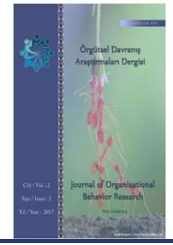




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## FACTORS AFFECTING THE EMPLOYEES' LOYALTY IN THE MOBILY TELECOM COMPANY, SAUDI ARABIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Mobily Telecom Company is the second-largest telecom company in Saudi Arabia. Mobily is the brand name used by the company for the services it provides to its customers. The telecommunication industry is growing and a large number of competitors are entering the market. So it is becoming of crucial importance for the company that it must develop strategies for retaining the best and professional employees so that the company can obtain a sustainable competitive advantage in the industry. In this study, the dependent variable is employee loyalty and the independent variables are Human Relations, Personal development, human resource practices, and competencies. A primary research approach is used for collecting data, and to collect data from 100 employees, a quantitative research approach is used. From this study, it was found that there was no impact of competencies, human relations, and personal development on employee loyalty with the organization, and only human resource management practices can directly impact employee loyalty.*

**Keywords:** *Employee loyalty, Employee retention, Personal development, HR practices.*

### INTRODUCTION

In today's organizations, there is a great need of implementing new, effective, and efficient resources so that these organizations can increase their output while reducing the cost of the business. The most common resource being held by the organizations is the human resource and in today's competitive environment the organizations have to strongly focus on retaining the best employees with the company. The increasing competition in the market led the companies to develop strategies for increasing employee loyalty and to retain the best employees in the company.

Mobily Telecom Company is the second-largest telecom company in Saudi Arabia. Mobily is the brand name used by the company for the services it provides to its customers. The company got its GSM license in 2004 and it has shown strong trends of growth ever since. It has an important contribution to the wireless communication system of the Saudi Arab as well. It provides 3G and 4G services to its customers as well. The company is under the ownership of Etisalat which is a UAE-based company. As it is a large scale company, it is engaging a large number of employees

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and these employees consist of both the technical employees and also the managerial level of employees.

Employee feedback and ideas are an invaluable resource to help to understand the current dynamics of the workplace and also, for identifying learning activities or training requirements (Haider *et al.*, 2018; Moghaddam & Dehkhodania, 2020). This study aims to evaluate factors affecting employee loyalty in organizations. Loyal employees are considered as the assets of the company as they ensure a low turnover rate for the company (Baghaei *et al.*, 2020). Retaining employees is one of the crucial issues faced by the organization of the world because the cost of recruiting new employees is very high. Some of the studies have indicated the direct link between employee loyalty and organizational performance (Mohammed *et al.*, 2020). Organizations can achieve a competitive position in the market based on these loyal employees (Mohsein *et al.*, 2019).

The aim of this study is conducted to evaluate the factors that have a significant impact on the loyalty of employees of Mobily telecom. Also, the research findings for the study are highly applicable to organizations not only working in the telecom industry but also to the various large-scale and small-scale organizations to improve the loyalty of employees.

#### *Literature Review*

Many theories have been developed on this subject, like Herzberg's theory, affect theory, dispositional approach, equity theory, and job characteristics model. A brief study of these theories shows that the most common and the most powerful three factors that affect employee retention are: human relations, personal development, and competencies.

The first employee retention factor we examine in this research is relationships between management and employees, and these relationships are of substantial value in any workplace. Human relations in the workplace are a major part of what makes a business work. Employees must frequently work together on projects, provide motivation, and communicate ideas to get things done. Without a stable and inviting workplace culture, difficult challenges can arise both in the logistics of managing employees and in the bottom line, the quality of workplace relations, which is critical to employee retention (Cranny *et al.*, 1992).

The second employee retention factor is personal development. To demonstrate the firm interest in their professional development, employee's empowerment in their development plans can help. Employees consider this investment in them by the company – and most respond positively. This supplies a significant boost to company morale, and it also strengthens the psychological contract that exists between the employee and the employer (Thornton, 2000; Scapolan *et al.*, 2017).

The third employee retention factor is employee competencies. Making a competency framework will evaluate the set of abilities, capabilities, skills, and knowledge that a candidate should have for him to be qualified for the position and meet the set expectations. Once you have selected the qualified candidates, the selection and hiring process does not stop, it should include a clear discussion on the employee's specific contributions and roles to help in the accomplishment of the organization's goals (Elbaz *et al.*, 2018).



### *Employee Loyalty*

Employee loyalty can be stated as the employee's satisfaction and affective commitment to be with the organization. The four major qualities that can be detailed as the major factors affecting employee loyalty in the organization are including human relations, personal development, competencies of human retention, and human resources management.

Employee loyalty can be considered as the most crucial tool for the organization because loyal employees are of great value to the organization and these employees help the organization to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage (Sachin *et al.*, 2017). Various research studies have defined loyalty as a process by which the organizations and managers can shape the behavior of the employees as well as increase their loyalty and commitment to the organization.

It has been seen in the various researches that globalization has strongly impacted customer loyalty because some of the practices of organizations have been changed and they have been implementing the latest technologies which result in the downsizing of employees (Haider *et al.*, 2018). Also, the employees are in search of greater opportunities in the labor market, and if they have a lower level of satisfaction with the firm, these employees have a lower level of loyalty to the organization.

As far as the external dimension of loyalty is concerned, the employees show various behaviors and attitudes towards the organization which shows their strong level of loyalty to the organization. This dimension is developed first among the employees and once they are satisfied with the practices of the organization, they become emotionally attached to the organization. Employee loyalty is also dependent on the perception of employees regarding the benefits that are being provided to them and if they are getting a high level of satisfaction from the company (Moghaddam & Dehkhodania, 2020).

The management researchers have also stated the fact that the attitude of managers also plays an important role in creating a high level of employee loyalty. It has been observed that if the managers have a greater positive attitude, they will be able to create greater employee loyalty with the organization (Mandourah *et al.*, 2017). The research studies have also proposed that if the managers have a negative attitude or behavior, these managers are not able to create a high level of loyalty and commitment to the organization.

Employee loyalty is important for the organizations because it helps the organizations to save their cost of recruitment and selection of employees as well as helps the Organization to save their cost of employee turnover. Also, costs associated with employee turnover can include lost customers and business as well as damaged morale. There are costs incurred in screening, verifying credentials and references, interviewing, hiring, and training a new employee (Haider *et al.*, 2018). The direct and indirect costs associated with employee turnover can range between 70 and 200 percent of salary.

### *Human Relations*

Human relations are said to have a greater effect on employee loyalty, and it can be seen that if the human relations and interactions are greater in the organization, it will create a higher level of employee loyalty in the organizations. Different factors define human relations and these factors include trust, honesty, loyalty, respect, and other basic human values that create a positive working environment in the organizations (Miah & Islam, 2017). All these factors are



said to be responsible for creating a high level of job satisfaction and also they are responsible for creating employee loyalty in the organization.

Workplace relations have a greater impact on the employee's loyalty as it can be seen that if the employees get a chance to work together in teams, and they have a chance to participate in the decision making of the organization as well as they can openly communicate their ideas and opinions with their colleagues, they will be able to work with greater flexibility while working in the organization, these employees have a greater loyalty with the organization (Mohammad *et al.*, 2020).

Human relation is loyalty and retention for the long run. There is a broader sense of working for the current employees and the cost of replacing an employee. Human relations are changed with the explanation for major studies and their critical assessment. According to, the drivers of employee loyalty have not changed since the earlier studies. Among the other major drivers, their concerns and employer care show toward their employees (Mohsein *et al.*, 2019). The goals of the Hornung and Nippa' case studies are geared for the achievement of a better understanding of the critical assessment for business value to retain an employee. Moreover, he explained that compensation, fair workplace policies, and day-to-day satisfaction are also causing an increase in employee loyalty for the organizations.

The issues for the analysis are utilizing the critical assessment. Human relations are maintained through performance assessment, critical analysis, and employee motivation through tangible and intangible motivation factors. The study shows the major aspects of a great workplace that are desirable for the workers. According to Haider *et al.* (2018), employee involvement, compensation level, healthy and affordable food, rest periods, safe working environments, and well-equipped facilities such as the gym or the fitness centers are some of the crucial determinants for employee loyalty (Otoo, 2019; Zandieh, 2020).

*H1: Human Relations have a positive impact on employee loyalty.*

### *Personal Development*

Personal development is highlighted in most of the literature studies. There are major personality development roles for employee motivation and loyalty including performance appraisal, 360-degree feedback, and consistent meetings for the employee performance analysis (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). The training can be based upon the analysis, the training measures, the skills required for the job criteria, and its long-run assessment time for the employee motivation. The employees reported that they are more committed to the organization that has more training and development opportunities as compared to the organization with fewer opportunities for training and development.

The other major benefit of the personal development of employees is that through their improved performance, these employees will be able to achieve organizational goals and objectives and they will be helpful for the organization to obtain sustainable competitive advantage Baghaei *et al.*, 2020). Personality development is considered to be the most effective tool for accelerating employee's performance and in this practice, training is one of the most effective factors and it will improve not only the organizational performance but also the loyalty of employees with the organization.



Moreover, if the employees find that they have been provided with adequate opportunities by their Organization for improving their skills and abilities, these employees remain committed and loyal to the organization because they have a future-oriented approach and they will like to remain with the Organization which invests on their personal development and growth (Otoo, 2019). The employees feel more encouraged and appreciated when they improve their performance, as well as they, have an increased commitment and loyalty to the Organization when they receive rewards and incentives based on improved performance.

The personal development of employees results in the development of core competencies of the human capital and the human resource management department of the organization develops personal development plans for the employees so that they can have greater commitment and loyalty towards the organization. It has been a challenging task for organizations and managers to find the most competent and skilled employees, so it is of major concern for these organizations and employees to retain these employees as they provide a sustainable competitive advantage. The personal development of employees is considered to be a crucial task for the success of the organization, and it has been observed that the training and development increase the productivity of employees, and also the turnover of employees is reduced when they are being provided with the opportunities for personality development.

*H2: Personal development has a positive impact on employee loyalty.*

#### *Employee Competencies*

The competencies are required negatively and positively to assess employee loyalty for the organization. Hofstede explained that loyalty is linked with the employee's human resources culture on grounds of the country. The country has pertained to the critical assessment, there is positive and negative assessment for the employee retention and competencies on employee loyalty (Anzum, 2020; Mohammad *et al.*, 2020). The competencies are encompassing the criteria for the long-run achievements, the IQ level, the ability to manage tasks in time, qualification, and the higher level of knowledge for assessing what is the critical assessment for current operations. The authors highlighted the ability to provide intellectual operations a creative link and the assessments of the analytical issues are two major competencies that provide employees an opportunity to further look for employment (Zacca & Dayan, 2018; Salman *et al.*, 2020). The loyalty level is lower in the countries with individualist support including Australia.

*H3: Employee competencies have a positive impact on employee loyalty.*

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The quantitative methodology will be used in this research. It will be based on the collection of primary data collected through survey questionnaires. There will be two parts to the survey questionnaires. The research design of the study will be "survey design". A cross-sectional survey will be conducted to collect one-time data from the participants of the research.

#### *Sample/Data*

*Population:* The population of the study will include all the employees of Mobily Telecom Company in the particular middle region of Saudi Arabia. All the employees working in the company including managerial and non-managerial staff will be included in the sampling frame.



*Sample Size:* The number of respondents who will participate in the study will be 200 initially. This sample size is more appropriate for getting authentic and reliable because it will help to get an authentic response. The number of questionnaires that will be finally included in the study after completion will be 100 to get the response of the maximum number of respondents and to get accurate information. The 100 will be selected in case few respondents refuse to participate in the study, or they are do not fill the questionnaire.

*Unit of Analysis:* The unit of analysis in this study will be individual employees working in the company at managerial as well as non-managerial positions in the company.

*Sampling Technique:* Non-probability random sampling technique will be used for this study. The respondents included in this study will be based on the convenience of the researcher due to the limited budget and scope of the research project.

**3.3.4 Questionnaire development:** The responses of the study will be recorded on a self-designed cross-sectional survey questionnaire. The responses to behavioral questions will be recorded on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5.

*Dependent Variable:* Employee Loyalty

*Independent Variables:* Relationship between management and employees, Personal Development, Employee Competencies

#### *Instrument and Measures*

The research strategy that is used in the study is the survey questionnaires. The data is collected from the managerial and non-managerial staff of Mobily Telecom in the Middle region of Saudi Arabia. The survey questionnaire is adapted from various literature that can be easily adjusted to the telecom sector. The questionnaire is divided into three parts, the first part is related to the collection of demographic information, and the second part is related to the statements containing variables affecting employee loyalty including human relations, personal development, human resource management, and competency level of employees. The third part contains the open-ended questions that specifically occur in the retention of employees of Mobily Telecom.

#### *Validity and Reliability*

Validity and reliability are the major criteria for assessing the quality and adequacy of the data collection instrument (Polit & Beck, 2013). Validity refers to the degree that an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008; Polit & Beck, 2013). Polit and Beck (2013) define validity as the ability of an instrument to measure what it is intended to measure.

For the current study instrument, the researcher tested both contents and faces validity to judge the accuracy of the questionnaire. Content validity assesses how well the instrument represents the different components of the variable to be measured (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Face validity merely means that the instrument appears to measure what it is supposed to measure (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

To confirm the content validity of the tool a Jury opinion was taken. A Panel of experts professional persons in the subject was chosen to establish content validity. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency and dependability of a research instrument to measure a



variable (Polit & Beck, 2013). To assess the internal consistency for the instrument a person correlation coefficient was used. Cronbach alpha was calculated.

### Validity

The validity of internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested using person correlation coefficient between the score of each item in the questionnaire and the total score of all items in scale tables below show the result of the correlation of all items with the scale and from looking at the **Table 1** for the relationship between management and employees scale, it's clear that all items have a significant correlation with the total score, except the item "The company clearly communicates its goals and strategies to me".

**Table 1.** Correlation of items with a total score of the Relationship between management and employees scale

| Factor Analysis  |   |
|--|---|
| Items  | Relationship between management and employees |
| The company clearly communicates its goals and strategies to me.                   | 0.052   |
| I receive adequate opportunity to interact with other employees on a formal level. | .571**  |
| I have a clear path for career advancement.  | .655**  |
| My job requirements are clear.   | .531**  |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

### Reliability

The reliability of both scale items was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. **Table 2** shows that the reliability for the Relationship between management and employee factors is negative (-0.217). Thus, it is not reliable and the variance with these items and sample is very high, same thing for the competency scale the Cronbach's alpha is (0.33) which is considered very low compared to the recommended value (0.7).

**Table 2.** Cronbach's Alpha Test

| Scale   | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|------------------|
| Relationship between management and employees | -.217            |
| competency                                    | 0.333            |

### Hypothesis Testing

$$\text{employee retention (experiance)} = \alpha \pm \beta \text{ human relathions}$$

Model 1

For model 1, **Table 3** shows the model summary of the human relation impact on employee retention (experience) and the model is not significant (0.656) which means there is no impact of human relationships on employee retention experience.



**Table 3.** Model 1 summary of human relations impact on employee retention (experience)

|   | Model      | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F    | Sig.              |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | .168           | 1  | .168        | .199 | .656 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual   | 82.582         | 98 | .843        |      |                   |
|   | Total      | 82.750         | 99 |             |      |                   |

$$\text{employee retention (motivation to company success)} = \alpha \pm \beta \text{ human relations}$$

Model 2

For model 2, **Table 4** shows the model summary of the human relation impact on employee retention (motivation) and the model is not significant (0.867) which means there is no impact of human relationships on employee retention motivation.

**Table 4.** Model 2 summary of the impact of human relations on employee retention (motivation)

|   | Model      | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F    | Sig.              |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | .015           | 1  | .015        | .028 | .867 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual   | 51.375         | 98 | .524        |      |                   |
|   | Total      | 51.390         | 99 |             |      |                   |

$$\text{employee retention (motivation to company success)} = \alpha \pm \beta \text{ Personal development}$$

Model 3

Personal development is measured through two variables. First is represented by the satisfaction about the position the employee at currently which is included in model 3. **Table 5** shows the model summary of the impact on employee retention (motivation to company success) and the model is not significant (0.774) which means there is no impact of personal development on employee retention motivation.

**Table 5.** Model 3 summary of personal development impact on employee retention (Motivation)

|   | Model      | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F    | Sig.              |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | .043           | 1  | .043        | .083 | .774 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual   | 51.347         | 98 | .524        |      |                   |
|   | Total      | 51.390         | 99 |             |      |                   |

$$\text{employee retention (motivation to company success)} = \alpha \pm \beta \text{ competencies}$$

Model 4

Competencies are measured through a scale that includes (17) items. **Table 6** shows the model summary of the impact on employee retention (experience) and the model is not significant (0.898) thus there is no impact of employee competencies on employee retention experience.



**Table 6.** Model 5 summary of employee competencies impact on employee retention (experience)

|   | Model      | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F    | Sig.              |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | .014           | 1  | .014        | .017 | .898 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual   | 82.736         | 98 | .844        |      |                   |
|   | Total      | 82.750         | 99 |             |      |                   |

**Table 7.** Model 5 coefficient of personal development impact on employee retention (experience)

|   | Model               | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|   |                     | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1 | (Constant)          | 3.737                       | .887       |                           | 4.213 | .000 |
|   | employee competency | .002                        | .016       | .013                      | .129  | .898 |

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research questions based on which the research paper is developed revolved around the various dimensions including the impact of human relations, personal development, competencies, and human resource management on the loyalty of employees of mobility (Table 7). These research questions are answered by deriving authentic and detailed literature from the previous research studies. A primary research approach is adopted to collect data from the employees of Mobily Telecom.

A total number of 100 respondents will be included in the study and these employees are selected from the managerial and non-managerial levels. The survey questionnaires and the self-designed questionnaires are used to collect data from these respondents of Mobily Telecom. The dependent variable in the study is employee loyalty and the independent variable is personal development, human relations, and competencies of employees. The collected data is analyzed through quantitative techniques such as the reliability and the validity of data is checked by applying the Chronbach Alpha technique.

The collected data is analyzed by using the SPSS approach and for ensuring the reliability and validity of the data, both the face validity and the content validity are tested. The validity of the dependent and independent variables of the study is tested by identifying the correlation between the variables. And the results of the Chronbach Alpha test shows that data for human relations and competency is not reliable because the reliability for the Relationship between management and employees factors are negative (-0.217), and for the competency variable, the Cronbach's alpha is (0.33) which is considered very low compared to the recommended value (0.7).

The first question of the research study shows that if the employees have spent greater years in the company, they have a higher level of loyalty with the company, similarly, these employees loyalty is also checked through the human relations and the results of the study shows that there are no impact of human relationships on employee retention, as the value of the model is not significant. Similarly, the scatterplot of the linearity relationship between the dependent and independent variables is developed and it's clear from the graph that there is no linear relationship due to the dependent variable experience is not a normal variable.



Furthermore, the impact of personal development on employee retention is studied and it is represented by the satisfaction about the position the employee at currently is and also the opportunities provided to employees for their personal development. The scatterplot of the linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables shows that there is no linear relationship due to the dependent variable experience is not a normal variable.

The impact of competency on employee retention also shows that there is no relationship between the competency level of employees and their retention in the organization. A chi-square test is implemented to check the relationship between human resource management practices and employee retention. The results of the study show that there is a significant association between human resource management practices and employee retention.

Hence, the results of the study show that all the other variables except for human resource management practices have no impact on the retention of employees. If the organizations implement human resource management practices effectively and adequately in the organizations, the organizations will enjoy the long-term loyalty of employees, as well as there is a reduced turnover of employees. So, it can be stated that employee retention and loyalty are greatly dependent on the human resource management practices of the company.

The hypothesis for the research study is developed to evaluate the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. The hypothesis is true for only one research finding, which states that only human resource practices have a greater impact on employee loyalty and retention within the organization. For other variables, the hypothesis does not hold.

Chronbach Alpha is used to check the validity and reliability of data, then a good fit model is used to study the relationship between the variables, linearity assumptions are used and a scatter plot diagram is used for testing the hypothesis. Independence of residuals are checked and also the normality assumptions are applied in this study.

The literature review for this study has used various theories and concepts to evaluate the impact of independent variables on dependent variables. Although these theories have presented a piece of extensive information regarding these variables. But, these theories have not discussed the changing perceptions of millennials that how the organizations can maintain the loyalty of these employees.

There are certain implications for managers because it would be difficult for them to create a satisfaction level for every employee at an individual level and also they have to face various challenges for developing HR policies while considering the benefits of the organization and for the employees at the same time.

## CONCLUSION

The company is under the ownership of Etisalat which is a UAE-based company. The research study is conducted on investigating the impact of various variables and factors on customer loyalty and retention. At first, the impact of human relations on employee retention is discussed and it is stated that workplace relations have a greater impact on the employee's loyalty as it can be seen that if the employees get a chance to work together in teams. They have a chance to participate in the decision-making of the organization and also openly communicate their ideas and opinions with their colleagues. They will be able to work with greater flexibility while working in the organization. These employees have greater loyalty to the organization.



Also, the impact of personal development on employee retention is studied and the research studies show that if the employees are given opportunities for personality development such as training and development, these employees have greater loyalty to the organization. By getting various opportunities for personal development, the employees will be able to increase their technical skills, knowledge, and abilities and it will result in greater employee loyalty.

The personal development plan being developed in the organizations is helpful for the employees to enhance their skills, abilities, and competencies. The impact of human resource management on customer loyalty is also studied and the research studies show that the human resource practices are said to have a greater impact on the loyalty of employees, and it has been seen that if the human resource department effectively manages its operations, it will provide greater satisfaction to the employees, and they will have a greater loyalty with the organization.

The primary data collection is used in the study and the data is analyzed through a quantitative approach by using SPSS, and various tests are applied for identifying the reliability and validity of the data. The results of the study show that there is no impact on competencies, human relations, and personal development on employee loyalty to the organization. Rather it has been identified and evaluated that only human resource management practices have a strong and positive impact on employee loyalty with the organization.

#### *Limitations and Dimensions for Future Research*

The study has a limited scope and it has only taken into consideration the telecom sector, while the other industries are not considered. Also, the research study does not include and discuss the various generation of employees, as the needs of the employees vary according to their age group. Moreover, the indicators of loyalty are not mentioned, based on which Mobily measures the loyalty of its employees. For future research, it is suggested that the study should be conducted by keeping in view the other industries, as all these industries have a different setup and the employees have different demands. Moreover, it is suggested that in the future, the employee's loyalty and retention should be measured by considering their generation.



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