

Identifying Attractive Behaviors of Managers Based on Kano Model in Isfahan Province Gas Company*

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Abstract Human resources are the most valuable asset of organization and various factors affect on their motivation and performance. One of the factors that has a significant impact on motivation and performance of employees is managers' behaviors. In this research, a model has been proposed for analyzing and classification of employees' needs (managers' behaviors) and this model has been examined in the Isfahan Province Gas Company. Statistical population of this research includes employees of Isfahan Province Gas Company. In this research after identifying the behaviors that affect on employees' satisfaction and dissatisfaction, a questionnaire was designed; then after data collection, the kinds of behaviors were determined. The results indicated that by using Kano model we can identify five kind of behaviors i.e. Must-be, One-dimensional, Attractive, Indifferent and Reverse behavior. The findings showed that 18 behaviors were classified in attractive category that these behaviors can affect on employees' motivation.

Key words Motivation, Kano model, Managers' behaviors, Isfahan Province Gas Company

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1. Introduction

Traditionally, researchers believed that there is a linear relationship between satisfaction and performance levels. This concept is called one-dimensional quality theory (Chen & Chuang, 2008).

Kano model originated due to the lack of explanatory power of a one-dimensional definition of quality. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory of job satisfaction (M-H theory), was the first to introduce a distinction between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In essence, this behavioral science theory posited that the factors that cause job dissatisfaction are different from those that cause job satisfaction. Inspired by Herzberg, Professor Kano and his colleagues developed the theory of attractive quality (Kano et al., 1984; Kano, 2001). In accordance with the M-H theory, the theory of attractive quality explains how the relationship between the objective performance and customer satisfaction with an attribute depends on how customers evaluate a product or offering (Löfgren *et al.*, 2011).

In spite of the fact that Kano model has been inspired by Herzberg's theory concerning employees' satisfaction in working environment, it is not used sufficiently in this domain and it has rather been used for satisfying customers outside the organization. Among the few studies in which Kano model has been used in employees' satisfaction can be referred to the survey of Martensen and Gronholdt (2001) and the survey of Matzler *et al.* (2004).

The subject of this article is allocated to using Kano model concerning employees' satisfaction. For this purpose, a model has been proposed for analyzing and classification of employees' needs (managers' behaviors) and this model has been examined in the Isfahan Province Gas Company.

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2. Kano model

The Kano model that was first developed by Kano et al. (1984) has gained increasing attention and acceptance for many years (Löfgren & Witell, 2008) and has been used in many fields and industries such as health care (Jane & Dominguez, 2003a); bank services (Rahman, 2004); travel agent (Shahin, 2004); technical products (Yang, 2005); tourism (Kvist & Klefsjo, 2006); food products (Riviere *et al.*, 2006); air travel agency (Shahin & Nekuie, 2011); school workshop's workstation design (Hashim & Dawal, 2012); and food and beverage industry (Chen, 2012).

Kano et al. classified quality attributes into five categories of must-be, one-dimensional, attractive, indifference, and reverse quality (Chen, 2012; Shahin & Zairi, 2009). Must-be attributes are minimum requirements that cause dissatisfaction if not fulfilled, but do not lead to customer satisfaction if fulfilled. One-dimensional factors lead to satisfaction if performance is high and to dissatisfaction if performance is low. Attractive factors are those that increase customer satisfaction if present, but do not cause dissatisfaction if not present (Llinares & Page, 2011). Indifference factor is a quality attribute that does not affect customer satisfaction (Pyo, 2012); this factor results neither in satisfaction nor in dissatisfaction, whether fulfilled or not (Kano et al., 1984) and reverse factor is an attribute that dissatisfies customers (Pyo, 2012). This factor results in dissatisfaction when fulfilled and in satisfaction when not fulfilled (Kano et al., 1984). The Kano model has been displayed in Figure 1.

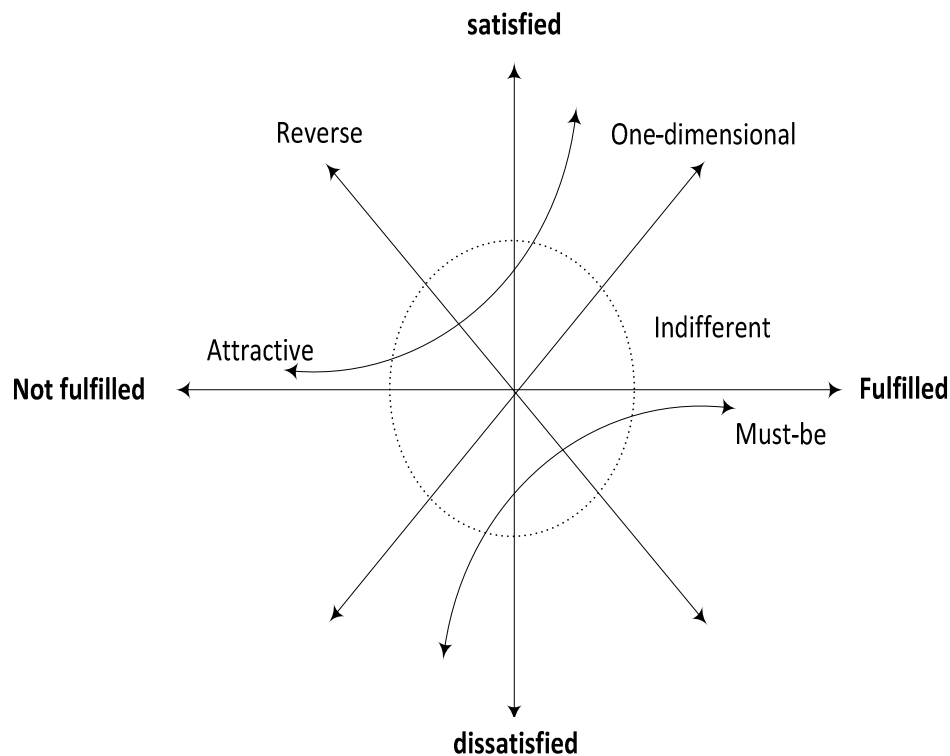


Figure 1. Kano model (Kano et al., 1984)

3. Methodology of research

Managers' behaviors has impact on employees' attitude. So based on this subject, we proposed a model for employees' satisfaction using Kano model. The proposed model for employees' satisfaction inspired by Kano model has been displayed in Figure 2.

Statistical population of this research includes employees of Isfahan Province Gas Company. The research framework has been displayed in figure 3.

In this research after identifying the behaviors that affect on employees' satisfaction and dissatisfaction, a questionnaire was designed; then after data collection, the kinds of behaviors were determined.

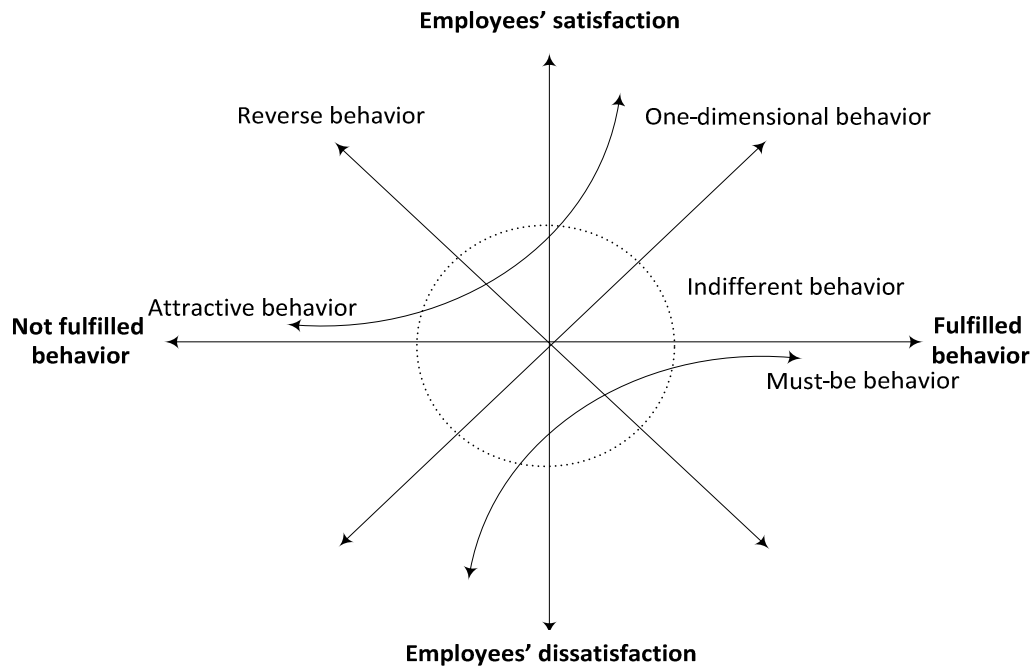


Figure 2. Proposed model for employees' satisfaction based on Kano model

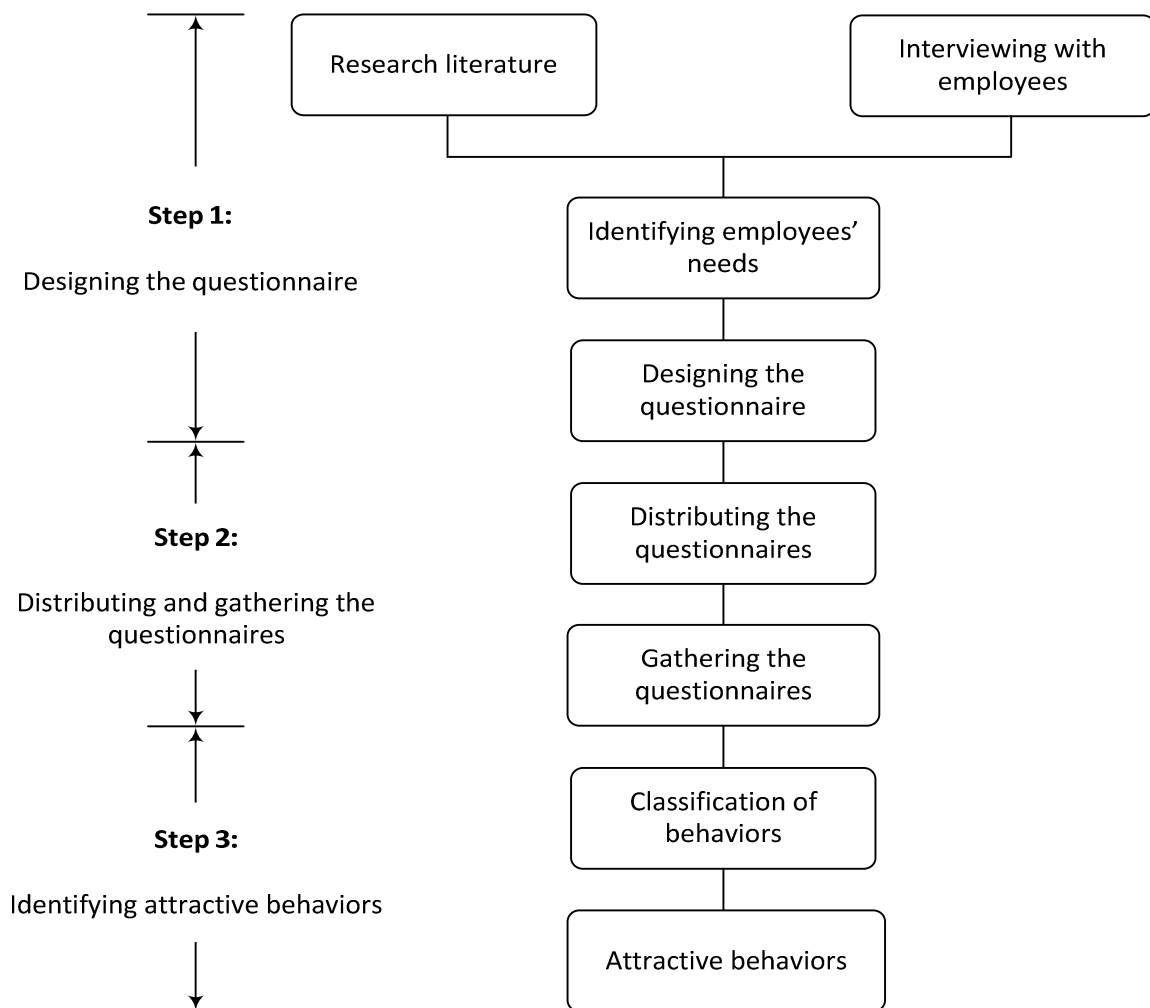


Figure 3. Research framework

4. Findings

The results indicated that by using Kano model we can identify five kind of behaviors i.e. Must-be, One-dimensional, Attractive, Indifferent and Reverse behavior. Must-be behavior cause dissatisfaction if not fulfilled, but do not lead to employees' satisfaction if fulfilled. One-dimensional behavior leads to satisfaction if fulfilled and to dissatisfaction if not fulfilled. So performing this behavior has a linear relationship with employees' satisfaction. Attractive behavior are those that increase employees' satisfaction if fulfilled, but do not cause dissatisfaction if not fulfilled. Indifference behavior does not affect employees' satisfaction and reverse behavior cause dissatisfaction if fulfilled, and lead to satisfaction if not fulfilled.

The findings of case study showed that 18 behaviors were classified in attractive category that these behaviors can affect on employees' motivation. These attractive behaviors have been listed below:

1. Encourage employees to discuss
2. Sympathy with employees when a problem is not solvable
3. Create a sense of dependency in employees toward organization
4. Pay attention to employees' motivation
5. Give identity to employees and inspire them
6. Influence on the mind and the heart of employees
7. Active listening
8. Give a sense of pride and honor to employees
9. Trust your employees and delegate
10. Build work environment like a family environment and make a parent-child relationship
11. Decrease communication distance with your employees
12. Help employees in their life problems
13. Solve employees' organizational problems with sympathy
14. Treat employees by using management and psychology principles
15. Treat Employees according to their personality characteristics and their mood
16. Encourage employees to participate in decision-making
17. Hear opposing opinions and respect them
18. Have attraction and repulsion

5. Conclusions

Employees' satisfaction and motivation are the most important drivers of quality and productivity. Numerous studies discuss the impact of these attributes on company performance.

One of the factors that affect on motivation of employees is managers' behaviors. In this research, the impact of managers' behavior on satisfaction/dissatisfaction of employees has been investigated. For this purpose, a model has been proposed for analyzing and classification of employees' needs and this model has been examined in the Isfahan Province Gas Company. The results indicated that by using Kano model we can identify five kinds of behaviors i.e. Must-be, One-dimensional, Attractive, Indifferent and Reverse behavior. The findings of case study showed that 18 behaviors were classified in attractive category that these behaviors can affect on employees' motivation. These behaviors increase employees' satisfaction if fulfilled, but do not cause dissatisfaction if not fulfilled.

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