

Blue-Collar Workers Behind The Success Story Of UAE

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Abstract: Blue-collar workers are typically defined as workers who work manually, physically and generally earn lower incomes who plays key role in any construction of organization in UAE. UAE is home to around half a million blue-collar workers. The real question is whether they are motivated and perform work to their fullest potential. This paper revolves around the importance of motivating and recognizing these blue-collar workers. It talks about the initiatives taken by the Government of UAE in order to provide happiness and satisfaction to blue-collar workers. Motivation always focused on white-collar employees in every organization but managements need to realize that for achieving effectiveness, efficiency and growth, every employee including the blue-collar workers should be motivated and should feel satisfied and happy in their workplace. This report shows an overview of the importance of motivation towards the Blue-collar works and with the help of a primary research through questionnaire. Upon receiving feedbacks from the workers, it has been concluded that the management should necessarily take initiatives towards motivating the Blue-collar workers and should realize their importance in the organization. Blue-collar workers are essential for any organization and play a very important role. Plans are made by the higher authorities but are mostly executed by these workers and without this execution, a company cannot grow. The contribution to growth from these workers should be realized by every single organization and they should motivate both white as well as Blue-collar workers.

Keywords: MBlue-Collar Workers, Motivation, Recognition, Smart Labor, Physical.

1. INTRODUCTION

Blue-collar workers come in the category of those workers that are required to do more of manual work and they generally earn a lower income than that of the White-collar workers. They usually include jobs such as mining, retail, manufacture, construction etc. where more of physical work is involved. Usually more than 50% of workers are Blue-collar workers in an organization and they are a very important factor in determining the success of a business [1]. Even though Blue-collar workers are crucial to an organization, mostly White-collar workers are a main point of focus excluding these laborers. However, the success of an organization depends upon satisfying and motivating both these kind of employees. Dubai has been harboring a massive number of Blue-collar jobs since the 80's and 90's. From that time onwards, there has been a rapid steady growth. According to a study conducted in 2005 approximately 2,00,000 workers chose to migrate to Dubai in order to take up this job. Upholding a strategic and comfortable location, UAE has become an economic hub from a globalization perspective. People are attracted to UAE because of the standard of living, which is provided to even the least of income earners, and because of the less rigid laws and regulations in comparison to other countries in the Middle East. Many global businesses have moved to Dubai considering it as a hub facilitating infrastructural and economic growth. One of the biggest challenges faced by HR department today is facilitating the engagement of blue-collar workers.

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A recent Gallup Poll data states that, in various job aspects; Manual laborers who are paid on an hourly basis are unhappier than those who work for salaries. An analysis conducted by the Harvard Business Review concluded that, Employees working in Blue-collar jobs have an overall lower level of happiness in almost about every region throughout the world. Industries such as mining, fishing, construction, manufacturing, transportation etc. report to have such similar cases [2]. The objective of this paper is to find how these blue-collar employees are motivated in the UAE and what are the measures taken by the government of UAE.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Unskilled/blue V collar workers such as auto mechanics, construction workers, plumbers, electricians etc perform variety of jobs. They perform manual work. It is a very necessary thing for the top management to understand that not only the white-collar workers but also motivation of the blue-collar workers considered as an important factor to complete tasks with efficiency and effectiveness and maintaining a happy and satisfied workforce [4]. These are some important factors that need to be considered with the blue-collar workers in the organization:-

2.1 Job Security

With the emergence of IT and the lesser need of human intervention, many workers lose their jobs and are replaced by robots or machineries. When these jobs are secure, there is more motivation to work in the organization. A contract of job rotation can be signed where laborers can be given another task or job in case they are replaced because of an automation or machinery [4].

2.2 Salary/Pay

The salary of unskilled workers is determined on an hourly basis. In the case of white-collar employees, the salary is negotiated and is based on seniority or levels. There is no such bargaining or adjustment in the case of blue-collar workers, a fair pay/wage can efficiently motivate and keep a labor satisfied [4].

2.3 Recognition

Receiving recognitions has a deep impact on not only the blue-collar employee but also on his peer employees. When receiving a reward or recognition, it motivates the worker to work harder and a sense of achievement and the other employees so they work towards receiving such recognitions [5].

2.4 Co-workers

When a positive environment is created amongst all the blue-collar employees, with interdependencies while performing dangerous tasks that include electricity, iron etc. The confidence and trust amongst the workers increases the satisfaction of the job [5]. When there are constant losses occurring in the construction industries, the price is mostly paid by these low paid Blue-collar workers. Being the backbone of the construction industry, even then these workers go through the maximum loss during economy crisis [6]. It was analyzed and opinionated by the MEED's construction industry into the labor welfare legislation of UAE and it was found that many of the respondents opinionated that the law could be improvised and the existing laws sufficed approximately only 22% of the respondents.

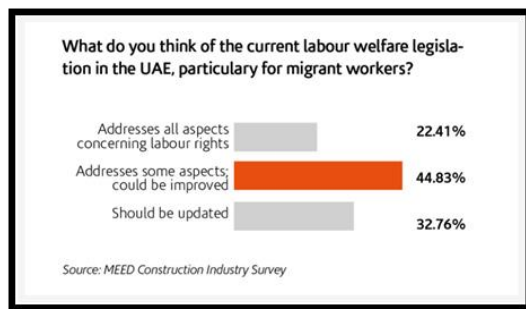


Fig. 1: Survey conducted by MEED construction Industry regarding the labour welfare.

Launched and initiated in the month of May, 2016 by Abu Muad; Smart labor is a technological acumen directed towards the blue-collar workers focusing solely on the personal development of these workers. It focuses on increasing their productivity and happiness. This is done by providing educational content in various languages and by collecting feedbacks/suggestions from these blue-collar workers or the reporting any incidents through pictures or voice notes which can be freely done in their language. Smart labor also consists of a platform that teaches a course to learn Basic English. Once the workers complete tasks such as watching an English course video, they receive points, which can be redeemed and used for shopping or gifting[8]. The main objective is to eliminate communication/language barriers which is really great imitative that makes the blue-collar workers feel recognized and important [7]. In the early stages of 2018, Smart labor comprised of a base with 12,500 Blue-collar workers. They secured US\$100,000 as funds in the Expo Live Innovation by the Dubai Expo 2020. It has been used in promoting and developing Smart Labor on the next level. After receiving much recognition, it has motivated Muad to make it the best opportunity for all the blue-collar workers to motivate them and to develop them on a personal basis.

Starting with a base of 12,500; Smart labor is now home to over 50,000 blue-collar workers which is a tremendous growth factor [8]. Keeping customers in the next few years will be even more important than making a sale. [9]

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is primary as well as secondary in nature. A questionnaire has been conducted primarily by gathering feedback from blue-collar workers. Previously used data has been analyzed and conclusions have been formed by conducting desk research. The main objectives of this research are as follows:-

- To study about the motivation of blue-collar workers in the UAE.
- To analyze initiatives taken by the UAE in order to measure the satisfaction level of the blue-collar workers.
- To determine the motivation of blue-collar workers by conducting a questionnaire.

The research approach used for conducting this research is inductive. Inductive research involves generalizing ideas or theories based upon an observation and forming conclusions. The data collection method used for the purpose of this research is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire sent to the Blue-collar workers of the company Sama Al Emarat Building Maintenance to collect the sample. The tests used for the purpose of this research and analyzing data are the calculation of Measures of Central Tendency i.e., Mean, Median and Mode to determine the average and the maximum occurrence of a feedback.

Following are some of the sample questions included in the questionnaire along with a rating scale:-

- My manager motivates me to work effectively.
- My company chooses the type of work according to my physical ability.
- I am very happy to have an opportunity to serve this company.

Some of the limitations while conducting this research are as follows:

- A larger size of the sample would help in receiving more reliable and accurate information.
- Many workers may choose not to speak against their organizations, hence, decreasing the accuracy of information.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

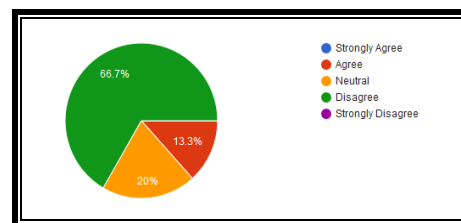


Fig. 2: Blue-collar workers are motivated effectively in UAE

4.1 Testing of Hypothesis: Blue-collar workers are motivated effectively in UAE.

Ho: There is not enough motivation given to the blue-collar workers in the companies of UAE.

H1: There is enough motivation provided to the blue-collar workers in the companies of UAE.

When the workers were asked if they were motivated efficiently by their managers, almost 70% of the Blue-collar workers disagreed to the statement (Mode=4). Therefore, the research failed to reject the null hypothesis, which concludes that there is not enough Motivation provided be the companies to the Blue-collar workers in the UAE.

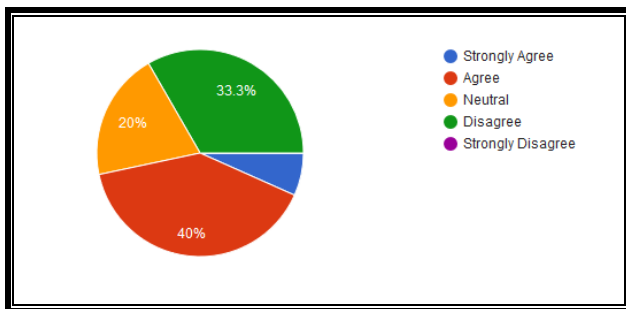


Fig. 3: Blue-collar workers are satisfied and happy with their job

4.2 Testing of Hypothesis: Blue-collar workers are satisfied and happy with their job.

Ho: There is no satisfaction and happiness derived from the job for the blue-collar workers in the UAE.

H1: There is happiness and satisfaction derived from the job for the blue-collar workers in the UAE.

Upon being asked 20% of the workers strongly agreed to bring satisfied with the job and approximately 50% agreed to being satisfied with the job (Mode=2). Therefore reject the null hypothesis and that there is happiness and satisfaction derived from the job for the Blue-collar workers in the UAE. From the feedbacks collected, it was found that almost 65% of the respondents are satisfied with the job that they are performing. Creating job satisfaction is very important on the part of the management; meetings and campaigns should be held and the opinions of the blue-collar workers should be voiced and taken into consideration. This increases satisfaction as the worker feels important. Almost 67% of the workers feel that there is no motivation from the manager whereas 20% feel neutral towards the statement. This is a very important factor that should be taken into consideration; motivation of the blue-collar workers should be considered as one of the most important factor as they play a very important role. Only with proper motivation efficient and effective results, reaching to the full potential can be achieved. Long and short-term goals with special incentives should be given to the workers. Friendly competitiveness should be promoted where employees feel a sense of achievement and recognition and which motivates them harder. Routine evaluations should be performed on each of the workers where areas of concern

can be addressed to and also appraisal can be rewarded to them. They should be educated of their rights and laws and there should also be seminars and workshops set up for personal development as they should not be limited to just the same job. These factors can play a very important role in motivating the blue-collar workers. According to the law of UAE, every blue-collar worker has Health Insurance, which can be claimed, in cases of emergencies or sickness, but they are not aware or educated about having a health insurance, as there is no physical evidence such as a card. Every employee should be educated and it is the job of the company to inform the workers of the perquisites they have. 73% of the employees agree that work is given according to their physical ability whereas almost 23% of the employees disagree to this statement. Management should always ensure that workers are given jobs that can be completed with their full potential and there should not be any physical burden on them. This can be taken care of with the help of observation and taking frequent feedbacks from the blue-collar workers. Only 40% of the employees have expressed being happy about serving the particular company whereas 33% of the employees disagree to the statement. This usually happens because of more focus given to the White-collar workers; management should consider these workers as a vital part of the organization and should focus both on white-collar and blue-collar workers to maintain a happy and satisfied workforce. 53% of the workers think that their managers are not effective leaders and that they do not communicate well, inspections should be performed by the government to ensure that managers are fair, good at communication and have effective leadership skills towards all the employees. 86% of the employees agree to the statement that salary/wages received before or on time. 13% of the blue-collar workers feel that they are not treated equally based on their race, caste etc. This is a minute percentage but every person should be treated equally and there should not be any discrimination. Management should always heed to any complaints the workers have and should always take action in such circumstances. Approximately 90% of the workers think that the safety at the workplace is according to the UAE law standards. UAE government considers the safety of the blue-collar workers as a very important priority, which is one of the many reasons people migrate from their countries to work as blue-collar workers in the UAE. 33% of the employees find their job interesting and they enjoy doing it, whereas 26% disagree and 13% are neutral towards the statement. Management should give equal focus to motivating blue-collar workers and make their job interesting by bringing in dynamic changes, recognition of good work, incentives on achievement of goals, empowerment of workers by involving them into decision-making and constant feedback from them. By focusing on equal motivation to both white and Blue-collar workers, the management can achieve very efficient and effective results with good growth of the business. Often times, the blue-collar workers are neglected; by avoiding this a company can make itself different and just work towards growth and success as each and every employee would be satisfied and motivated to achieve organizational and personal objectives.

5. CONCLUSION

It is very evident that blue-collar workers make up a very

important part in an organization. It is important for management to motivate these workers to achieve effective results. UAE is a home to about half a million migrant blue-collar workers. However, the management of the companies including blue-collar workers need to strategize and prioritize motivating the blue-collar workers. It is because they have done the entire manual task in construction sector. Maximum number of managers and leaders fail to realize that personal development of every single employee and not just the white-collared employees is necessary. Making up a significant percentage of a company, these Blue-collars shed their sweat and blood in order to make a building stand. With proper motivation, organizations can build strong workers with good inter-personal skills and teamwork adaption. When they are motivated in the right manner, they feel a sense of motivation, they feel empowered and they even appreciate their team members. If organizations want to achieve effective results, they must necessarily focus on the motivation of blue-collar workers. Smart Labor provides a very good opportunity to workers to express themselves, develop themselves and learn different languages in order to eliminate the communication barriers. The management has mostly been authoritarian in the case of blue-collar workers; initiating a participative approach can bring in many changes in the attitude and motivation of blue-collar workers. This gives a clear vision of goals and helps in the enhancement of teamwork. If the blue-collar workers feel important and recognized, they will definitely work harder and it will increase their motivation level which will eventually lead to a tremendous growth of the organization/enterprise. The UAE Government not only ensure safety in a workplace, also organize inspections to determine if the blue-collar workers are motivated sufficiently. It is a vital thing to motivate blue-collar workers in every organization to achieve work to their maximum potential that leads to success platform for the country.

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