

## **Employee Perception of Skill Development and Career Growth Opportunities in Selected Dairy Plants of Saurashtra Kutch**

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### **Abstract:**

The paper discusses the perception of employees towards the skill development programmes and career growth in their choice of dairy plants in the Saurashtra and Kutch areas. Dairy industry is a significant part of the economic development of the region and the human resources of the dairy industry are determined by employee skills, training, and promotion, to a large extent. The study is conducted through a primary survey method by evaluating the effectiveness of training programmes and the sufficiency of career development opportunities as per their perception by the employees. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on 70 employees who were working in selected dairy plants. One-sample t-tests and Pearson correlation analysis were statistical tools used to test the hypotheses. The results have shown that employees have a very good perception towards skill development and career growth. The correlation between perceived skill development and career growth was however weak and statistically insignificant. The paper points out that there is a need to more closely align training programs with career progression policies that would help motivate employees, retain them, and make the organization more effective.

**Keyword:** Employee perception, skill development, career growth, training effectiveness, human resource development, dairy industry, Saurashtra-Kutch region.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The dairy industry is an important part of the rural economy of India as it provides employment, livelihood to farmers, and considerable agricultural and industrial development. Such dairy plants serve as both production and employment centers in other parts of the country like Saurashtra and Kutch which also have a high number of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled laborers. Within a more competitive and technologically oriented business world, the sustainability and productivity of dairy plants in the long-term is significantly reliant on the talents, flexibility, and inspiration of the employees. Based on this, career growth and development of skills have become important aspects of human resource management in the dairy industry.

Employee training and skill development programs like technical training, soft-skill training, safety training and managerial training help the employees to do their job more efficiently and change with the current dairy technologies of processing. At the same time, clear career developmental prospects such as promotions, role enrichment, leadership, and performance-based pays are important in raising employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention. The perception that employees have towards such initiatives affects their morale, productivity, as well as readiness to play a role in achieving organizational objectives in a significant manner.

Within the framework of the chosen dairy facilities in the Saurashtra and Kutch areas, employee perception gains specific significance because of the peculiarities of the region like the diversity of workforce and differences in the educational levels, the lack of access to modern training facilities, and the developing market needs. The perception that

employees have on the sufficiency, equity and efficiency of skill development program and career advancement can be useful information in enabling the management to refine human resource practices.

The research is based on the study of perceptions of employees with regard to skill development and career growth potential in the identified dairy plants within Saurashtra and Kutch. The research will examine the way employees appraise current training programs, learning opportunities, and career advancement channels to focus on strengths, gaps, and propose improvements. It is believed that the results of this research will help the dairy plant management to develop more encompassing, practical and people oriented human resource development programs which will eventually lead to efficiency and sustainability within the organizations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The analyzed literature will as a whole focus on the importance of practices related to career development in determine employees performance, commitment, loyalty, retention and overall career success in various sectors and countries. In both empirical and conceptual and review-based research, career development stands out as a strategic human resource process that links organizational objectives with personal ambitions of the employee. The main dimensions including training and development, mentoring, career advancement opportunities, promotion systems, career planning and career growth opportunities always show favorable relations with job performance, organizational commitment, loyalty of employees and retention.

In various empirical studies, it has been shown that structured career development opportunities have a profound positive effect on the performance and commitment of employees improving skills, motivation and clarifying career paths. The advantages of promotion and career growth are found on multiple occasions as the most potent predictors of the organizational commitment and loyalty, whereas training and mentoring serves as a key to the long-term employability. Research in manufacturing companies, financial institutions, e-commerce companies, and cooperatives industries indicate that, when employees feel that they are treated fairly, transparently, and they have a promising future, their efforts and desire to stay with the company will rise significantly.

There are also significant mediating and moderating mechanisms which are found in the literature. Job satisfaction contributes a crucial mediating effect to both compensation and career development opportunities and employee retention. The career growth opportunities serve as an important job resource in the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) model which alleviates the ill effects of job including turnover intention due to performance pressure. Although the HR performance attribution could also lead to job performance and turnover intention, the situation can be alleviated substantially in case of sufficient career growth opportunities. Also, the behaviour of employees, shared responsibility between employees and organizations and organizational culture also enhance the results of career success.

Conceptual and review studies build on this insight by incorporating career development in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), technology-enhanced learning and digital HR practices. These papers suggest that career development has ceased to be confined with promotions in current times, but is rather a continuous learning process, ethical accountability, inclusiveness, and employability in the digital world. In general, the literature has a lot of evidence to support the conclusion that career development systems that are integrated, well resource and strategic aligned are indispensable to keep the employees motivated, loyal, productive and competitive at the organizational level.

## RESEARCH GAP

Though there are some studies which have been conducted on the development of skills and career growth in manufacturing and service industry, there is scarcity of empirical research studies in the dairy industry in the context of the regional level of Saurashtra and Kutch. Available research tends to focus on organizational outputs, including productivity and profitability, whereas a relatively small portion of research pays attention to the perception and experience of employees. In addition to that, the regional specifics like the composition of the workforce, cooperative systems, and infrastructural restrictions are hardly discussed. This research fills in these gaps by offering primary, perception-centred skill development and career growth opportunity analysis in the chosen dairy plants of Saurashtra and Kutch..

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To determine whether employees perceive the existing skill development and training programs in selected dairy plants of Saurashtra and Kutch as significantly effective.

To determine whether employees perceive career growth and advancement opportunities in selected dairy plants of Saurashtra and Kutch as significantly adequate.

To examine whether employees' perception of skill development initiatives is significantly associated with their perception of career growth opportunities in selected dairy plants of Saurashtra and Kutch.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Descriptive and analytical research design

Nature of Study: Quantitative, survey-based primary research

Study Area: Selected dairy plants of Saurashtra and Kutch regions

Population: Employees working in selected dairy plants

Sample Size: 70 respondents

Sampling Technique: Convenient sampling method

Data Collection Method: Primary data through structured questionnaire

Measurement Scale: Five-point Likert scale

Statistical Tools Used: One-sample t-test and Pearson correlation

Software Used: SPSS

Hypothesis Testing: Skill development perception, career growth perception, and their association

Level of Significance: 5 percent (0.05)

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

$H_{01}$  (Null Hypothesis):

The mean Skill Development Perception Score of employees is not significantly higher than the neutral level

$H_{11}$  (Alternative Hypothesis):

The mean Skill Development Perception Score of employees is significantly higher than the neutral level

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mean Skill Development Perception Score	70	4.4429	.36814	.04400

One-Sample Test
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	Test Value = 3						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Interval of the Difference	Confidence	
					Lower	Upper	
Mean Skill Development Perception Score	32.791	69	.000	1.44286	1.3551	1.5306	

To assess how the employees perceived the efficacy of skill development and training programme used in the selected dairy plants within Saurashtra and Kutch, a one-sample t-test was used to compare the mean score with the neutral value of perception (3). The scores show that Skill Development Perception Score ( $M = 4.4429$ ,  $N = 70$ ,  $SD = 0.3681$ ) is very high, which means that employees completely agree on the effectiveness of these programmes. The test value is extremely important ( $t = 32.791$ ,  $df = 69$ ,  $p = 0.000$  less than 0.05) which proves that the mean mark is statistically greater than the level of neutrality. Also, the mean difference of 1.44286 and the 95% confidence interval (1.3551 to 1.5306) that is left all above zero give strong evidence that employees have a positive and significant perception of the skill development initiatives to be effective.

$H_{02}$  (Null Hypothesis):

The mean Career Growth Perception Score of employees is not significantly higher than the neutral level.

$H_{12}$  (Alternative Hypothesis):

The mean Career Growth Perception Score of employees is significantly higher than the neutral level.

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mean Career Growth Perception Score	70	4.3821	.39864	.04765

One-Sample Test							
	Test Value = 3						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Interval of the Difference	Confidence	
					Lower	Upper	
Mean Career Growth Perception Score	29.008	69	.000	1.38214	1.2871	1.4772	

One-sample t-test was done to determine how employees perceive the career growth and advancement opportunities in the dairy plants of your choice in Saurashtra and Kutch against the neutral benchmark value of 3. The scores reveal that the mean Career Growth Perception Score ( $M = 4.3821$ ,  $N = 70$ ,  $SD = 0.3986$ ) is high and demonstrates that the employees agree on the aspect of career growth opportunities being available to them. The test value is very significant ( $t = 29.008$ ,  $df = 69$ ,  $p = 0.000$  less than 0.05) and demonstrates that the mean value is statistically greater than the neutral level. Furthermore, the statistical evidence that the employees have a positive attitude to career growth and promotion opportunities in the chosen dairy plants is well supported by the mean difference of 1.38214 and the 95% confidence interval (1.2871 to 1.4772) that being above zero.

$H_{03}$  (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant association between employees' skill development perception and their career growth perception in selected dairy plants of Saurashtra and Kutch.

$H_{13}$  (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant association between employees' skill development perception and their career growth perception in selected dairy plants of Saurashtra and Kutch.

Correlations		Mean Skill Development Perception Score	Mean Career Growth Perception Score
Mean Skill Development Perception Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.713
	N	70	70
Mean Career Growth Perception Score	Pearson Correlation	.045	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.713	
	N	70	70

The Pearson correlation analysis was carried out in order to test the correlation between the Mean Skill Development Perception Score and the Mean Career Growth Perception Score. The findings indicate a positive correlation is very weak ( $r = 0.045$ ) which means that there is practically no linear correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, the value of the t-test is  $p = 0.713$ , and this value is larger than 0.05, which proves that the correlation is not significant. It implies that, in the current research, the employees that consider skill development Perception to be effective do not always think that career growth opportunities are superior (and vice versa). Therefore, the relationship between perceived skill development Perception and perceived career growth opportunities is not.

## CONCLUSION

The current research thoroughly analyzed the perception of employees towards the skill development programs, and career promotion opportunities in the chosen dairy facilities of Saurashtra and Kutch. The results obtained in the t-tests performed on a one-sample small sample have made it clear that employees have a very positive perception of both skills development and career growth practices adopted by their respective organizations. The average Skill Development Perception Score ( $M = 4.4429$ ) and Career Growth Perception Score ( $M = 4.3821$ ) were both significantly greater than the neutral benchmark of 3 and their t-values were significantly lower than 0.05. This establishes that workers greatly believe that the current training and development initiatives are efficient and that there is sufficient career development and promotion in the study dairy plants.

These findings indicate that dairy organizations in Saurashtra and Kutch have managed to achieve an organized training process and promotional channels that help to increase the level of employee satisfaction and trust that the organization supports them. These confidence intervals are also narrow, which enhances the soundness of these results, as they indicate an opinion that is always positive among the employees.

The perception analysis of skill development and career growth was however correlated and this gave an important insight. Though the mean scores of the two variables were high individually, the correlation between them was observed to be very weak and was not significant ( $r = 0.045$ ,  $p = 0.713$ ). It means that employees do not always see the skill development initiatives as the outcomes of career advancement. That is, though employees

value training programs and recognize career growth chances, they might not consider training as a critical element that can determine promotion or decision to advance.

All in all, the research comes to a conclusion that although dairy plants are successful in introducing training and career development systems on their own, there is a disconnect in the perception between the training and skills development factors and the career advancement. This gap can also be filled to enhance employee motivation, retention and long-term organizational performance.

### **Recommendations**

According to the findings, dairy plants need to clearly connect the skill development programs with the career progression policies to add more weight to the training relevance of employees. There should be a clear communication on the role of training outcomes in terms of promotions, increments and enhancement of roles. This linkage can be improved by introducing competency-based promotion systems, post-training appraisal pegged on promotion prospects and clear career maps. Also, the management should occasionally evaluate the expectation of the employees in terms of training and growth alignment. Enhancing the coordination of learning programs with professional growth will enhance motivation of the employees and their interest as well as commitment towards the company in the long term.

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