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A STUDY ON EMPLOYEES JOB SATISFACTION OF HARDWARE SHOPS IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing employee job satisfaction within hardware shops across Tamil Nadu. The primary objective is to identify key determinants that contribute to or detract from the overall satisfaction levels of employees in this specific retail sector. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, data will be collected through structured questionnaires administered to a diverse sample of employees working in various hardware establishments across different districts of Tamil Nadu. The questionnaire will cover aspects such as working conditions, compensation and benefits, opportunities for growth, management style, interpersonal relationships, and work-life balance. The anticipated findings of this research are expected to highlight significant correlations between specific organizational practices and employee satisfaction. The study aims to provide valuable insights for hardware shop owners and managers, enabling them to formulate effective strategies to improve employee morale, reduce turnover rates, and foster a more productive work environment. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the existing literature on job satisfaction within the retail sector, with a specific focus on the unique context of hardware shops in Tamil Nadu.

KEY WORDS: Hardware Shops, organizational practices, Job Satisfaction, Employees, Work environment and Performance

INTRODUCTION

Employee job satisfaction is a crucial aspect of human resource management and organizational success, especially in retail sectors like hardware shops, where daily operations heavily depend on employees' dedication and performance. In Chennai, a city with a robust economic landscape and a rising demand for infrastructure and construction, hardware shops play a vital role in the supply chain. These shops rely on a stable workforce to meet customer expectations, handle product inventory, and sustain business competitiveness. For these

businesses, employee satisfaction not only affects turnover rates but also influences customer service quality, productivity, and overall profitability. Understanding the factors that contribute to employee job satisfaction in hardware shops can provide insights into improving employee retention, reducing training costs, and fostering a positive work environment that benefits both employers and employees.

Employee job satisfaction is influenced by a variety of factors, including work environment, job security, compensation, and opportunities for growth. In Chennai's hardware retail sector, which often involves a mix of small and large businesses, employees face unique challenges such as fluctuating customer demand, limited career advancement opportunities, and variable income. These factors can lead to dissatisfaction if not properly addressed. Employees in hardware shops may also deal with physically demanding tasks and long working hours, which can impact their well-being and overall satisfaction. Exploring these influences helps reveal the specific needs of employees in this sector, allowing business owners to implement changes that improve morale, engagement, and loyalty.

GROWTH OF HARDWARE SECTOR

The growth of the hardware sector in Chennai has a significant impact on the employment landscape, offering numerous job opportunities across a range of roles within hardware shops. As Chennai's economy expands, driven by real estate, construction, and infrastructure development, the demand for hardware supplies has surged, making the hardware retail sector a cornerstone of the city's commercial framework. This growth has led to an increased demand for skilled and semi-skilled labor in hardware shops, creating a vital source of employment for local residents. Consequently, job satisfaction among employees in this sector has become a critical factor, influencing both the stability and success of these businesses.

Employee job satisfaction in Chennai's growing hardware sector is closely tied to work conditions, opportunities for advancement, and compensation. With the rise in the sector's competitive dynamics, hardware shops are striving to attract and retain talented workers by improving workplace conditions and investing in employee well-being. As the industry grows, the pressure to maintain consistent service quality and customer satisfaction increases, often resulting in extended work hours and the need for employees to perform a variety of tasks. While the sector's growth provides job stability, it also brings challenges related to workload and employee expectations, making satisfaction a complex issue that requires careful attention.

Key Trends in Chennai's Hardware Sector

- Growing demand for hardware products due to Chennai's expanding real estate and construction sectors.
- Increase in small and medium-sized hardware shops across the city to meet diverse consumer needs.
- Rising competition among hardware shops, driving improvements in customer service and product variety.
- Adoption of digital payment systems and inventory management software to streamline operations.
- Focus on skill development and training programs to enhance employee performance and retention.
- Emphasis on offering competitive salaries and benefits to retain skilled workers amid rising living costs.

- Shift toward eco-friendly and sustainable hardware products to meet changing consumer preferences.
- Extended work hours and additional workload during peak demand seasons, impacting employee work-life balance.
- Use of social media and online platforms by hardware shops to increase visibility and attract more customers.
- Increased collaboration between hardware shops and large-scale suppliers to secure better prices and product availability.

EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN HARDWARE SHOPS

Customer demand and convenience are crucial factors in the success of hardware shops, especially in urban areas where competition is high, and customer expectations are diverse. Satisfied employees play a vital role in meeting these demands, as their motivation and expertise directly influence the quality of customer service and the overall convenience of the shopping experience.

In a hardware shop, employees are often expected to offer knowledgeable recommendations on products, guide customers in finding suitable tools, and provide tailored advice for projects. When employees are satisfied and engaged, they are more likely to deliver this level of support, which not only meets but often exceeds customer expectations. Satisfied employees are also more attentive and patient, creating a more enjoyable and efficient shopping experience, which is essential for retaining loyal customers in a competitive market.

Convenience is another significant aspect, as customers in the city often prioritize shops where they can find quick, effective solutions. When employees are content and well-trained, they can streamline the shopping process by promptly assisting customers, reducing wait times, and ensuring efficient service. Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to poor engagement, which may translate into slow service and a lack of helpfulness, detracting from the customer experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Arumugam & Krishna (2013) conducted a study on small retail businesses in Chennai, identifying key factors like employee recognition, fair pay, and work-life balance as primary contributors to job satisfaction. These findings are applicable to hardware stores in Chennai, where similar factors could influence employee satisfaction. Chennai, as a metro city, has a unique workforce that may be influenced by factors such as the cost of living, local culture, and economic conditions. Additionally, the competitive nature of the retail sector in Chennai necessitates that hardware shops invest in employee satisfaction to improve productivity and reduce turnover.

The hardware retail sector in Chennai, like in many cities, faces unique challenges such as intense competition, changing consumer demands, and fluctuating market conditions. Research by **Johnson & Singh (2014)** highlighted that employees in hardware retail stores experience higher stress due to the physical nature of the job and customer service demands. Furthermore, the customer-centric nature of the industry means that employee satisfaction is also dependent on their ability to meet customer expectations.

Choi and Goh (2015) indicates that a positive, safe, and well-organized work environment enhances employee morale. In the hardware retail sector, this extends to the physical conditions of the store, ease of product handling, and organizational culture.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of employee job satisfaction in hardware shops across Chennai is a critical issue that impacts the overall productivity and success of businesses in this sector. As Chennai experiences rapid growth in construction, real estate, and retail industries, hardware shops are facing an increased demand for products and services. However, despite the expanding market, many employees in these shops experience dissatisfaction due to various factors such as low wages, lack of career growth opportunities, long working hours, and insufficient recognition for their efforts. This dissatisfaction can lead to high employee turnover, decreased productivity, and a negative impact on customer service, which ultimately affects the shop's bottom line. Therefore, the problem lies in identifying the key factors that influence employee job satisfaction in hardware shops, understanding the specific challenges employees face, and determining how these issues can be mitigated. The study aims to fill this gap by investigating the drivers of job satisfaction in this sector and offering recommendations to enhance employee well-being, retention, and performance, ultimately contributing to the sustained success of hardware shops in Chennai.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the key factors that contribute to employee job satisfaction in the hardware retail sector.
2. To assess the level of job satisfaction among employees working in hardware shops in Chennai.
3. To examine the relationship between employee satisfaction and job performance in hardware shops.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of employee job satisfaction in hardware shops. Primary data will be gathered via surveys and interviews, while secondary data will be analysed from reports and literature already in existence. The sample size for this study on employee job satisfaction in hardware shops in Chennai will consist of 150 employees from various hardware shops across the city. This sample will be selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation from different shop types, including small independent shops and larger retail chains provided the required information. A one-way ANOVA, correlation coefficient, and percentage analysis are used to examine the collected data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focuses only on hardware shops in Chennai, limiting its applicability to other regions or cities with different economic conditions or retail landscapes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table – 1: Personal Profile of the Employees

Particulars		Employees	Percentage
Gender	Male	96	64.00%
	Female	54	36.00%
	Total	150	100.00%
Age	Upto 25 Years	49	32.67%
	25 – 35	54	36.00%

	35 – 45	34	22.67%
	Above 45 Years	13	8.67%
	Total	150	100.00%
Marital Status	Married	58	38.67%
	Un married	87	58.00%
	Single parent	5	3.33%
	Total	150	100.00%
Education Level	Up to School Level	57	38.00%
	UG Degree	43	28.67%
	PG Degree	12	8.00%
	ITI / Diploma	23	15.33%
	Others	15	10.00%
	Total	150	100.00%
Monthly Income	Up to Rs.15,000	69	46.00%
	Rs. 15,001-25,000	41	27.33%
	Rs.25,001-35,000	21	14.00%
	Rs.35,001-45,000	14	9.33%
	Above Rs. 45,000	5	3.33%
	Total	150	100.00%
Types of Family	Nuclear family	118	78.67%
	Joint family	32	21.33%
	Total	150	100.00%

The above table 1 shows that, out of 150 respondents, Majority 64% of the respondents are male and least 36% of the respondents are female based on their gender. Majority 36% of the respondents belongs to the age group between 25-35 years and least 8.67% of the respondents belongs to the age group above 45 years. Majority 58% of the respondents are unmarried and least 3.3% of the respondents are single parent based on their current marital status. Maximum 38% of the respondents educational qualification are up to School level and least 8% of the respondents are PG degree holders according to their educational qualification. Majority 46% of the respondent's monthly income are up to Rs. 15,000 and least 3.3% of the respondent's monthly income are above Rs.45,000. Majority 78.67% of the respondents is belongs to nuclear family and least 21.33% of the respondents are belongs to joint family.

H₀: There is no significant difference between educational qualification of the employees with respect to job satisfaction of hardware shop employee in Chennai.

Table -2 One-way ANOVA on educational qualification of the employees with respect to job satisfaction of hardware shop employee in Chennai.

Educational Qualification of the Employees	Mean	SD	f Value	p Value
Up to School Level	3.32	1.093	4.631	0.000
UG Degree	3.42	1.351		
PG Degree	4.31	0.795		
ITI / Diploma	4.12	1.165		
Others	4.14	0.922		

Table 2 indicates that, Since P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5 percent level of significance with regard to job satisfaction of hardware shop employee in Chennai. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant difference between educational qualification of the employees with respect to job satisfaction of hardware shop employee in Chennai.

H₀: There is no correlation among working hours, wage system, Career growth opportunities, performance and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai.

Table – 3: Correlation among the factors influencing job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai.

		Working hours	Wage System	Career growth opportunities	Performance	Rewards
Working hours	Pearson correlation	1	.515**	.421**	.515**	.526**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
Wage System	Pearson correlation	.515**	1	.539**	.415**	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
Career growth opportunities	Pearson correlation	.421**	.539**	1	.541**	.539**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
Performance	Pearson correlation	.515**	.415**	.541**	1	.615**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
Rewards	Pearson correlation	.526**	.557**	.539**	.615**	1

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	150	150	150	150	150

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows that, the Hypotheses is rejected in the case of

1. Working hours of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with wage system, Career growth opportunities, performance and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai.
2. Wage system of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, Career growth opportunities, performance and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai.
3. Career growth opportunities of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, wage system, performance and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai.
4. Performance of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, wage system, Career growth opportunities and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai.
5. Rewards of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, wage system, Career growth opportunities and Performance of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai.

MAJOR FINDING:

- Out of 150 respondents, Majority 64% of the respondents are male and least 36% of the respondents are female based on their gender. Majority 36% of the respondents belongs to the age group between 25-35 years and least 8.67% of the respondents belongs to the age group above 45 years. Majority 58% of the respondents are unmarried and least 3.3% of the respondents are single parent based on their current marital status. Maximum 38% of the respondent's educational qualification are up to School level and least 8% of the respondents are PG degree holders according to their educational qualification. Majority 46% of the respondent's monthly income are up to Rs. 15,000 and least 3.3% of the respondent's monthly income are above Rs.45,000. Majority 78.67% of the respondents is belonging to nuclear family and least 21.33% of the respondents are belongs to joint family.
- Since P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5 percent level of significance with regard to job satisfaction of hardware shop employee in Chennai. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant difference between educational qualification of the employees with respect to job satisfaction of hardware shop employee in Chennai.
- Working hours of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with wage system, Career growth opportunities, performance and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai because the P value is less than 0.01.
- Wage system of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, Career growth opportunities, performance and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai because the P value is less than 0.01.
- Career growth opportunities of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, wage system, performance and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai because the P value is less than 0.01.

- Performance of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, wage system, Career growth opportunities and rewards of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai because the P value is less than 0.01.
- Rewards of Hardware Shop Employees is correlated with working hours, wage system, Career growth opportunities and Performance of job satisfaction of Hardware Shop Employees in Chennai because the P value is less than 0.01.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore and analyze the factors influencing employee job satisfaction in hardware shops in Chennai city. Through an in-depth examination of various determinants such as compensation, work environment, career development opportunities, and management practices, the study highlighted the significant factors contributing to employees' overall satisfaction in the retail hardware sector. The findings suggest that job satisfaction among employees in hardware shops in Chennai is strongly influenced by factors such as fair compensation, positive work relationships, recognition, and career advancement opportunities. Employees who felt supported by management and experienced a safe, inclusive, and positive work environment reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, the role of leadership and effective communication emerged as a key driver in enhancing job satisfaction levels, demonstrating the importance of management's involvement in employee welfare. This research offers valuable insights for business owners and managers in the hardware retail sector, highlighting the need for a focused approach to improving employee satisfaction as a means of ensuring sustainable growth and success in a highly competitive industry.

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