

# **Problem Solving and Decision Making: Individual Report**

## **Job dissatisfaction and decline in employee morale: a complex problem in the workplace**

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## **Executive summary**

Job dissatisfaction is a common problem that is also persistent in the contemporary workplace due to poor administration, poor work-life balance, and lack of growth prospects, to name a few. This report has focused on the impact of job satisfaction on employee morale as a complex problem in the organisation. As a method, this report took the aid of several secondary resources and reports from credible bibliographic databases like Google Scholar. After evaluating a plethora of alternatives, this report suggests that job redesigning and meaningful work is the most appropriate solutions to drive employee morale. Apart from that, this report also notes the communication plan and monitoring techniques of these alternatives.

## Table of Contents

|                                                                           |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction .....                                                        | 4  |
| Job dissatisfaction: definition, scope, and impact .....                  | 4  |
| Analysis of existing information .....                                    | 5  |
| Alternative solutions.....                                                | 5  |
| Evaluation of alternatives to identify the most appropriate solution..... | 6  |
| Implementation plan.....                                                  | 7  |
| Communication to stakeholders .....                                       | 8  |
| Monitoring and review techniques .....                                    | 9  |
| Conclusion .....                                                          | 9  |
| Reference List.....                                                       | 10 |

## **Introduction**

There can be diverse reasons behind job dissatisfaction of employees in a workplace including poor management, poor work-life balance, or lack of development opportunities, which renders employee dissatisfaction a complex problem in the workplace. Though this report aims to cover job dissatisfaction from a broader perspective, it narrows down its focus to the problem of declining employee morale, which is a direct outcome of job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, this report evaluates alternative solutions to combat job dissatisfaction to identify the most suitable solution to the chosen problem. This report also points out an implementation plan, techniques for communicating the plan to stakeholders, and techniques for monitoring the progress of the plan.

## **Job dissatisfaction: definition, scope, and impact**

As job satisfaction is an index of understanding how much an employee is contented with her job, job dissatisfaction can be defined as a situation where employees are not feeling contented with the job. As hinted in the introduction section, there can be a plethora of reasons for this situation to arise. For instance, focusing on the garment workers of Bangladesh, Islam (2015) shows how inefficient administration or poor management can lead to employee job dissatisfaction. As the attached case study also notes, poor management, especially in terms of poor leadership skills, often leads to employee dissatisfaction due to the incapability of the administration to motivate their employees. Moreover, as noted in De Jong *et al.* (2017), poor work-life balance is also a crucial reason for job dissatisfaction to persist since it increases stress and, hence, causes frustration in the employees.

As far as the scope of this report is concerned, it is focused on job dissatisfaction as a major cause of declining employee morale in an organisation. Employee morale is primarily concerned with the compatibility of employees' objectives with organisational objectives. From this definition, it is evident that declining employee morale essentially refers to the reluctance or lack of motivation of the employees to serve organisational objectives. As shown in Obeng *et al.* (2020), poor employee morale plays a mediating role in job insecurity and turnover intention in the employee.

It is evident from the basic association between job dissatisfaction and employee morale that the primary impact of this intention can be identified in the sense of job insecurity in an employee, which eventually leads her towards turnover. Lack of employee morale, as shown by Pattnaik and Jena (2020) in the context of remote working i.e. post-Covid-19 'new

normal', is essentially associated with employee disengagement, which can have harmful effects on employee productivity.

## **Analysis of existing information**

Here, the identified problem is the impact of job dissatisfaction on employee morale. One of the basic manifestations of low employee morale is the development of a sense of meaninglessness in the employee regarding the job. According to Cetinkaya and Karayel(2019), this sense of meaninglessness may arise when the employees cannot find direct relations between their work and the organisational objectives. Now, as mentioned earlier that employee morale is principally about the compatibility between individual objectives and organisational objectives, it is proven that employee morale is directly related to the meaningfulness of work. Another aspect that is commonly linked with job dissatisfaction and employee morale is the opportunities that organisations provide for the individual development of the employees. As shown in a 2019 study, in comparison to other areas of the United Kingdom (UK), Wales presents manydissatisfied employees where the principal cause of their dissatisfaction is a lack of autonomy growth prospects in their existing job profile (Felstead and Davies, 2019). As the attached case study notes, the low growth prospects of a company can cause employee disengagement since the employees are deprived of a sense of belongingness in the company. In other words, they tend to feel that the organisation does not value their efforts. The strategic significance of growth opportunities in a workplace is termed as 'demands-resources' by Kim *et al.* (2018), which, from a psychological perspective, is directly related to the reduction of disengagement and burnout. Hence, it is evident that the relationship between job dissatisfaction and employee morale cannot be understood without the aspects like meaningful work and growth opportunities in the workplace.

## **Alternative solutions**

Job dissatisfaction and the corresponding engagement are primarily associated with a lack of recognition of the efforts of the employees in the workplace. Hence, one of the major alternative solutions will be to ensure acknowledgement of employee efforts (monetary and otherwise) and communicate feedback to drive motivation.

Poor work-life balance as a major reason for job dissatisfaction can only be handled through work flexibility. In this regard, the organisational administration can be recommended to exercise flexible working arrangements (FWAs) to ensure work flexibility, and, hence, greater work-life balances (Rodríguez-Modroño and López-Igual, 2021). It is evident from

the analysis of existing information that adopting FWAs can begin with redesigning the existing jobs and assigning them as per competence to prevent burnout or frustration. It is also evident from the existing analysis that the meaningfulness of work is a pivotal criterion for boosting employee morale. Meaningfulness of existing work can come from enabling the employees with greater authority about their tasks. Moreover, purposeful feedback from the administration can also play a foundational role in creating a sense of meaningfulness in existing work.

## Evaluation of alternatives to identify the most appropriate solution

Job dissatisfaction leads to a lack of engagement and employees in a workplace tend to be reluctant in achieving the organisational objectives which reduce their effort as well. For a manager, to solve the issue of dissatisfaction and low level of morale in the employees, evaluating a range of solutions is crucial. Lunenburg (2010) notes decision-making is a process of making an effective choice from various alternatives for achieving the desired result. For making an informed decision for identifying the appropriate solution to reduced satisfaction, engagement and low performance of employees, the Multiple Criteria Decision Analysis technique can be effective. It provides a systematic framework that evaluates the options by comparing them against a specific set of success criteria along with identifying the risks (Yu, 2013). Using the decision tree tool choices and every possible outcome associated with the alternatives can be visualised. One of the tools of the MCDA technique is a decision matrix evaluating different solutions that can be effective.

In the current context, four alternatives can be identified which include:

1. Reducing the work-load for improved work-life balance as Abdirahman (2018) noted work-life balance has a positive impact on employee satisfaction
2. Communicating a sense of purpose and meaning by job re-designing and challenging tasks
3. Increased recognition and rewards for improving employee motivation as Varma (2017) noted employee motivation is positively associated with employee satisfaction and engagement
4. Professional development of the employees for enhancing skills, meeting esteem needs, and facilitating career goals

| Factors | Cost of the change | Feasibility | Tangible outcome | Productivity | The scope within | Resistance to change | Meeting employee needs |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
|---------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|

|            |      |          |          |      |                           |          |      |
|------------|------|----------|----------|------|---------------------------|----------|------|
|            | e    |          |          |      | the<br>current<br>culture |          |      |
| Weights    |      |          |          |      |                           |          |      |
| Solution 1 | High | Moderate | Moderate | Low  | Low                       | Low      | High |
| Solution 2 | Low  | High     | High     | High | High                      | Moderate | High |
| Solution 3 | High | High     | Moderate | Low  | Moderate                  | Low      | High |
| Solution 4 | High | Moderate | Moderate | High | High                      | Moderate | High |

From the evaluation of the four alternatives, considering the acceptance of the strategies, their ability to meet the needs of the employees, and the cost of introducing the change prove to be crucial factors. Selection of the appropriate solution needs to be based on the tangible outcome, and its impact on organisational productivity. To boost employee morale, job redesigning, and communicating to employees the importance of their work to bring a sense of meaning and purpose would be the most appropriate solution to solve the problems of lack of engagement, reduced performance, and low employee morale emerging from employee dissatisfaction at the workplace.

## Implementation plan

For implementing the solution, it is crucial to follow a structured approach. Knight and Parker (2021) revealed that job redesign has a significant positive impact at an individual level and it can improve the satisfaction of the employees. The following plan would be used for implementing job redesign in the workplace:

Step 1: Identifying the changing needs, and selection of various jobs and job categories affected by the changes in the external environment for redesigning the jobs

Step 2: Performing an individual job analysis using the job element method for listing the characteristics of excellent performers for specific job roles

Step 3: Core-competency analysis of the job descriptions and the roles

Step 4: Redefining the job by making minor changes, combining job roles, and communicating with the stakeholders regarding the impact of the re-designing. After evaluation and approval of the senior management, the changing job roles would be codified into the competency framework of the organisation and necessary changes will be communicated clearly to the employees.

Step 5: Implementing the job redesign would require consideration of the internal resistance, reskilling people, introducing learning and development programs, and involving people on a day-to-day basis working in the key job roles for improved readiness of the employees.

## **Communication to stakeholders**

The primary stakeholders in the context of implementing job redesign are the employees, managers, and human resource management of the organisation. Before implementing necessary changes to the workplace concerning job redesigning and development of job roles focusing on the meaningfulness of the work, employees need to be communicated the implications, the need for redesigning, and the importance of their contribution to the organisational performance. Employees across different departments would be informed about the change through the HR manager along with providing them with the scope of providing feedback, their opinions, and collaboration to ensure they participate in the decision-making process.

Employees would be sent a formal mail indicating the purpose of the redesign and the implications of the redesign of their jobs. The benefits of the redesigning will be mentioned in the mail as well. Apart from that, team leaders and managers of each department would be allocated the responsibility of clearly communicating the changes in the job roles of each team and the arrangements that have been made to enhance the engagement of the employees by providing them jobs that would be meaningful and interesting for them. Clear communication of the expected skills and the organisational resources provided to the employees including learning and development as well as training programs would be included in the communication process.

The external stakeholders would be communicated the change within the organisation through a newsletter uploaded to the official website of the organisation. Apart from that, the social media platform and the existing internal networks of the organisation would be utilised for clearly communicating the plan to the employees and the external stakeholders.

## **Monitoring and review techniques**

Measuring the success of the implementation of job redesign would require the use of effective monitoring and review techniques. Gupta and Agrawal (2019) noted that the 360-degree feedback method can be effective in measuring the behavioural change of the employees. Along with assessing the engagement levels through internal surveys, one-on-one interviews with employees, and conducting exit and stay interviews, a variety of different HR tools can be used. Among different monitoring and review techniques, employee engagement levels can be monitored through the performance of the employees which can be monitored by the managers and the team leaders on a day-to-day basis. Focusing on available monitoring and review techniques, 360-degree feedback can prove to be effective as it allows the management to obtain relevant data regarding the performance of the employees and their efficiency from different people. This review technique can be used for obtaining feedback from the employees as well. Anonymous feedback from the employees can help in understanding whether the strategy has been effective in reducing dissatisfaction and improving the work engagement of the employees.

## **Conclusion**

This report focuses on job dissatisfaction and studies its impact on employee morale as a complex problem in the workplace. Employee morale is primarily a function of meaningful work and growth opportunities existing in the workplace. After evaluating a plethora of alternatives, this report suggests that job redesigning and meaningful work is the most appropriate solutions to drive employee morale. This report also suggests that the administration should exercise all possible sources of communication to make the stakeholders aware of these alternatives. Monitoring techniques include feedback programs where the employees will direct express their experiences after the implementation of new alternatives.

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