

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP OF EMPLOYEES IN VIETNAM'S ENTERPRISES

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze social relationship in businesses through analyzing attitudes and assessing social relationship between employees and co-workers, managers, directors in enterprises in Vietnam. Mainly using quantitative results of Vietnam Institution of Workers and Union's 2016 survey on "Vietnamese workers' lifestyle in industrialization period", the author continued to further analyze and discuss the results through literature review of several articles, reports in Vietnam and abroad. This paper has analyzed and assessed the characteristic of employer's relationship within context of workplace and suggests some solutions for better communication in working. The obtained result will be basic foundation to execute suitable social policy to improve physical and mental life of employees in current time.

Keywords: social relationship, lifestyle, employees, enterprises.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and international integration is an unequivocal trend in a modern world with freely transportation of goods, capital, technology and human resource. This can impact deeply on not only national and global economics but also society, individual and collective lifestyle. Lifestyle choices (positive and negative) are created not only within a nation but also in regional and global scale. To industrial worker, multinational enterprises establishment with technology and worker flows, especially high qualified worker, will form a new lifestyle for international workers and experts. This lifestyle will affect traditional, "native" lifestyle. In one hand, this can help create an industrial lifestyle in each country, especially in developing country as Vietnam, change perspective, attitude and behavior of individual, community in workforce, hence self-define in daily lifestyle. In the other hand, globalization and integration can lead to consequences in life, diminish cultural identity. How to improve positive aspects of life in integrated scene, overcome negative ones so it can become "new native" lifestyle, depends a lot on courage of each worker, working group and working class. These days, worldwide workers are under huge impact of globalization and international economic integration. While one country's economic market transformation can lead to another country's transformation, worker's lifestyle should find a suitable transformation. This transformation is expressed through worker's position, daily life and labor relationship.

Vietnam is currently enhancing industrialization and international integration. During this crucial period, Vietnamese economic is effected by global economic in both scale and construction. This will inevitably effect changes in Vietnamese worker's lifestyle, through position, job and labor relationship. Therefore international lessons about changes in worker's lifestyle will be useful for research about Vietnam worker's life, and this is also the main aim of this research paper.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper's methodology is social literature review, mainly used the quantitative results obtained from Vietnam Institution of Workers and Union's 2016 survey on "Vietnamese workers' lifestyle in industrialization period". In order to further analysis, the author collected data and reports from literature reviews, national and international report on each

result. Science reports appeared on the paper was selected from reliable sources, with peer-reviewed and published no later than 1998.

3. RESULTS AND THEIR DISCUSSION

For human being, labor is the basic condition to survive. Friedrich Engels once wrote “The political economists said that labor was the source of wealth”. That is the definition of wealth – nature provides the material for labor into wealth. But the meaning of labor is well beyond that. Labor is a fundamental condition of human life, moreover, we must say that “Labor create what we are.”[1]

Economical market put every objects, every relationship in society under the definition of goods or character of goods, even human labor. Ethnic relationship and lifestyle are also controlled by that definition. More or less, relationship inside the market introduces changes in ethnic, life perspective of people’s life, with living standard and environment improvement. Wealth and class discrimination can lead to ethnic classification in life

In a globalize trend, to improve competitive ability, government need to adjust or transform economic growth model. In Vietnam, economic growth model transformation is defined as a process transforming “*from mainly developing widely to developing reasonably widely and deeply, expanding ranges as the same time improving quality, effect and sustainability*”. In other words, economic growth model transformation in general is to change the momentum of economic growth; enhance labor productivity, resources utilization in order to replace investment, worker, and natural resources and become the new momentum.

In a modern manufacture, science technology is widely applied in stage of production. Applying new, advanced technology in manufacture, step by step producing high productivity have deep impact on Vietnamese worker class, in both quality and quantity, therefore effect on their lifestyle, working behavior. The appearance of new modern industry, industrial center effects on their lifestyle, attitude and also behavior. Science technology applicant requires highly advanced work force academically and specially. At the same time, industrialization, globalization both demand worker improving their responsibility, discipline, behavior, constant learning to update and control advanced technology. This leads to new lifestyle formation, traditional lifestyle transformation which requires worker to change their perspective, develop suitable working behavior and realistic manufacturing methodology, indirectly demand worker to sharpen his life skill, knowledge about science technology, and awareness about cultural and mental lifestyle.

From philosophy’s aspect, “social relationship” is a term used to define contacts, interactions, and depending relationship built between individuals and groups in distinguished position of these individuals and groups in a “social organization”, especially in economic field. From individuals’ perspective, social relationships reflect on each person’s life journey through socialization of family, culture or career, which contribute to social identity and its own identity [2]. Sociology of social relationship is to research on relationship between individuals, between individuals and groups and between groups in a society. In this paper, the author used data from Vietnam Institution of Workers and Union’s 2016 survey on “Vietnamese workers’ lifestyle in industrialization period” to analyze social relationship between employers and coworkers and between employers and business’s managers.

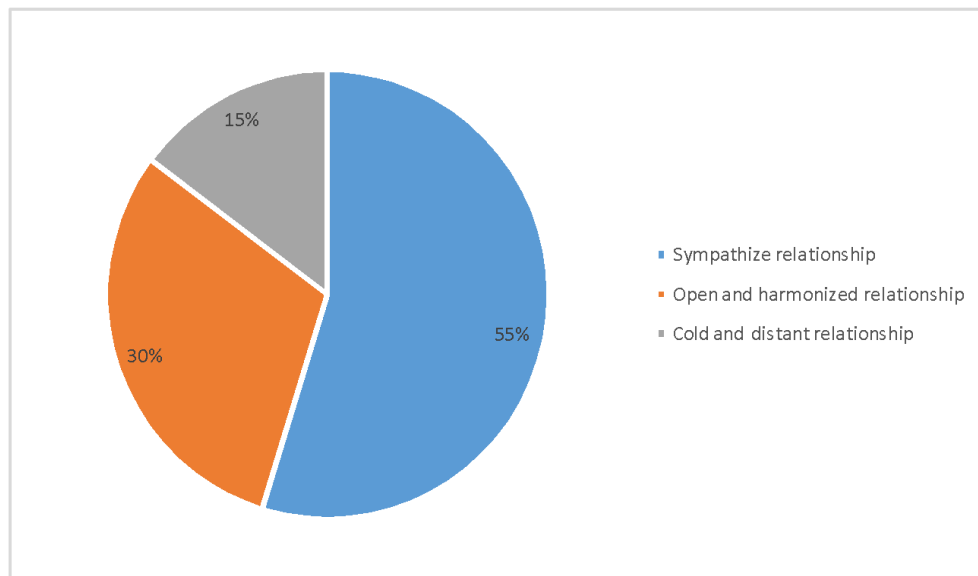
1. Social relationship between employers and coworkers

Besides definitions, standards of social relationship of employees, behaviors observation also provides a general outlook of employees’ lifestyle. [7] Looking at this matter in details, the author has exhibited and researched on social relationship of employees.

Based on position and roles of employers in manufacturing process, this is an equal relationship. The equality in this relationship shows through self-aware interdependence, help and protection of other workers’ privilege in work and life. The tighter and united this relationship is, the better interdependence, help and protection of each other’s privilege become, and this will become the condition to enhance employees’ union. [3]

Look at the education level in more details, employees with higher education levels, and trained properly have better awareness and their social relationship is also more modern, civilized and skillful than those who are low-educated. [12]

Chart 1: Assessment of relationship between workers. (Vietnam Institution of Workers and Union's 2016 survey on "Vietnamese workers' lifestyle in industrialization period" [4])

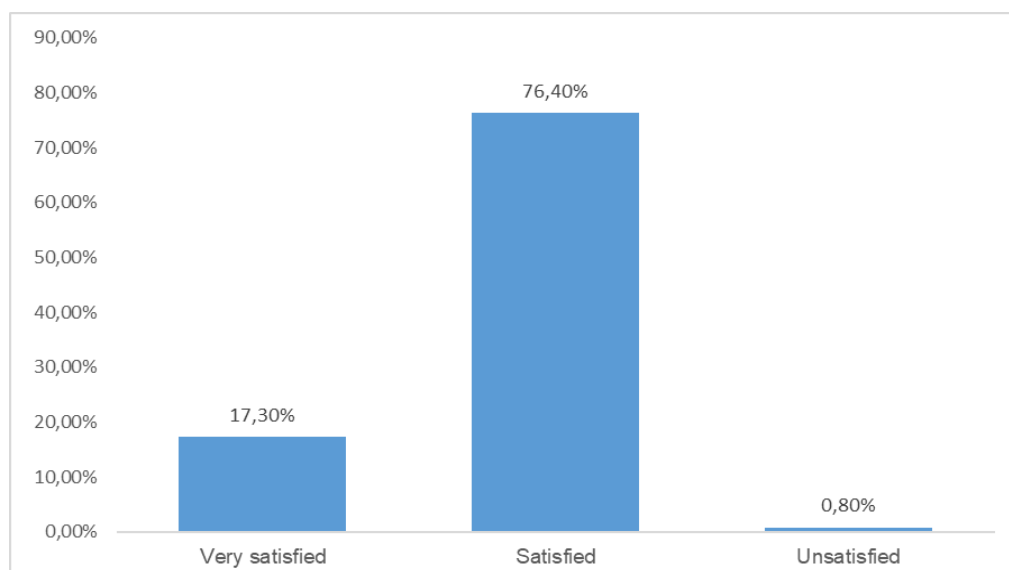


The result after assessing relationship between workers showed that 63.1% responded this relationship was a sympathize one; 35.1% saw this as an open and harmonized relationship between workers in laboring relationship in business. However, 17% responders still thought this relationship to be cold and distant.

In a chain manufacturing business, each worker is responsible for each stage and detail of the product. This process creates specialize task's distribution, as well as contribute to a modern and industrial lifestyle for worker. The reason is that only business's working behavior can meet the requirements of machines, modern technology's manufacture and high profession.

In general, relationship between workers in manufacture is relatively good. Most workers behave friendly, openly, cooperative and helping in work. There are 17.3% felt "very satisfied" with other workers; 76.4% felt "satisfied" and only 0.8% responders felt "unsatisfied". This is also a general character of Vietnam's workers, based on similarity in life, background, for workers are all hard-working people trying to make ends meet. Besides instinct performance, interactive behaviors are affected by formal rules inside businesses.

Chart 2: Satisfaction of workers with colleagues (Vietnam Institution of Workers and Union's 2016 survey on "Vietnamese workers' lifestyle in industrialization period" [3])



Good interaction and relationship with coworkers is one of the factors reflecting positively in workers' lifestyle. In Vietnamese's business, there are not only native local workers but also workers that are immigrants or people from other areas (which are 40.1% according to recent survey [4]). Immigrant workers coming from other background can have different behaviors and lifestyles. Some when attending to new jobs, without familiar people, living with workers from the same hometown is both economic and safety. When working in a same business, same manufacturing process, good relationship with coworkers is essential, a bonding factor contributing to workers' good lifestyle. There are not many differences between various types of business in these matters. While there are 47.9% workers having good relationship with coworkers in state-owned enterprises, these figures are 44.8% in non-state-owned enterprises and 47.1% in FDI businesses.

The survey also showed that while 49% female workers are interested in building a good relationship with coworkers, there are 43.3% male workers who care to do so. This can be explained by flexible and easy to adapted female characters, needs for sharing with coworkers their normal life, therefore female workers tend to appreciate working relationship.

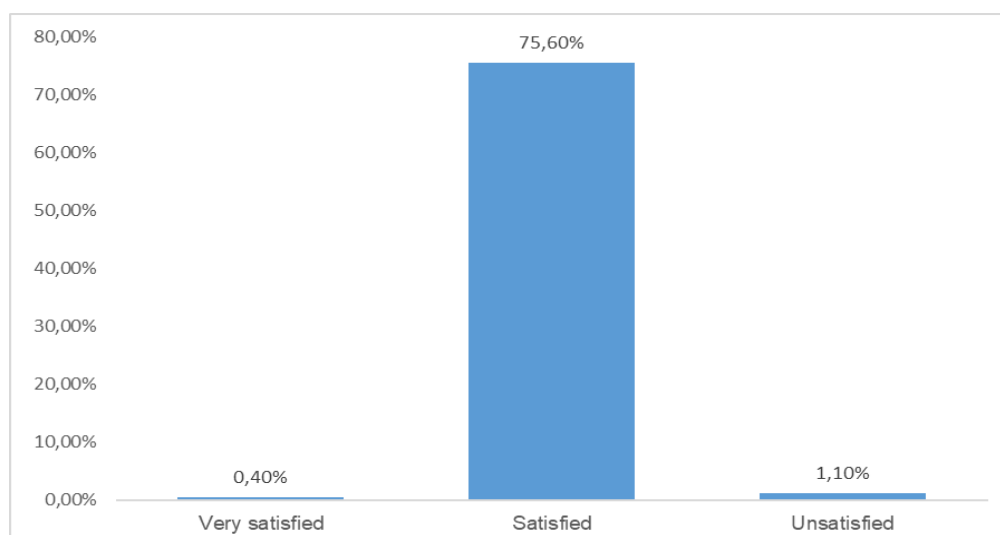
The key in this relationship is to co-helping and interdependence between workers in various types of businesses. While in FDI businesses, the percentage of workers usually caring for each other is 60.1%, 56.1% workers in non- state-owned enterprise regularly help their coworkers. There are also minor statically difference between male and female workers in co-working and helping each other (52.9% and 61.4% respectively). Normally, workers from same hometown frequently help and share with each other out of kindness, bond and similarity.

Each relationship with coworkers shows cooperation and sincerity while co-working, sympathy and sharing difficulties with others in manufacture and life, where workers together build a civilized business, friendly working environment. Communicating habit in manufacturing process is created when worker follows rules and regulations in business, when friendly greeting other workers after arriving to work or before leaving. In each relationship, workers need to show respect, protect others' credential and honor, actively listen to their coworker's opinion, sincerely and honestly contribute ideas, regularly exchange work with coworker in same department, same unit in order to learn and share experiences, enhance knowledge in new fields. When assigned a task with another coworker (in the same manufacturing process), one should actively cooperate, support their colleague to complete it. However, there are still a portion of workers who present hateful, jealous, distant, disunited, especially in normal daily life. [11]

2. Social relationship between workers and directors/managers

Managing activities in businesses has major impacts on workers' attitudes. The good managers who know how to organize tasks, understands employers' needs will create an open, comfortable atmosphere for employers in working process. However, in many enterprises, relationship between managers and workers is not always friendly. Employers mostly contact their manager in task's distribution and arrangement, when work is involved. Besides this, rarely do the employers get direct contact with the managers. The managers are informed wishes and needs of employers through union officials or direct communication with workers. [9, 13]

Chart 3: Satisfaction of worker with manager (Vietnam Institution of Workers and Union's 2016 survey on "Vietnamese workers' lifestyle in industrialization period" [4])



In manufacturing process, relationship between workers and managers official (director, deputy) is a relationship between the one who lead and the one who is lead – a less equal one. The leader will put out demands, tasks and require the worker to execute. The worker only has the right to ask for essential condition (working transportation, reasonable payment) in order to finish handed tasks. But not always suitable/needed conditions are provided [3].

According to the survey, 21,1% workers felt satisfied with their manager's attitude while 75.6% workers felt their manager's relationship with them is normal, and 3.3% felt unsatisfied. The majority of workers felt satisfied or fine with their manager, there is differences between the percentages of satisfied workers in each type of businesses.

The result also showed that "Workers mainly share work's difficulties with their manager. The relationship between worker and manager is only a co-working one and not very bonded" (30-year-old female worker). This is an important contributing factor in workers' satisfaction and engagement with business.

Even though, the majority of workers still show empathy with their manager and are pleased with the business's owner. There are differences in satisfaction between different age group and manufacturing categories. Workers who work for a longer time or in older age group are more pleased than ones who are younger and newly work.

According to the survey, social and work skills in working environment of a portion of workers are still limited, their awareness of working relationship is not sufficient. In FDI businesses, when some workers are lack of foreign culture, custom in their working space (foreigners who are manager, owners), conflicts and disagreements are often happened between employers and employees.

Some workers who are limited in teamwork skill, cooperating and sharing skills still hesitate to learn, share their ideas and working experiences. Their working pattern is uptight, depending, conservative, lack of flexibility and dynamic, which cannot meet the requirement of industrialization, modernization and competition in international integration [5]. This is also why managers and directors are not pleased with employers.

3. Constructing a harmonized, stable and advanced labor relationship

In conclusion, relationship between workers is proved to be relatively good through helping and sharing in both work and daily life. There are still some workers who are distant and hateful which can lead to negative influences in both work productivity and workers' mental health. With manager, director, worker's relationship is rather normal, without interdependence and helping in work.

Improving awareness about labor relationship and roles of subjects in a labor relationship; identify clearly roles and function of Government and other stakeholders.

Improving ability of negotiation, communication, agreement of representative organizations for employees and employers, especially on subjects: payment, negotiation and collective laboring contract agreement; improving agreement on collective investment on enterprise level, association level, and faculty level and executing investment. Constructing mechanism for union, enterprise association to monitor, control collective investment on enterprise level, association level, faculty level.

Communication activity, include consultant and negotiation is the essential measure to adjust two-side benefit in labor relationship [6]. This is a voluntary action so Government cannot apply administration tools. Even though, Government can enact regulations which help flexibly intervene on this activity to encourage and support both sides to have a realistic and sufficient communication.

Supporting mechanism should be either an official organization or a flexible and deliberate tool of Government to intervene on labor relationship during the whole process, from the beginning, middle and end stage of labor competition. Supporting mechanism mainly is to support technically both sides in a labor relationship to enhance ability to communicate and negotiate, with Government's arrangement and supports; this procedure will bring effective result and mutual understanding.

It is necessary to establish Tripartite Administration of labor relationship, include government agency, union and enterprise representative. This administration will consult the Government about labor and labor relationship policy. This is not an organization, but only an active mechanism to consult ideas from three parties about this field. Depend on different situations, the Administration will establish small departments about minimum wage, occupation safety, work

productivity... These departments will organize national negotiation process about labor standard issues, navigating for branches' negotiations.

This labor administration is also needed inside enterprises, working dually but not irreplaceably with Union. In enterprises that do not have Union organization, worker can vote for representative to join this Administration.

To improve roles of employers in negotiation, Government can enact and organize consultant forum with employers as annual enterprise meeting. Organizations, associations with legal representative can become a communicating partner with Union to form a two-sided communication mechanism on group, enterprise collection level.

Government agency manages labor relationship inside the government with 3 main aims: protecting Union, negotiation activity and strike. This agency will act as a middle agent to negotiate during labor relationship, starting from the beginning to the end of negotiation, even during strikes. This agency will be the referee and support communication, negotiation skills between both sides. [16, 17]

During communication, this action has decisive role with the enterprises, it can solve any arising issue within workplace. Communication content includes: (1) discussion of general issues of enterprise such as production – business planning, salary, bonus, collective labor agreement, labor contract...; (2) issues involving business administration; (3) worker's issues such as benefit, personal and situational privilege.

Collective negotiation in workplace is one of advanced communication methods, it is the essential key in labor relationship. Negotiation is compulsory for enterprises in Vietnam. Negotiation must be executed under peaceful, equal, cooperative, public and clear principles; in order to (1) construct a harmonized, stable and advanced labor relationship; (2) establish new basic working condition for collective labor agreement; (3) resolve difficulties, questions during executing both rights and privilege of both sides in labor relationship. Negotiation content should be the guideline for both side to discuss right and privilege that work force asks for, under an equal circumstance between employee and employer. If the situation is unequal, there should be method to navigate workers to speak out their realistic needs.

Model, mechanism for communication, negotiation should be executed in 3 levels: Tripartite Administration of labor relationship, Union for enterprise association and Association of employers, local union. Administration agency in government must take responsibility to monitor negotiation's result, provide support when one of two sides demands in negotiation process, at the same time negotiation the process in a democratic way. [10, 14]

4. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this result should be used as foundation to construct a realistic social policy for workers, in order to comprehensively build a better life for employers, more updated with social economics development trend. Encouragement in working spirit for workers, enhancement of union between workers and reduction/avoidant in conflicts, tension between managers and workers are recommended.

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