

## **A Study of Work Motivation among Kuwaiti Employees**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to investigate the work motivation among Kuwaiti employees and its relation with employment type (public, private), age, and gender. To fulfill this, (312) employees selected by stratified randomly from Kuwaiti public and private organizations. Results can be summarized as follows: Kuwaiti employees in general have high level of work motivation, there were statistically significant differences in work motivation due to the variable of employment type in favor for public employees, there were statistically significant differences in work motivation due to the variable of gender in favor for males employees, there were no statistically significant differences in the work motivation due to age and interactions.*

**Keywords:** work motivation, Kuwaiti employees, public employees, private employees.

### **1. Introduction**

An issue which usually generates a great deal of attention from most managers, administrators and those involved in human resources management is the issue of how to successfully motivate employee. While it is true that aspects like staff recruitment, controlling, managing, leading, and many more are of great importance to the success of an organization, Employee Motivation is generally considered a core element in running a successful business.

Motivation has been shown through a great number of studies in both psychology and organizational behavior during the last hundred years. A great number of theories, models and concepts tackle the issue and it has been discussed in various articles and books. Motivation is a frequently disputed topic and viewed as a critical subject within the field of organizational behavior. Having employees that are motivated when performing their work is a prime objective for managers (Alvesson, 2004). For many years, the general assumption has been that the most successful companies have the most motivated employees, which can be explained by a correlation between high productivity and motivated employees. In modern organizations, increasing productivity and performance is not the only focus for management, factors such as employee commitment and loyalty are also being considered, in order to retain a skilled workforce in the competitive market of today. This is a huge challenge since organizations easily can copy systems, structures, strategies and products from each other, but they cannot copy the company's culture or the abilities and skills of the employees. This challenge can be seen as even greater in knowledge-intensive organizations, in which a large part of the work is primarily based on employees' intellectual skills (Wilson, 2003).

There have been many, many studies on the motivation over the years, ranging from the Hawthorne Studies that were conducted by Elton Mayo in the 1920's and 1930's, through the current day (Landy, 2004). The studies are today famous for identifying the importance of social needs in the workplace, and the whole question of work motivation became a burning issue. The relation between individuals and groups also woke attention, and new theories of organizational life began to emerge. With this, it became clear that employees being committed and motivated in their work resulted in higher production levels and hence reduced costs (Steers & Porter, 1999). Abraham Maslow was the big pioneer in the field and further developed the idea that individuals and groups most effectively operate when their needs are satisfied. The idea of integrating the needs of individuals and organizations became a powerful force. Organizational psychologists like Chris Argils, Frederick Herzberg, and Douglas McGregor began to show how bureaucratic structures, work organizations and leadership styles generally could be modified to build "enriched", motivating jobs that would promote people to exercise their capacities for self-control and creativity (Halepota, 2005). In 1943 Abraham Maslow proposed his theory over motivation, hierarchy of needs, which has become one of the most famous theories within behaviorism.

Generally, it proposes that when we are young, we are more concerned with our physical wellbeing and as we become more secure in our physical world, we start to focus on the social foundation. Later on, when the social needs seem secure, we start to emphasize the developing of our capabilities and abilities to the fullest. This five-factor-need theory has been modified several times since its first introduction by psychologists, but despite this and the fact that it has been many years since its' first introduction, it still has a great impact in the motivational area of psychology and organizational theory. Maslow argued that all humans have a basic set of needs and that these needs express themselves over the life span of the individual as internal drives or "pushes". He identified five basic sets of needs and that these are arranged hierarchically, one need set must be fulfilled before the next higher need-set can be activated. The sets are arranged from the most basic (lowest) to the most advanced (highest), and generally the needs are fulfilled from the bottom to the top, but this order can sometimes be changed depending on the environment. At the first level of the hierarchy one find the level of physiological and biological needs. These needs or drives are the most basic in human beings and are satisfied by water, food and sleep. The second step is made up by security or safety needs, which are the needs for an individual to create a secure environment, to bar external threats. The third step involves the love or social needs, which are needs that include interpersonal factors. It is an individual's desire to be accepted by others and to feel a sense of belonging. The fourth step concentrates on esteem needs, and these needs involve being respected for capabilities and for accomplishments. The fifth step is built up by the self-actualization needs, which are needsto fulfill one's potentialities (Maslow, 1987).

Frederick Herzberg Proposed the Two-Factor Theory which sometimes also called motivation-hygiene theory. he investigated the question, "What do people want from their jobs?" He asked people to describe, in detail, situations in which they felt exceptionally good or bad about their jobs. These responses were then tabulated and categorized. From the categorized responses, Herzberg concluded: Intrinsic factors, such as advancement, recognition, responsibility, and achievement seem to be related to job satisfaction. Dissatisfied respondents tended to cite extrinsic factors, such as supervision, pay, company policies, and working conditions. The opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction. Removing dissatisfying characteristics from a job does not necessarily make the job satisfying. Job satisfaction factors are separate and distinct from job dissatisfaction factors. Managers who eliminate job dissatisfaction factors may not necessarily bring about motivation. When hygiene factors are adequate, people will not be dissatisfied; neither will they be satisfied. To motivate people, emphasize factors intrinsically rewarding that are associated with the work itself or to outcomes directly derived from it associated with individuals' desire to develop their capacities to the fullest(Halepota,2005).The motivational theories provide a good framework; however, they are somewhat restrictive and do not consider individual differences. There are different variables that can influences motivation (e.g. type of work, age, experience, income) which the theories do not explain.

For the important role of motivation to work many studies were conducted concerning its relationship with many variables; Ilke et al,( 2012)indicated that older employees were less motivated by extrinsically but more by intrinsically rewarding job features. Freyedon (2012) pointed that managers have varying degrees of influence over these different aspects of work motivation, with greatest influence over job satisfaction and least influence over job involvement. Christian &Torsten (2012) Findings - Age was positively associated with motivation for generatively-related, but not growth-related tasks. Personal and job resources were positively.Laura et al, (2012) examined the effects of two types of motivation, driven to work and enjoyment of work. The authors also tested the effects of self-esteem on the two motives. They found that the enjoyment motive was positively related to career satisfaction and performance and negatively related to strain. Driven to work had no main effects but appeared to interact with enjoyment of work to influence performance and strain. When enjoyment of work was high, driven to work was unrelated to performance or strain. When enjoyment of work was low, increases in driven to work were associated with increases in both performance and strain. Self-esteem was positively related to enjoyment of work and negatively related to driven to work. Overall, the authors' findings suggest that being motivated by enjoyment of work facilitates both effectiveness and well-being. Rachita & Piyali(2012) Indicated that public employees are motivated by achievement and self-control, whereas in the private sector, employees value job involvement, pride in work, upward striving, and activity preference. Samina et al,(2011) suggested that the same type of the factors of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are not equally applicable in both the public and private sector organizations to increase the work motivation. Shiraz et al, (2011). Pointed that variables such as work content, working conditions and career growth were found as key predictors to employee motivation.

Comparatively career growth was found as the most parsimonious variable in explaining employees' work motivation. Implications of the study are also presented.

## 2. Study Questions

- i. What is the level of work motivation among Kuwaiti employees?
- ii. Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to employment type (public, private)?
- iii. Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to gender?
- iv. Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to age?
- v. Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to interactions (Employment type \* Gender, Employment type \* Age, Gender \* Age, Employment type \* Gender \* Age)?

## 3. Limitations

Results would be limited by Validity and reliability coefficients for the scale which is used in the current study.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1 Participants

The population of the study consists of all Kuwaiti employees. The sample of the study consists of (312) employees selected by stratified randomly from Kuwaiti public and private organizations. Table 1 shows participants characteristics.

**Table 1. Participants' characteristics**

Employment type	Age	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
public	Less than (40) years	34	46	156
	More than (40) years	34	42	
	Total	68	88	
private	Less than (40) years	40	36	156
	More than (40) years	46	34	
	Total	86	70	
Total		154	158	312

### 4.2 Instrument

For the purposes of the current study, the researcher prepared a scale of work motivation, by reference to the literature about work motivation, specially Hawthorne Studies and Abraham Maslow theory. The scale consisted of (45) items. The researcher investigates the reliability of the scale by the following methods: (Test- Retest reliability (0.82), Split- Half Reliability (0.76). and Internal Consistency Reliability (0.78)) of the scale items, the researcher investigates the validity of the scale through Logical Validity, and Construct Validity. To explain the total-scores, the means were divided into five levels as follows: score less than (89) refers to the low level of work motivation, score among (90-110) refers to the average level of work motivation, score among (111-135) refers to good level of work motivation, score among (136-155) refers to high level of work motivation, score more than (156) refers to excellent level of work motivation.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Results Related to Question One

What is the level of work motivation among Kuwaiti employees? To answer this question, means and standard deviations were computed for grades obtained by participants on the work motivation scale as shown by table (1). Table (2) shows that Kuwaiti employees in general have high level of work motivation. Also it shows the descending order of work motivation for Kuwaiti employees as follows: Males (138.72), employees less than (40) years (138.28), employees more than (40) years (136.99), finally females (136.58).

**Table 2: Means and standard deviations**

Employment type	Age	Gender						Total		
		Male			Female			M	SD	N
		M	SD	N	M	SD	N			
public	Less than (40) years	142.41	8.225	34	138.30	7.969	46	139.28	8.447	156
	More than (40) years	139.65	8.334	34	137.52	8.788	42			
	Total	141.03	8.334	68	137.93	8.331	88			
private	Less than (40) years	138.10	9.826	40	134.56	10.756	36	135.99	9.698	156
	More than (40) years	135.85	9.209	46	135.21	9.001	34			
	Total	136.90	9.512	86	134.87	9.876	70			
Total	Male						138.72	9.215	154	
	Less than (40) years						138.28	9.499	156	
	More than (40) years						136.99	8.933	156	
	Female						136.58	9.146	158	
	Total						137.63	9.228	312	

**5.2 Results Related to Question Two**

Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to employment type (public, private)? To answer this question, means, standard deviations and F-Value were computed for grades obtained by participants on the work motivation scale as shown by table (3). Table (3) shows that there were statistically significant differences in the work motivation related to the variable of employment type in favor for public employees.

**Table 3: It shows means, standard deviations, and F-Value.**

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	$\alpha$
Employment type	964.987	1	964.987	11.804	0.001
Gender	520.953	1	520.953	6.372	0.012
Age	127.184	1	127.184	1.556	0.213
Employment type * Gender	20.063	1	20.063	0.245	0.621
Employment type *Age	18.131	1	18.131	0.222	0.638
Gender *Age	114.640	1	114.640	1.402	0.237
Employment type * Gender* Age	4.049	1	4.049	0.50	0.824
Error	24852.198	304	81.751		
Total	5936790.000	312			

**5.3 Results Related to Question Three**

Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to gender? To answer this question, means, standard deviations and F-Value were computed for grades obtained by participants on the work motivation scale as shown by table (3). Table (3) shows that there were statistically significant differences in the work motivation related to the variable of gender in favor for Males employees.

**5.4 Results Related to Question Four**

Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to age? To answer this question, means, standard deviations and F-Value were computed for grades obtained by participants on the work motivation scale as shown by table (3). Table (3) shows that there were no statistically significant differences in the work motivation due to age.

**5.5 Results Related to Question Five**

Are there statistically significant differences in work motivation due to interactions (Employment type\* Gender, Employment type \*Age, Gender \*Age, Employment type \* Gender\* Age)? To answer this question, means, standard deviations and F-Value were computed for grades obtained by participants on the work motivation scale as shown by table (3). Table (3) shows that there were no statistically significant differences in the work motivation due to interactions.

## 6. Discussion

The results of the current study show that that Kuwaiti employee in general has high level of work motivation. This result may be due to the nature of rewards in Kuwaiti public and private organizations which is dealing successfully with motivation psychological processes (arousal , direction, and intensity). According to Vroom's Expectancy Theory, an employee will work smarter and/or harder if he believes his additional efforts will lead to valued rewards, if the rewards are substantial enough to be meaningful to an employee, then the valence would be also considered high. Results also shows that there were statistically significant differences in the work motivation related to the variable of employment type in favor for public employees. This result may be due to the nature of the organizational reward systems in Kuwaiti public organizations, which have a significant impact on employees' level of motivation, rewards can be either tangible or intangible. While such these organizational reward systems maybe don't available in private organization to same degree. On the other hand, the results indicate that there were statistically significant differences in the work motivation related to the variable of gender in favor for male employees. This result may be due to some cultural factors, Kuwaiti males seek to self-actualization out of career superiority, but Kuwaiti females seek to self- actualization out of family, beauty, fashions, and career superiority. Despite this, females Kuwaiti employees have a high level of work motivation.

## 7. Conclusion & Applications

After analyzing the work motivation among Kuwaiti employees in the current study, I can make the conclusion that Kuwaiti employees have high level of work motivation, while there were statistically significant differences in work motivation due to the employment type in favor for public employees, and there were statistically significant differences in work motivation due to the variable of gender in favor for males employees. Also, Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the work motivation due to age. In the light of the results that are concluded by current study, It would have been more interesting to increase the work motivation among females and private Kuwaiti employees. Also, it is recommended to pay greater attention to maintain and promote this level of work motivation.

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