on specific criteria of engineers with minimum five years work experience. The rationale for selection of engineers with minimum five years work experience was based on the idea that engineers with experience shall be better able to provide feedback on low motivation at workplace. Purposive sampling is a non probabilistic sampling method that is used for specific purpose (Singleton & Straits, 2005) to draw participants for any research study conducted on any topic.

3.2 Instruments

The instruments used for this study were questionnaire survey and semi structured interviews conducted with engineers on low motivation at workplace.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire administered to engineers contained two parts. First part of the questionnaire contained demographic information asking about gender, qualification, age, field of discipline, nature of job, and work experience. On the other hand, second part of the questionnaire contained statements relating to low motivation of engineers at workplace.

3.2.2 Semi Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews were better choice for this study since it allowed this researcher to ask more relevant questions from the feedback provided by engineers during interview. All interviews were audio recorded to capture full information provided by respondents on low motivation at workplace.

3.3 Participant Characteristics

Twenty eight (93%) male and 2 (7%) female engineers participated in this study. Nine respondents were between the ages of 25-30, thirteen 30-35 and eight 40-45 years. Interestingly, all 30 engineers possessed the degree of bachelor of engineering. Two engineers were from discipline of civil engineering, 4 mechanical, 21 electrical, 2 electronics and 1 chemical engineering. All of them were working as full time engineers. Seventeen possessed work experience between the range of (5 -10) years, seven (10-15), one (15-20) three (20 -25) and two (25-30) years respectively.

4. Data Analysis

Data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 15.0) to draw percentages for the variables included in the questionnaire. On qualitative part semi structured interviews were conducted. Miles and Huberman (1994) qualitative data analysis method such as data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification was used. All interviews were coded and the steps developing the codes began with open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Patton, 2002). Moreover, content analysis approach as suggested by (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was used. As open ended questions were similar for all respondents thus, answers were similar in many cases to make comparisons based on respondent responses.

5. Study Results

The research findings provided valuable insights on low motivation of engineers at workplace. Thus, these findings are presented as:

5.1. Quantitative Analysis

When engineers were asked about low motivation at workplace 0% engineers strongly disagreed, 8.84 % disagreed, 7.48% responded neutral, 51.70 % agreed and 31.97 % strongly agreed that they face low motivation at workplace (Fig. 5.1).

5.2 Qualitative Analysis

The researchers interviewed 2 engineers from questionnaire respondents to obtain in depth views on low motivation of engineers at workplace. When engineers were asked whether they are motivated to perform workplace jobs effectively at workplace Engineer 1 and Engineer 2 responded:

A comment by Aamir Ali:

"I think here people are not aware about these new trends. Our bosses are not aware of these new techniques. We are just performing our duty 8 to 10 hours".

This engineer indicated that there is no motivating environment in his organization. Surprisingly, this engineer called motivation a new trend although motivation and workplace productivity are interrelated and interdependent upon each other in this modern of industrialization. This engineer further opined that not only engineers but upper management of the organization is even unaware about motivation and its impact on employee job performance and workplace productivity. Additionally, this engineer showed his frustration saying that they are just performing duties daily from 8 to 10 hours. This engineer views confirm quantitative finding on low motivation of engineers at workplace.

A comment by Irfan Ali:

"Motivation plays an important role for the workers or subordinates and motivation particular I believe in motivation but here is generally no such environment from bosses or company managers, but I believe and my team and I work with my team to motivate ...the workers and then we get the good results".

This engineer indicated that motivation plays important role to encourage workers to perform workplace jobs

effectively. Moreover, this engineer complained that there is lack of motivation in his organization either from managers or from the management of the organization. This engineer further indicated that he believes in teamwork and through motivation they can obtain better results that can augment workplace productivity of organization. This engineer's view confirms the quantitative findings on low motivation of engineers at workplace.

6. Discussion

The results for low motivation indicated that engineers face low motivation in engineering workplace of Pakistan. Engineers indicated that if they perform better jobs organizations do not reward them. Engineers further identified that due to lack of motivation and poor work environment they change jobs from one organization to another. Thus, engineers' poor motivation affects their job performance as well as workplace productivity of organizations. Additionally, engineers indicated that the management of the organization is not well aware about motivation and its impact on employee job performance and workplace productivity. In such a working scenario they are perform 8 to 10 hours duty. On the other front, engineers stated that if workers be motivated they can obtain better results that ultimately lead towards workplace productivity of organizations. Shahzad and Bhatti (2008) noted that poorly motivated employees' tend to be less productive and bring poor profits for organizations. On the contrary, motivated employees contribute towards financial benefits of organizations (Baker, Jensen & Murphy, 1988). Catteeuw et al. (2007) conducted studies on 1,000 professionals. These researchers found that 54% professionals were not motivated to complete tasks effectively. It is envisaged that due to low motivation and poor work environment government organizations of Pakistan tend to be less productive and profitable for the government of Pakistan. Thus, such organizations tend to be privatised every year which have become burden on the economy of the country. It is suggested that if government of Pakistan focuses restructuring of these organizations they can be profitable organizations of the country. Moreover, it is envisaged that if upper management of organizations motivate employees they can considerably increase workplace productivity of organizations which is in better interest of all stakeholders such as government, employees and the organization itself.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated low motivation of engineers in engineering workplace of Pakistan. The results of this study indicated that engineers face low motivation at workplace. As a result, it affects their job performance at workplace. This tends to be the responsibility of the management of the organization to motivate engineers to perform workplace jobs efficiently. As a result it will improve workplace productivity of organizations itself. Moreover, it would be better if management of the organization reward engineers with intrinsic reward. As a result, engineers will take more efforts to promote business of organizations at national and international level. Summing up the discussion it is concluded that motivation plays an important role at workplace and it impacts on health of organizations in terms of increased workplace productivity.

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Inayatullah Kakepoto earned his Master of Arts (English Literature) from Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur (Sind) Pakistan. His teaching experience is spread more than over a decade as Lecturer at Cadet College Petaro (Pakistan Navy) and as Assistant Professor Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering Science and Technology Nawabshah (Sind) Pakistan. Currently he is a doctoral student at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. His research interests include workplace communication, soft skills, business communication and engineering education.



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Appendix:

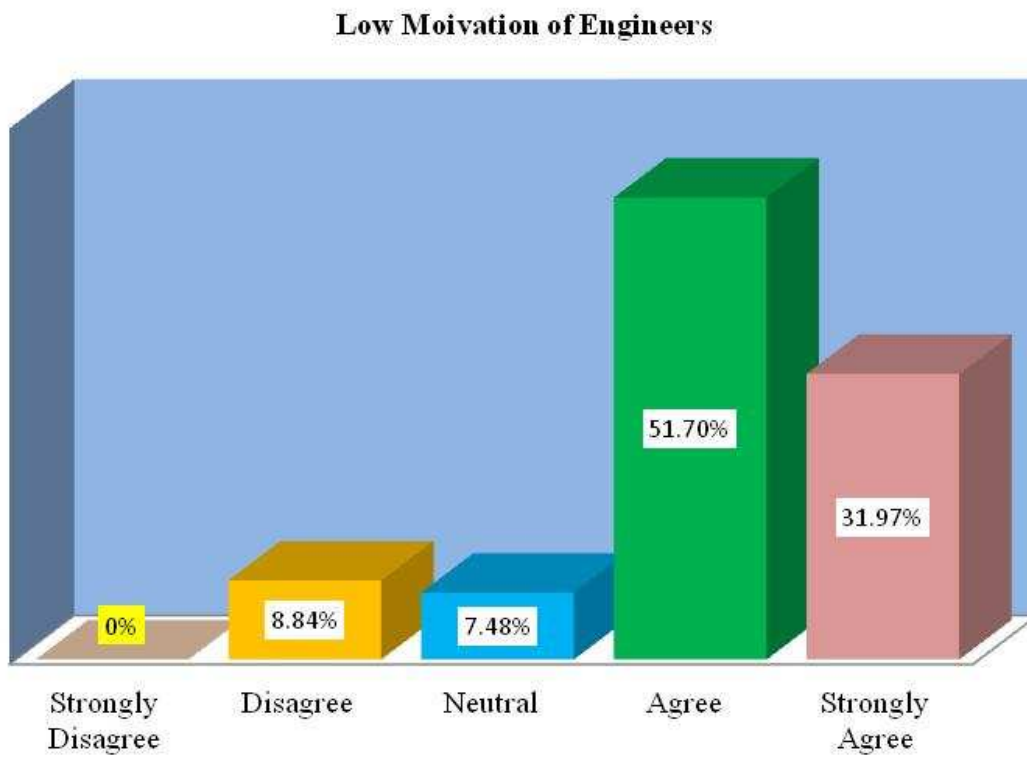


Figure 5.1: Low Motivation of Engineers in Engineering Workplace of Pakistan