

Employee Grievance and Work Politics: Expats Suffering in UAE

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Abstract: Grievances means any kind of dissatisfaction that employees may have due to internal and external factors that hampers not only their personal growth but affects the organization as whole. This case is a description of an employee who was employed in UAE and works wholeheartedly for his family wellbeing. The facts and figures are collected by interviewing the employee in person and other information is collected through secondary data from magazines, newspapers, journals and web resources. This case study will help the students in analyzing the factors that can lead to grievances and how to cope up with work politics.

Keywords: employee grievance

1. Introduction

It was a beautiful morning during the pious month of Ramadan when Mr. X was sitting in his room at his home town looking at the moving fan trying to analyzing the situation, making future plans and still confused what to do next. People leave their country for the betterment of their family, to live a successful life. The present scenario makes him indecisive due to problems that he has faced throughout. With heavy heart he just decided to grab the offer given by his present employer without knowing whether this opportunity still exists for him or not.

2. About UAE

The United Arab Emirates is an Arabian Pen-insula nation settled mainly along the Persian (Arabian) Gulf. The country is a federation of 7 emirates. Abu Dhabi, the island capital, is home to Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, with crystal chandeliers and room for 40,000 worshipers. Dubai is the site of ultramodern Burj Khalifa tower, enormous shopping centres and extravagant entertainment attractions. According to a recent survey conducted by Bayt.com, 56% of professionals working in the UAE expect the economy to improve.

3. Travel & tourism sector

Since the unification of the UAE's seven emirates 42 years ago, the UAE has made its mark in the world as a leading tourism destination. According to data by Dubai Chamber, the UAE's tourism sector is expected to grow by 6.5 per cent annually between 2011 and 2021. Once a small trading hub,

Dubai has risen to become an international tourism destination for leisure and business travelers through the infrastructure developed to cater to these markets. Dubai launched Vision 2020, which involves attracting 20 million visitors to Dubai by 2020, from 10 million visitors in 2012, and tripling the annual contribution made by tourism to the city's economy. Tourism acts as a growth sector for the entire UAE economy. Dubai is the top tourism destination in the Middle East. According to the annual MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index, Dubai is the fifth most popular tourism destination in the world. Dubai holds up to 66% share of the UAE's tourism economy, with Abu Dhabi having 16% and Sharjah 10%. Dubai welcomed 10 million tourists in 2013. Travel and Tourism sector works 24/7 to cater the needs of tourist for their unforgettable experience in Emirates. Therefore, the work pressure on the employees working un-der this sector is obvious.

4. Statistics

The demography of the UAE is extremely diverse. In 2010, the UAE's population was estimated to be 8,264,070, of whom only 13% were UAE nationals or Emiratis, while the majority of the population were expatriates. The country's net migration rate stands at 21.71, the world's highest. There are 1.4 million Emirati citizens. The United Arab Emirates' population is ethnically diverse. According to the CIA, 19% of residents were Emirati, 23% were other Arab (Egyptians, Jordanians) and Iranian, 50% were South Asian, and 8% were other expatriates, including Westerners and East Asians (1982 est.).

Table 1
Ethnic groups (2015)

OTHERS	38.56%
INDIAN	27.15%
PAKISTANI	12.53%
EMIRATI	11.32%
BANGLADESHI	7.31%
SRILANKAN	3.13%

*In 2016, the number of Emiratis was only 12%.

<https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/uae-population-statistics/>

5. Grievance at work place

Mr. X is a very hardworking and sincere fellow. He works in a Travel and Tourism company in UAE and work pressure is obvious due to high traffic of tourists. The problem started when Mr. X did not receive his hard earned salary for few months as the superiors says that funds are blocked and they will re-lease it soon. He keeps on working with full dedication and patience without saying a word. One month gone, no salary and this continues till three months. Mr. X discussed the same with rest of the employees as he is not the only one who is not getting their salaries on time so they have decided to register the complaint under Ministry of Labor. The complaint has been filed and through lots of struggle they succeed in getting their hard earned money but this is not the end of hurdles for Mr. X. He made up his mind not to continue with this company anymore as he can't see any future and moreover his tenure was also completing with the company. Company is delaying his cancellation due to which company is liable to pay a fine for his over-stay in country. Mr. X keeps on requesting his superiors to relieve him but the officials asked him to pay the fine that company is liable to in order to get his relieving letters. Mr. X decided to pay the fine as he doesn't want to suffer any more, without thinking that this can even affect him in future. Meanwhile his present company dissolved due to over dues and various other factors and Mr. X returned back to his home country. This was not the end of his sufferings. Mr. X tried his luck everywhere but was not lucky enough to get a suitable job. One early morning he get a call for an interview and was asked to join at a lesser salary that he was receiving in his previous company. Without thinking much he agrees to join at the lesser salary, the employer has asked him to go to his home country till the processing is done. He left for his home country and kept waiting for the offer letter. The offer letter that was supposed to come in fifteen days took more than a month and he was impatient enough to know what is happening but did not get any satisfactory response from the HR. He struggled for more than 3 months. He went through mental trauma as every time he was asked to submit documents to prove about his exit from the country of his employment. After so many hassles, he was so unfortunate that his visa has been rejected and was been imposed a life time ban for entering in UAE due to negligence and internal politics from his previous employers. He discussed about this matter with so many experts but none was able to suggest any satisfactory answer. So on his friend re-quest he decided to try his luck again and applied for tourist visa in order to be physically present and hoping to resolve the issues himself. This time he was fortunate to get his visa issued and with a new hope he entered. After reaching he went directly to his office to find out the matter, his employer mentioned that they are facing some legal issue and once it is resolved they will try for his visa again and ask him to stay back in his home country and wait for the processing again. This time also he came back to his home country without any hope and start thinking what next? After few months he again get a call that his employment

visa has been renewed and he was been asked to join immediately. Mr. X thought that now his difficulties are over and he can lead a better and successful life and can support his family. With this hope he started his job with same passion and dedication. But when time is bad nothing can be so easy. This time his visa was cancelled because of medical reasons and he was deported back and this shattered his life due to negligence from employers, Immigration department and UAE rules and regulations. Here it is mandate to mention about factors in expatriate selection (Figure Source: Peter. J. Dowling, et. al., op cit., p.85).

These factors need to be considered both on individual (Technical ability, Cross-cultural suitability and Family requirements) basis and on situation basis (Country/cultural requirements, Language and MNE requirements) while expatriate selection that can actually ease the process not only for employees but for the management as well.

6. Legal implications

The relationship between employers and employees is governed by Federal Act Number 8 of 1980 and its amendments. The Act is applicable to all employment relationships when engaging an employee, whether a UAE citizen or a foreigner. Act Number 8 stipulates certain provisions for the employee's health and safety and for workmen's compensation against work accident. The employment contract may be terminated by mutual consent of the parties or on expiry of its duration. Any dispute arising between the employer and the employee will be resolved by the Ministry of Labor, which must make a recommendation within two weeks from the date the application for a dispute settlement is filed. If the parties fail to settle the dispute as recommended by the Ministry, the matter should be referred to the courts. UAE have a clear rules and policies still employees are facing so many issues and are difficult to address.

7. Road ahead/Conclusion

In the UAE, about 75% of the population of four million are expatriates, mostly migrant workers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Iran and other Asian, Arab, African and Western nations. Migrants, as well as helping with the physical development of the UAE. Expatriates contributions to the success of the UAE was praised by academics and community leaders on International Migrants Day. There should be a proper repatriation process designed to attract future expatriates so that these aspirants should be mentally and physically prepared to handle the corporate pressure and should not encounter any cultural shock and can survive well in International environment.

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Questions:

Why do expats failures occur? How can organisations minimise such failures?

Explain the factors in expatriate selection?

Design a Repatriation Programme for your employees.