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Motivational Needs for Construction Industry Employees in Gulf Countries–Kuwait Case Study

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Abstract- Kuwait is mentioned as one of multi-national workplaces. It is important to identify motivating factors that affect the workers in Kuwait construction workplaces. Maslow's hierarchy is the most common theory of motivation. Many studies investigated the application of Maslow's hierarchy in many places around the world. This study surveyed the motivational needs of employees working in the construction industry in Kuwait. A questionnaire designed to evaluate the motivation needs of employees for different public and private sector in Kuwait industry. Ten motivators were used to describe the five hierarchical levels derived from Maslow's theory. Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to identify motivational needs for different categorizes in Kuwait workplaces and rank them. This rank was compared with what is mentioned by Maslow. Comparison between motivational needs' levels was done to clarify the differences of these needs from gender, sector, level of organization and other categorizes. Spearman rank correlation was used to distinguish the difference between different surveyed categories ranking.

Keywords: kuwait–motivation–employee – construction.

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Motivational Needs for Construction Industry Employees in Gulf Countries – Kuwait Case Study

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Abstract- Kuwait is mentioned as one of multi-national workplaces. It is important to identify motivating factors that affect the workers in Kuwait construction workplaces. Maslow's hierarchy is the most common theory of motivation. Many studies investigated the application of Maslow's hierarchy in many places around the world. This study surveyed the motivational needs of employees working in the construction industry in Kuwait. A questionnaire designed to evaluate the motivation needs of employees for different public and private sector in Kuwait industry. Ten motivators were used to describe the five hierarchical levels derived from Maslow's theory. Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to identify motivational needs for different categorizes in Kuwait workplaces and rank them. This rank was compared with what is mentioned by Maslow. Comparison between motivational needs' levels was done to clarify the differences of these needs from gender, sector, level of organization and other categorizes. Spearman rank correlation was used to distinguish the difference between different surveyed categories ranking. The study revealed that the hierarchical level of motivation needs for employees working in the construction industry in Kuwait is not as mentioned by Maslow. The first level in Kuwait is the security level, which is the second level as Maslow. While the lowest level from this study was self-esteem which is on the fourth level in Maslow. The study revealed that there is no significant correlation for needs ranking between surveyed categorizes. This study is important to understand and improve the working environments of the different construction workplaces in Kuwait and any similar work environment such as gulf countries.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Maslow's hierarchical theory describes the needs of a human being to be motivated. Maslow's theory is introduced in 1948-1953 by an American scientist Abraham Maslow. This theory is the base for all introduced motivation theories after that. Much research work conducted around the world to evaluate application of this theory. In this research, the motivational needs of employees who work in the Kuwait construction industry are identified. There is almost no research work studied the motivational sources of

personnel working in the construction industry based on Maslow's theory of hierarchical needs. This study aims to identify the motivational factors that affect personnel performance who working in construction industry in Kuwait. These motivational factors are ranked based on the Maslow hierarchical levels and compare this rank of levels with which is driven by Maslow.

Many criticisms targeted Maslow's theory because it ignored some of the dynamics and emotional needs that might be added to human needs. In spite of this criticism, this theory is still valid and attracts many of research work and applications around the world.

II. OBJECTIVE

This study aims to identify the motivational needs of employees who work in the construction industry in Kuwait. The other objective is to compare these needs with what is proposed by Maslow's theory.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Motivation Definition

Motivation has been defined according to Cox et al. 2006 as "providing a drive to act to satisfy needs or desires". According to (Gagne & Deci, 2005), Motivation is divided into Intrinsic motivation and Extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation depends on the activity itself, and it states that the reason behind doing an activity is that the person finds the activity interesting and leads to self-satisfaction. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation requires contribution between the activity and other separable consequences such as tangible rewards, which means that the satisfaction does not result from the activity itself but from the extrinsic consequences to which the activity leads.

b) Maslow motivation theory

This theory was developed by Abraham Maslow 1943-1954. It states that all people have needs and they are working towards satisfying those needs. The needs are arranged according to their importance in a 5 sequential hierarchical levels. Needs of the lower-order level must be fulfilled before the higher-order needs. Level one which the lowest level includes physiological needs which are the biological requirements for human survival such as food, drink, air, shelter, rest and sleep. If these needs are not satisfied the human body cannot

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function properly. Maslow considered physiological needs the most important as all the other needs become secondary until these needs are fulfilled. Level two includes safety needs such as protection from fear and pain, safe working environment, and job security. Level three includes the social needs and belongingness needs such as love, affection, relationships with family and friends. Level four includes self-esteem needs such as self-confidence, achievement, recognition, being respected by others and prestige. Level five which is the highest level of the hierarchy include self-actualization such as personal growth and fulfillment, opportunities for innovation and creativity and problem-solving.

Maslow (1943) initially stated that individuals must satisfy lower level needs before progressing to meet higher level needs. However, he later stated that satisfaction of a needs is not an "all-or-none" phenomenon, confessing that a need must not be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges" (Maslow 1987).

Although this theory is invented in the early 20th century, it still attracts many studies and researches regarding application and criticism of this theory. Many of studies around the world discussed the application of Maslow's theory in motivating many sectors, types of workers, types of customers... and many others. Although this theory is widely accepted all over the world, there is criticism oriented to the theory. These critics summarized as:

- The theory assumes that all people practice motivational needs in the same order ignoring cultural and individual differences.
- The theory is rigid and not take into consideration the dynamic effect of the work environment.
- The theory ignores the unstable characteristic of employee needs.
- Also, substantial satisfaction of one need level doesn't necessarily lead to the next higher need level.
- The needs hierarchy is based on US cultural values which are basically individualistic. In collectivist societies, for example, social needs may be considered more important than physiological needs. In countries such as China, and Korea, which have collectivist cultures, belonging and security are significantly more important than growth or self-actualization. (Patrich, and Cianci 2003)
- The theory did not take into consideration the spiritual needs (Bouzenita and Boulanouar 2016).

In spite of so much criticism, Maslow's hierarchy theory continues to be popular, perhaps due to its simplicity and ease of application.

c) *Kuwait construction industry*

Kuwait state is one of the oil producer countries located in the gulf area. Kuwait is ranked as the tenth of

oil producer list and it owns approximately 8% of world crude oil reserves (EIA 2016). The construction contribution to GPD is about 7%. There are 177,696 persons working directly with this industry in Kuwait (CSB report 2014). There are many challenges facing the construction industry in Kuwait, but one of the most significant is low productivity (Jarkas and Bitar 2012), project time overrun (Soliman, 2010) and many other problems. Employees' motivation in the construction industry has a great role to handle some of these problems. There is very limited research work that dealt with employee motivation in the construction industry in Kuwait. This study is an attempt to understand the motivational needs that are affecting the workforce that working in the Kuwait construction industry. This investigation is conducted through a wide survey in many of different construction organizations in Kuwait.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire is designed to collect data regarding motivational factors that are affecting employees' motivation. These factors are driven from Maslow's theory.

a) *Questionnaire design and sample*

The questionnaire was distributed among a random sample in different working places including the public and private sector working in the construction industry in Kuwait. This sample contains the Ministry of public works, Kuwait Credit Bank, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Kuwait University, Kuwait Central Bank, Kuwait Finance House, National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Oil Company. The total number of questionnaires was 601 questionnaires and the completed number of returned questionnaires is 283 completed questionnaires by a rate of 47% of questionnaire return. The questionnaire formed in two parts. It started with participant general information. It asks about gender, age, educational level, and job title. The second part of the questionnaire was a question that includes factors that influence motivation among employees. The factors were chosen based on the five needs of Maslow's theory with two factors representing each need. Salary and bonuses represent the physiological needs while job security and promotion/growth factors represent safety and security needs. Recognition received for doing the job and Enjoyment of the work factors represents social needs. Responsibility (being given responsibilities by management) and equality (being treated fairly) represent the self-esteem needs. The last need which is the self -actualization is represented by the last two factors which are expectancy (a belief that effort will lead to the achievement of a target) and relationships (having a good relationship with management and colleagues). Each factor has 5 scale where the value of "1" stands for no influence whereas "5" shows the greatest influence.

V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

a) Survey Respondent Demographics

Table 1 shows the study sample size analysis. The analysis is based on the sample of 283 responses which consists of 166 females and 117 males. Regarding education level, 65.4% of the respondents

have a bachelor's degree 14.5% had a diploma, 14.1% had a master's degree and 6% had Ph.D. The number of respondents working in the public sector is 217 with 76.7% while the private sector employees were 66 with 23.3%. The sample included 227 employees with 80.2% and 56 managers with 19.8% as shown in table (1).

Table 1: Distribution of the Participants' Personnel Information

		No	%
Gender	Male	117	41.3
	Female	166	58.6
Educational level	Diploma	41	14.5
	Bachelor	185	65.4
	Masters	40	14.1
	PhD	17	6
Workplace	Private Sector	66	23.3
	Public Sector	217	76.7
Job title	Manager	56	19.8
	Employee	227	80.2

b) Motivational needs ranking

The Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to analyze and rank the data provided by the questionnaire. A rating scale of 1 to 5 was adopted with 1 representing the lowest level of effect and 5 representing the highest level. A relative importance index is a common tool used to rank different aspects for a questionnaire of Likert scale answers. The RII for each motivation factor is calculated by the following equation as used by (Fagbenle et al. 2004).

$$RII = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^5 w_i * n_i}{5 * N} \text{-----}(1)$$

Where,

wi = Respondent's rating from 1 for no influence to 5 for greatest influence.

ni= frequency for each rate

N = sample size.

Table 2 shows the ranking of motivational needs based on RII values. As shown in Table 2, the first important level is the security level followed by the self-

actualization level. The physiological needs level is ranked as the fourth level rank. Comparing the analytical motivational needs in Kuwait construction employees with what is mentioned by Maslow's theory showed that there is a big difference between them.

Kuwait state is one of the gulf countries with a high rate of income (Salary survey 2019). Employees in such countries might not have the same importance for facilitating physiological needs as they have been provided by most of these physiological needs. Because of oil price declination during the past few years, the government and private sectors cancelled many of the scheduled projects. Also, the offered jobs have been reduced dramatically during this period. This situation affects job security, so the surveyed employees rank security as the first rank for their motivational needs.

Table 2: Motivational Needs Ranking compared to Maslow's Theory

Global (sample size, N =283)				Motivational Needs as per Maslow theory
hierarchical needs level	Motivation Factors	RII	Ranking	
physiological needs	Salary	0.872085	4	1
	Bonuses			

safety	Job security	0.888339	1	2
	Promotions/growth			
love / belonging	Recognition	0.878445	3	3
	Enjoyment			
self-esteem	Responsibility	0.853004	5	4
	Equality			
self-actualization	Expectancy	0.881625	2	5
	Relationships			

In the coming section, we will distinguish the difference between motivational needs ranking for different surveyed categorizes.

Tables 3 to 6 show the difference between surveyed categorizes and Maslow's theory motivational needs ranking.

c) Categorizes ranking of motivational needs

Table 3: Comparison Between Kuwaiti' Male and Female Motivational Needs with Maslow

hierarchical needs level	Male Ranking	Female Ranking	Maslow Theory Rank
physiological needs	3	4	1
safety	2	1	2
love / belonging	4	2	3
self-esteem	5	5	4
self-actualization	1	3	5

As shown in Table 3, the male category chose self-actualization, while the female group chose safety as their first motivational needs. Both of groups are

different in needs ranking and the two groups are different than Maslow's hierarchical ranking.

Table 4: Comparison Between Motivational Needs Per Workplace and Maslow

hierarchical needs level	Private Ranking	Public Ranking	Maslow Theory Rank
physiological needs	2	4	1
safety	1	1	2
love / belonging	4	3	3
self-esteem	5	5	4
self-actualization	3	2	5

As shown in Table 4, both categorize who are working in public and private sectors chose safety as their first motivational needs. This is because of the

instable situation of the economic situation in gulf due to oil price declination. Both groups are differencing than Maslow's hierarchical rank.

Table 5: Comparison Between Motivational Needs Per employee position and Maslow

hierarchicalneeds level	Employee Ranking	Manager Ranking	Maslow Theory Rank
physiological needs	4	3	1
safety	2	1	2
love / belonging	3	2	3
self- esteem	5	5	4
self-actualization	1	4	5

Managers chose safety as their first motivational needs, while employees chose self-actualization as first need. Managers who have big experience and get more

salary will find difficulty to get job if they lost their current jobs. So they search for a job with safety more than other needs.

Table 6: Comparison between Motivational Needs Per Educational Level and Maslow

hierarchical needs level	Diploma Ranking	Bachelor Ranking	Master's Ranking	PhD Ranking	Maslow Theory Rank
physiological needs	1	4	5	1	1
safety	2	1	2	1	2
love / belonging	4	3	1	4	3
self-esteem	5	5	2	5	4
self-actualization	3	2	4	3	5

As shown from Table 6, the diploma and Ph.D. holders put physiological needs as first motivation, while bachelor holders chose safety and who have master's degrees chose to belong needs as their first motivator.

As shown from the above Tables that the ranking for motivational needs is different from each surveyed category.

Table 7 shows the correlation factors for the surveyed categories. These factors are calculated using SPSS 25. As shown from Table 7, there is no remarkable correlation between surveyed categorizes ranking except the correlation between Diploma and Ph.D. holders. Table 3 shows also that there is no significance for most of these surveyed categorizes.

d) Level of Agreement Between Different Respondents Categorizes

 Table 7: Correlation Factor for Surveyed Categorises Hierarchical ranking
Correlations factors

		male	female
male	Correlation Factor	1	0.500
female	Correlation Factor	0.500	1

		public	private		
public	Correlation Factor	1	0.700		
private	Correlation Factor	0.700	1		
		manager	employee		
manager	Correlation Factor	1	0.400		
employee	Correlation Factor	0.400	1		
		dimple	bachelor	master	Ph.d
dimple	Correlation Factor	1	0.400	-0.674	.972**
bachelor	Correlation Factor	0.400	1	0.096	0.530
master	Correlation Factor	-0.674	0.096	1	-0.527
Ph.d	Correlation Factor	.972**	0.530	-0.527	1

VI. RESEARCH LIMITATION

Due to the small number of samples, the concluded results are controlled by this sample size. As this study is conducted in Kuwait, so the study results are limited to the work environment of Kuwait or any other similar work environment such as gulf countries.

VII. CONCLUSION

Maslow's theory ranked the human motivational needs as in five hierarchical ranks. Lowest-order needs must be fulfilled before the higher-order needs. A questionnaire distributed to employees working in the Kuwait construction industry. RII and correlation factors were used to rank surveyed sample their motivational needs. In Kuwait, the most important motivational need was security more than physiological needs. Each surveyed category such as male, females, private, public sectors has their own motivational needs. All of the surveyed categorizes chose rank different than what is mentioned by Maslow. This study results prove that the motivational needs are changed due to differences in work conditions, gender, work environment and there is no common rank for motivational needs.

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