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The mediating role of employee work motivation in the relationship between social compliance and employee productivity: A conceptual framework

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Abstract

The overall success of an organization largely depends upon the productivity of their employees. The desired productivity cannot be achieved unless the employees are working with their full motivation. Subsequently, the employees will not be motivated until and unless their individual, social and legal needs are fulfilled. The social compliance satisfies these needs which directly effect on the employee productivity and also affect indirectly to the employee productivity through the motivational process. Therefore, this study has developed a conceptual framework by this said concept which is supported by the existing literature. In this framework, social compliance used as an independent variable, employee productivity as the dependent variable and employee work motivation as mediating variable.

Keywords: Social Compliance; Employee Productivity; Employee Work Motivation; Conceptual Framework

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1. Introduction

Employee productivity is one of the essential components of a successful business organisation. This achievement is due to assiduous employees with exceptional productivity. Workers who put forth a sincere effort that create an immense difference in company returns. The workers who do only their duties and no extra effort can put the advancement of a business into an impasse. Therefore, it is imperative to motivate all personnel to touch their chock-full potential for the highest level of productivity. Business enterprises that distinguish and embolden by improved productivity are expected to be more effectual than their counterparts that don't. Numerous things sway labours productivity such as working environment, protection of employees' rights, interactions with supervisor & co-workers, labour standards, aptness of tasks for the employees' skills, employees' motivation, job satisfaction etc. On the other hand, bad working environment, bad leadership, discrimination, forced labour, excessive working hours, non-harmonious relation with a supervisor, underpayment of wages and overtime, poor working conditions, insufficient fringe benefits, frequent changes or disruptions in processes can negatively affect workers' productivity. Managers can motivate workers to enhance productivity in numerous ways. Remuneration package is one of the firstly addressed, but an upsurge in wages does not necessarily associate with enhancement of productivity. The essential way to motivate employees is to safeguard social compliance issues such as maintain legal working hours, providing legal leaves, ensure health and safety provisions, effective grievance handling procedure, adequate welfare facilities, non-discriminative work environment, abuse and harassment-free workplace. Therefore, this study is intended to propose a conceptual framework for examining the effect of social compliance on employee productivity with the mediating role of employee work motivation.

2. Problem statement

Each manager pursues to increase the productivity of their operatives which is one of the essential elements of their overall strategy (Gino and Jane, 2009). For being the improvement of employees' productivity, the motivation is significant. However, it is observed that in many companies, the workers are less motivated and less satisfied by doing their work and the employers have a very little concern about the motivation of their workers (Islam et al., 2012). There are many different solutions recommended to address the productivity improvement for the workers such as to improve social compliance situation, to provide training to the workers and to install advanced technology etc. However, (Razzaue and Eusuf, 2007) in his study trade, development and poverty linkage found that healthier working conditions, welfare facilities and better wage payments have its positive effects on workforce productivity. By considering this, (Rahman and Hossain, 2010) recommended that there is a need to study the relationship between social compliance issues and employee productivity. Therefore, the proposed study is an attempt to fill the above knowledge gap by establishing the relationship between social compliance and employee productivity with the mediating role of employee work motivation.

3. Literature review

The proposed study aims to establish a conceptual framework by using the three variables such as employee productivity, social compliance and employee work motivation from the existing literature by observing their effect on each other.

3.1. Social compliance

Compliance implies conformity to standards. The standards comprise of the relevant laws of the respective country, ILO conventions regarding labour standards and labour rights, fair labour practices, working conditions, building standards, worker's safety and health measures, environmental protection issues and buyers' Code of Conduct (Alam et al., 2017). Upholding compliance standard has progressively been contemplated as one of the significant factors for competitiveness in the international RMG market (Moazzem and Sehrin, 2016). Observance with international and national compliance principles has become gradually important to confirm buyers' necessities as well as to preserve the industry's effectiveness (Rahman and Hossain, 2010). It is observed that consumers are setting more importance on compliance standard as customers of western countries are becoming progressively more attentive about social and work environment in the supplying factories (Moazzem and Sehrin, 2016). The term compliance is derived from the verb 'to comply', that means, 'to act by the rules'. The rules cover nearly all sectors within the manufacturing and services industry. Regulated organisations generally have a compliance department, lead by a compliance officer, whose role is to implement policy and standards that guarantee all principles and obligations are adhered to, as well as confirming that no conflicts of interest get up within the company. Compliance unit must have a monitoring team. This monitoring team is necessary to notice and correct violations, be responsible for evidence to support corrective actions and evaluate program progress by establishing compliance status (Lima, 2012). However, there are many advantages of compliance in industry such as the higher price of goods, reduce employee turnover rate, increased productivity, improve employee morality, diminish labour unrest, improve product quality, international recognition for the performance, upgrade global image of the company, the better relation with community and public, contentment of the customer requirement, better relation with government, can get consistency in customer order and can attract internationally reputed buyers (Rahman and Hossain, 2010). Despite having those numerous benefits of social compliance, there are many owners of the factory are less attentive to become a complaint factory because of massive initial expense and maintain cost (Baral, 2010). Moreover, in several cases, the management personnel of the factory does not have proper knowledge and skills to implement desired compliance standards (Ullah et al., 2013).

3.2. Employee work motivation

According to Dictionary of Webster's New Collegiate definition, a motive is "something a need or desire that causes a person to act". The term "Motivate" means "to provide with a motive," and the motivation is referred as "the act or process of motivating". Subsequently, motivation is the performance or process of presenting an intention that causes an individual to endure some accomplishment. It is the compulsory requirement of

comprehending, discovering and instigating workers' motivation as a principle concern for supervisors, managers and even organisation's top-level management because workers' motivation has been and will be the determining factor in work performance and turn to decide the failure or success of a company (Kim, 2006). The motivated workers are more creative and more productive and enhance additional value to a company than their just performing what it takes to get by. According to the author, motivation cannot be taught, created or instilled. However, it can be tapped into, maintained and supported. Thus, he explains that the motivational factors are different to one another and therefore various persons are driven by different motivators by nature (Lunsford, 2009). Hence, substantial research and study on this subject have been conducted, and realistic volumes of outcomes have been produced to assist contemporary management and organisations. Different researchers and authors have defined the motivation in various ways in various perspective. There are mainly two types of motivation such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is achieved by performing tasks that lead to a feeling of satisfaction or interest. For example, when a person goes to the gym, they will feel satisfied after they went. This feeling of satisfaction can be an intrinsic motivator to go to the gym the next time. In opposite, extrinsic motivation is achieved by effective incentives (Deci and Ryan, 1975). An instrumental incentive can, for example, consist of a high wage for jobs which require that the employee be away from home for a longer period. The extrinsic motivator then is the money an employee earns. In jobs, extrinsic motivators mostly consist of salary, bonuses, and other benefits, for example, health insurance or more vacation days. Islam et al. (2018) expounds again, by distinguishing the followings such as employees are extrinsically motivated when they involve in the job to achieve some goals or objectives that are apart from work itself. Employees are intrinsically motivated when they seek self-expression, the satisfaction of curiosity, personal challenge in the work, enjoyment or interest. This kind of motivation originates from an employee's interest or pleasure in the work, and it does not include job performance for the sake of external rewards, it instead forces the feeling of inside interest and pleasure in the work itself. It can be seen as a driving force that contains performing the job without external inducement (Nduka, 2016).

3.3. Employee productivity

Productivity can be defined in many ways but, technically, it is the relationship between input and output where output implies to the product manufactured by a business organisation and input implies to the materials and resources consumed to manufacture the outputs (Saha and Mazumder, 2015). The word "productivity" is sometimes misunderstood with the term "production". Production is focused on the activity of manufacturing products or goods whereas productivity is slanted towards with the efficient uses of resources (inputs) in manufacturing goods (outputs). In the empirical technique, the term production is the number of outputs manufactured while the productivity is the ratio of output manufactured to the input(s) utilised (Gino and Janel, 2009). Productivity is a combination of efficiency and effectiveness. Hence, it is doing the right things right (Islam, 2016). There are different productivity definitions in the literature. Productivity is a ratio to measure how efficiently a manufacturing unit or industry, individual, country transforms input resources like materials, labour, machines, capital etc. into products and services (Ying, 2004). In many cases, the productivity is determined by calculating performance increase as when there is less absenteeism, fewer breaks, and fewer workers leaving early whereas employee productivity should be considered by the number

of goods manufactured per worker per hour. (Nabil, 2010). People used to measure productivity in various ways. For instance, in a manufacturing industry, productivity might be calculated according to the hours of work takes to manufacture a product, while in the service industry, productivity might be calculated according to the revenue generated by a worker divided by his/her salary (Gundecha, 2012). Single or multiple factors can calculate productivity measurement, but the choice between them depends upon the objective of the productivity measurement and in maximum cases, it depends on the availability of data (Fernandes, 2006). In early, productivity implies to the quantifiable ratio between inputs and outputs in physical terms. "Productivity" is a business concept that considers actual output attained for a given unit of input. An employee's productivity is the number of units produced by a given time he/she has exercised (Umoh and Lezaasi, 2013).

4. Relationship between social compliance and employee productivity

Social compliance refers the policies and practices of a business enterprise which are connected to the physiological and psychological well-being of their workers (Alam et al., 2018). This psychological and physiological well-being includes workers safety and health, respect and dignity for human rights, work-life balance, diversity, non-discrimination, equal opportunity & growth and employee training etc. (Gond et al., 2011). Workers involve themselves intensely with their company when it is associated with welfare activities of the workers (Glavas and Godwin, 2013). Workers who are supported by their company are more likely to feel rigorously associated with the company (Jones et al., 2010). It can be argued that the organisation affianced in social compliance practices earn a positive image and are better able to entice appropriate workers (Jones et al., 2014). It may claim that by improving higher social compliance practice, an organisation can enhance its trustworthiness amongst its main stakeholders especially workers which in turn would be reflected in advanced workers' productivity. Moreover, this can be said that greater social compliance practice can reflect an organisation's higher social enactment about workers' productivity. Many previous studies already provided many theoretical arguments of a positive link between social compliance and workers' productivity (Siegel, 2009). According to Perrini et al. (2009), social compliance contributes to the foundation via its positive influence on an organisation's associations with its pertinent stakeholders. Advanced and enriched social compliance practice can upsurge the trustworthiness of an organisation and reinforce the relationships with their employees which can reduce operating costs and can lead to monetary gain by decreasing workers turnover rate, pooling of more enthusiastic talents, and avoidance of unrest. Heal (2005) has given an inclusive list of the advantages which have linked to social compliance practices such as reduce wastage, cost of capital reduction, upgrading of human relations into the workplace, improve the workers' productivity, enhancement of relations with regulators. However, for example, a progressive workers relations policy may have a very little expense, but it can lead to considerable gains in motivation, morale, and productivity. Siegel (2009) claims that organisations can use environmental and social compliance strategies to attain their deliberate goals such as the rise in employee productivity and market share price etc.

5. Relationship between social compliance and employee motivation

Motivated workers are more creative and more productive and enhance more overall value to the company than those are just doing what it takes to get by. As it is said, motivation cannot be installed, taught or created. It can, however, be tapped into, supported, and maintained. Additionally, it is elegant that the motivational factors are different to one another and therefore different individuals are, by nature, driven by different motivators (Lunsford, 2009). Workers are satisfied and motivated by the social compliance factors such as wages and on time payment, non-discrimination, admissible benefits, hygienic canteen, medical facility and acceptable working environment (Ferdous, 2015). It is necessary for the manufacturers to progress social compliance in their company which would be imperative to the improvement of the workers' motivation (Baral, 2010). Harpaz (1990), in his study, found that there are many factors such as good wages, interesting work, and job security work as a motivational factor. Lindner (1998) by a descriptive study of twenty five workers in the research centre, found the motivational factors and ranked it as affecting on workers performance as: "(a) interesting work, (b) good wages, (c) full appreciation of work done, (d) job security, (e) good working conditions, (f) promotions and growth in the organization, (g) feeling of being in on things, (h) personal loyalty to employees, (i) tactful discipline, and (j) sympathetic help with personal problems". Olcer (2005) discovered the factors that influence employees' motivations are wage and appreciation based on fair performance, job security, harmonious relations with superiors, cooperative and trustful relations with co-workers, confirming opportunities for social development, appropriate work environment, doing group work, giving important and appropriate works in accordance with workers' skills and work rotation. Hossain and Roy (2016) found several factors of workers motivation into the workplace such as good wages, benefits, evaluating performance fairly, overall job security, accepts mistakes positively, training and development, availability of logistics supports, flexible working hour, chances for career growth and development, recognition, reasonableness in work and challenging work. Thus, it can be concluded that the proper practices of social compliance factors such as wages & benefits, suitable working hours, leave & holidays, welfare facilities, non-discrimination, without forced labour, women rights, and employment relations motivate the employees.

6. Relationship between employee work motivation and employee productivity

From human relations theory, it is observed that the motivation causes for the performance of the employees (Filley et al., 1976). The relationship between work motivation and worker productivity has been researched since a long time. However, the earlier study could not succeed in establishing a direct link between this two (Vroom, 1964). It appears that the factors do influence each other. Petty et al. (1984) reviewed the 15 studies, Vroom (1964) used in his research and added another 20 more recent studies; they decided that worker motivation and productivity are undeniably related. The outcomes of their study indicate that the relationship between individual's overall job motivation and individual job performance is more consistent that conveyed in previous studies (e.g. Vroom, 1964). Not only that, Hackman and Oldham (1976) argue that when employee motivation is added, a circular relationship is shaped by motivation, satisfaction and productivity. The term satisfaction is also used by Herzberg (1959); he claims that when motivators are existing at the job, satisfaction

is likely to occur as well as an upsurge in worker motivation. Amabile (1993) observed that workers' productivity depends upon the workers' level of motivation; the person's level of motivation can be extrinsically and/or intrinsically based. It is also found that positive job characteristics are essential in forming the relationship between employees' motivation and productivity (Brass, 1981; Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Brass (1981) argues that when specific work features are present in a company, employees are well motivated and it improves in productivity significantly. Job characteristics entail particular attributes or dimensions that can be used to explain various tasks (Griffin et al., 1981). Hackman and Oldham (1976) defined five job characteristics, which are based on the Two-Factor Theory from Herzberg (1959). Those characteristics are task identity, skill variety, task significance, job autonomy and feedback. The results of their research indicate that employees who work on jobs scoring high on the five characteristics show high work motivation, satisfaction, and productivity (Brass, 1981).

7. Employee work motivation as a mediator between social compliance and employee productivity

The labour intensive business industries are commonly defined as industries where labour expenses are more significant than capital expenses. More particularly, worker-intensive refers to employ of the workforce in the manufacturing process with less endure of machinery or technology. Labour-intensive organisations usually have more gaining constancy in comparison to the capital-intensive unit because of their lesser investment amount. It is also obvious that the compensation package for workers in this kind of business sector is much less in comparison to the sectors that are established on capital (Leblebici, 2012). How is it happening? As explained by Shahidul and Anwar (2008), a lesser operational capability of personnel, adverse work environment, low process ability and poor R&D strength are the core reasons of low employee productivity which contribute the business to offer a low wage package. A favourable social compliance situation such as having a good superior, working with a good team and decent physical environs in the factory, is a causative factor for motivating the personnel towards greater productivity. Undeniably, a sustainable wage package, job security and the availableness of drink and food at the place of work, are also acknowledged to be primary indicators of a conventional compliance practice. The availability of all those facilities in the factory floor could intensify the motivation of employees and leads to heightened workers' productivity. In contemporary research. Battisti and Iona (2006) had revealed that there is a strong relationship between positive work environment and workers' productivity. The issue of employee productivity related to motivation of workers, however, workers are motivated when they found their rights are protected that are wages & benefits, leave & holidays, providing the good working environment, non-discrimination, safe & healthy workplace environment, no forced labour, women's right is given, providing adequate welfare facilities, proper grievance handling procedure, harmonious relationship between employee & employer etc. Social compliance ensures all of these labour rights prescribed by Bangladesh labour law, ILO labour rights convention, and international buyers' philanthropically COC requirements (Fukunishi and Yamagata, 2013). Upsurges in employee productivity allow more payments to employees' remunerations. With improving employee productivity and high wages arose standards of living which motivate the workers to work more (Fukunishi and Yamagata,

2013). The researchers of Hong et al. (1995) research on the effect of worker benefits on job motivation and employee productivity and they observed on worker benefit schemes have the bigger effect on work-motivation than on employee productivity. They considered on effort, promotion, command of work, commitment and work-quality. They found that commitment and work quality belong to work motivation and the promotion and command of work belong to productivity, and they evidently state that the effect of workers benefit on work motivation was higher than its effect on productivity. It is also revealed that financial benefit packages are utmost greatly valued by employees. The finding revealed that both worker demands and corporate offers are predominantly concerned with money. The research was done by Prasada (2006) concerning the motivation model for increasing workers' productivity in an industrialised unit observed that a multi-factor incentive program to incentivise and paid workers in a useful way. The volume of monetary incentive gained by every worker is calculated and provided every month along with wages. It was demonstrated that the enactment of this program is motivated the workers of the organisation to expand levels of production, attain better uses of raw materials and hence attain greater productivity. Islam et al. (2008) affirmed by their research that employee productivity enhancement needed more than just technology, decentralisation, customer service or process re-engineering. The researcher of Hong et al. (1995) investigates on the effect of employee benefits and welfare facilities on employee productivity and motivation. However, they revealed that workers benefit and welfare programs have the bigger effect on work-motivation and motivated workers' pay more attention to their productivity.

8. The proposed conceptual framework

The productivity of labour endorses a fundamental role in attaining the industrial success (Mahamid, 2013). Social compliance influence to reduce the workers' error rate, reduce absenteeism, improve the level of innovation, improve the cooperation among workers, less migration rate and workers stay with their job for the longer period with satisfaction (Leblebici and Okan, 2012). The financial success of any industry mostly depends upon the employees' performance. Workers can be motivated to work by various measures, like recognition, promotion opportunities, job enjoyment, responsibility, sense of achievement and a chance of career growth. The objective of motivation is to enhance employee productivity. Highly motivated workers have a habit of work harder and effectively perform their work than the workers who are less motivated (Islam et al., 2012). Social compliance factors such as wages & benefits, overtime payment, various allowances, wage increment, health & safety measure, festival bonus, incentive system, reward system, promotion scheme, employee training and development, medicinal benefits, welfare benefits, collective bargaining, employment relations and good working conditions improve the levels of employee motivation (Kuria, 2013). A motivated workforce put enough efforts on their job. So, the industry may emphasise on improving their workers' motivation through proper implementing and practising of social compliance principles that may help to improve the level of employee productivity (Prasanta, 2012). As it is evident from motivation theory that if the workers are well paid, reasonable working hours, non-discriminative working environment, workers are free from forced labour, providing women's right, providing adequate welfare facilities, workers enjoy sufficient leave and holidays, providing good working conditions, and the harmonious relation among management and

workers that will encourage workers to contribute more to their work. By considering the above literature discussion, following research framework (figure 1) is developed where social compliance work as independent variables, employee productivity as the dependent variable and employee work motivation work as a mediating variable in between social compliance and employee productivity.

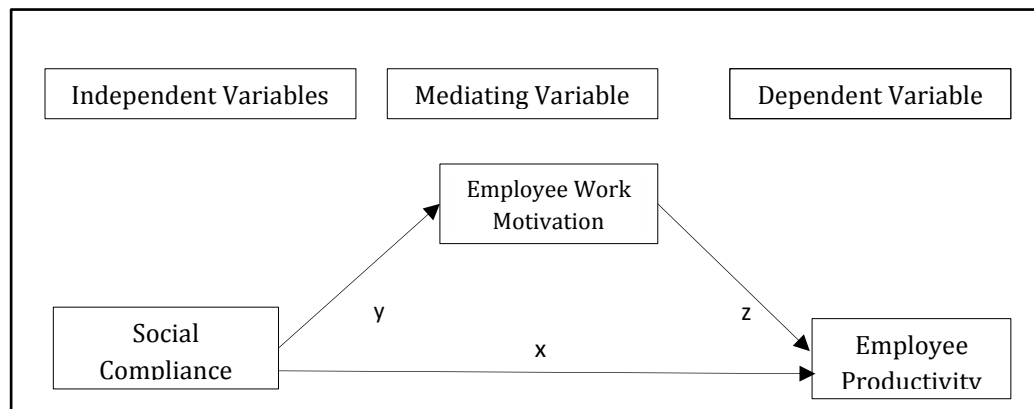


Figure1. Conceptual framework of the study

Undeniably, a sustainable wage package, job security and the availableness of drink and food at the place of work, are also acknowledged to be primary indicators of a decent compliance practice. The availability of all those facilities in the factory floor could intensify the motivation of employees and leads to heightened workers' productivity.

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The labour intensive manufacturing industry can be the most suitable for further empirical study for getting in-depth knowledge about the workers' legal rights and its impact on motivation and productivity. The

conceptual framework may provide the overall idea about the working behaviour and attitude of employees that can help employers to better nurturing of their workforce. Despite of having many benefits of this framework still have some limitations into the framework that cannot be denied such as the IV i.e. social compliance, mediating variable employee work motivation and DV i.e. employee work motivation did not showed the dimensions or sub-constructs of each variable that can be addressed in further study.

9. Conclusion

The study is an attempt to establish a conceptual framework by using three variables such as social compliance, employee work motivation and employee productivity. Also, the study tries to elucidate the mediating role of employee work motivation between social compliance and employee productivity. The framework can apply for further empirical study which may provide a better understanding of these variables for practising in industrial establishment. The company managers can be benefited from this conceptual framework and can be inspired to implement social compliance standards into their organisation and can see the outcome of employees' productivity. It will also give them the idea about the motivation of employees and how does it mediate the relationship between social compliance factors and employees' productivity.

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