

A Study On Employee Challenges, Motivation, And Benefit Preferences In Msmes In Thoothukudi District

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The study examines employee challenges, motivation, and benefit preferences in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Thoothukudi district. MSMEs play a crucial role in regional economic development, yet employees often face challenges such as excessive workload, limited career growth, inadequate recognition, and insufficient workplace resources, which can affect their motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. This research aims to identify the major challenges faced by employees, analyze the factors that motivate them to continue in their current organizations, and assess their benefit preferences. Primary data were collected from 130 employees using a structured questionnaire, interviews, and informal discussions, while secondary data were obtained from journals, books, reports, and online sources. Descriptive research design was employed, and statistical tools including Chi-Square tests and Independent Samples t-tests were applied for analysis. The findings reveal that gender, years of experience, and age do not significantly influence employee challenges, motivation, or benefit preferences. The study underscores the importance of improving workplace conditions, providing recognition, enhancing career growth opportunities, and offering well-structured benefits to foster employee engagement, motivation, and organizational sustainability in MSMEs.

Keywords: MSMEs, Employee Challenges, Motivation, Benefit Preferences, Workplace Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a pivotal role in the economic development of India by generating employment, promoting entrepreneurship, and contributing significantly to regional and national growth. In Thoothukudi district, MSMEs form a vital part of the local economy, engaging in diverse industrial, service, and trading activities. Despite their importance, employees in these enterprises often face unique

challenges, such as excessive workload, job insecurity, limited career growth opportunities, lack of recognition, and inadequate workplace resources. These challenges can affect their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. Employee motivation and the benefits provided by organizations are critical factors in ensuring workforce productivity, commitment, and retention. Understanding the challenges faced by employees, their motivational factors, and preferences for organizational benefits is crucial for improving workplace policies, enhancing employee wellbeing, and sustaining the growth of MSMEs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Charles and Ceasar (2024) conducted a study on employee motivation at DCW Limited in Sahupuram, Thoothukudi District. The research revealed that while employees exhibited a moderate level of motivation, they expressed the need for improved promotion schemes, more performance appraisals, better working environments, rewards, and cooperation from top management. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing these factors to enhance employee motivation and overall organizational development.

Muscoora and Nallathambi (2024) examined the psychological well-being and performance of employees in MSMEs in Thoothukudi District. The study found that factors such as self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relationships, and purpose in life significantly influenced job performance. The research highlights the importance of addressing psychological well-being to enhance employee performance in MSMEs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Employees are the backbone of any organization, and their performance and engagement directly influence the success and sustainability of business enterprises. In MSMEs, particularly in developing regions like Thoothukudi district, employees encounter numerous challenges that can negatively impact their job satisfaction and motivation. Problems such as long working hours, insufficient recognition, lack of career advancement opportunities, poor communication, and limited access to benefits can lead to decreased productivity, low morale, and high turnover. Moreover, understanding employees' benefit preferences is essential for designing effective human resource strategies that meet their needs and enhance overall organizational efficiency. Despite the significance of these factors, there is limited research on employee challenges, motivation, and benefit preferences in MSMEs in Thoothukudi. Therefore, this study aims to analyze these aspects to provide insights for employers and policymakers to create supportive work environments, improve employee satisfaction, and foster sustainable growth in the MSME sector.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the major challenges faced by employees working in MSMEs in Thoothukudi District.
2. To analyze the factors that motivate employees to continue working in their current MSME organizations.
3. To assess the relationship between years of experience and motivational factors among employees in MSMEs.

HYPOTHESIS - H0

- 1. There is no significant relationship between Gender and Challenges Faced factors
- 2. There is no significant relationship between years of experience in MSME and motivates to work in current organization
- 3. There is no significant relationship between Age and type of Benefit

METHODOLOGY

The present study on employee challenges, motivation, and benefit preferences in MSMEs in Thoothukudi district was carried out using both primary and secondary data sources. A descriptive research design was adopted to systematically examine the challenges faced by employees, their motivational factors, and preferences for organizational benefits. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents, ensuring that each employee in the chosen MSMEs had an equal chance of participation and minimizing bias. A total of 130 employees from various MSMEs in Thoothukudi district were included as respondents, providing a representative sample for meaningful analysis. Primary data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire covering employee challenges, motivational factors, and benefit preferences, supplemented with personal interviews and informal discussions to gain deeper insights. Secondary data was gathered from journals, books, research articles, government reports, and online databases relevant to MSMEs, employee motivation, and benefits management. The collected data was systematically classified, tabulated, and analyzed using statistical tools such as chi-square test, and independent T- Test to draw significant conclusions regarding the relationship between employee challenges, motivation, and benefit preferences.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

H0: There is no significant relationship between Gender and Challenges Faced factors

Independent Samples Test							
Factors	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Excessive workload or unrealistic deadlines.	2.727	.101	-.991	128	.324	-.165	.167
			-.995	126.863	.321	-.165	.166
Lack of recognition for achievements.	.556	.457	-.309	128	.758	-.051	.166
			-.309	127.392	.758	-.051	.166
Limited opportunities for career growth.	1.281	.260	-.037	128	.971	-.006	.174
			-.037	121.676	.971	-.006	.175
Poor communication between teams or departments.	.039	.843	-.551	128	.582	-.094	.171
			-.550	126.097	.583	-.094	.171
Lack of mental health support or awareness.	1.677	.198	-1.366	128	.174	-.224	.164
			-1.371	127.711	.173	-.224	.163
Job insecurity or fear of layoffs.	.007	.931	-.557	128	.579	-.088	.157
			-.556	126.685	.579	-.088	.158

Workplace conflicts or lack of cooperation.	.593	.443	-.841	128	.402	-.154	.183
			-.845	127.446	.400	-.154	.182
Insufficient training or resources to perform tasks.	.532	.467	.494	128	.622	.090	.182
			.493	125.466	.623	.090	.182

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The Independent Samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there is a significant relationship between gender and the challenges faced by employees in MSMEs. Across all the factors considered excessive workload, lack of recognition, limited career growth opportunities, poor communication, lack of mental health support, job insecurity, workplace conflicts, and insufficient training the Sig. (2-tailed) values are all greater than 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female employees with respect to the challenges they face in the workplace.

Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0 : There is no significant relationship between gender and challenges faced factors) is accepted. The findings suggest that employees, irrespective of gender, experience similar workplace challenges in MSMEs in Thoothukudi district.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between years of experience in MSME and motivates to work in current organization

Chi-Square Tests			
Factors	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.235 ^a	24	.393
Likelihood Ratio	28.015	24	.259
Linear-by-Linear Association	.312	1	.577
N of Valid Cases	130		

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The above table Chi-Square test was carried out to assess the relationship between years of experience in MSMEs and employees' motivation to work in their current organization. The Pearson Chi-Square value (25.235) with a p-value of 0.393, along with the Likelihood Ratio ($p = 0.259$) and Linear-by-Linear Association ($p = 0.577$), all exceeded the 0.05 significance level. These results suggest that employees' motivation is not significantly influenced by their tenure in MSMEs, and thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. Overall, these findings indicate that demographic factors such as gender and years of experience do not significantly affect employees' perceptions of workplace challenges or motivational factors.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Age and type of Benefit

Chi-Square Tests			
Factors	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.171 ^a	24	.569
Likelihood Ratio	20.714	24	.656
Linear-by-Linear Association	.054	1	.817
N of Valid Cases	130		

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

A Chi-Square test was conducted to examine whether there is a significant relationship between age and the type of benefits availed by employees in MSMEs. The results indicate that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 22.171 with a p-value of 0.569, the Likelihood Ratio is 20.714 with a p-value of 0.656, and the Linear-by-Linear Association has a p-value of 0.817. All these values are greater than the 0.05 significance level, suggesting that age does not have a statistically significant influence on the type of benefits employees receive. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0), stating that there is no significant relationship between age and type of benefits, is accepted. This implies that benefit preferences among employees are independent of their age groups in the surveyed MSMEs.

CONCLUSION

The present study on employee challenges, motivation, and benefit preferences in MSMEs in Thoothukudi district highlights several important insights regarding workforce perceptions and organizational practices. The analysis reveals that employees in MSMEs face similar challenges irrespective of gender, including excessive workload, lack of recognition, limited career growth opportunities, poor communication, and insufficient training. This indicates that workplace challenges are uniformly experienced across male and female employees. Furthermore, the study shows that years of experience in the organization do not significantly influence employees' motivation to continue working in their current MSME, suggesting that factors other than tenure such as organizational culture, work environment, and management practices may play a more critical role in sustaining employee motivation. Similarly, age does not have a significant relationship with the type of benefits availed by employees, indicating that benefit preferences are consistent across different age groups within MSMEs.

Overall, the findings suggest that MSMEs in Thoothukudi should focus on improving general workplace conditions, providing adequate recognition, promoting career development opportunities, and designing benefits packages that meet the overall needs of employees. By addressing these areas, organizations can enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and engagement, ultimately contributing to higher productivity, reduced turnover, and sustainable organizational growth in the MSME sector.

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