

Employee Attitudes and Job Satisfaction

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Attitudes impact employee conduct and performance. In order to satisfy the needs of employees in the workplace, their concerns and feelings must be addressed because they contribute to the success of an organization. If employees are content and management is continuously looking for ways to improve the morale of workers, organizations are more efficient, customers are happier, and profits increase. Employers must recognize that the state of their business depends on how their employees feel about the issues that they encounter in the workplace. If employees are not thoroughly satisfied with their employment, they can succumb to negative attitudes and emotions that influence others within the organization.

INTRODUCTION

Attitudes and the affect they have on the workforce have been studied and thoroughly researched since the early 1900s (Irshad & Naz, 2011). In key job related behavior, including job performance and employee turnover, most studies have focused on employee job satisfaction (Irshad & Naz, 2011). Attitudes affect behavior and therefore are integral in studying how individuals and cultures within a company are affected. (Robbins & Judge, 2015) Attitudes displayed by individuals and groups are seen in their behavior and how they perform (Robbins & Judge, 2015). It is important for managers to understand how each employee feels and how that is reflected through their work (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Attitudes and behavior have the ability to reveal how satisfied people are with their jobs and they can affect a company's performance (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Still, there are many distinctive factors revolving around attitudes that affect workplace performance including: job satisfaction; organizational commitment; personality traits; age; salary; marital status; and education levels (Irshad & Naz, 2011). People have been studying attitudes and the affect they have on job satisfaction since the early 1900s. Many have tried to explain job satisfaction through theories including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, Expectancy Theory, Social Information Processing, Opponent Process Theory, and Genetic Theory of Job Satisfaction (Irshad & Naz, 2011).

COMPONENTS OF ATTITUDES

Researchers studying attitudes have focused on three main parts: cognition, affect, and behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2015). The cognitive element is an explanation or belief component, while the affective focuses on emotions and feelings (Robbins & Judge, 2015). The behavioral element focuses on meeting an objective to behave in a particular manner (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Cognition, affect, and behavior are difficult to separate because people tend to think one results in the causation of another (Robbins & Judge, 2015). It is important for researchers and companies to understand how multifaceted attitudes can be and how closely related these three components are regarding workplace behavior; management must understand that how they treat employees affects and shapes their point of view towards the company and their behavior and role in the businesses' success or failure (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

JOB ATTITUDES

People have many different attitudes; researchers believe there are thousands (Robbins & Judge, 2015). On a single day, a person can be happy or sad and experience both negative and positive emotions. These emotions translate into attitudes and how effectively employees are able to do the tasks related to their job. Researching attitudes within the workforce helps companies understand their work environment. Attitudes that have been researched extensively and apply to the workplace are job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, organizational support, and employee engagement (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

A company's culture plays a key role in whether or not the workplace has a positive or negative atmosphere (Yafang, 2011). If company leaders are able to communicate effectively and promote a common vision among all employees who agree with that vision, work behavior and attitudes can be more easily influenced (Yafang, 2011). Positive interactions between leaders and subordinates aid in better communication and collaboration (Yafang, 2011). Interactions also help encourage and foster a sense of teamwork where employees work together to accomplish common goals set forth by the organization which then leads to greater job satisfaction (Yafang, 2011).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an extremely important concept in the workplace, because it reflects an employee's attitude towards the organization that employs him or her. Someone who has high level job satisfaction has feelings that are positively correlated with the job's characteristics and requirements (Robbins & Judge, 2015). If someone has low level job satisfaction, he or she does not have a positive working environment and holds negative feelings towards the company (Robbins & Judge, 2015). In the 1990s, researchers focused on global satisfaction, and how satisfied an employee was with all aspects of the business, and facet satisfaction, which focused on key elements which included but were not limited to pay and supervision (Suma & Lesha, 2013).

Job Involvement & Psychological Empowerment

Employee involvement is related to job satisfaction. Job involvement focuses on evaluating the level to which people identify with their work while also measuring their own performance as a valuable component of individual worth (Robbins & Judge, 2015). When people are able to identify with the work that they perform, they feel more valuable and are able to accomplish more (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Psychological empowerment involves the level at which people believe they can affect their environment, their understanding, and the value they bring to an organization (Robbins & Judge, 2015). One study found that managers who involve employees in decision-making, value their employees, and give them the freedom to do their own work are the most empowering (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Employees value supervisors that trust their judgment (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

For many years, businesses were conservative and traditional in the sense that people would go to work and be closely monitored by their supervisors. Today, companies like Google give their employees more freedom. Google has nap pods where employees are allowed to sleep in order to be more productive. Many companies change the décor to be more pleasant and inviting for workers. Employees respond with feeling more connected to the institution.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to how well an employee recognizes him or herself as a member within an organization and his or her responsibilities as a result of that attachment (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Organizational commitment reflects how well an employee understands and upholds the organization's goals in order to remain active and see the company succeed (Robbins & Judge, 2015). New employees have the strongest correlation between commitment and performance (Robbins & Judge, 2015). However, employees can be committed and unhappy in their work (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Despite this finding, Okpara (1996) found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Irshad & Naz, 2011). Although job security once equated to an employee's loyalty to an organization, companies have now been fraught with downsizing and other company-wide transformations; in order to improve morale, companies are faced with the need to create more favorable working conditions, more easily accessible training and education, and other initiatives to boost employee commitment (Quereshi, Saleem, Basheer, Salahuddin, Sheikh, & Saadat, 2012). It is important to focus on highly committed employees and keep them satisfied in their jobs since higher job commitment is associated with better job performance (Quereshi, Saleem, Basheer, Salahuddin, Sheikh, & Saadat, 2012). Gender, age, marital status, educational level, and experience all have an effect on job satisfaction and employee performance (Quereshi, Saleem, Basheer, Salahuddin, Sheikh, & Saadat, 2012). Employees and institutions have a responsibility to one another; companies must provide a satisfying work environment while employees must do their jobs to the best of their abilities (Quereshi, Saleem, Basheer, Salahuddin, Sheikh, & Saadat, 2012).

In several studies (Judge, Heller, and Mount, 2002; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and DeChermont, 2003), job satisfaction and organizational commitment were studied along with extraversion and neuroticism (Irshad & Naz, 2011). They found that individuals with outgoing personalities were more committed to their work (Irshad & Naz, 2011). Personality is a defining variable when dealing with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Irshad & Naz, 2011). In addition, demographic variables including age, education level, and marital status have been studied to determine whether they are linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Irshad & Naz, 2011). Employees' ages are directly linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Irshad & Naz, 2011). In several studies, AL-Hussami (2008); Cabrita and Perista (2007); Castillo (2004); Du, Song, Liu, and Picken (2007); Mosadeghrad, Ferlie and Rosenberg (2008); Salami (2008); and Stup (2006), determined that education levels are positively correlated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Irshad & Naz, 2011). According to data, better employee performance means a greater commitment level (Quereshi, Saleem, Basheer, Salahuddin, Sheikh, & Saadat, 2012).

Workers feel committed to their jobs for many reasons (Suma & Lesha, 2013). Some of those reasons include an attachment to the organization's values, their understanding that there are both financial and personal costs connected to leaving an organization, and a worker's sense of obligation to the institution (Suma & Lesha, 2013). Internationally, recent research has focused on organizational commitment and job satisfaction of city employees in developing nations with specific focus on how committed workers are and how satisfied they feel with different parts of their job (Suma & Lesha, 2013). This study found that greater job satisfaction at the Municipality of Shkoder, a city in northwestern Albania, correlated with a stronger commitment to the organization (Suma & Lesha, 2013).

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support refers to how extensive an employee feels its company values their involvement within the organization and makes them feel taken care of and secure (Robbins & Judge

2015). Supportive working environments include fair reward systems, employees being an integral part in decision-making, and thoughtful and supportive management (Robbins & Judge, 2015). This is pertinent to business because a strong feeling of perceived organizational support increases organizational citizenship behavior and customer service, and decreases absenteeism and tardiness among all employees (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

Job satisfaction is positively correlated with perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior, and task performance (Ren-Tao, 2011). In order to enhance employee performance, companies must implement policies and regulations, attitudes, procedures, and decision-making that takes into account the company's workers (Ren-Tao, 2011). This can be shown through providing monetary incentives, resolving employee issues, increasing job development opportunities, and reducing workplace discrimination (Ren-Tao, 2011). Employees who perceive positive support from their company are much more likely to demonstrate reciprocity through organizational citizenship behaviors (Ren-Tao, 2011). Employees value a relationship where benefits and contributions between the employee and company are equally exchanged (Ren-Tao, 2011).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to a worker's participation, gratification, and excitement for his or her work (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Engaged employees are ardent about their work and feel a strong connection and link to their company; only a small percentage of workers feel engaged by their work (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Employee engagement is important because it produces higher levels of customer satisfaction and employees are more productive; businesses reap higher profits and lower turnover levels and mishaps (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Ultimately, in order for an employee to be deeply engaged, he or she must have a good relationship with management (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Managers are vital in employee job satisfaction, performance, and success (Jackson, Alberti, & Snipes, 2014).

JOB SATISFACTION FACTORS

Jobs involve relationships between employees and management. Employees must understand and abide by rules and procedures set forth by companies. Employees are also responsible for performing tasks specific to each job. The nature of the job, administration, salary, advancement opportunities, and relationships are all key factors that must be taken into consideration with job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Employees are least satisfied with their wage and promotion opportunities and more satisfied with the people they work with and their actual work (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Western cultures experience higher job satisfaction levels (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Retention of employees largely depends on high levels of support and a positive leader-member exchange relationship with their supervisor. More recently, demographic differences amongst employees have been studied in order to better understand a company's work flow and how well employees work under leadership traits associated with different genders (Jackson, Alberti, & Snipes, 2014).

Employee Support

Job satisfaction is most easily identified in jobs where employees receive training, support, variety, freedom, interdependence, feedback, interaction, and power (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Some researchers say that job and life satisfaction are positively correlated (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Begley and Czajka (1993) and Tharenou (1993) researched and determined that job satisfaction correlated with job performance, work values, employee motivation, absenteeism, turnover, and burnout (Suma & Lesha, 2013). It has also been determined that employees who are satisfied at work lead better lives at home and have better health which leads to lower medical costs for employers (Suma & Lesha, 2013).

Leader-Member Exchange

Unique workplace relationships develop between employees and management (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Leader-member exchange is the study of relationships formed by employees and

subordinates (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Past research by Golden & Veiga (2008) shows that leader-member exchange, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are linked in part because relationships are stronger between employees and supervisors (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Past studies have concluded that the higher the quality of leader-member exchange the more employees feel trust and respect for their employer which leads to organizational commitment while companies with low quality leader-member exchange do not feel an obligation to their employer and thus, see their jobs as a contractual agreement (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Supervisors and subordinates must work together to establish successful relationships leading to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Leaders within companies have the power to affect an employee's feelings about the company (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Interactions and the relationships formed between supervisors and employees influences perceived leader-member exchange quality (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). When the quality of leader-member exchange is perceived as increasing, job satisfaction and organizational commitment increase (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). There are several ways supervisors can develop quality leader-member exchange. First, companies should provide leadership and development training for employees (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Within this training, companies should concentrate on mentoring, relationship skills, achieving common goals, and communicating with others (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Through training and seminars, employees can increase their knowledge and become more valuable to the institution (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Secondly, trust can be established when open communication is accepted and valued (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). All employees should be treated fairly and equal and each should be recognized for individual talents (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Supervisors should respect and value diversity rather than ignore it within their workplace (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011). Company leaders must get to know employees personally and be able to communicate with them (Chou, Chou, Jiang, & Klein, 2011).

Leaders should work with employees to help identify their subordinates' through cues and information, which will help the subordinates become more self-aware and help them in their work interactions and relationships (Jiaxin, Lin, & Jun, 2014). Leaders have the ability to help shape their subordinates' self-identity; this self-awareness encourages subordinates to maintain their roles in the work force (Jiaxin, Lin, & Jun, 2014). In order to cement leader-member exchange, leaders must be perceived as qualified, knowledgeable, and appreciated by followers (Jiaxin, Lin, & Jun, 2014). For leaders and followers alike, building a reputation will take time and effort, but it is extremely valuable within this exchange, because it allows both leaders and subordinates the opportunity for self-discovery and knowledge of how the working unit will run (Jiaxin, Lin, & Jun, 2014). In China, due to social structures, a supervisor's relationship with his or her employees is vital to the success of a company because employees feel more or less committed to a company depending on the relationship (Ren-Tao, 2011).

Demographic Differences

Recent studies have focused on demographic differences among workers (Jackson, Alberti, & Snipes, 2014). Researchers have identified gender as being a key component in job satisfaction due to female versus male leadership qualities (Jackson, Alberti, & Snipes, 2014). Identifying and recognizing whether employees work better under female leadership or male leadership is key in how management decides to run a company (Jackson, Alberti, & Snipes, 2014). In recent years, a shift has been made to move from typical male characteristics: "aggressive, objective, dominant, competitive, and decisive" to female traits: "emphasizing teamwork, empathy, work-life balance, and nurturing relationships" (Jackson, Alberti, & Snipes, 2014). In the late 1980s, Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) proposed that demographic differences among management and employees led to miscommunication and communication barriers which affected employee's satisfaction with their work (Jackson, Alberti, & Snipes, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Much research has been done to reflect that there is a positive correlation between attitudes and job satisfaction. Individual employees have the capacity and power to see a business either fail or succeed. When employees experience high levels of job satisfaction, their working environment is better for everyone at the organization. With high morale, companies are able to become more efficient, increase profits and satisfy customers. Supervisor and subordinate attitudes and respect for one another, the level of job satisfaction for each worker, job involvement, psychological empowerment, organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, and employee engagement all help shape an employee's perspective and feelings towards a company.

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