

Employment of Jordanians in the Garment Industry: Challenges and Prospects

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Raghda Butros
Baker Al-Hiyari

1. Executive summary

The garment industry in Jordan has expanded rapidly over the past fifteen years, yet the percentage of workers in the sector who are Jordanian stands at a meager 20 per cent despite the high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity among Jordanians with low educational attainment.

In this context, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) has been mandated by its key stakeholders - the government, employers' associations and workers' associations - to develop a strategy for increasing Jordanian employment in the garment industry to complement the government of Jordan's National Employment Strategy. BWJ has sponsored this qualitative study to aid the development of evidence-based policies by better understanding the barriers and obstacles to increased Jordanian employment in the sector.

The methodology employed by this study included in-depth interviews with factory management representatives, focus group meetings with workers at three garment factories and with unemployed workers in three main cities in Jordan. It should be noted that this research is exploratory in nature. While it provides useful insights to guide the design of policy interventions, it is not based on statistically representative samples of garment workers, unemployed individuals or garment factory managers.

Increasing the number of Jordanian workers in the garment industry requires improvements in both the ability to recruit and retain these workers. Improving recruitment is related to making both individual factories as well as the entire sector appear more attractive to unemployed persons by increasing the perceived status of occupations in these factories and this sector. Improving retention of Jordanian employees, on the other hand, is related to job satisfaction. Thus, this study has adopted an analytical framework drawn from the literature on occupational status and job satisfaction to organize the research findings into themes that can be developed into loci for intervention.

The overall impression gained from the focus group research was that factory workers are generally satisfied with their jobs. This is in stark contrast to the negative impression that most unemployed persons in the focus groups have about work conditions in this industry. However, it is also worth noting that despite the fact that they are generally satisfied with their jobs, almost every worker emphasized the need for improvement in work conditions.

With regard to occupational status, the findings of the research conducted suggests that work in garment factory is viewed as having very low social status, particularly for women. This is mostly related to: 1) the level of income earned by garment workers, 2) a common perception that employers in this sector do not respect workers' rights and the labour law and 3) the idea that women working in the factories have lax morals. It is worth noting that a key factor associated with job status in the international literature- level of education- was not mentioned by respondents in these focus groups/interviews. This suggests that the low social status of the occupation is not related to a perception that these workers are "uneducated" or "unskilled".

With regard to job satisfaction, the findings of the research conducted confirmed the expectation that wages are an extremely important determinant of job satisfaction. A more surprising finding was the fact the focus groups suggested that even marginal annual raises would improve worker morale significantly. Desired increases in pay are somewhat modest, with most workers specifying 200JD monthly take home pay as their desired salary. The desire to have access to health insurance was also emphasized repeatedly by workers, although management interviews suggest that employers believe this is prohibitively expensive.

Importantly, the attitude of Jordanian garment workers towards their workplace was found to vary greatly from one factory to another and is not necessarily related to wage levels. Contrary to what might be expected, workers who report the highest levels of job satisfaction are employed in a factory which pays lower wages than workers employed in the other factories visited. However, this factory had what workers perceive to be a positive working environment. Factors related to this positive working environment are: 1) positive relationships with supervisors, 2) open and clear communication with management and 3) a collegial working environment where workers feel that they are part of a “family” and partake in social activities organized by the factory.

Finally, the literature on both occupational status and job satisfaction suggests that jobs that are perceived as beneficial to society or meaningful are related to higher occupational status and job satisfaction respectively. This was confirmed by the results of the focus groups conducted in this study. However, it was also clear from these focus groups that no social value is placed on the outputs of the garment industry or its contribution to the Jordanian economy. While the workers themselves feel a sense of pride in producing items that are exported abroad, they do not see themselves as part of the bigger picture, or as valuable members of the Jordanian workforce or the Jordanian economy.

The key recommendations for improving the ability to recruit and retain Jordanian workers in this sector set out in this report are:

- The social status of employment in the garment industry should be raised through a mass media campaign which a) focuses on presenting a positive image of women garment workers in order to counteract stereotypes about “factory girls” being disreputable and having lax morals b) builds national pride around the “Made in Jordan” notion, c) counters the image that this is an exploitative sector in which workers’ rights are not respected or in which workers do not have full employment rights, d) dispels negative attitudes towards migrant workers and thus, working in factories with a high proportion of migrant workers.
- Factories should engage in outreach programmes with local communities that aim to communicate the following: a) there is limited mingling between genders in garment factories, b) garment factories respect the rights of workers and do not violate employment laws, c) factories do not tolerate disrespectful treatment of women by employees of or contractors associated with the factory (such as bus drivers). This is not only a key message for outreach programmes but also an issue which many factories need to address, as women workers expressed very

strong objections to the way in which bus drivers treat women garment workers in general. Importantly, the in-depth interviews with factory managers suggest that the key to successful outreach programmes is the recruitment of a charismatic employee to liaise with the local community. This should be a person who understands the social norms of the local community and is able to build good personal relationships with them. The involvement of senior factory management in outreach events is also important.

- The compensation and benefits received by workers in the industry should be improved by introducing salary increases and annual salary increments in garment factories, even if marginal, to improve morale. In addition, factories should consider the feasibility of access to health insurance.
- Factories should work to create a positive working environment characterized by a) respectful relationships between workers and their supervisors, b) open and clear lines of communication between workers and factory management and c) a collegial atmosphere where workers feel that they are part of a “family” and partake in social activities organized by the factory.
- Factories should work to identify Jordanian workers with the potential to become successful supervisors and managers in order to build a cadre of role models who have been promoted from within the factory. The presence of these role models will motivate Jordanian workers and improve retention.

2. Introduction and background

Although garment manufacturing has not historically been an important industry in Jordan, the industry has enjoyed enormous growth since 1996 when garments manufactured in Jordan were first granted preferential duty free and quota free access to the United States, first under the terms of the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) agreement and more recently under Jordan's Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States, which was approved in 2001.

The economic profile of Jordan is atypical of countries with large garment industries. The garment industry typically has its biggest economic impact in developing countries transitioning from an agrarian society to low-level manufacturing. In such countries, the sector has exhibited a wage premium for workers lacking post-secondary education (e.g. Neak and Robertson, 2009). The Jordanian economy, on the other hand, has long been reliant on public sector employment and the service sector. Thus, garment industry jobs are less likely to exhibit a wage premium in relation to comparator jobs for workers lacking post-secondary education. However, since a large proportion of the unemployed in Jordan have less than secondary education, the expected employment effect of the sector would more likely be the lowering of unemployment levels. It is also possible that the sector could lead to an increase female labour force participation in Jordan, given the extremely low rates of economic activity among women in the country.

However, the expansion of the garment industry in Jordan has failed to lower the unemployment rate, with the percentage of workers in the sector who are Jordanian standing at a meager 20 per cent, according to statistics collected by BWJ.

In this context, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) has been mandated by its key stakeholders - the government, employers' associations and workers' associations - to develop a strategy for increasing Jordanian employment in the garment industry to complement the government of Jordan's National Employment Strategy. BWJ has sponsored this qualitative study to aid the development of evidence-based policies by better understanding the barriers and obstacles to increased Jordanian employment in the sector. More specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) Why did Jordanians currently working in the apparel industry decide to join this sector, and what are the factors that encouraged them to stay?
- 2) What are the obstacles, including attitudes and social norms, which prevent more Jordanians, particularly rural women, from working in the apparel sector?
- 3) What good practices are found in the factories that have been successful in attracting and employing Jordanians?
- 4) What government policies tend to either discourage or encourage more Jordanians to enroll in this sector?

3. Methodology

A qualitative methodology was employed in this study which involved the conducting of focus groups and in-depth interviews with key informants. These data collection methods were chosen as they are traditionally utilized in the social sciences to gain in-depth understanding of behaviors and mechanisms of decision-making and closer insights into cultural practices, motivations and emotions.

The discussion guides used for the focus groups and interviews are available in Appendix 1 of this report.

3.1 Focus groups

The focus group meetings employed a combination of traditional and less-traditional approaches to investigate the subject at hand, to better understand the attitudes and barriers (real and imagined) to Jordanian employment in the garment sector, and to discover the measures which could possibly encourage increased employment in this sector based on the findings.

The choice of focus group techniques was dictated by the varying circumstances in different locations. Feedback, learning and impressions of earlier meetings influenced the shape, style and focus of the rest of the meetings. Focus groups were conducted with one moderator/facilitator engaging the group assisted by another facilitator/observer gauging the reactions and response of the participants.

Each of the six focus groups involved 10-14 individuals, with females constituting 70% of the total sample in order to correspond with and reflect the reality of female participation in the work force at the garment factories. The focus group meetings were divided into two parts covering the following targeted constituencies relevant to this study:

Focus groups with factory workers

In coordination with BWJ, three garment factories were selected to conduct focus group meetings from different parts of Jordan in areas where there are clusters of garment factories. The proportion of Jordanian workers differed significantly between the three factories at 72%, 13% and 8% of the total workforce.

The focus groups were conducted in the middle of the workday so that workers' impressions of their work were fresh in their minds. At times, groups were divided into two and then members of the groups rotated among the two different groups after every two questions.

Three focus group meetings were conducted at the selected factories between the 22nd and 28th November 2011. At each factory, 10-14 workers were selected in coordination with the factory quality assurance officers and/or HR officers. Workers were selected to reflect a diversity of experiences, backgrounds and positions within the factory to ensure richness, diversity and differences in opinion and perspective. Each focus group

ran for 90 minutes. The focus groups were run in a free, convivial and open manner without interference from the factory administrations. At one of the factories the human resource officer was present, while at the others, the workers were unsupervised.

Focus groups with unemployed individuals

The researchers organised the focus group meetings with the unemployed and unskilled persons in close coordination with its local partners in the chosen localities, building on extensive experience in community engagement and outreach. The participants in the focus group were jointly selected with the local partners to provide the widest possible diversity and representation.

These discussions utilized a different approach with twelve people divided into two groups of six people each with a different facilitator/ moderator to give everyone the time and opportunity to express their ideas and opinions. The questions were designed to grasp the attitudes, perceptions, bias (if any) and knowledge of the subject at the community level. Discussions were structured but friendly and highly engaging with people expressing their opinions freely and holding active discussions amongst each other and with the facilitators.

All focus group meetings with unemployed persons took place in their localities in areas near industrial zones that have a high concentration of garment factories (Irbid, Zarqa and Amman). They were conducted at community centers or homes in their neighborhoods in order to reflect as much as possible the environment at which work and life decisions are taken. In Irbid, the focus group was run at the Family Protection Center, in Zarqa it was run at the Princess Salma Community Center and in Amman it was hosted by the local community in Jabal Qala'a.

Since the majority of the workers in the garment sector in Jordan are women, the groups were composed to reflect this. Three focus group meetings were conducted between 22nd and 30th November 2011. Each focus group contained 10-14 unemployed young people and ran for 120 minutes.

3.2 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted during the research period with three categories of people.

The first batch of interviews were conducted with officials from BWJ to familiarize the researchers with the history, background and composition of the actors targeted for this report.

The second batch of interviews was conducted with factory management representatives at the early stages of the study before organizing the focus group meetings with workers and the unemployed persons. The rationale for this is twofold:

1. To understand and examine the perspective of factory management with regard to the situation of employment in their factories including the challenges and obstacles they face, discussing with them the different experiences they had with

the workers, especially Jordanian workers, and recording their input in this regards.

2. To incorporate feedback and input into the design, development and implementation of the focus groups in order to maximize the validity and relevance of the outcomes.

The third batch of in-depth interviews was with local experts, carefully selected for their knowledge and experience in areas related to the research and study conducted for this report. In these interviews, the results and outcomes of the research conducted were shared and discussed with the experts, and their feedback and input was solicited in relation to the challenges facing the sector, and the practical recommendations that could contribute to solving some of the problems and concerns raised in the course of the study.

BWJ officials

Early interviews were conducted with officials from BWJ in order to understand the status of Jordanian workers in garment factories and to get a better understanding of the industry in general and the different active stakeholders and their contributions to the design of the process as a whole. The initial interviews were complemented by follow-up meetings and discussions on a regular basis. Duration of these meetings ranged from 60-120 minutes. At no stage in this report was this input used to formulate any independent findings.

Factory management

In order to receive input, feedback and direct information from employers about Jordanian employment in the garment sector, and the challenges related to it, in-depth interviews were conducted in July and August 2011 with management representatives from four different factories.

The factories whose management was interviewed, were selected in coordination with BWJ to provide adequate sampling for the study, representing different geographical locations covering Amman, Dulayl and a couple of satellite factories - including a branch factory. Each interview lasted from 90-120 minutes.

Expert interviews

In-depth interviews with independent experts were designed to harvest feedback and input from individuals with expertise and knowledge in economics, labor and workforce issues and communications. The experts were selected in consultation with BWJ.

The five main interviews were conducted after the preliminary findings of meetings with all the industry stakeholders were prepared. The approach used for the interviews was based on sharing the preliminary findings and engaging with the experts in a discussion on them. The duration of the interviews ranged from 120- 150 minutes and were conducted with:

- Dr. Omar Razzaz (economist)
- Dr. Yusuf Mansur (economist)
- Mr. Nadim Asa'd (former garment factory manager)
- Ms. Thoraya El-Rayyes (economist, labour specialist)
- Ms. Nadine Toukan (communications specialist)

4. Analytical framework

In order to increase the number of Jordanian workers in the garment sector, factories must be able to improve their ability to both recruit and retain these workers. Improving recruitment is related to making both individual factories and the entire sector appear more attractive to unemployed persons by increasing the perceived status of occupations in these factories and in this sector. Improving retention of Jordanian employees, on the other hand, is related to job satisfaction. Thus, this study employs an analytical framework drawn from the literature on **occupational status** and **job satisfaction** to organize the research findings into themes that can be developed into loci for intervention.

Occupational status

Over the years, an extensive body of academic literature on occupational prestige has studied the factors which affect societal perceptions of different occupations.

The most widely-cited tool to measure occupational prestige is Treiman's International Occupational Prestige Scale which asserts that occupational status is largely determined by two factors: 1) the educational level of workers in this occupation 2) the income level of workers in this occupation. Studies have found that these two factors account for most of the variance in scores of occupational prestige (Bergman & Joye, 2001). Treiman's scale purports to be independent of locality and invariant to national, social, and cultural settings. This claim is supported by a meta-analysis which found that prestige ratings of selected occupations across 85 studies within 60 societies correlate at $r=.79$ ($s=.14$) (Treiman, 1977). Treiman argues that occupational prestige scores are homogeneous across all modern complex societies because of the spread and hegemony of Western values, especially relating to occupational prestige.

However, research on occupational prestige in specific cultures has also found other factors that affect societal perceptions of different occupations (e.g. Buzea & Scarneci, 2011; Haller et al, 1972; Lin & Xie, 1988; Zhou, 2005). Factors which have been found to lead to occupations being viewed favorably by society include those characterized by:

- Authority over subordinates
- Position in social hierarchy/ proximity to authority
- Freedom to have physical mobility
- Low intensity of manual labour
- A salient scientific and/or technical nature
- Providing value to society
- A clean and healthy working environment

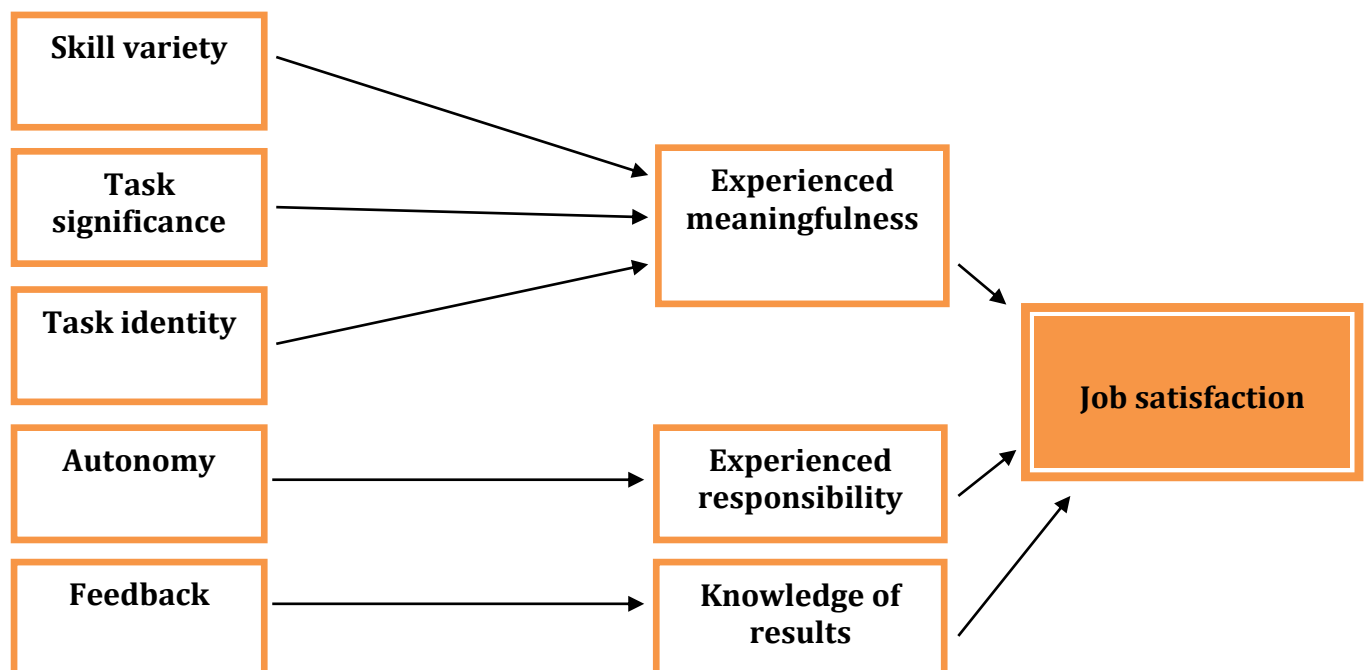
These studies have shown that rankings of occupational prestige do differ from one society to another in accordance with social norms and differences in political economy. Thus, this paper will not only draw on Treiman's factors but also on the abovementioned factors in order to organize the findings of the focus groups and interviews into themes supported by the focus group/interview data. The idea is to develop these themes into different areas of intervention designed to improve the perceived status of garment workers.

It is also important to note that several studies have found that holding the same occupation may have different implications for a persons' social position depending on their gender (Bergman & Joye, 2001). This study will also explore whether such a gender dimension exists for Jordanian garment workers.

Job satisfaction

Firstly, it is important to note that this study found that the attitude of Jordanian garment workers towards their workplace varies greatly from one factory to another and is not entirely related to wage levels. Contrary to what might be expected, workers who reported the highest levels of job satisfaction were employed in a factory which pays lower wages than workers employed in the other factories visited. The reason behind the high levels of job satisfaction in that factory was what workers perceived to be a positive working environment. This suggests it is important to look beyond wages and benefits, to develop a more holistic approach towards improving job satisfaction (and thus, retention) of Jordanian workers in garment factories.

Hackman & Oldham's Job Characteristics Model (1976) is the most widely used framework to study how particular job characteristics impact on job satisfaction. A meta-analysis of studies that assess the framework of the model provides support for the validity of this model (Fried & Ferris, 1987). The model states that there are five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) which impact three critical psychological states (experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results), which in turn influence job satisfaction.



This model has been augmented by Taylor's (1979) influential research on the essential components of quality of working life which he has identified as wages, hours and

working conditions. The importance of these components has to quality of working life has been validated by numerous subsequent studies (e.g. Mirvis & Lawler, 1984; Robins, 1989). Moreover, superior-subordinate communication has also been found to play an important role in determining job satisfaction in the workplace. In particular, research suggests that both verbal and non-verbal communication behavior is crucial to the superior-subordinate relationship (Teven, 2010).

This paper will develop actionable recommendations for intervention by relating the findings of the focus groups and interviews to Hackman & Oldham's five factors, Taylor's three essential components of quality of working life and superior-subordinate communication.

5. Key findings

This section presents an overview of the findings from the workers' focus groups, unemployed individuals' focus groups and the in-depth interviews with factory management.

Findings from in-depth interviews with experts were used to develop the recommendations at the end of the report and will not, for the purposes of this report, be detailed independently. Moreover, findings from the different categories of respondents (workers, unemployed individuals, managers) have been merged and are presented thematically in this report. In-depth findings for each category of respondent is available in Appendix 2.

It should be noted that this research is exploratory in nature. While it provides useful insights to guide the design of policy interventions, it is not based on statistically representative samples of garment workers, unemployed individuals or garment factory managers.

The overall impression gained from the focus group research was that factory workers are generally satisfied with their jobs. This is in stark contrast to the negative impression that most unemployed persons in the focus groups have about work conditions in this industry. However, it is also worth noting that despite the fact that they are generally satisfied with their jobs, almost every worker emphasized the need for improvement in work conditions.

Job status

Determinant of job status	Related findings
Income	Both workers in the focus groups and unemployed persons expressed the opinion that salaries in the sector are not attractive. Among the unemployed persons, this sentiment was repeated often- the salary was considered too low particularly because the job was perceived as tiring and potentially harmful to one's health.
Position in social hierarchy/ proximity to authority	- Several participants in the unemployed persons' focus groups noted that that they perceive garment workers as people whose employment rights are abused by employers who do not adhere to the country's labor law. This perception that garment factories do not abide by the law is also implied by the fact that several unemployed persons said that they would consider working in a garment factory if it was government owned, even with the exact same conditions and benefits prevalent in privately owned factories. - Both workers in the focus groups and unemployed persons pointed to an important gender dimension to the social status of garment workers, whereby women in the factories are considered to have lax morals because they work in a mixed-gender environment and may

Determinant of job status	Related findings
	come home after dark in the winter. This was considered to impact negatively on their ability to find a husband. This perception of women garment workers is consolidated by behaviors of foreign workers who have been seen, and are perceived as, engaging in mixed gender activities outside the factories. When asked how this mingling differs from a government job, the answer was related to the status of a government job outweighing the disadvantages and to the “type” or “quality” of people who work at factories. Such taboos are not faced by men garment workers. • Unemployed women from the focus group held in Amman were the only ones who did not consider working in the factory to be a real taboo or for whom there were no connotations to the term “factory girls.” • A recurring finding was that many women garment workers in the focus groups were distraught by the fact that bus drivers (contracted by the factories) treat them with disrespect. • Several workers in the focus groups pointed to the fact that, despite initial family opposition to their employment, they gained respect and voice in the household when they started to contribute to family income.
Clean, healthy working environment	• Several participants in the unemployed persons' focus groups expressed concerns about working with “foreigners”, referring to rumors that they carry diseases that are “alien” to Jordan.
Intensity of manual labour	• Several participants in the unemployed persons' focus groups noted that that they perceived factory work as an “exhausting” occupation.
Providing value to society	• A number of women in the unemployed persons' focus groups that they would like a job that provides a social benefit. However, it was clear that both the worker and unemployed groups did not perceive the garment industry as having any social value.

The findings of the research conducted suggests that work in garment factory is viewed as having very low social status, particularly for women. This is mostly related to the level of income earned by garment workers, the perception that employers in this sector do not respect workers' rights and the idea that women working in the factories have lax morals.

It is worth noting that a key factor associated with job status in the international literature- level of education- was not mentioned by respondents in these focus groups/interviews. This suggests that the low social status of the occupation is not related to a perception that these workers are “uneducated” or “unskilled”.

Job satisfaction

Note: this section only refers to results from the garment worker focus groups.

Determinant of job satisfaction	Related findings
Wages and benefits	• Participants in the focus groups expressed their dissatisfaction at the lack of annual salary increases in garment factories, even for those who have worked in the factories for many years. The discussions suggested that even marginal annual increments would improve worker morale significantly. • Desired increases in pay are somewhat modest, with most workers specifying 200JD monthly take home pay as their desired salary. • The desire to have access to health insurance was emphasized repeatedly by workers, although management interviews suggest that employers believe this is prohibitively expensive.
Working conditions	• The need for effective transportation solutions to and from work was emphasized by many workers. • Improvements to the physical work environment were perceived as important, especially suction fans to reduce dust and more reliable machines.
Task significance	• This is related to being able to identify the task as contributing to something wider, to society or a group over and beyond the self. It was clear from the focus groups that no social value is placed on the outputs of this industry or its contribution to the Jordanian economy. While the workers themselves feel a sense of pride in producing items that are exported abroad, they do not see themselves as part of the bigger picture, or as valuable members of the Jordanian workforce or the Jordanian economy. When asked whether they would buy Jordanian-made clothes themselves, they said they prefer imported clothes because of their better quality and considered the clothes they make to be “foreign.”
Task identity	• Workers described a good day as one in which “the hall meets or exceeds production targets.”
Autonomy	• Workers expressed the desire for a more flexible leave system that would give them more autonomy to fulfill social

Determinant of job satisfaction	Related findings
	and family obligations although many conceded that this would be difficult to implement considering the realities of the garment industry. Workers in one factory where there were clear examples of people who have been promoted several times from within the factory felt this was something they could aspire to. In contrast, workers from other factories expressed frustration that the job had no future or potential for growth.
Superior-subordinate communication	- Workers repeatedly expressed the fact that they appreciate supervisors who provide verbal encouragement to workers. In contrast, workers in one factory voiced their dissatisfaction with working in a tense environment where there is shouting or ill treatment, even though this treatment was overwhelmingly directed against foreign workers and not against them. - Workers in one factory asserted that the open and clear line of communication with management in their factory was an important factor in creating a high level of job satisfaction in their factory.

Not all of the determinants of job satisfaction emphasized in the literature on this topic (as set out in section 4 of this report) were brought up by workers in the focus groups. The workers did not mention factors related to skill variety or the importance of obtaining constructive feedback from managers, which is not surprising as these factors are more relevant to complex jobs that require a higher level of skill, rather than the basic tasks required of garment workers in these factories. In addition, the number of hours worked was not mentioned as a major advantage or cause for complaint by the workers.

Outside the framework of well-established determinants of job satisfaction, there were also some findings which seem more specific to the context of the Jordanian garment industry and Jordanian culture:

- Jordanian garment workers are more comfortable working in factories with a higher proportion of Jordanians overall.
- Jordanian garment workers placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of a collegial working environment. This may be related to the collectivist nature of Jordanian society which places high value on the quality of social and familial relations. In the factory with high levels of job satisfaction, workers expressed that they are happy at work because they feel that they are part of a “family”. They showed great appreciation for celebrations and activities for holidays and other occasions where

workers get together and are offered refreshments by the factory. In all factories visited, workers emphasized that a comfortable relationship between Jordanians and non-Jordanians in the factory is also important to the quality of their work life.

In their words

Jordanian garment workers on their experiences working in the industry

On societal perceptions of the industry

"In the past, there were some rumors of bad reputation about the environment inside garment factories, maybe because they hire migrant workers who are new to our society and have different cultures than ours, so we were hesitant to work in them."

On family pressures

"My mother has not visited me or spoken to me since I accepted this job three years ago. She says it brings shame to the family and that I should be doing a respectable job instead. My sisters have university degrees, but neither of them work. Sitting at home is better, as far as my mother is concerned, than working in a factory."

"When I first started working here, my family did not like the idea of having a girl working outside her home and dealing with strangers alone. But now they are used to the idea."

On the working environment

"It's very important to us to feel that we are part of a family where there is care and respect, it makes us work better and more happily."

"We are here as a big family. Sometimes we have good times and have fun, sometimes we have problems and troubles. But everything passes, the important thing is to maintain respect in the workplace... Our supervisors treat us well but unfortunately it is not the same for foreign workers."

6. Recommendations

The recommendations listed below consist of direct and immediate measures that could improve the situation in garment factories and contribute to the encouragement of unemployed and unskilled people from different age groups to seek employment in this industry.

Raising the social status of employment in the garment industry

There is clearly a need to improve the image of employment in this sector. A *mass media campaign* using television, radio and print could play an important role in this regard. The research carried out by this study suggests that such a campaign should:

- Focus on presenting a positive image of women garment workers in order to counteract stereotypes about "factory girls" being disreputable and having lax morals. Given the importance of family values in Jordanian society, it is important to drive the message that these women's wages provide their families with a better life. This aspect of the campaign is particularly important outside Amman where negative stereotypes about women garment workers are more prevalent.
- Build national pride around the "Made in Jordan" notion, highlighting the quality of these products, their high value in the countries that import them and the contribution of this sector to the Jordanian economy.
- Counter the image that this is an exploitative sector in which workers' rights are not respected or in which workers do not have full employment rights.
- Dispel negative attitudes towards migrant workers and thus, working in factories with a high proportion of migrant workers. In particular, it is important to dispel myths about migrant workers carrying diseases that are "alien" to Jordan.

Factories should engage in outreach programmes with local communities that aim to communicate the following:

- There is limited mingling between genders in garment factories.
- Garment factories respect the rights of workers and do not violate employment laws.
- Factories do not tolerate disrespectful treatment of women by employees of or contractors associated with the factory (such as bus drivers). This is not only a key message for outreach programmes but also an issue which many factories need to address, as women workers expressed very strong objections to the way in which bus drivers treat women garment workers in general.

Importantly, the in-depth interviews with factory managers suggest that the key to successful outreach programmes is the recruitment of a charismatic employee to liaise with the local community. This should be a person who understands the social norms of the local community and is able to build good personal relationships with them. The involvement of senior factory management in outreach events is also important.

Improving retention through increased job satisfaction

Factory managers interviewed for this study, repeatedly voiced dissatisfaction with the high levels of turnover among Jordanian garment workers. This suggests that there is a clear need to increase the level of job satisfaction among these workers. Data collected from the focus groups suggests that this can be done by:

- Improving the compensation and benefits packages received by workers in the industry. The findings of this research suggests that even small salary increases and the introduction of marginal annual increments would significantly improve morale. In addition, factories should consider the feasibility of providing access to health insurance.
- Improving transportation to and from the industrial zones. It may be possible to achieve this without incurring extra costs to factories if the transportation provided to workers is pooled at the level of the industrial zone (i.e. a system of buses shared by the entire zone). This would eliminate the extra costs associated with factories' use of small vehicles for transporting Jordanian workers and/or vehicles running at a low passenger load factor. A study should be carried out to determine the feasibility of such a scheme and pilot it in one of the industrial zones.
- Improving the physical work environment, especially increasing the number suction fans to reduce dust and procuring more reliable machines.
- Continually fostering a sense of pride among employees in their role in an industry that creates high-quality products and is an important contributor to the Jordanian economy.
- Ensuring positive and healthy relations between workers and their supervisors. This involves working to ensure that supervisors praise workers' achievements and verbally encourage them and working to prevent ill treatment, even if directed against foreign workers. Better Work's highly-regarded Supervisory Skills Training programme could play an important role in creating this kind of working environment at factories. A comprehensive academic study conducted jointly by the International Finance Corporation and Harvard University's ideas42 research center has provided evidence that this training programme both improves workers' perceptions of relationships with their supervisors and leads to improvements in overall firm productivity (IFC, 2009).
- Creating open and clear lines of communication between workers and factory management.
- Working to identify Jordanian workers with the potential to become successful supervisors and managers in order to build a cadre of role models who have been promoted from within the factory. The presence of these role models will motivate Jordanian workers and improve retention.

7. Conclusions

There is real potential and a need for developing the garment industry in Jordan as a viable, sustainable and potentially creative economic activity that is essential for boosting exports and providing short and long-term jobs for Jordanians.

While the government seems to realize and acknowledge this fact, it has yet to establish all the required physical and legal infrastructure needed. It has also not fully capitalized, over the years, on the opportunities presented by this industry and has not developed policies and practices on the ground that would enhance and develop local participation and employment in this sector. As things stand, Jordan acts as a host and transit zone for this industry with lost opportunities for Jordanian employment and investments. Realizing this challenges and capturing this lost opportunity will further develop the sector and raise its value within the Jordanian economy, and further enhance Jordan's workforce. No effort should be spared to make this a reality.

In addition to the recommendations outlined in this report that address and respond to the problems and barriers of employment, it would be advisable for the government to seriously consider upgrading this particular industry and to establish a joint commission that includes all stakeholders to develop a long term strategy to transform this sector into one of the main productive and creative economic activities in the country. Moving up the value-chain would help increase both direct and indirect Jordanian employment related to this industry through the development of high added-value backward linkages and feeder industries.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Discussion guides used in interviews/focus groups

A. Factory management in-depth interview discussion guide

1. How do you recruit Jordanian workers?
2. What aspects of the workplace do you think deter Jordanians from working here?
3. What aspects might attract them?
4. What kind of jobs do Jordanians have in the factory?
5. Are there jobs that you feel it is difficult to find Jordanian workers for? Why? What can you do about this?
6. What do you think of the skill level of Jordanians?
7. How can it be improved?
8. What obstacles have you faced in trying train Jordanians?
9. What are the advantages of hiring migrant workers over Jordanians? What are the advantages of hiring Jordanians?
10. What are the main challenges you face with Jordanian workers?
11. What is the profile of Jordanian workers? (Probe for impressions about gender, marital status, age)
12. How far do the Jordanian workers live from your factory? What kind of transportation provisions do you have for Jordanian workers?
13. Do you need seasonal/temporary workers? Have you tried to recruit Jordanians for this role? Have you been successful in such recruitment? Why/why not?
14. What do you think of the possibility of implementing a two-shift model in Jordan? What would be the obstacles? What would be the advantages?
15. What do you think Jordanians demand/want in order to work at your factory?
16. How long do Jordanian workers stay in your factory? (If turnover is high, probe for reasons)
17. What do you (think you can) do to motivate them to stay longer?
18. What can the government do to make it easier for you to hire Jordanians? Do government subsidies motivate you or are they not really an incentive?
19. To what extent do strikes impact your commitments to buyers? Do you think Jordanians and migrant workers have different attitudes towards striking?
20. Do you face problems related to conflict between Jordanian and migrant workers?

B. Factory worker focus group discussion guide

Engagement Questions

1. Give us a picture of what a typical day looks like in the factory.

2. Describe a good day at work.

Exploration Questions

1. Tell us what goes on when something goes wrong at work.
2. Describe to us your family's reaction when you started this job.
3. Describe your reaction if your son/daughter wanted to do your job.
4. If I were not doing this job, I would be...

Exit Questions

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when I say "your shift is over"?
2. If you could do one thing to improve your work, what would it be?

C. Unemployed individuals focus group discussion guide

Engagement Questions

1. What comes to your mind if I say: "you have a job at a garment factory"?
2. Describe a day in the life of a garment factory worker.

Exploration Questions

1. Name all the things that would discourage you from working in a garment factory.
2. What do you expect the reaction of your family to be if you get a job at a garment factory?

Exit Questions

5. If you could do any job in the world, what would it be?
6. Describe what you imagine a good workday would look like.

Appendix 2: Detailed research findings

A. Worker focus group notes

There is a clear discrepancy between the level job satisfaction in different factories. Interestingly, the workers in the factory with the lowest salaries had the highest job satisfaction.

Factors that led to a more positive outlook:

- A collegial working environment, where several workers expressed that they feel that they are part of a “family”. For example, a worker at Al-Hassan Industrial Estate said: "It's very important to us to feel that we are part of a family where there is care and respect it makes us work better and more happily. "Workers in other factories also reiterated this sentiment.
- A larger number of Jordanian workers overall.
- Monthly monetary incentives connected with performance and overtime.
- Celebrations and activities for holidays and other occasions where the workers get together and are offered refreshments by the factory.
- A comfortable relationship between Jordanians and non-Jordanians.
- Clear examples of people who have been promoted several times from within the factory, and perception that this could also happen for other workers. At both Al-Hassan Industrial Estate and a Tajamouat, the workers expressed desire to have good working relationship with foreign workers, which could be accomplished if the language barrier is broken.
- Annual salary increases, even if marginal.
- A sense of shared accomplishment. With good day being described as one where “the hall meets or exceeds production.”
- Verbal encouragement by supervisors.
- Transportation solutions.
- An open and clear line of communication with management.

Factors that lend themselves to a decreased sense of satisfaction:

- Salaries are fixed with no overtime for Jordanians, no incentives, no bonuses and no annual salary increases except those proscribed by government. One woman has worked a one factory for eight years and has never had an increase, other than that prescribed by the government.
- Nothing to break the routine and allow people to mingle-.no celebrations, no activities. Several workers at all three factories expressed the need for activities that break the daily routine. At Al-Hassan Industrial Estate, the factory organized several activities such as lunches and celebrations, which made workers feel appreciated. One worker said:"We love it, when we all have lunch together, it breaks the routine and allows us to mingle with each other. "In other factories were such activities do not take place, a sentiment was repeated that amounts to: "We wish there were some activities where we all could come together and celebrate an achievement or an occasion, it would make a big difference. "A male worker in Dulayl reminisced about his time in another factory where there were celebrations taking place on a regular basis. He said: “I still take time off to attend the New Years’ Eve party at my old factory, it’s a lot of fun.”

- A very small percentage of Jordanian workers.
- No notion of possibility to grow and develop within the factory. No examples of people who have been promoted or changed jobs.
- Negative treatment by bus drivers contracted by the factories was cited more than once as an important factor in the degree of satisfaction for women workers.
- A tense environment where there is shouting or ill-treatment, even if directed against foreign workers, which seems to be the case most of the time.

Factors that would lead to an overall improvement in the quality of work and desirability of the job include:

- An increase in salaries with total of 200JD take home pay emerging as the desired salary for most.
- Monetary and non-monetary incentives for individual workers linked to performance and commitment.
- Childcare facilities that are of an acceptable standard.
- A clearer job development path.
- Group incentives to encourage better cooperation.
- Participation through representative councils for workers.
- More flexibility with vacation time and sick leave.
- Verbal encouragement and better treatment by supervisors.
- Activities such as discussion sessions, presentations or IT training.
- Introduction of bonus schemes for committed workers who work regularly everyday.
- Improvement in the work environment, such as suction fans to reduce dust and more reliable machines.
- Health insurance.

Societal response and impact on norms:

- A general resistance to this type of work.
- Brothers of women more disagreeable than anyone else.
- Fathers generally supportive of decision and stand up to uncles and brothers.
- Worries about coming home late, especially in the winter.
- Concerns about working with “foreigners”, rumors that they carry certain diseases that are alien to Jordan.
- Concerns that women will not be marriageable.
- Social taboo around the concept of “factory girls” with regards to intermingling of sexes and low social status of the work. In all the focus groups that were conducted, the issue of social taboo related to work in the factories was prominent. There was an emphasis on the use of the term “factory girls” or “banat masane” by people in their communities, which was considered a derogatory terms by all groups except the unemployed workers in Amman, for whom it had no significance. One story that illustrated this issue most poignantly was when one of the women workers in Dulayl began to cry and said: “My mother has not visited me or spoken to me since I accepted this job three years ago. She says it brings shame to the family and that I should be doing a respectable job instead. My sisters have university degrees, but neither of them

works. Sitting at home is better as far as my mother is concerned, than working in a factory."

- Low salaries an obstacle to approving of the work.
- Once a woman works for some time, most concerns are alleviated, though some family members continue to resist.
- Female friends of the women often jealous of the fact that they are able to work.
- Once a woman starts bringing home money, she gains more respect and a voice.
- Some women give part of their salaries to their family, while others give the entire amount and are then given an allowance.
- Men who work at factories do not face taboo, but would rather work in government, the army or have their own small business.

B. Unemployed persons' focus group notes

Direct findings:

- Factory jobs are not considered particularly suitable for women and are not considered preferable for men.
- There is clear social taboo related to women working in factories, and particularly to industrial estates. This is related to the perception that the factories are an environment where men and women freely intermingle and to a reputation of loose moral standards among workers. This perception is consolidated by behaviors of foreign workers who have been seen, and are perceived as, engaging in mixed-gender activities outside the factories. When asked how the mingling differs from a government job, the answer was related to the status of a government job outweighing the disadvantages and to the "type" or "quality" of people who work at factories.
- Salaries are too low to make the job viable or attractive, except in cases where no other option is available. With the unemployed group participants, the issue of low salaries paid to factory workers was repeated often.
- Participants felt that the pay made the job unviable unless no other option existed and someone was forced to do the job in dire financial circumstances. This sentiment was repeated several times: "The salary is too low, especially because the work is tiring and can negatively impact your health."
- The work itself is repetitive and exhausting.
- Factories abuse workers' rights and do not adhere to the country's labor law, but rather take advantage of every loophole possible.
- There is no possibility for promotion or self-betterment.
- Working with foreigners is not desirable.
- Government jobs are still most preferable, to an extent that if factories were government owned, even with the exact same conditions and benefits, they would be more likely to consider a job there.

Additional potentially useful findings include:

- The women from Amman were the only ones who did not consider working in the factory to be taboo or for whom there were no connotations to the term "factory girls."
- A surprisingly high number of women said their ideal place of work would be a hospital, though the immediate reasons are not clear.

- Brothers seem to be the number one factor in preventing women, and some men, from working in factories.
- A group of women from one community going to the factory exponentially improves chances for it to become socially acceptable. In Amman, the group of unemployed women almost unanimously agreed that if a group of them were to go together to the factory for a job, they would feel more comfortable and willing to go and their families would be more supportive. One woman said: "No doubt, if we all go together, or a group of us, I would be much happier to go, and my husband would have less of a problem." The other women, with the exception of two, agreed with this statement.
- Younger people, especially males, seem to be particularly well informed about the labor law and its applications.
- A considerable number of the women would like to do work that has some sort of social benefit –such as nursing, teaching, child-care, social work etc.
- Several women expressed an interest in working as beauticians, but this was considered to be unacceptable for the most part to their families, due to longer work hours, low pay and the negative reputation associated with hair salons.

C. Management interview notes

Management interview 1- Factory in Dulayl

1. How do you recruit Jordanian workers?
 - When first opened, advertised in newspapers, gave out pamphlets and made banners etc. Met with the Labor Office and vocational institute (VTC), but realized that people were not interested.
 - Coordinate meetings with village elders in different areas. HR manager and HR team member attend (one is Pakistani, the other Jordanian) and take 'success stories' (Jordanian workers who have been promoted and talk about their experience in the factory) from their factory to persuade villagers to work in the factory.
 - Recruiting through VTC is ineffective and is a waste of time and money. This is because trainees at VTC join to get the salary and are not necessarily interested in pursuing it as a career. Also the VTC doesn't teach discipline/work ethic and other essential soft skills workers need to participate effectively in the workplace. Workers that come through the VTC are generally not productive and do not stay in the factory for long.
2. What aspects of the workplace do you think deter Jordanians from working here? What aspects might attract them?
 - The mixing of genders deters many Jordanians from working here.
 - There's an average of 1 hr of commute for Jordanian workers, which is perceived by management as a deterrent.
 - Its considered a woman's job by society so men need to be persuaded to work in the factories.
 - Production bonuses might attract local workers as they get more salary for less hours.

3. What kind of jobs do Jordanians have in the factory?
 - Most are helpers; majority of Jordanians are checkers; 70% of cutting are Jordanian.
 - Some are supervisors though, most of the HR department is Jordanian (only 1 foreigner).
4. What do you think of the skill level of Jordanians?
 - It is poor, whether hiring them for management or worker jobs.
 - The skill level is even worse when Jordanians come from the VTC as they lack essential soft skills (see question 1).
 - It takes a long time to train workers starting from a helper (no skills) that person needs at least 4 months training to become proper helping hand in production. To become a machine operator need 6 months -2 years to become a proper contributor (become an operator after 6 months but need time to develop speed).
5. What are the advantages of hiring migrant workers over Jordanians? What are the advantages of hiring Jordanians?
 - Availability is the main problem with hiring Jordanian workers; there aren't enough workers who come and stay. Jordanian workers are generally not motivated and many are not serious workers; either quitting after a month or so or switching between factories.
 - Jordanian workers are cheaper to hire and less issues in terms of dorms, religion, food, communication/coordination.
6. What are the main challenges you face with Jordanian workers?
 - Availability (see q5)
 - Work ethic and discipline, especially Jordanians trained at VTC (see q1)
 - Cultural issues related to acceptance of the idea of women working, especially in a mixed gender setting, and persuading men to work in what is perceived as women's jobs.
 - High turnover.
 - Lack of transportation infrastructure and public transportation which prevents them from hiring workers in some surrounding areas (especially villages around Mafraq and Khalidieh) because of high cost/impossibility in the case of infrastructure.
7. What is the profile of Jordanian workers?
 - Mostly female (around 63% percent), most women are married.
 - Most come from surrounding areas, mix of rural and urban.
8. How far do the Jordanian workers live from your factory? What kind of transportation provisions do you have for Jordanian workers?
 - The average commute is 1 hour, most workers are from surrounding areas.

- They pay for Jordanian workers' transportation, mostly in minibuses because of the spread of workers from different areas. This is more expensive than using bigger buses (more than 55 JD/worker/month).
9. Do you need seasonal/temporary workers? Have you tried to recruit Jordanians for this role?
- They respond to different levels of demand through the year by increasing overtime 1-2 hours rather than recruit more workers.
 - They have had students come during the summer on occasion. They usually stay for a short period.
10. What do you think of the possibility of implementing a two shift model in Jordan?
- In theory it's a good idea but not workable for cultural reasons, as women cannot be out after dark.
11. What do you think Jordanians demand/want in order to work at your factory?
- Gender segregation.
 - Convenient transportation.
 - Easy jobs: most are happy to be helpers.
12. How long do Jordanian workers stay in your factory?
- To them there are 3 categories of workers: serious and dedicated (smallest group), some who work for a short time (1 month) and quit, and workers who loaf about and constantly switch between factories.
 - There are some 'serious' workers who have been working for a long time, some up to 9 years.
13. What can the government do to make it easier for you to hire Jordanians? Does the government subsidy motivate you or is not really an incentive?
- They had a contract with the government to subsidize training within the factory which benefitted them as it reduced the costs of training; but in reality it did not affect the number recruited or the recruitment efforts by the factory
 - Pooling transportation can reduce costs for the factory and increase workers' salary. Also the government should build the infrastructure for transportation to remote areas
 - Reassessing the efficiency of the VTC model. The government is willing to spend money ineffectively on the VTC whereas the factories are capable of providing training at cheaper costs and more effectively.
 - Have had discussions with government and employers organizations about the government generating an awareness campaign to provide information about and promote the image of the industry, promote work ethic and a change in attitude (they see Jordanians as non motivated workers/people in general), and third to promote the idea of women

working and that factories are safe environments, even though there is gender mixing

14. To what extent do strikes impact your commitments to buyers? Do you think Jordanians and migrant workers have different attitudes towards striking?

- No problems with strikes.

15. Do you face problems with conflict between Jordanians and non Jordanian workers, especially between supervisors and workers?

- No

Management interview 2- Factory in Jordan Valley

1. How do you recruit Jordanian workers?

- Identifying key persons in the community like the Mukhtar, mosque leaders, tribal leaders and outreach and in person interviews with them.
- Meetings in the municipality offices/town halls (dar el-baladie) in the communities and invited potential workers and their families. Factory management brought their families as well. Foreign general manager of the company attended as well. The purpose of these meetings was to 1) present a good image of the factory as a workplace and of the management and 2) promote the idea of women leaving the house and seeking employment.
- After the meetings, the potential workers (mostly female) and their guardians would visit the factory to see the working environment first hand. When they saw good conditions and the lack of male workers, they became more keen to allow their daughters/wives to work there
- Once a core group of workers were recruited, others joined suit.
- Workers are chosen based on their eagerness to work and perceived need for income. Also choose those good at teamwork and who avoid conflict with colleagues.

2. What aspects of the workplace do you think deter Jordanians from working here? What aspects might attract them?

- Lack of male workers,
- Easier to get people from the northern part of the Jordan valley because they and their community had experience dealing with the garment industry.
- The factory has built a rapport with the community.
- The 15% quota of migrant workers did not seem to be a problem or deter Jordanians from working at the factory. NOTE: Sri Lankan workers were in the same production lines as the Jordanians. They seemed to complement the Jordanian workforce rather than compete, and fill gaps in the production line due to high levels of absenteeism with Jordanian workers.

3. What kind of jobs do Jordanians have in the factory?
 - All types of jobs, including a woman cutter once who was highly skilled. Even in the packing dept there were mostly women workers, very small number of male workers.
 - It takes a long time to train machine operators specifically: they usually arrive with no skills or experience and it takes 2 months to join the production line and 6 months to consistently produce the quality required.
 - 6 out of 14 supervisors are Jordanian, at least of one of which started as a machine operator.

4. What do you think of the skill level of Jordanians?
 - They arrive with no skills and need to be trained.
 - A major obstacle is the long time required to train them (see question 3) and high turnover.

5. What are the advantages of hiring migrant workers over Jordanians? What are the advantages of hiring Jordanians?
 - Migrants have low levels of absenteeism and arrive with skills. They also have a low turnover for the duration of their two year contract.
 - The advantage of having Jordanian workers is that you do not have to deal with work permits, dorms and other issues related solely to migrant workers.

6. What are the main challenges you face with Jordanian workers?
 - High levels of absenteeism because of social obligations, seasonal migration, and high paying seasonal work in the agricultural sector during harvest season (which occurs 3-4 times a year)
 - Recruitment is difficult especially since many families in the area rely on National Aid Fund assistance, which would be withdrawn if one member of the family joins the workforce. This is especially problematic because the level of the National Aid Fund assistance is similar to the wages provided by the factory.
 - High turnover which is especially problematic because of the long time it takes to train workers.
 - Having to deal with male members of the family who pressure women to leave the job on occasion.

7. What is the profile of Jordanian workers?
 - Over 95% of the Jordanian workers are women. Mix of married and unmarried women, but there are more of the latter.
 - Men are found more in cutting and admin, whereas women are machine operators and work in the packing department.

8. How far do the Jordanian workers live from your factory? What kind of transportation provisions do you have for Jordanian workers?
 - Many of the workers (60%) are from the surrounding area (Central Shouneh sub-district), 30 workers are from Salt and the rest are from north Ghour.

- Because this is a satellite factory, buses are subsidized by the government and provide transportation for all workers. The factory pays the bus and is reimbursed by the government for the first 18 months of each employee's employment. The factory makes sure that women are always home before dark.
 - The factory will assess the cost effectiveness of paying for transportation after the subsidy expires as a package for all workers, not on an individual basis.
9. Do you need seasonal/temporary workers? Have you tried to recruit Jordanians for this role?
- There are no special provisions for temporary staff during peak season. Additionally, the factory suffers seasonally due to seasonal migration and harvest season. The gaps in the production lines are generally filled by migrant workers.
10. What do you think of the possibility of implementing a two shift model in Jordan?
- The factory only has one hour of overtime (2 for migrant workers) and is not pursuing a model of having the factory operational for more than 10 hours a day.
11. What do you think Jordanians demand/want in order to work at your factory?
- Safe and reputable workplace, minority of males, getting home before dark.
 - Factory management that is willing to assist with personal matters, such as male family members trying to dissuade women from working.
12. How long do Jordanian workers stay in your factory?
- Most leave within the first few months of employment, the factory has a 67% annual turnover. There are many examples, however, of people who have stayed. This is especially true for the first 'core' team of workers recruited who were recruited based on stringent criteria.
 - The factory gives an allowance for employees who have stayed one year. (15 JD for machine operators, 7.5 for helpers)
 - Examples of success and promotion within the factory might motivate workers to stay longer in the hopes of getting promoted in the future.
13. What can the government do to make it easier for you to hire Jordanians? Does the government subsidy motivate you or is not really an incentive?
- The government should increase the quota of migrant workers in satellite factories to around 25% so as to fill gaps in production by Jordanians and allow the factory to grow, and subsequently hire more Jordanians.
14. To what extent do strikes impact your commitments to buyers? Do you think Jordanians and migrant workers have different attitudes towards striking?
- Not applicable

15. Do you face problems with conflict between Jordanians and non Jordanian workers, especially between supervisors and workers?
- No, in fact we don't have many problems between Jordanian workers.
 - The migrant workers are integrated in the factory and are on friendly terms with the Jordanian workers, and many have learned to speak Arabic.

Management interview 3- Factories in Sahab and Madaba

1. How do you recruit and retain Jordanian workers?
 - Identifying key persons in the community like the Mukhtar, mosque leaders, tribal leaders and outreach and in person meetings with them. Promoting factory employment through mosque leaders at Friday prayers to persuade male family members to send daughters/wives/sisters to work at factory.
 - Meetings in the municipality offices/town halls (dar baladieh) in the communities and invited potential workers and their families. The purpose of these meetings was to present a good image of the factory as a workplace and of the management.
 - Building a good reputation for the factory is really important.
 - Once the factory opened, some of the families came to see it.
 - Hired a woman to go door to door to houses in Madaba during the daytime (when male members are not around) to market the factory to female family members.
 - Hire women who have not worked before and don't have high salary expectations from previous employment.
 - Market the salary as a package of 200 JDs which is split into basic wage, transportation, food allowance, bonuses. They used to market it as basic wage and other benefits but found that it was not as successful.
2. What aspects of the workplace do you think deter Jordanians from working here? What aspects might attract them?
 - Tribal mindset: If the factory is in a certain area people from other tribes nearby feel that it has been built for that tribe and prefer not to send their family members to work there.
 - Some workers don't find it acceptable to be supervised by members of other tribes.
 - Working with migrant workers is a deterrent
 - The factory gives the women the basic salary on a pay slip and gives them additional cash vouchers that they do not give to their families so they have their own disposable income (this increases retention rate).
 - The factory tried to sign workers up for health insurance and give them the option of insuring their family members but no insurance companies would allow their families to register under their insurance.
 - The factory also thought of implementing a yearly retention bonus for all workers of one month's salary at the end of each year of employment (it has not been implemented yet). Another suggested alternative is a savings plan whereby workers contribute 5% of their salary each month to the savings fund and after working in the factory for 12 month, the total savings are matched by the factory.

3. What kind of jobs do Jordanians have in the factory?
 - All types of jobs, including machine operators, supervisors and middle management.
4. What do you think of the skill level of Jordanians?
 - There are no problems in terms of skill because of the simple, low value added, garments produced in this particular factory but in the future they want to hire skilled migrant workers for complex operations (active wear)
5. What are the advantages of hiring migrant workers over Jordanians? What are the advantages of hiring Jordanians?
 - It has become difficult to deal with migrant workers, especially Bangladeshi workers who do not want to leave even though their contract has expired.
 - Communication issues exist when dealing with migrant workers; this is not an issue for this factory manager when dealing with Jordanian workers. However, factories that are foreign owned with workers from the same country as owner/mgmt have also had problems with strikes etc. This suggests that this is not just a communication issue but reflects the discontent among migrant workers in general.
6. What are the main challenges you face with Jordanian workers?
 - High turnover (he has trained 1200 workers but only 350 remain).
 - Recruitment is difficult because of tribal mindset in the Madaba area.
7. What is the profile of Jordanian workers?
 - Overwhelmingly female.
8. How far do the Jordanian workers live from your factory? What kind of transportation provisions do you have for Jordanian workers?
 - Most workers are from surrounding areas in satellite factory. In Sahab factory workers come from different areas in Jordan including Salt, Baqaa, Zarqa and Madaba. Transportation costs around 50 JD per worker from further areas; 40 JD for workers from Madaba
 - In the satellite factory, the government subsidizes 35 JD for each worker regardless of actual cost of transportation for the first 18 months of employment.
 - The factory hires 10 workers from Tafileh that live in dorms next to the industrial zone. They are committed and willing to work overtime but are expensive to hire (300 JD per month as opposed to 200 for other workers). This would only be feasible if you hire a large group of workers to achieve economies of scale by pooling certain large costs like buses etc.
9. Do you need seasonal/temporary workers? Have you tried to recruit Jordanians for this role?

- There have been problems with temporary workers in the sense that they come for the summer and leave to go to university etc. once their productivity reaches the required level. The factory prefers not to hire these workers and blacklist them.
10. What do you think of the possibility of implementing a two shift model in Jordan?
- Not possible with Jordanian workers.
11. What do you think Jordanians demand/want in order to work at your factory?
- Good reputation is important; make the women feel like they are gaining disposable income which they can use for themselves;
12. How long do Jordanian workers stay in your factory?
- Most leave within the first 6 months but most that stay afterwards continue working at the factory long term. (see retention policy question 1)
 - There have been success stories of machine operators being promoted and having salary increase 'exponentially'. Chances for promotion are limited however and shouldn't overemphasize career path aspect of employment in this sector.
13. What can the government do to make it easier for you to hire Jordanians? Does the government subsidy motivate you or is not really an incentive?
- They would like to hire a fixed percentage of migrant workers (~10%)
 - The move towards government subsidies of training: 30% of salary for the first 12 months of employment.
 - The government should have a comprehensive plan for subsidizing local employment as in Egypt which would include subsidies for transportation food etc. The government should also adopt a long term strategic approach (like a 5 year plan) instead of piece meal initiatives that are easily abandoned.
14. To what extent do strikes impact your commitments to buyers? Do you think Jordanians and migrant workers have different attitudes towards striking?
- Strikes involving Jordanian workers are easier to resolve.
15. Do you face problems with conflict between Jordanians and non Jordanian workers, especially between supervisors and workers?
- No

Other Notes:

- Factories have tried to pool buses to reduce transportation costs but this didn't work because of different working hours in different factories (since Jordanian workers are a minority there was no strong incentive to standardize working hours for this purpose). It would be more feasible for the industrial zone (Tajamout) to pool transportation for the whole zone. There would have to be buses at different times to offset the different operation hours.

- The problem with hiring Jordanian workers in Dulayl is related to the lack of populated centers in the area and is only relevant to Dulayl. Irbid is the best place for the industry as there are highly populated surrounding areas and the local population is more socially liberal.