The Impact of Rewards Management on Job Satisfaction of Operational Level Employees in Selected Apparel Companies

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the role of rewards management in influencing job satisfaction among operational-level employees in selected apparel companies in Sri Lanka. Through an extensive literature review, the study examines the effects of various rewards management components including basic pay, incentives, and welfare facilities on employees' contentment at work. Key insights reveal that effective rewards management positively impacts employee satisfaction, which is essential for organizational productivity, retention, and morale. By focusing on secondary data, the paper emphasizes existing gaps in the Sri Lankan apparel sector literature regarding rewards management and its implications on job satisfaction. The findings suggest that while rewards are crucial in fostering job satisfaction, their effectiveness depends on how well they align with employees' expectations and needs. The paper concludes that structured, equitable rewards systems are imperative for enhancing employee satisfaction and organizational outcomes, laying the groundwork for future empirical studies to validate these theoretical insights. The paper brings out the current limitations and future research avenues of the respective disciplines.

Keywords **- Job satisfaction, Operative employees, Rewards management**

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations need to adopt a variety of interventions, including innovation, diversification, restructuring, and technical advancements, to stay competitive in today's globalized and informalized environment. One such intervention that has a big impact is investing in human resources. Human resources are becoming more and more valued assets for businesses in the face of competitive challenges. They are essential to gaining and preserving a sustainable competitive advantage in a knowledge-based economy (Rowley & Redding, 2012). Taking good care of workers improves the effectiveness of other resources, such as equipment, supplies, and money. Therefore, human resource management (HRM) done well is essential. To accomplish organizational objectives, human resources must be used effectively and efficiently. (Opatha, 2009). Opatha (2009) states that

HRM includes 14 different responsibilities, ranging from industrial relations to job design. Management of employee wellbeing is an essential task that has a big influence on workers' lives. . Rewards in general human resource management practices, were taken as the independent variable with its three components; basic salary, welfare and incentives. This idea is applied to the workforce through employee rewards (Souza & Beuren, 2018). To improve the standard of living for workers, rewards is offered as a covert incentive for joining the organization. According to Souza (2009), complicated work systems that need peak performance without necessarily encouraging it characterize the current industrial culture. Strict rules and restrictions may not meet the basic requirements and expectations of the staff, which could impede their innovation and progress. This circumstance underlines how crucial labor rewards is. The effect of employee rewards on organizational development and performance has been the subject of numerous research using a variety of dependent variables (Haddon, 2018). Industrial relations are greatly influenced by employee rewards, which provides a level of satisfaction for workers that even high pay cannot match. According to Kumari and Tatareddy (2014), job satisfaction has been a major research subject for almost a century, and satisfaction is an important concept in HRM. Almeida & Perera (2015) assert that contented workers are an asset to the company. Ensuring that employees are satisfied and that their expectations are met is the organization's obligation.

Workers may have long-term repercussions from spending a large amount of their lives at work (Ghosh et al., 2010). Because it improves workers' happiness and quality of life, job satisfaction is vital. Companies care about employee happiness because it affects the development and expansion of their businesses. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of job satisfaction for completing tasks and preserving human resources (Souza & Beuren, 2018). The effect rewards management have on employee satisfaction has been the subject of extensive investigation. Research from several nations shows that rewards amenities have a favorable impact on worker satisfaction (Prabakar & Prabhavathi ,2019; Souza & Beuren, 2018; Srivastava, 2004). Furthermore, a large number of research has investigated the connection between social services and worker happiness in a variety of industries in Sri Lanka. Therefore this study aims to explore the impact of rewards management on job satisfaction in apparel industries (selected organizations).

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research has indicated that rewards amenities in several Sri Lankan sectors have a favorable effect on worker satisfaction. As per the findings of Madusanka & Perera (2016) discovered a highly positive association between rewards and job satisfaction among team leaders working in Sri Lanka's off road tire manufacturing

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sector. Despite the nation's active participation in the garment industry, there is a dearth of study on the effects of rewards management on workers' job satisfaction at the operative level in this industry. The business climate for apparel companies is fiercely competitive in a globalized marketplace. Operative-level employees' output has a significant impact on these organizations' performance. Businesses must inspire employees if they want to increase productivity and effectiveness while holding onto top talent. For this reason, fostering job satisfaction requires offering sufficient labor rewards management. Apparel companies emphasize providing their clients with high-quality products by cultivating an enthusiastic and hardworking staff. This effort stems from the fundamental conviction that job performance and quality are closely linked to employee satisfaction. The ability of individuals to select employers who they feel would improve their job happiness has grown as a result of globalization, according to Meyer et al., (2016). Neglecting employee happiness, on the other hand, might result in a host of issues. Low job satisfaction among employees is linked to several problems in the apparel industry and beyond, including absenteeism, high turnover, and decreased productivity levels (Almeida & Perera, 2015). In the end, these issues may cause expenses to rise, client deliveries to be delayed, and market share to decline. This situation has prompted companies to invest time, money, and energy in programs that promote employee rewards and satisfaction, aiming to attract and retain the best performers. It is important to determine whether rewards management effectively satisfy employees' needs and secure company investments in employee rewards. This study addresses the issue of investigating whether rewards management impact job satisfaction among operational-level employees in selected apparel companies.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to highlight the impact of rewards management on the job satisfaction of operative level employees in selected apparel companies. By examining the relationship between employee rewards management and job satisfaction, the study provides valuable insights into the rewards provisions of apparel companies from the employees' perspective. The findings will raise awareness among employers about the importance of offering labor rewards management and help them understand which specific management need adjustment to meet employees' actual needs. Additionally, the study will indicate the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees in the apparel industry. This understanding will assist in identifying effective strategies to enhance employee job satisfaction by addressing various facets of it. Management can utilize the information from this study to benchmark their employment packages, not only to attract high performers but also to retain them by fostering their commitment and loyalty. Ultimately, the research can inform policy formulation and decision-making at different organizational levels, improving overall effectiveness and efficiency. This, in turn, will secure the investment in rewards management by ensuring a positive return for the organization. Furthermore, future

researchers interested in exploring employee rewards management and job satisfaction will greatly benefit from the insights and findings of this study.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 Main Objective

To identify the impact of rewards management on employee job satisfaction

4.2 Specific Objectives

To identify the impact of basic pay on employee job satisfaction

To identify the impact of incentives on employee job satisfaction

To identify the impact of welfare management on employee job satisfaction

4.3 Hypothesis

Based on the research objectives, following hypothesis will be tested,

H_1: There is a significant relationship between basic pay and employee job satisfaction

H_2: There is a significant relationship between incentives and employee job satisfaction

H_3: There is a significant relationship between welfare management and employee job satisfaction

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Rewards Management of Employees in Organizations

As per the findings of Sutherland (2013) rewards can be identified as the total gain of an employee which he/she gets as a result of their commitment and dedication towards an organization's achievement of goals and objectives. Rewards management is an important part of the human resource management process of an organization (Sarwar & Abugre, 2013) and it counts in major amounts when it comes to encouraging employees to contribute their best for the organizations. However not only that but also it has been identified by literature that employee rewards are not just financial options but there are many other ways to encourage employees in terms of rewards which do not completely focus on monetary aspects (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

Rewards management is a very crucial part of the employee management because companies are supposed to lay down clear rules and justifications to evaluate the employee performance at all levels for the rewards they will be receiving (Bustamam et al., 2014). However the rewards could be a visible form of appreciation which has the ability to manipulate the invisible satisfaction of an employee and most modern day contemporary organizations have aligned their rewards management system with the performance management system of the organization (Akafo & Boateng, 2015). Rewards can be awarded to employees for many purposes but research suggest that organizational rewards have the ability to encourage the employees to perform better and they could lead the employees for better performance capacities (Chepkwony & Oloko, 2014). Actually when compared different literature, it has been visible that there has been no clear difference or significant disparity in motivational level and job satisfaction across varied categories of employees in different companies in different fields.

5.2 Employee Pay

Basic pay is what an employee gets in an organization which is also known as the base pay that does not include the benefits, bonusses or any other deductions. This is a fixed amount of pay and it one of the most important constituents of the rewards management scheme of an employee in an organization (Adeoye & Fields, 2014). This is either calculated monthly or annually or even daily based on the job the employee is doing and it is quite important it have it clearly laid for the employees to understand the compensation package (Singh & Loncar, 2010). This can actually determine whether employee gets adequate job satisfaction and gets motivated to work better in the organization.

Basic pay could be different from company to company based on the industry standards, experience, education as well as the financial capacity of the organization. The basic pay gets discussed at the hiring process and time to time it could get revised accordingly (Adeoye & Fields, 2014). Then the adjustments to the basic pay could be as a result of the performance evaluation, promotions or even the changes in the cost of living (Tessema et al., 2013). So many researchers have identified this form of reward as having a clear relationship between the job satisfaction.

Basic pay is supposed to provide an employee with the financial security as also it helps them with the future financial plannings as well (Ilena Petrescu & Simmons, 2008). Not only that but also the basic pay will be the benchmark for the compensation elements such as the overtime payments, contributions for the retirement and even in the cases of insurance allowances and claims (Malik et al., 2012). Therefore it plays an important role in managing the overall job satisfaction of the employees because it carries a lot of weight in terms of the payment an employee is getting.

5.3 Incentives

Incentives is another important part of the employee rewards management. These are the benefits which are given to an employee to encourage and then enhance the performance of their company career and then it could actually increase the employee engagement within the organization as well (Erbasi & Arat, 2012). Companies offer different kinds of incentives for the employees which could range from financial benefits to non financial benefits and they could be of different magnitudes based on the size of the company, financial capacity, employee contribution, etc (Alam et al., 2023).

Financial incentives were identified as the most popular ones to increase employee job satisfaction as per many previous literature and they include bonusses, profit sharing, stock options and commissions. These are offered to employees on a periodic basis and depending on company situations these could vary in amount and frequency (Abdullah & Wan, 2013). Mostly in production industry and jobs in sales and marketing the whole system sometimes depend on the commissions and incentives followed by in monetary terms and many employees make a lot of money based on these incentive schemes (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

However, even the non-financial incentives are known to be quite effective as well. They could be very powerful motivators according to (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Recognition programmes, flexi-hours, professional development opportunities, additional paid time, public acknowledgement on achievements, etc. could be quite the boost for the employees to perform even better and have the job satisfaction at their workplace (Wickramasinghe & Sajeevani, 2018). Organizations' commitment towards employees could be made visible through such schemes and it could empower the employees to reach better heights in job and then pave the way for a successful career which in return increases the job satisfaction (Opatha, 2009).

5.4 Welfare Facilities

Employee welfare facilities are broadly categorized into statutory and non-statutory schemes. Statutory welfare facilities are legally required, such as canteens, drinking water, lighting, and first aid. Non-statutory facilities are voluntarily provided by employers, including housing, recreational facilities, educational services, and more (Opatha, 2009). Welfare facilities can also be categorized into intra-mural (within the organization) and extra mural (outside the organization) activities, covering a wide range of services aimed at improving employees' working and living conditions.

Statutory welfare facilities are legally mandated by the government to ensure minimum standards of health and safety for employees. In Sri Lanka, these include provisions under the Factories Ordinance, Shop and Office Act, Wages Board Ordinance, Employee Provident Fund Act, Employee Trust Fund Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, and Termination of Employment of Workmen Act. These laws prescribe essential welfare services like drinking water, washing facilities, resting areas for female workers, and first aid provisions (Opatha, 2009).

Srivastava (2004) found that public sector workers in Kanpur received better welfare facilities and had higher job satisfaction compared to private sector workers. However, personal factors affecting job satisfaction were not explored. Souza (2009) showed a positive correlation between eight dimensions of labour welfare and job satisfaction among pharmaceutical company employees in Goa, with education/training being particularly influential. Prabakar (2013) concluded that employees at Don Bosco College were satisfied with intramural facilities but needed improvements in extramural and non-statutory facilities (Weerasinghe et al., 2012).

5.5 Job Satisfaction

Work plays a crucial role in people's lives, occupying a significant portion of their time. Therefore, job satisfaction is a vital concept for both employees and employers. For employees, it reflects their contentment and fulfillment at work, while for employers, it is a key factor in achieving organizational goals. The term "job satisfaction" is derived from the Latin words 'satis' (enough) and 'facere' (to do). It represents a dynamic and comprehensive process of obtaining desired outcomes from one's job. Hoppock, the first industrial psychologist, described job satisfaction in 1935 as "any combination of

psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause a person to say — I am satisfied with the job." It encompasses how people feel about various aspects of their jobs, including whether they like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their work (Spector, 1997).

Locke et al., (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experience, while Kainth & Kaur (2010) described it as a positive emotional response to the job situation resulting from meeting the employee's expectations. Pegg (2014) highlighted that employee satisfaction is the degree to which employees feel content with their current jobs and are willing to stay long-term. It is crucial for companies because satisfied employees are likely to be more productive, take fewer days off, and remain loyal. Cascio (2009) added that job satisfaction also refers to how content an individual is with various facets of their job, such as the nature of the work or supervision. Almeida & Perera (2015) stated that employee satisfaction measures how happy workers are with their job and working environment. Satisfied workers can benefit a company by enhancing the quality and quantity of production, taking fewer days off, and staying loyal to the company.

Judge et al., (2004) noted that the field of industrial/organizational psychology has a long history of studying employee attitudes and job satisfaction. Various definitions focus on job satisfaction as an attitude, with Herzberg (1957) and Ganguli (1994) emphasizing that it results from balancing many specific likes and dislikes associated with the job. Srivastava (2001) identified significant factors such as wages, working conditions, advancement opportunities, grievance resolution, fair treatment, and fringe benefits.

Souza (2009) pointed out that some psychologists reject the notion that job satisfaction solely depends on individual attitudes. Instead, job satisfaction can also be viewed as a reaction to the working environment, perceived need satisfaction, or the fulfillment of aspirations. It represents an employee's general attitude towards their job, job-related factors, and life in general, resulting from a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances. Job satisfaction is dynamic, reflecting a balance of specific likes and dislikes. It indicates the agreement between one's job expectations and the rewards and benefits provided by the job. Job satisfaction also influences overall life satisfaction.

The literature shows clear identification of a linear relationship between the rewards management and job satisfaction. There are many sources of literature in terms of hospitality, health care academic sectors in terms of the same research interest. But when it comes to the Sri Lankan context, there is room for improvement in the field of apparel and there is a lack of literature in finding the relationship between the rewards management of the organization and employee job satisfaction. Therefore the current concept paper is on how to measure the correlation between these two variables and identify the relationship between the rewards management approaches of the organization and job satisfaction.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on previous literature on similar studies the conceptual framework is derived as given below (Figure 1). The study aims at finding the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, which are respectively basic pay, incentives and welfare facilities and dependent variable being the job satisfaction. The conceptual framework is based on similar studies presented by (Wickramasinghe & Sajeevani, 2018; Weerasinghe et al., 2012).

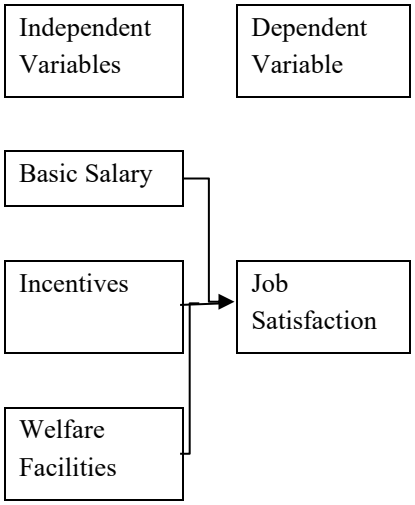

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on Relationship between Rewards Management and Job Satisfaction

7. METHODOLOGY

The study will be devised to test the developed hypothesis through a structured questionnaire where the questions will be extracted from previous literature. The study will focus on testing the hypothesis and testing and understanding the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. The study would be conducted in a quantitative form and the study is supposed to explain the nature of the relationship between the variables and elaborate the variance of each variable in terms of the data collected.

Sampling: The study will consider 200 operative level employees from two selected apparel companies in Export Processing Zone, Biyagama in Sri Lanka. Sampling method would be convenient sampling due to the time and resource restrictions.

Following questionnaire would be administered for data collection and the questions are derived from similar sources of literature by (Wickramasinghe & Sajeevani, 2018; Weerasinghe et al., 2012).

7.1 Measures

Table 1. Part A – Demographic Information

Age
Gender
Education Level
Years of Experience
Job Position
Salary : 30 000 – 50 000, 50 000 – 100 000, above 100 000

Table 2. Part B – Independent Variables

Independent Variable	**Statement**
Basic Pay	The basic pay I get is fair
	I am satisfied with the basic salary I get

	Salary increments are given with good frequencies
	My basic salary covers my living expenses
Incentives	I frequently receive incentives for better performances
	I am satisfied with the incentives I get
	The incentives I get motivate me to work even better
	The incentives are always fair and unbiased
Welfare Facilities	There are many welfare facilities in our company (ex: gym, medical, cafeteria, etc.)
	Welfare facilities provided from the company are adequate and satisfying
	It is easy access and receive the welfare facilities at the company
	I am satisfied with the welfare facilities I receive at the company

Table 3. Part C – Dependent Variable

Dependent Variable	**Statement**
Job Satisfaction	Overall I am satisfied with my job
	I have enough time to balance my personal life and work life
	I am doing a good job at my organization
	My current working environment is up to my best expectations

The questionnaire covers 03 basic areas. These will be asked from the operative level employees of the selected companies to collect the necessary data as a cross sectional approach.

Part A – Demographic information such as age, gender, educational level, occupation

Part B – There are 12 statements which have been developed by previous researchers to find same information for different work settings. These are the independent variables which will be asked from the sample during the research survey.

Part C – There are 7 statements which have been developed by previous researchers to find same information for different work settings. This is the dependent variable which will be asked form the sample during the research survey.

These questions will be directed at the sample to be rated from a 5 point Likert scale, where 1 implies strongly disagree and 5 implies strongly agree.

200 operative level employees from two selected apparel companies in Export Processing Zone, Biyagama in Sri Lanka will be subjected to the study and the occupations selected will be sewing machine operators, fabric cutters, quality control inspectors, packing and warehousing staff, etc. The job titles may vary as per the company requirements but all included in the sample will be from the operative staff since their availability and vitality in the production process is of paramount importance.

7.2 Reliability and Validity

To evaluate how each measure aligns with the terms and test consistency, Cronbach's alpha values will be calculated. Values of 0.7 or above are generally considered to indicate consistent results.

7.3 Data Analysis

Statistical analysis will be conducted using both univariate and bivariate methods in SPSS to understand the correlation between the dependent and independent variables.

8. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The demographic analysis aims to characterize the sample and provide context for the forthcoming results. This analysis will collect basic information and quantitatively represent the sample based on gender, age, occupation, experience, and educational qualifications.

To analyze the responses for each variable, univariate analysis will be conducted. General measures such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis will be evaluated to determine if the data follows a normal distribution.

Subsequently, Pearson's correlation between health and safety measures and job satisfaction will be assessed using bivariate analysis. This will identify which factors most significantly influence job satisfaction and which are less impactful. The correlation will be measured to explore the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

The study aims to explore is there is a significant relationship between the reward management schemes of an organization and the job satisfaction of the operative level employees in the apparel sector. The correlation will be checked between the selected independent variables namely basic pay, incentives and welfare facilities and the dependent variable job satisfaction. If there us a positive relationship it could be understood that adequate rewarding systems are practiced and maintained at the selected apparel companies and based on the significance level of each parameter it could be identified which ones are the most appealing rewarding schemes at the organizations and which ones need more work in the sense of improving employee job satisfaction.

Previous studies support the fact that employee reward management could actually help in increasing job satisfaction and many brings out the importance of having proper set ups in the organizations in terms of understanding what kind of rewards

the employees prefer, as in whether they prefer financial or non financial incentives for better job satisfaction. Once the proper benchmark is set it is easier to work on which factors to increase or enhance in the organization to increase job satisfaction which in return will increase the performance levels of the employees as proved by previous research studies on similar disciplines.

This study will focus on the employee perception about the reward management system they have in the organization and the satisfaction they derive from it. So as per the magnitude of the correlation the author aims to identify which factors contribute to the better job satisfaction of the employees and which are not that effective or needs improvement as per the perspective of the employees. Yet the study tries to understand if the findings are consistent with the previous literature or if they deviate from them. If so the researcher aims to come up with the most essential factors in terms of rewards management approaches to enhance employee job satisfaction.

9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

According to the literature, rewards management is a crucial element in determining employee job satisfaction. Despite various controversial findings, employee job satisfaction remains an unresolved phenomenon that is not yet fully understood. Since this study aims to explore the impact of rewards management on overall job satisfaction, it will focus specifically on the selected dependent and independent variables. Working conditions have been identified as one of the most important factors in establishing job satisfaction, and similar importance is given to the role of rewards management in cementing employee satisfaction. Therefore, enhancing and developing employee working conditions and rewards management could be equally crucial in improving employee job satisfaction, which in turn leads to better employee performance.

The study's findings will be significant for the theoretical aspect by bridging a gap in the literature. Practically, it is important for similar companies to understand how to increase employee job satisfaction through rewards management. Companies could learn what employees consider most and least important for job satisfaction. This understanding could lead to improvements in their basic pay, incentives, welfare facilities and other initiatives to enhance employee satisfaction, aligning with results from similar studies.

Regarding future implications, this study focuses only on selected branches of the selected apparel companies, and its results are not generalizable to all types of companies. Future research could be directed at different organizations within the same research discipline, utilizing larger sample sizes and a variety of occupational selections.

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