

THE EFFECT OF SECURITY PROCEDURES ON EMPLOYEE MORALE

Mr. Daeij Al Hosni

Security Officer, ORPIC

Sultanate of Oman, dhosni@orpic.om

Dr. M. Firdouse Rahman Khan

Faculty of Business, Sohar University

Sultanate of Oman, firdouse4u@yahoo.co.uk

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

The objective of the study is to critically analyze the main issues on the scrutiny of personal belongings and the effect of it on the employee morale and to understand the due impact so as to find out a simplified work atmosphere in order to increase taskforce retention.

Design/methodology/approach

The study was conducted with 260 employees working in the Oil fields of Sohar industrial port, Oman. The employees were selected on a simple random sampling basis and were contacted through a well-defined questionnaire which was made available online for this purpose. The sample included both the managers and the workers from the task force.

Findings

Our empirical results reveal that the employees understand the logic behind the measures, are not reluctant and hence no negative impact on the employee's morale. However, the study demonstrates that there is a strong association between the privacy of the employees, their trust, tolerance and the morale of the employees. The main factors which might impede the security procedures are the trust and the privacy.

Practical Implications

The study reveals that the security practices may violate the individual privacy and leads to ethical conflict and thus the employees may become untrusted and tend to leave the organization due to daily physical inspection which is not a very good sign.

Social Implications

There is a need to educate all the employees on the logic behind such inspection measures and seek the opinion on the ways to improve such measures. A national campaign can be initiated.

Originality/value

Very few studies have examined the effect of security procedures on the employee morale in the oil fields of Oman and it is a first-hand study of its kind.

Key words: *Effect of Security Procedures, Impact of inspection on employee morale, Security in Oil fields, Physical Inspection of personal belongings, Daily security inspection.*

INTRODUCTION

Security is the state of being free from peril or threat. It is the degree of resistance to, or protection from harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, item, nation, or organization (ISECOM, 2016). Oman Oil and Gas (O & G) sector is a major contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Being an important sector, security norms have been formulated and maintained by the royal decree (No. 08/2011) that sets the standard requirements referred to as the Royal Oman Police (ROP) matrix. It categorizes the sector into three levels with specific requirement for each one of them in detail. The implementation of this matrix is mandatory for all the firms working in the Omani O & G sector. Although the ROP matrix aims to secure persons and properties, as it is implemented to all the employees and visitors on a daily basis, its present substantial amount of additional pressure will have an effect on employees. Thus it becomes important to find out whether the employee's know the logic behind the new securities regulations and the consequences of these measures on the employee's morale and also to know whether it violates the personal privacy.

The employees are human being who interact and react to the surrounding environment. Any change has an effect either in a positive or negative way. The modern organizations face ever-growing physical threats due to their business nature or due to the radical believes in today's world. To overcome these challenges, modern organizations implement systematic and coordinated activities and practice through which an organization optimally manages its risks, the associated potential threats and impacts therefrom. Of late, the tradeoff between

employees' workplace privacy and employers' need to protect company assets to avoid costly litigation has been receiving increased attention (Lee and Kleiner, 2003, Mello, 2003, National Workplace Institute, 2004, Friedman and Reed, 2007).

In Oman, both the Government and the private institutions for variety of reasons have increased the security measures especially after the incidents that have occurred to other similar institutions in the neighboring countries. As O & G sector is the backbone of the national economy, the Government response was to implement an integrated matrix, which aims to cover all the gaps in this sector. These practices are new to the country, which leads to a magnified effect on the employees as they may not understand or accept these procedures as mandatory norms. Such changes may have negative influence on the morale and need to be investigated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A firm's organizational climate –its degree of trust, morale etc. – helps determine its success (Burton, Lauridsen and Obel, 2004). Akintayo (2012) found that the working environment has a significant influence on workers' morale.

According to Bowles and Cooper (2009), morale is the state of individual psychological wellbeing based upon a sense of confidence, usefulness and purpose. The morale is the feeling of employee enthusiasm, confidence and challenging tasks. Morale refers to how the employees positively and supportively feel about their organization (Haddock, 2010).

Fard et. al. (2010) indicates that organizational trust leads to organizational effectiveness and have impacts on intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships inside and outside the organization. Carnevale and Wechsler (1992) pointed out that the trust provides a basis for security and confidence in the intention and actions of supervisors, managers and organizational leaders. Dirks and Ferrin (2001) argue that trust results in effects such as positive attitude, higher level of cooperation, workplace behavior and performance.

Gilmer (1961) indicated that the morale is a group concept and becomes general description of the attitudes of the employees in an organization. He argued that the group interactions result in forming the morale of the employees in an organization. Johnsrud (1996) explained that the morale holds satisfaction of the work environment and also some of the characteristics (such as excitement, emotion, and commitment), loyalty to the organization and tendency towards the job. Ransom (1995) emphasized on the three characteristics of high morale in an organization:

- Offering freedom and autonomy to workers to do their work
- Rewarding the employee for exceeding the organizational expectations and
- Paying attention to employees and resolving their disputes immediately.

He also stated that the high morale of employees in an organization leads to more productive situation than competition. All of the above imply that attaining high standards of morale is important to expose the feelings of the employees and their abilities to do the work. Linz et. al. (2006) indicated a positive relationship between expected rewards and morale among the Russian employees. They explore that expected monetary rewards exhibit a greater influence on the morale than the expected non-monetary rewards. Their results indicated that there is a strong positive correlation between performance assessment and morale, as well as between positive work attitudes and morale. Popoola et. al. (2007) explored that the role of human resources practice in an organization is fostering employee engagement and commitment is paramount, in doing this many organizations are aware of the significant impact (both positive and negative) on the employee performances. But progress toward a mindset of safety will enhance employee morale and customer service (Work first Casualty, 2016).

Anthur (1998) asserted motivation as a process that arouses, energizes, directs and sustains behavior and performance i.e. it is the process of stimulating people to act and to achieve a desired task. One way of stimulating people is to employ effective motivation, which makes workers more satisfied and committed to their jobs. Money is not the only motivator. Bussing (2002) explored that the instrumental type of commitment what is known as calculative commitment is uncorrelated to personal trust for any group of employees whereas a positive correlation exists between personal trust in the organization and job involvement.

Bruijne (2015) defended that the value of privacy meant to protect personal life in its natural relationships and structures, such as family and work, from the supervision of the state.

On the lines discussed above, the referred factors - trust, tolerance, privacy and the morale of the employees were taken into consideration as checks to verify the safety measures to maintain a safety environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with 260 employees working in the Oil fields of Sohar industrial port, Oman. The employees were selected on a simple random sampling basis and were contacted through a well-defined questionnaire which was made available online for the purpose of study.

The questionnaire consists of two parts; the first one covering the demographic information of the respondent whereas the second part will examine his views on the security measures.

The research populations are both gender indiscriminate and will be selected from two categories. The Managers views will represent the corporate while worker will represent the task force views in order to have a wider coverage.

FINDINGS

Table.1 Demographic details of the respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	133	51.2
	Female	127	48.8
Age	< 18 years	4	1.5
	18 – 29 years	131	50.4
	30 – 44 years	114	43.8
	45 – 59 years	11	4.2
Marital status	Single	68	26.2
	Married	185	71.2
	Widowed	3	1.2
	Divorced	4	1.5
Educational Qualification	High School	75	81.6
	Degree	143	7.2
	Master	40	4.5
	Doctorate	2	6.7
Monthly income	500 – 1000	153	58.8
	1001 – 1500	61	23.5
	1501 – 2000	26	10.0
	> 2000	20	7.7
Job	Trainee	35	13.5
	Individual Contributor	150	57.7

	Team Leader	35	13.5
	Manager	32	12.3
	General Manager	8	3.1
	Non-Omanis	2	0.9

Source: Questionnaire

The above table shows the demographic particulars of the respondents. The respondents are the staffs of the organization who are familiar with the firm's security systems. This will help us to determine and measure the effect of the security procedure on the experienced employees.

Table 2. The most intense procedure from your personal view

	Frequency	Percent	t^2	p-value
ID card check	28	10.8	167.846	0.000
Thorough Car Inspection	21	8.1		
Personal belonging inspection	152	58.5		
Interrogation	59	22.7		
Total	260	100.0		

Most of the respondents (58.5%) observe that the inspection of personal belonging is more intensive and irritating followed by personal interrogation which is unwanted. The least but not least is the ID card checking (though they are well known, repeated checks are unwanted).

Table 3. Showing the trust

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	K-S value	t^2	p-value
I know the logic behind the new security regulation	29 11.2%	94 36.2%	107 41.2%	16 6.2%	14 5.4%	1.96	5.878	0.053
Security procedure are not reflecting the level of trust	20 7.7%	84 32.3%	107 41.2%	34 13.1%	15 5.8%	2.08		
My work place is very safe	37 14.2%	85 32.7%	95 6.5%	26 10%	17 6.5%	1.95		

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the statements pertaining to trust and the choices of the respondents.

From the above table it can be seen that the $p\text{-value} > 0.05$, therefore the null hypothesis gets accepted i.e. there is no significant relationship between the statements pertaining to morale and the choices of the respondents. Therefore, comparing the K-S values of the statements it can be noted that the 'security procedure are not reflecting the level of trust' ranked first i.e. there is an impact on the employees due to these procedures may make him feel untrusted.

Table 4. Showing the Privacy

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	K-S value	t ²	p-value
Security procedure does not violate my personal privacy	28 10.8%	84 32.3%	110 42.3%	32 12.3%	6 2.3%	2.26	50.821	0.000
The effect of security practices on my personal privacy is limited	12 4.6%	85 32.7%	120 46.2%	31 11.9%	12 4.6%	2.41		
The routine car check is not compromising my privacy	20 7.7%	69 26.5%	110 42.3%	42 16.2%	19 7.3%	2.56		
Inspection of personal belonging is not violating my privacy	24 9.2%	44 16.9%	110 42.3%	47 18.1%	35 13.5%	2.77		

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the statements pertaining to privacy and the choices of the respondents.

From the above table it can be seen that the p-value to be < 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected i.e. there is a significant relationship between the statements pertaining to privacy and the choices of the respondents. In other words, the employees feel that the security practices are not violating the individual privacy. Therefore, comparing the K-S values of the statements it can be noted that the 'Inspection of personal belonging is not violating my privacy' ranked first followed by 'the routine car check is not compromising my privacy' followed by 'the effect of security practices on my personal privacy is limited'.

Table 5. Showing the Tolerance

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	K-S value	t ²	p-value
Security measures have positive effect on my morale	18 6.9%	67 25.8%	143 55%	26 10%	6 2.3%	3.26	56.925	0.000
Security inspection make me feel safe at work	34 13.1%	94 36.2%	115 44.2%	11 4.2%	6 2.3%	2.77		
I understand the ultimate goal and encourage the practices	39 15%	91 35%	112 43.1%	9 3.5%	9 3.5%	2.76		
I understand the need for security and therefore i do not mind the extra measures	16 6.2%	93 35.8%	120 46.2%	22 8.5%	9 3.5%	3.11		
Overall i have been fairly treated	12 4.6%	96 36.9%	125 48.1%	15 5.8%	12 4.6%	3.10		

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the statements pertaining to tolerance and the choices of the respondents.

From the above table it can be seen that the p-value to be < 0.05 , therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected i.e. there is a significant relationship between the statements pertaining to tolerance and the choices of the respondents. In other words, the employees are not reluctant with the routine security checks. Therefore, comparing the K-S values of the statements it can be noted that the 'Security measures have positive effect on my morale' ranked first followed by 'I understand the need for security and therefore i do not mind the extra measures' followed by 'Overall i have been fairly treated'.

Table 6. Showing Morale

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	K-S value	χ^2	p-value
I deal with security team regularly	35 13.5%	89 34.2%	110 42.3%	11 4.2%	15 5.8%	3.39	25.314	0.000
Security procedures are simple	28 10.8%	93 35%	115 44.2%	19 7.3%	7 2.7%	3.52		
I am satisfied with security services	22 8.5%	98 37.7%	94 36.2%	30 11.5%	16 6.2%	3.62		
I am satisfied with overall security procedures	24 9.2%	92 35.4%	104 40%	28 10.8%	12 4.6%	3.60		
Security service works for the organizational welfare	50 19.2%	86 33.1%	91 35%	12 4.6%	21 8.1%	3.17		
The daily routine check has no impact on employee morale	31 11.9%	76 29.2%	98 37.7%	40 15.4%	15 5.8%	3.70		

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the statements pertaining to morale and the choices of the respondents.

From the above table it can be seen that the p-value to be < 0.05 , therefore the null hypothesis gets rejected i.e. there is a significant relationship between the statements pertaining to morale and the choices of the respondents. Therefore, comparing the K-S values of the statements it can be noted that the 'daily routine check has no impact on employee morale' ranked first followed by 'I am satisfied with security services' followed by 'I am satisfied with overall security procedures'.

Table 7 (a), (b), (c) & (d). Showing the regression analysis

Variables Entered / Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Tolerance, Trust, Privacy ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent variable: Morale

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
	.551 ^a	.304	.296	2.81461

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tolerance, Trust, Privacy

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	885.346	3	295.115	37.253	.000 ^b
Residual	2028.039	256	7.922		
Total	2913.385	259			

a. Dependent Variable: Morale

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tolerance, Trust, Privacy

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.774	1.057		4.515	.000
Privacy	.260	.071	.204	3.655	.000
Trust	.509	.093	.302	5.489	.000
Tolerance	.299	.066	.256	4.526	.000

a. Dependent variable: Morale

Thus, the derived regression equation is as follows:

$$M = 4.774 + 0.260 P + 0.509 Tr + 0.299 To$$

Where M is Morale, P is Privacy, Tr is Trust and To is Tolerance.

From the above F-table, it can be seen that the p- value is < 0.05 which proves that there is a linear relationship between the factors - privacy, trust, tolerance and the morale of the employees and it can also be seen that the trust has a higher impact on the morale followed by the tolerance factor and privacy factor. In other words, the trust gets first affected rather than their tolerance and privacy.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Out of the 260 respondents, 133 were males and 127 were females. It is observed that the married people tend to value the safety more than single persons. Majority of the employees are degree holders (55%). The education level may be a good factor on measuring the effect. As highly educated employee tend to understand and tolerate the security processes. The salaries of the majority of the respondents fall under the category of less than RO 1000. 23.5% are in the range between RO1000-RO1500 and 10% of the respondents are on a higher scale. The majority of the respondents (57.7%) are individual contributors. 13.5% are shared between trainee and senior team leader positions with 12.3% managers and 3.1% of senior managers. In the normal situation, the managers and the senior more staff tend to accept the security procedures easily than the lower grade staff.

It was observed that there is no significant relationship between the statements pertaining to morale and the choices of the respondents. It was also noted that the 'Security procedure are not reflecting the level of trust' ranked first i.e. there is an impact on the employees due to these procedures may make them feel untrusted.

It was observed that the employees feel that the security practices are not violating the individual privacy. Thus it was noted that the 'Inspection of personal belonging is not violating my privacy' ranked first followed by 'the routine car check is not compromising my privacy' followed by 'the effect of security practices on my personal privacy is limited'.

It was found that the employees are not reluctant with the routine security checks. Thus, the 'Security measures have positive effect on my morale' ranked first followed by 'I understand the need for security and therefore I do not mind the extra measures' followed by 'Overall I have been fairly treated'.

Further it was also found that there is a significant relationship between the statements pertaining to morale and the choices of the respondents. Thus, the 'daily routine check has no impact on employee morale' ranked first followed by 'I am satisfied with security services' followed by 'I am satisfied with overall security procedures'.

From the derived regression equation, $M = 4.774 + 0.260 P + 0.509 Tr + 0.299 To$ (Where M is Morale, P is Privacy, Tr is Trust and To is Tolerance), it was learnt that there is a linear relationship between the factors - privacy, trust, tolerance and the morale of the employees and it should be noted that the trust has a higher impact on the morale followed by the tolerance factor and privacy factor i.e., the trust gets first affected rather than their tolerance and privacy.

SUGGESTIONS

It is well known fact that the employees are the very important assets of an organization and therefore they must be given utmost importance. The security practices are not violating the individual privacy and therefore no ethical conflict is seen. Further, the employees are also not reluctant with the routine security checks. In fact, the daily routine check has no impact on the employee morale whereas most of the procedures are taken positively and have good impact on them. The study revealed that the overall services are good. This is a very good sign for the organizational development due to the prevailing organizational culture.

However it was observed that there is a great chance of trust being lost in due course. This may jeopardize the organization culture in due time and such atmosphere may make employees tend to leave the organization due to the untrusty feeling. This may not be a very accurate assumption and can be handled with good educational campaign. Thus, the recommendation is to educate all the employees on the logic behind the security measures. The same can be explained using a Trust, Privacy, Tolerance, Morale Model (TPTM Model) which can be figuratively shown as in figure no 1.

Therefore, advices should be sought on the ways to improve the security checks. Many of the best ideas for improving the safety and efficiency of high-risk jobs come from the people who perform the work (Penwell Corporation, 2015). The trust issue needs to be addressed immediately with educational campaign that makes all feel trusted and safe. Therefore the security department and the related officials should take the necessary measures for proper educational campaign explaining the need for the daily routine security checks to retain and maintain safety and secured environment in the organization. These campaigns can be conducted on a regular time intervals so as to boost the morale of the employees irrespective of their cadre.

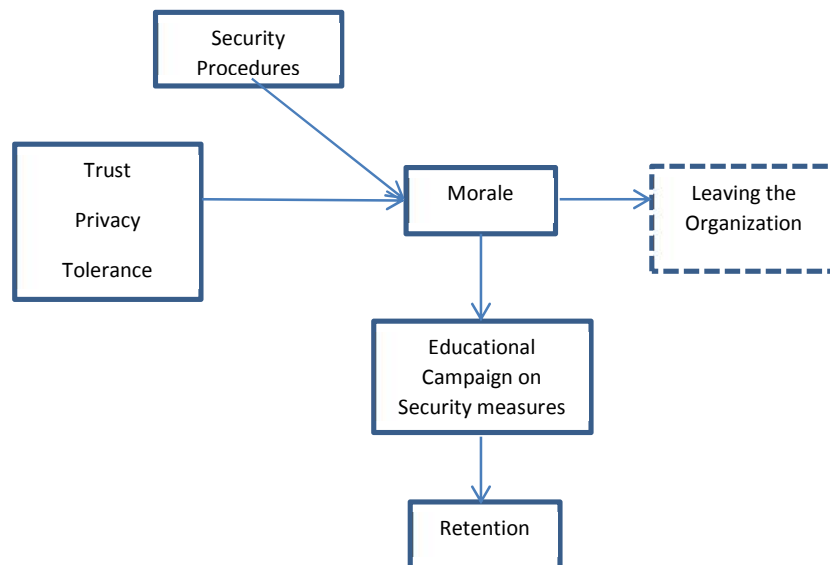


Figure 1. Showing the Trust, Privacy, Tolerance, Morale (TPTM) Model

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