

# Work Attitudes Of Employees Of Saudi Aramco: Its Relation To Work Satisfaction

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**ABSTRACT:** This study determined the status and level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. The purposes of the hypotheses are tested in the determining the status and level of satisfaction of the manager, supervisors, business & systems analysts and rank in file in terms of personal, initiative and accountability attitudes. There is confusion and debate among practitioners on the topic of employee attitudes and job satisfaction even at a time when employees are increasingly important for organizational success and competitiveness. "Happy employees are productive employees." "Happy employees are not productive employees." We hear these conflicting statements made by HR professionals and managers in organizations. This research aims at establishing a level of satisfaction as a basis for employee attitude; whether strongly satisfied, satisfied, moderately satisfied, dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied. Assessment of the Corporate Business Applications Department of Saudi Aramco in terms of the status and level of work attitudes has shown that the respondents agreed and were satisfied with the status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco in terms of personal attitudes, initiative attitudes and accountability attitudes. It indicated that there was no significant relationship between the status and the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco in terms of personal attitudes, initiative attitudes, and accountability attitudes.

**Keywords :** Personal Attitudes, Initiative Attitudes, and Accountability Attitudes

## 1 INTRODUCTION

"Everyone can bring a horse to the pond, but nobody can force it to drink". This Russian proverb is a good definition of work attitudes. Today, it has become a common sense that employees' work attitudes and level of satisfaction are the key elements in quality of products resulting in company's high profitability and stability. Every employee has unique collection of values and beliefs, but it is usually based on national and cultural work attitudes that can't be changed easily and quickly. This study aims to determine the effect of the work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco in terms of personal attitudes, initiatives attitudes, accountability attitudes, The Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) is the state-owned oil company of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It ranks first among oil companies worldwide in terms of crude oil production and exports, and natural gas liquids (NGL) exports, and is among the leading producers of natural gas. It is also among the world's leading refiners and is moving further downstream into chemicals production. The current work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco are based on work ethics, empowerment and motivation. In term of work ethics, employees are introduced to the theoretical understanding only through workshops from time to time. In term of empowerment, employees are trained heavily on technical and managerial depending on the job status of each employee. However, some employees receive special training of personal and leadership skills. In the other hand, motivation is of a great concern by the management as it is considered the starter of employee performance. Motivation process is based on beliefs, feelings and behaviors. Employees are motivated by either pecuniary or non-pecuniary. But, motivation level is still has not reached the desired level of expectation of the management. The work attitudes of employees in the workplace that can have a significant effect on the business as a whole, is presented as the most significant work attitudes with the most effect on employees job performance. Therefore, the work attitudes should be assessed and served as a model to other companies in the Middle East providing the same services. Hence, the study is conducted to examine the factors leading to this success. Robbins and Judge (2011) cited that managers should be interested in their employees' attitudes because attitudes give

warnings of potential problems and influence behavior. Satisfied and committed employees, for instance, have lower rates of turnover, absenteeism, and withdrawal behaviors. They also perform better on the job. Given that managers want to keep resignations and absences down-especially among their most productive employees-they'll want to do things that generate positive job attitudes. According to Robbins and Judge (2010), study about the important attitudes reflect fundamental values, self-interest, or identification with individuals or groups that a person values. They both believe that attitudes that individuals consider important tend to show a strong relationship to behavior. The more closely the attitude and the behavior are matched or correspond, the stronger the relationship.

Rodney C. Vandever and Michael I. Menefee (2010) stated that a person's attitude can be a major factor in determining his or her success in life. If you want to understand a person's behavior, you must understand his or her values. Pappi Baruah and Bhaskar Jyoti Barthakur (SCMS Journal of Indian Management, July - September, 2012.), in their article entitled "Employees' Attitude: Performance and Satisfaction", stated that Qatar employs large labor forces from the Indian subcontinent, the Far East, and from relatively less rich Arab countries. This has led to a situation where most organizations in the public and private sectors in Qatar often comprise many different nationalities - each individual having his/her own role perception, attitudes toward other nationalities, cultural orientation and educational background. This creates a multicultural work environment, which affects the attitude and the behavior of the workforce in Qatar. Abdullah Al-Anazi (2011) study about skilled and unskilled people undertakes their best efforts to seek employment opportunities to support their families. In the search for job opportunities people normally do not have reservations on status, prestige, name or fame because people who are willing to work accept offered opportunities with a high sense of dignity of labor. This characteristic is missing among the Saudis who have serious apprehensions in considering what jobs they can accept and what jobs are against their social and national status. This makes many able and capable Saudis to choose to remain unemployed instead of doing something worthwhile to bring added revenue to their families. YouGovSiraj together with Bayt.com in their survey

entitled "Employee Loyalty Survey", the survey aims to understand the perception and attitudes of Middle East employees pertaining to their career and the organization they work for. Although 17 percent expressed dissatisfaction with their current jobs, a majority of 53 percent employees (the highest percentage of all other GCC countries), have agreed that they are satisfied with their jobs. Waleed Alnaqbi (2011) study the significant difference is found in attitudes towards leadership, where those without a need to supervise seem more in satisfied agreement than those with supervisory responsibilities. One useful mechanism for understanding commitment behaviors is to consider them the relationship between the employer and employee as one of a fair exchange, with the way in which an employer treats employees having a direct bearing on their performance, attitude and commitment to the organization. Employee attitudes and behaviors, including performance, reflect their perceptions and expectations, reciprocating the treatment that they receive from the organization. It is important to note that while similarities in attitudes towards work and management practices exist across Middle Eastern countries, there are also considerable variations between countries in the Middle East that cannot be explained by cultural factors. Amna & Fatma (2010), cited that job satisfaction means the degree of positive emotions the employees has toward a job (Abu Elanain, 2009). So if the employees are satisfied with what they got, their reaction will be positive and they will perform better toward their job. "Attitude to the job can contribute to job satisfaction, because job satisfaction is a general attitude that comprises several attitudes related to various fields (Uygulama, 2009)." As a conducted research has shown that when employees is being treated unfairly by his organization they respond both affectively with lower commitment and behaviorally with increased turnover, theft and decreased citizenship behavior (Abu Elanain, 2009). The study conducted that justice plays a big role in influencing employee's satisfaction and performance. Employees need to be satisfied not only with justice but also with a successful relations with the management, relations with employees, job safety, being recognized, pay and promotion, unambiguity of roles, freedom, performance and life satisfaction and trade unions. Hossam M. Abu Elanain (2010), stated that the work attitudes and behaviors investigated in this study included job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. The key conceptual difference between satisfaction, commitment, and turnover is that the first two concepts are employees' attitudes but turnover refers to an employees' behavior. Job satisfaction is perhaps the most widely studied work attitudes over the last four decades of organizational studies. Researchers have defined and measured satisfaction both as a global construct and as a concept with different dimensions. This study used the global approach over the dimensions approach, conceptualizing job satisfaction as the degree of positive emotions an employee has toward a job. After reviewing the previous literature and studies, some of similarities are as follows: firstly, subject to assess the work attitudes of employees and recommendations to improve the work attitudes, secondly, most of the literature and studies were focused on the modern practices which may help assess the work attitudes in order to improve it. Thirdly, they focused to improve the work attitudes to enrich the employees with the tools and skills to improve their productivity.

### Theoretical Framework

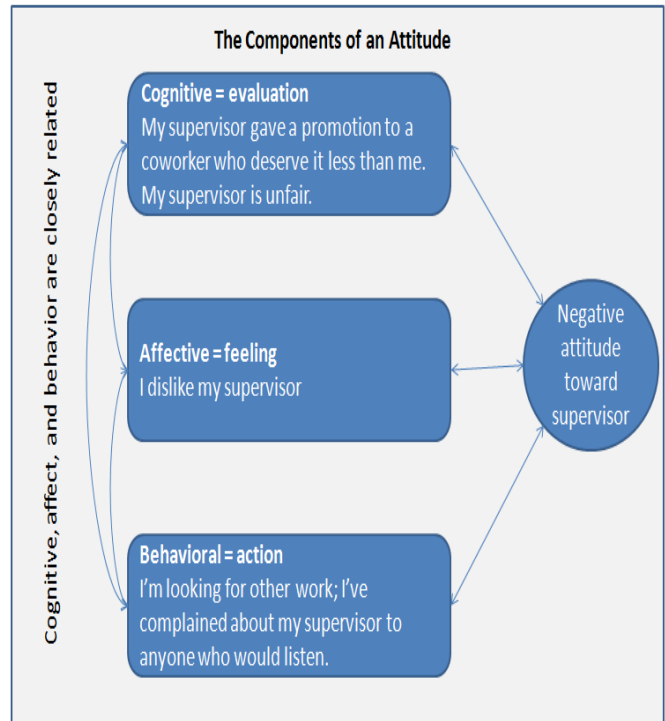


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study.

Source: Stephen P. Robbins & Timothy A. Judge, "Organizational Behavior", 14th edition, 2011 There are number of factors that affect the improvement of the level of satisfaction on work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. These factors can be categorized as internal and external forces that inherently play a role. The internal forces that affect the improvement of the level of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco include decisions undertaken by the managers, division heads, supervisors, and employees while, the external factors include training centers, joint venture companies, customers, and competitors. If the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco is improved, it will lead to desirable status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. Hence, it will result in higher job satisfaction achievement, and consequently retaining and growing employee base. The conceptual framework focused on work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. The study helped to know the status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. The study also helped to know level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco in terms of Personal Attitudes, Initiative Attitudes, and Accountability attitudes. The assessment was done by utilizing the descriptive method which utilized the questionnaire to collect data. The input comprises the status and the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco as well as the problems encountered in work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. The process consists of processes and methods used by Saudi Aramco in the implementation of work attitudes. The output improves the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. However, if the output does not meet with the desired result, it will go back to the first stage by using feedback technique.

## METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the descriptive – evaluative type of research. An organizationally - based, descriptive portion of design was pursued through the use of relevant data via conducting questionnaire. The articulated research outline happened to be the most fitting one exemplifying the work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. According to James P. Key (1997), Descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The methods involved range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, to developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time. The respondents were selected as the employees of Corporate Business Applications Department of Saudi Aramco. The total sample of the study is 330 respondents with 1 manager, 40 supervisors, 219 business/systems analysts, and 70 ranks in file. The population of each class will be shown in Table 3.1. The Table shows that 0.30% manager, 12.12% supervisors, 66.36% business/systems analysts, and 21.21% rank in file responded to survey.

**Table 1-Respondents Classification**

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Managers	1	0.30%
Supervisors	40	12.12%
Business/Systems Analyst	219	66.36%
Rank in File	70	21.21%
Total	330	100%

**\* The conducted respondents were selected on selective basis.**

In this study, the sampling consisted of only two groups; these groups included management employees and regular employees of the Corporate Business Applications Department (CBAD) of Saudi Aramco. Purposive sampling was used in the study where the researcher identified criteria for the selection of the respondents. This often improved the representativeness of sample by reducing sampling error. The t-test was used to determine the significant relationship between the status and the level of satisfaction in terms of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco.

## Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the finding, analysis, interpretation and discussion on the status and level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. In this section, the status as well as the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco for the following variables namely: personal attitudes, initiative attitudes and accountability attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco will be discussed. The data gathered and generated from respondents answers from the questionnaire were tabulated and presented in tables will be discussed in details below.

**Table 2-The Status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco in terms of: Personal Attitudes**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Between times to time, supervisor likes the employee to talk to him/her to know about the way he/she wants the employee to deal with him/her.	3.74	Agree
2. Criticism from supervisor and management should be accepted without feeling annoyed or being offensive.	3.86	Agree
3. Appreciation from direct report (supervisor, division head, and manager), workmates, customers, visitors or any others make employee very excited.	4.47	Strongly Agree
4. Help and assistance to the direct report (supervisor) whenever he/she in need for it should be given.	4.33	Strongly Agree
5. Human manners are practiced among employees at work.	3.96	Agree
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	4.07	Agree

Table 2 Personal Attitudes of the status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco has overall mean of 4.07 (Agree). Most of the respondents strongly agreed that appreciation from direct report (supervisor, division head, and manager), workmates, customers, visitors or any others make employee very excited with the highest mean of 4.47. Moreover, most of the respondents strongly agreed that help and assistance to the direct report (supervisor) whenever he/she in need for it should be given with the second highest mean of 4.33; which is supported by Naimatullah Shah and Zahir Irani in their research entitled "Examining Employee Attitudes and Behaviors towards Organizational Change Using Supervisor and Peer Relations", stated that relationships between employee and employer may be developed on the basis of the work environment that can stimulate the individual to utilize his/her abilities, efforts, experiences and skills. The work environment may support employees to develop commitment with the organization because s/he sees the possibility of accomplishing their desires, needs and future expectations. By achieving these desires and needs employees may accept or develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards organizational change.

**Table 3-Initiative Attitudes**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Following new developments of activities, tools, methods and innovative ways in the field of work is a common practice.	3.46	Agree
2. Reading some books related to the field of work, and company products/services, is being exercised from time to time by employees.	3.42	Agree
3. Reviewing the tasks and conduct self-assessment to ensure capabilities to perform these tasks is performed periodically.	3.44	Agree
4. Freedom to consult with the manager if there is any problem regarding the work is available.	3.63	Agree
5. Employees are aware of almost all the policies and procedures of Saudi Aramco.	3.09	Moderately Agree
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 the Initiative Attitudes of the status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco has overall mean of 3.41 (Agree). Most of the respondents agreed that freedom to consult with the manager if there is any problem regarding the work is available with the highest mean of 3.63. Moreover, most of the respondents agreed that following new developments of activities, tools, methods and innovative ways in the field of work is a common practice with the second highest mean of 3.46; which is supported by Robbins and Judge (2011), stated that managers should be interested in their employees' attitudes because attitudes give warnings of potential problems and influence behavior. Satisfied and committed employees, for instance, have lower rates of turnover, absenteeism, and withdrawal behaviors. They also perform better on the job. Given that managers want to keep resignations and absences down-especially among their most productive employees-they'll want to do things that generate positive job attitudes. As one review put it, "A sound measurement of overall job attitude is one of the most useful pieces of information an organization can have about its employees".

**Table 4-Accountability Attitudes**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Agreement between the employee and his/her direct report (supervisor) on the tasks that the employee has to accomplish exists.	3.89	Agree
2. Following the technical/managerial/health & safety instructions at work is an obligated task.	4.27	Strongly Agree
3. Permission to do any task that requires special tools to be used is required.	4.09	Agree
4. Punctuality is a common practice among employees.	4.02	Agree
5. Face problems to solve them and not to run away from them is a common practice by employees.	3.72	Agree
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 the Accountability Attitudes of the status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco has overall mean of 4.00 (Agree). Most of the respondents strongly agree that following the technical/managerial/health & safety instructions at work is an obligated task with the highest mean of 4.27. Moreover, most of the respondents agreed that permission to do any task that requires special tools to be used is required with the second highest mean of 4.09; which is supported by Backman (1969) as cited in Arnold (2011) work attitude is defined as "...certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act toward some aspect of their environment." It follows that attitudes are evaluative phenomena and indicates the likely outcome of how a person's feelings, thoughts and behaviors affect the object of the attitude. The level of satisfaction work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco in terms of:

**Table 5-Personal Attitudes**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Cares provided by Saudi Aramco for its employees.	3.72	Satisfied
2. Present tasks and activities challenges.	3.82	Satisfied
3. The benefits provided by Saudi Aramco to employees and their families.	3.67	Satisfied
4. The training programs that Saudi Aramco organizes for its employees' personal development.	3.63	Satisfied
5. The work done by the employee and his/her supervisor to identify his/her strengths and Weaknesses.	3.39	Moderately Satisfied

<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	3.65	Satisfied
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Table 4 the Personal Attitudes of the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco has overall mean of 3.65 (Satisfied). Most of the respondents satisfied that present tasks and activities challenges with the highest mean of 3.82. Moreover, most of the respondents satisfied that cares provided by Saudi Aramco for its employees with the second highest mean of 3.72; which is supported by Anna Lozytska (2010), in her research entitled "Work Attitude in Russia" highlighted that young people are becoming more confident. They are more willing to compete and achieve high results, but sometimes are seen to be overconfident about their capabilities. Youth doesn't already have a tough necessity of surviving so new values such as interesting and pleasurable job are developing fast.

**Table 6-Initiative Attitudes**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The motivation process taken by the supervisor for employees' development.	3.39	Moderately Satisfied
2. The cordial relations with each other as teamwork.	3.89	Satisfied
3. The training received from skilled and experienced trainers.	3.60	Satisfied
4. The supervisor's concern about the welfare of his sub-ordinates.	3.68	Satisfied
5. The supervisor informing his/her subordinates all the things that they need to know and guiding them all the time.	3.46	Satisfied
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	3.60	Satisfied

Table 6 the Initiative Attitudes of the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco has overall mean of 3.60 (Satisfied). Most of the respondents satisfied that the cordial relations with each other as teamwork with the highest mean of 3.89. Moreover, most of the respondents satisfied that the supervisor's concern about the welfare of his sub-ordinates with the second highest mean of 3.68; which is supported by Waleed Alnaqbi (2011), in his research entitled "The Relationship between Human Resource Practices and Employee Retention in Public Organizations" stated that a significant difference is found in attitudes towards leadership, where those without a need to supervise seem more in satisfied agreement than those with supervisory responsibilities. Employee attitudes and behaviors, including performance, reflect their perceptions and expectations, reciprocating the treatment that they receive from the organization.

**Table 7-Accountability Attitudes**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The supervisor tries to solve the problems of his sub-ordinates with personal attention.	3.67	Satisfied
2. The subsidy provided by Saudi Aramco to employees.	3.65	Satisfied
3. The proper training for the understanding of any new benefits launched for employees provided by the management.	3.40	Satisfied
4. The physical and mental health facilities provided by Saudi Aramco to employees.	3.49	Satisfied
5. The benefits provided by Saudi Aramco as compared to other companies.	3.75	Satisfied
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	3.59	Satisfied

Table 7 the Accountability Attitudes of the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco has overall mean of 3.59 (Satisfied). Most of the respondents satisfied that the benefits provided by Saudi Aramco as compared to other companies with the highest mean of 3.75. Moreover, most of the respondents satisfied that the supervisor tries to solve the problems of his sub-ordinates with personal attention with the second highest mean of 3.67; which is supported by Naimatullah Shah and Zahir Irani in their research entitle "Examining Employee Attitudes and Behaviors towards Organizational Change Using Supervisor and Peer Relations", stated that relationships between employee and employer may be developed on the basis of the work environment that can stimulate the individual to utilize his/her abilities, efforts, experiences and skills. Relationship between supervisor and peer in literature has been found to transform knowledge from individual to individual, groups and organization.

**Table 8-The Relationship between the Status and the Level of Satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco:**

		The Status		
The Level of Satisfaction		Personal Attitudes	Initiative Attitudes	Accountability Attitudes
	CORR.	0.1	0.3	-0.4
	L. S.	0.05	0.05	0.05
	Decision	No significant Relationship	No significant Relationship	No significant Relationship
	Interpretation	Weak Positive Correlation	Moderate Positive Correlation	Very Weak Negative Correlation

Table 8 shows that there is no significant relationship between the Status and the Level of Satisfaction in terms of Personal Attitudes, Initiative Attitudes and Accountability Attitudes have weak positive correlation of 0.1, moderate positive correlation

of 0.3 and very weak negative correlation of - 0.4 respectively.

**Table 9** -The problems encountered of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco:

Indicators	%	Rank
1. The Saudi Aramco supports honest & clear two-way communication between managers & employees.	35.09%	1
2. Employees at Saudi Aramco work well together to solve problems & get the job done.	08.77%	4
3. The grievance procedures are tackled very tactfully & fairly by the management.	22.81%	2
4. The management encourages the employees to give their best in order to achieve the organization objectives.	15.79%	3
5. The policies & procedures for the employees are simple enough to understand and convenient.	22.81%	2

Table 9 the most severe problem encountered is that the Saudi Aramco does not supports honest & clear two-way communication between managers & employees with the rate of 35.09%. The second and third severe problems with the same rate of 22.81% are that the grievance procedures are not tackled very tactfully & fairly by the management and the policies & procedures for the employees are not simple enough to understand and convenient respectively. The least severe problem is that employees at Saudi Aramco do not work well together to solve problems & get the job done with the rate of 8.77%.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The major findings of the study indicated that the respondents agreed that personal, initiative, and accountability attitudes meet their expectation in terms of the status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco. Also, the study has shown that most of the respondents are satisfied with their personal, initiative, and accountability attitudes in terms of the level of satisfaction. Not only that, but the study proved that there was no significant relationship between the status and the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco in terms of personal, initiative and accountability attributes. Based on the study, respondents believe that the most encountered problems are first, Saudi Aramco does not support honest and clear two-way communication between managers and employees; second, the grievance procedures are not tackled very tactfully and fairly by the management; and third, the policies and procedures for the employees are not simple enough to understand and/or comprehend. The study showed that 38% of participants believe immunity should be given to employees with clear and transparent assurances against retaliation to communicate upward any work and/or personal issues and unfair treatment. 85% of participants believe that 70% to 90% of employees stay 5-10 years without promotion for neither unknown reasons nor the employee get informed "why"? The results of the study showed that the respondents agreed that the status of work attitudes of employees of Saudi

Aramco: its relation to work satisfaction, in terms of personal, initiative, and accountability attitudes, meet their expectation. Also, the study showed that most of the respondents are satisfied in terms of personal, initiative and accountability attitudes. The finding showed that there is no significant relationship between the status and the level of satisfaction of work attitudes of employees of Saudi Aramco: its relation to work satisfaction in terms of personal attitudes, initiative attitudes, and accountability attitudes. The most severe problem encountered is that there are many employees who are far away from satisfaction and their attitudes level is so low. The researcher recommends that management should effectively practice clear honesty, open-door policies, and two-way communication between managers and employees. Also, management needs to enhance and ease the policies and procedures for the employees to make it simple enough to understand and/or comprehend. Since, Saudi Aramco provides free in-house, In-kingdom and Out-of-kingdom training, management needs to increase its employees' satisfaction by providing them with more and enough training to overcome these obstacles and create healthy workplaces to keep the attitudes level always high. Social gathering and outside activities between time to time can help improve the work environment. Finally, a similar research in different fields is recommended to sustain the findings of this study.

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