



▶ **Business Case Analysis  
and Recommendations  
for Successful Hiring and  
Retention of Jordanians in  
Middle Management Positions  
Within the Garment Industry**

**STUDY REPORT**

**DECEMBER 2023**



**International  
Labour  
Organization**



**IFC** | **International  
Finance Corporation**  
WORLD BANK GROUP

*Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities*

**BetterWork.**

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## ► Acknowledgement

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We express our sincere appreciation to the team at Pine Tree Company for Textile Manufacturing (PSC), particularly the middle management and top management, for their invaluable contributions during this case study.

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Best Regards,

**Taher Qatanani**

Lead researcher,  
Third Party Services



## ▶ 1. Executive Summary:

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This case study investigates the successful recruitment and retention of Jordanian talent in middle management positions within a garment factory, namely, Pine Tree Company for Textile Manufacturing (PSC).

The examination takes place within the unique landscape of Jordan's garment industry, where migrant workers constitute the majority of the workforce with an aim to uncover the practices and strategies employed by the factory to attract and retain local talent, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of talent management in this context.

Amidst challenges faced by the garment industry in integrating local labor into knowledge-intensive service roles, exacerbated by a gap between educational competencies and industry needs, the study's core objective is to identify and analyze the key success factors enabling the employment of Jordanians in middle management positions. Ultimately, the aim is to provide actionable recommendations for stakeholders, including industry players, government entities, and relevant organizations, fostering the replication of successful practices at a broader scale. The study's significance is underscored in the wider socio-economic context of Jordan, where high unemployment rates, especially among university graduates, necessitate a strategic approach to leverage success factors in local talent recruitment, aligning with the government's Economic Modernization Vision.

Additionally, this case study is intrinsically linked to Better Work Jordan's Phase IV strategy, offering findings and recommendations that can be pivotal in advancing the objectives of stipulated in the Strategy document. This case study specifically contributes to enhancing employment practices and bolstering competitiveness within the garment industry. Envisaged as a valuable resource, the study's recommendations aim to support initiatives for hiring and retaining Jordanians in middle management roles, fostering the overall growth and development of Jordan's garment sector in alignment with national economic goals. Moreover, the findings serve as a practical guide, providing actionable insights for industry stakeholders, government bodies, and relevant organizations, with the overarching goal of widespread adoption of successful strategies to fortify a resilient and locally empowered middle management within Jordan's garment sector.



## Summary of Key Findings

### ► **Commitment to Empowering Jordanians:**

The organization's commitment to empowering Jordanian talents is highlighted, creating an environment for local talents to thrive. The study emphasizes the significance of this approach in the success stories of Jordanian middle management, positioning the factory as forward-looking.

### ► **Overall Satisfaction:**

There are many factors that contributed to the overall satisfaction such as supportive culture, career progression, salary structure, open-door policy, and HR initiatives contributing to the middle managers contentment. The HR department's commitment to regular evaluations and employee-centric initiatives plays a crucial role in maintaining and improving satisfaction.

### ► **Gender Equity:**

Key findings underscored the impact of commitments to gender equity through initiatives like a free childcare facility, family-friendly policies, and adherence to gender equity programs, in addition to policies and practices alignment with on-ground efforts, emphasizing gender inclusion and equal opportunities.

### ► **Career Progression to Middle Management:**

Recruitment and hiring practices focus on strategic alignment with the vision of empowering the local community. The factory's intentional focus on industrial engineers, collaboration with top universities, and transparent communication of career paths contribute to successful recruitment. Training and internal promotions within the factory showcase a commitment to employee growth.

### ► **Middle Management Practices:**

Middle managers receive support from top management, creating a supportive environment emphasizing open-door policies and collaboration. Retention strategies focus on fairness, transparency, continuous development, and competitive salary systems. Leadership styles, communication, and teamwork are actively fostered, with communication channels and feedback mechanisms ensuring a positive working environment.

### ► **Future Outlook of Middle Managers:**

Middle managers exhibit a comprehensive understanding of career development opportunities, expressing satisfaction with current opportunities and optimism about career growth in the next 2-5 years. The study highlights their collective ambition to ascend to higher positions, emphasizing continuous development and alignment with organizational objectives.

### ► **Conclusion:**

The case study provides a comprehensive exploration of successful practices in recruiting and retaining Jordanian talent in middle management within the garment industry. It not only serves as a valuable resource for industry stakeholders but also aligns with Better Work Jordan's objectives in improving employment practices and competitiveness. The study showcases the commitment of the factory to empowering Jordanians and fostering a positive and inclusive workplace environment.



## ► 2. Introduction and Context

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Jordan's apparel industry has expanded significantly over the past two decades, becoming the nation's largest employer in the manufacturing sector and the primary driver of exports. Jordan, like the majority of other nations that export clothing, entered the global apparel value chain by way of connections to mature international markets. This all started with favorable trade access to the US market, which attracted foreign investors making clothing for global clothing companies to establish manufacturing plants in Jordan employing primarily migrant labor.

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) is a partnership between the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The ILO flagship program brings together stakeholders from all levels of the global garment manufacturing industry to improve working conditions, enhance respect for labor rights, and boost competitiveness. Better Work Jordan was established in 2008 at the request of the Government of Jordan (GoJ) and the United States government (USG).

Under the US-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, garment factories that export to the US are required to participate in the Better Work Jordan program. Since manufacturers that export to the US account for the great bulk of employment in the garment sector, Better Work Jordan covers an estimated 95% of garment workers in Jordan. Participating in Better Work has allowed manufacturers to gradually increase their adherence to national laws pertaining to contracts, compensation, working hours, occupational safety and health, and ILO core labor standards. This has raised factory efficiency and profitability while also greatly improving working conditions.

### ► 2.1. Context of the case study<sup>1</sup>

The garment exporting industry in Jordan employed over 77,800 people in 2022. Three quarters of the workforce consists of migrant laborers. These workers, who are mostly from South Asia, usually have two- to three-year contracts that are renewable. With more than half of all migrant workers coming from Bangladesh, other major worker groups include those from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Myanmar. Of the workforce, the remaining twenty-five percent are Jordanians. Approximately 75% of the production workforce is made up of women, whereas men occupy the majority of management roles.

There are three different kinds of factories in the garment exporting sector. The biggest factories are those that create products directly for buyers and are direct exporters. The majority of these factories are found in Sahab, Irbid, and Dulayl's key economic zones. Many smaller companies that subcontract, or make goods for direct exporters upon request, are located below these larger factories in the supply chain. In parallel with this structure are the satellite units, usually small in size, that are based outside of the industrial zones and employ mainly Jordanians. Currently, 24 satellite factories with approximately 8,000 Jordanian employees are registered under the Better Work Jordan program.

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<sup>1</sup> Mainly adapted from Better Work Jordan, Terms of Reference (ToR) for business case analysis and recommendations for successful hiring and retention of Jordanians in middle management positions within the garment industry



There are two primary types of workers in Jordan's garment sector. The first is the production/ factory floor workers (around 85% of the total workforce) and include occupations such as sewing machine operators, helpers, cutter, ironing, packers and supervisors and Quality control. Those occupations usually don't require high educational attainment and are usually paid according to the sector set minimum wages. Those in the positions of supervisor and quality assurance earn somewhat higher monthly wages.

The second group is characterized as knowledge-intensive service jobs (remaining 15% of the total workforce) and include occupations such as HR, IT, Finance, production planning, Industrial engineering related positions, and middle management positions...etc. Those occupations usually require a university degree or a technical degree with relevant industry experience and have better and higher wages.

Unofficial data estimates the number of positions available in the knowledge-intensive service jobs category between 5000 – 7000 positions. Though these occupations are more in line with the general characteristics of Jordan's workforce, most of these jobs are held by migrant workers.

In this context, it is worth noting the decisions issued by the Ministry of Labor regarding the designation of closed professions and occupations for non-Jordanians (expatriates). Article (12) of the Labor Law specifies violations related to the employment of a worker in a profession other than the one authorized. Regarding companies operating in the apparel and textile sector, the decision allows these companies to employ or bring in non-Jordanian workers in the professions they desire, subject to specific ratios outlined in the decision <sup>2</sup>.

Employers within Jordan's garment manufacturing sector cite notable impediments in increasing the hiring of Jordanian workers due to multifaceted challenges. Specifically, the sector encounters difficulties in integrating local labor into those knowledge-intensive service jobs, largely due to the mismatch between the competencies taught in Jordan's educational system and those demanded by the industry. The garment industry requires specialized skills and knowledge, particularly in advanced roles, yet industry leaders contend that the educational outcomes in Jordan do not align with these needs. This incongruity presents a significant obstacle, hindering the seamless assimilation of Jordanian workers into crucial positions and potentially stunting the sector's growth and competitiveness.

On the other hand, according to the Jordanian Engineers association, there are more than 192,000 engineers in Jordan, along with more than 34,000 engineering students in the Jordanian universities. Out of which there are more than 9600 industrial engineers and more than 2600 industrial engineering students, as well as more than 1900 production and machinery engineers along with around 100 students, among other specialties that can work in the factories in general <sup>3</sup>.

2 Ministry of Labor, Labor law, article 12, section C.

[https://www.mol.gov.jo/EBV4.0/Root\\_Storage/AR/EB\\_Info\\_Page/%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9\\_%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1\\_58\\_%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_1.pdf](https://www.mol.gov.jo/EBV4.0/Root_Storage/AR/EB_Info_Page/%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9_%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1_58_%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9_1.pdf)

3 Jordanian Engineers Association, Guidance bulletin for engineering specializations and labor market needs

[https://jea.org.jo/EBV4.0/Root\\_Storage/AR/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_2023\\_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6.pdf](https://jea.org.jo/EBV4.0/Root_Storage/AR/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9_2023_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6.pdf)



As of the first quarter of 2023, Jordan has a 21.9% unemployment rate. Recent statistics indicate that the overall unemployment rate for university graduates stands at 25.8% in the country, with the percentage standing at 26.7% among male university graduates compared to 79.5% for female university graduates<sup>4</sup>. These figures highlight a significant gap between the supply of graduates and the demand for their skills in the job market. Moreover, Jordan's unique economic landscape is characterized by a scarcity of natural resources and a limited presence of advanced industries. In the absence of substantial natural wealth, Jordan's primary capital lies in its human resources.

In light of these challenges, prioritizing the employment of Jordanian graduates in sectors like the garment industry becomes crucial not only for national economic growth but also for addressing the pressing issue of graduate unemployment in the country. By leveraging the talents of the local workforce, the industry can play a pivotal role in reducing these unemployment rates and contributing to the broader socio-economic development of Jordan. Particularly since the Economic Modernization Vision, a ten-year plan to boost employment, income, and Jordan's international position through investments in green technology, new services, high-value sectors, and education, was introduced by the government of Jordan in June 2022. The garment sector was identified as one of the high-value industries with a focus on moving up the value-chain including through horizontal integration, increased sales throughout the seasons, and expanding vocational training and job opportunities for Jordanians. With these initiatives, the government hopes to reach 7.3 billion USD in exports by 2033, and employment of 225,000 in the sector, with an average annual growth of 12% and 9.5% respectively.

Better Work Jordan is also committed to increasing the employment of Jordanians in the sector. Under the second outcome of its phase IV strategy, Better Work Jordan aims to collaborate with domestic stakeholders to enhance the garment industry's employment contribution in Jordan while concurrently ensuring the sector's competitiveness.

## ► 2.2. Purpose of the case study

Despite the industry's historical reliance on migrant workers, certain garment factories have accomplished the notable feat of attracting and maintaining Jordanian talent in these knowledge-intensive service positions.

This case study aims to investigate the factors underpinning the success within a specific Jordanian garment factory, namely, Pine Tree Company for Textile Manufacturing (PSC), in recruiting Jordanians in middle management positions. Its primary objective is to identify the pivotal success elements and practices contributing to the effective recruitment and retention of Jordanians in these roles, offering tangible recommendations for stakeholders to replicate these successes industry-wide. By examining the strategies and practices implemented by this factory, the study seeks to identify influential factors shaping employee satisfaction. This includes aspects such as working conditions, career prospects, compensation, workplace culture, management policies, and professional advancement opportunities.

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<sup>4</sup> Department of statistics, 2023 Q1 unemployment rate, [https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/databank/news/unemployment/2023/unemp\\_Q1\\_2023.pdf](https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/databank/news/unemployment/2023/unemp_Q1_2023.pdf)



The findings and recommendations are intended as a resource for industry stakeholders, governmental entities, and pertinent organizations. These insights aim to bolster efforts in hiring and retaining Jordanians in middle management roles, thereby fostering the continued development and expansion of Jordan's garment sector.

## ▶ 2.3. Research Questions

Under this case study, the following research questions were investigated:

- ▶ How does the factory approach the recruitment and employment of middle managers, specifically examining hiring local talents, including university graduates?
- ▶ How are internal processes within the factory, including training, development, and recognition programs, designed to support the integration and success of local middle managers, and what is the overall employee experience within this context?
- ▶ What are the success factors that contributed to the hiring and retention of Jordanians in middle management positions?
- ▶ What is the impact of the success of hiring and retaining Jordanians in middle management positions on the factory's overall performance (including the impact on productivity, employee morale, and the factory's reputation)?



## ▶ 3. Factory Overview

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### ▶ 3.1. Organization Background, Vision, and Mission:

Pine Tree Company for Textile Manufacturing (PSC) was established in 2014 and is located at Al Muwaqar Industrial Estate in Amman. The factory stands as one of the leading garment exporting factories in Jordan. It marks the pioneering venture of a Singaporean textile and apparel group in the region, bringing a wealth of international expertise and innovation to the heart of the Middle East. The factory currently employs a diverse workforce of 2280 individuals who contribute to the various facets of the company's operations. Among these employees, 752 are Jordanians, with 625 women and 127 men. As a key player in the textile and apparel sector, the factory has positioned itself as a trusted producer for a major brand in the USA. Central to its operational framework are three layers of policies and standards that have been meticulously integrated into its own policies and procedures. These layers include the brand's specific requirements and policies, the overarching guidelines of the Singaporean textile and apparel group, and the regulatory framework established by the country.

### ▶ 3.2. Organizational structure:

The organizational structure within the factory is designed to encompass a diverse range of roles, reflecting a hierarchical framework that contributes to the efficient functioning of the facility. At the helm of the organization, the top management comprises two individuals, the Factory Manager and the General Manager. Notably, this leadership duo is characterized by a blend of nationalities, with one being a migrant and the other a Jordanian, both of whom are males. Operating beneath top management, the middle management tier plays a critical role in bridging strategic directives with operational execution. With a total of 34 individuals in these roles, the majority, numbering 30, are Jordanians, showcasing a gender-diverse composition of 21 females and 9 males. Concurrently, four migrants hold middle management positions, with three females and one male.

Further down the organizational hierarchy, the junior level consists of 58 individuals, including 16 Jordanians and 42 migrants. The staff category comprises 172 people, predominantly Jordanians (166), whereas team leaders, numbering 137, are composed of 40 Jordanians and 97 migrants.

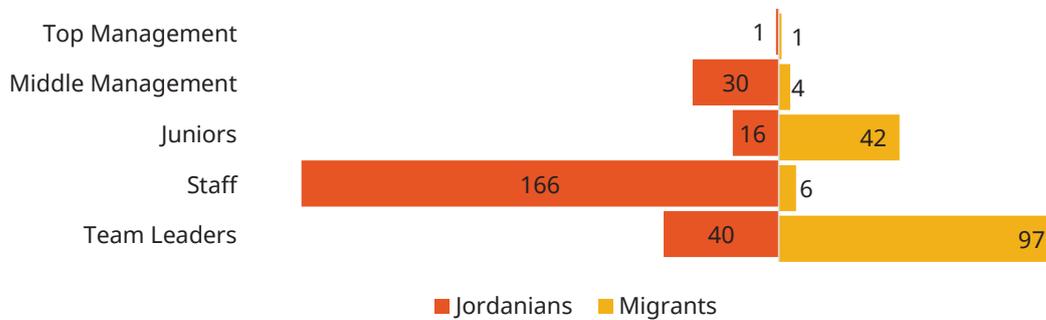
The largest segment within the organizational structure is the workforce, totaling 1877 individuals, with 499 Jordanians and 1378 migrants, highlighting the diversity and gender distribution within each stratum of the factory's hierarchy.



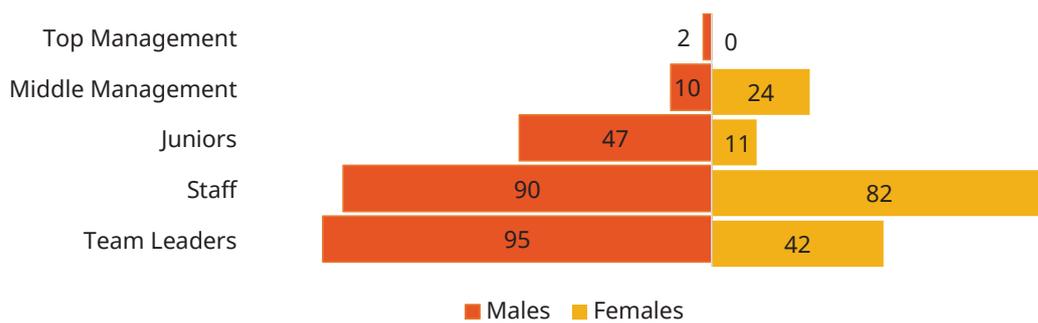
**Roles' description based on the factory's definitions:**

- ▶ Middle management is the level of managers, assistant managers, heads of departments, assistant heads of departments, supervisors, and assistant supervisors.
- ▶ Junior management is the level of supervisors and assistant supervisors, the staff team leaders.
- ▶ Team Leader is the level of direct line leader.
- ▶ Staff (non-production) is the level of Data entry, Assistant officer, Officer, and Senior Officer.
- ▶ Worker (Production) directly support/manufacturing the product.

**Figure 1: Distribution of Knowledge Intensive Jobs Based on Nationality (Jordanian Vs. Migrant)**



**Figure 2: Distribution of Knowledge Intensive Jobs Based on Gender**





### ▶ 3.3. Middle Management roles:

Within the factory, the middle management structure encompasses a diverse array of roles crucial to the seamless operation of various departments and teams. These roles include managers, assistant managers, heads of departments, assistant heads of departments, supervisors, and assistant supervisors.

- ▶ Managers play a pivotal role in overseeing the overall operations of their respective departments, ensuring efficiency, and implementing strategic directives from higher management.
- ▶ Assistant managers provide essential support, contributing to decision-making and day-to-day coordination.
- ▶ Heads of departments lead specific functional areas, utilizing their expertise to drive performance and innovation.
- ▶ Assistant heads of departments play a supporting role, assisting in planning and execution.
- ▶ Supervisors are responsible for the direct supervision of teams, ensuring tasks are carried out according to standards and timelines.

Collectively, this middle management tier serves as a bridge between upper management and frontline employees, fostering effective communication, implementing organizational strategies, and ensuring the smooth execution of daily operations. Each role within this structure plays a unique and integral part in maintaining the factory's productivity and contributing to its overall success.



## ▶ 4. Methodology

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Third Party company employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative tools with a focus on qualitative methods, to gather comprehensive insights from various stakeholders in the targeted factory. The data collection included surveys, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving Jordanian employees in middle management roles, and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with key figures such as the General Manager, Factory Manager, HR Manager, and Internal Auditor. Collaboratively developed with Better Work Jordan, the tools incorporated a gender-sensitive approach and adhered to ethical research considerations during the formulation and addressing of questions in the questionnaires, FGDs, and KIIs.

The following is a summary of the methodology, the full detailed methodology can be found in annex 1.

The data collection tools utilized in the case study, developed in English and translated into Arabic, encompassed a survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) to comprehensively address research questions. The Middle Management Employee Satisfaction Survey targeted sentiments and experiences, emphasizing personal satisfaction, support structures, communication, strategy involvement, and future outlook. FGDs explored various aspects, guided by survey results, prioritizing ethical considerations and ensuring a safe and confidential space for participants. KIIs targeted management practices and perceptions, involving key figures in the factory. The surveys included 25 Jordanian middle managers out of 30 in the factory due to three managers on leave and two newly hired managers being excluded, while Five FGDs, each with five participants, were conducted over three working days in November, totaling 24 participants, with each session lasting approximately two hours. The data analysis process incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods, ensuring quality through comprehensive enumerator training, follow-ups, and regular checks. Triangulation of data, considering consistency across methods and sources, enhanced the credibility of findings.

### **Limitations and Challenges**

Third Party faced the following limitations and challenges during the data collection phase:

- ▶ Due to the sensitivity of the roles of middle managers and their importance, there were some interruptions during the FGDs in some cases for some of the roles.
- ▶ As FGDs and Surveys were conducted at the workplace some participants might have been reluctant to speak openly.



## ► 5. Case Study Findings and Analysis

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In the exploration of the findings and analysis section, a thorough investigation was conducted into the dynamics that defined the operational landscape within the factory. This section serves as a lens through which the wealth of collected data was explored, revealing insights that highlighted the factory's practices and policies, and their real-world implications. The interactions of various factors, from organizational structures to hiring practices, were meticulously examined, providing a nuanced understanding of how the factory aligned with its mission, vision, and values. The analysis extended beyond numerical metrics to capture the essence of the workplace culture, shedding light on the experiences of employees at different hierarchical levels within middle management. Through this exploration, patterns, challenges, and successes that defined the factory's unique identity within the garment industry were identified. The following sections present quantitative data and qualitative insights to offer a holistic understanding of the factory's operations.

### ► 5.1. Overall Satisfaction:

During the research, a special focus was given to understanding how satisfied the middle managers were, exploring their feelings, perspectives, and how content they were with their professional experiences within the factory. This was done through a triangulation of survey responses, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, with an aim to look beyond numbers to uncover the more personal aspects of their job satisfaction, work-life balance, and how well individual goals matched up with what the factory was doing. These elements were further investigated to find patterns showing what influenced the middle managers' satisfaction, considering things like company policies, opportunities for career growth, and how well internal processes were working. This allowed us to reveal what the job is really like for middle managers, giving a complete picture of their roles in the overall operation of the factory.

The initial step towards understanding middle management overall satisfaction with their current role and responsibilities was through the survey. **Results showed that among the surveyed middle managers, 48% expressed satisfaction, while 52% indicated being highly satisfied.**

When discussing the elements contributing to their satisfaction, middle managers emphasized several key factors, including:

- **Support and Career Progression:** They emphasized the vital support from factory management throughout their career growth to middle management. The clear career trajectory provided to them from the outset was crucial. Additionally, investment in their capacity building significantly contributed to their satisfaction.
- **Childcare Facilities and Safe Transportation:** The presence of a childcare facility accessible by all employees on the factory premises was highlighted, facilitating the management of their parental responsibilities. Safe transportation for their children to the childcare facility was noted as a crucial element in managing work-life balance.



- ▶ **Open-Door Policy and Guidance from Top Management:** The top management's open-door policy for providing guidance and opportunities for inquiry, learning, and personal development.
- ▶ **Common Ground and Professional Alignment:** Being primarily industrial engineers, the shared professional background among most middle managers provided a common ground for agreement across various work aspects.
- ▶ **Autonomy, Skill Development, and Flexibility:** Autonomy in decision-making, the practice of starting as fresh graduate employees with subsequent skill development, and the management's flexibility regarding work hours, leaves, and vacations were also cited as factors contributing to their satisfaction.

One of the middle managers mentioned:

*“Most of us in the middle management are youth, with a maximum of 33 years old, this gives me a high level of satisfaction as in another company I would need another 20 years to reach such a position being directly under the General Manager, and this happened due to the huge investment in our capacity building, and giving us and trusting us with high-levels of responsibility, and in return, this enabled us and gave us self-confidence, high satisfaction, and loyalty to the company, as most of us in the middle management have been here for many years and we wouldn't consider leaving the company.”*

Moreover, middle managers highlighted various factors driving their motivation to continue in their roles at the factory. These factors can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ **Salary Structure and Benefits:** Salary alignment with their experience, job titles, and qualifications in addition to the timely salary distribution were cited. Additionally, the provision of free health insurance and transportation not only reaching specific assembly points but also employing diverse routes to minimize commuting distance for employees across different governorates in addition to movement notifications when any factory car is being dispatched to Amman were acknowledged as a substantial benefit.
- ▶ **Incentives and Continuous Development:** The incentives received by employees and the emphasis on continuous professional development were highlighted as motivational factors.
- ▶ **Flexible Work Arrangements:** The management's responsiveness to their request for remote work on Saturdays was noted, contributing to their satisfaction.
- ▶ **Job Security and Supportive Culture:** Job security, high-quality facilities, and having a human touch from the top management in caring for the employees' special occasions (both happy and sad ones) such as the compassionate approach from management towards sick employees, including visits and small gestures, were mentioned as elements fostering a supportive work culture.
- ▶ **International Exposure:** Working under an international group with foreign supervisors and colleagues in other factories provided exposure to international standards, enriching their experience.



KIIs findings were also linked and contributed to explaining the employee's high levels of satisfaction.

The General Manager emphasized the company's commitment to empowering its employees especially for women, underscoring the significant opportunities extended to these individuals, who, in turn, have proven their worth through outstanding contributions. This recognition reflects not only the effectiveness of the empowerment initiatives but also the deserving achievements of the dedicated workforce.

Meanwhile, the HR manager underscored several factors contributing to middle management satisfaction, including structured career paths, career support, and position-specific skills development programs. **HR manager also emphasized the importance of readiness through training, focusing on both technical and soft skills.**

In its efforts to measure and improve employee satisfaction, the HR department conducts two evaluations per year for the employees, during which any concerns, comments, or issues raised that impact employees in middle management performance would be addressed. Additionally, there are monthly meetings between middle management and top management that aim to facilitate more understanding of the challenges, achievements, and performance of each department to extract lessons learned and seek feedback on what can be improved.

The HR manager mentioned that HR department has implemented several initiatives aimed at boosting employee satisfaction:

- ▶ **Training Academy:** They established an in-house Training Academy within the factory, offering tailored training programs to cater to various employee needs, fostering their growth and development.
- ▶ **'Work from Home Saturdays':** The introduction of this policy serves as a step towards promoting work-life balance, significantly increasing satisfaction across all employee levels.
- ▶ **Cross-Factory Learning:** Providing opportunities for middle managers to learn from other factories within the group through knowledge-sharing events, like the recent example of sending managers to China, enhancing their expertise and satisfaction.
- ▶ **Financial Rewards:** The HR department also offers financial incentives such as annual bonuses tied to employee performance, further contributing to overall satisfaction.

### **Work Environment:**

The next step for assessing middle management satisfaction involved evaluating their contentment with the work environment and company culture. **According to the survey outcomes, 48% expressed high satisfaction, another 48% were satisfied, while 4% neither leaned towards satisfaction nor dissatisfaction.**



During the discussions, middle managers highlighted several key elements contributing to their satisfaction and success within the work environment and thus contributing to their overall satisfaction:

- ▶ **Lean Management and Kaizen:** A culture of continuous improvement, focusing on refining processes, workplace culture, and environment. The implementation of the "Golden Idea" under Kaizen and rewarding innovative proposals has notably enhanced various processes.
- ▶ **Learning Opportunities:** Flexibility in requesting beneficial training or software, along with experience sharing with peers in sister factories. In addition to not fearing making mistakes as they know they will be heard, understood, and corrected with respect.
- ▶ **Fair Policies and Facilities:** supportive and fair application of policies, attention to improving work facilities, such as incorporating greenery and decorations. Availability of various facilities like meeting rooms, training centers, libraries, and a spacious canteen.
- ▶ **Gender-Inclusive Workplace:** Emphasis on workplace safety and a respectful environment conducive to learning and development.
- ▶ **Familial Atmosphere:** Employees describe a close-knit environment, likening it to a second family, where mutual support is prevalent regardless of departmental boundaries.
- ▶ **Resignation Protocol:** A thoughtful approach to employee resignations, including discussions to understand and address reasons behind resignations, aiming to prevent future departures. In addition to leaving the opportunity for the employee to withdraw their resignation if they see that the reasons are addressed in a way that convinces them to do so.

On his part, the General Manager shared that the factory management adopts an approach of continuous improvement through lean management and Kaizen by embracing lean thinking and encouraging a bottom-up approach for innovative ideas, such as those aiming for cutting costs and reducing waste, thereby fostering a positive environment. He also added that middle management actively contributes to the company's strategies, fostering a cohesive workforce aligned with improvement goals. **Moreover, the factory also draws from its group extensive industry experience, leveraging modernization and sustainability practices to remain competitive.** Acknowledging challenges like long working hours and the remote location, the focus extends beyond basics, ensuring quality facilities, transportation, and amenities for employee comfort.

**He further mentioned a managerial vision emphasizing well-being and sustainability, aligning with the group's strategy.** Monthly and annual KPIs are established in these areas, reflecting the commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This commitment extends into a partnership with the client, who shares KPIs related to these goals. The HR manager emphasized the importance of open communication channels among workers, middle managers, and top management. This open communication not only supports middle managers in their roles but also enhances their satisfaction through initiatives like remote working on Saturdays and periodic social activities. These efforts promote a balanced work-life dynamic and a sense of camaraderie within the organization.



On the other hand, the Internal Auditor underscored the significance of conducting regular internal audits across departments. These audits serve as a valuable mechanism to understand and address challenges faced by various teams. By analyzing findings and collaborating with departments, the internal audit process not only mitigates challenges but also contributes to the development of new policies that enhance the work environment. Employees are encouraged to raise concerns, knowing they will be addressed by both the internal audit department and top management, fostering a culture of problem-solving and improvement.

**Moreover, both perspectives acknowledge the positive impact of a clearly defined career path. This approach encourages collaboration over competition, as employees understand and align with their career trajectories, reducing the need for unnecessary rivalry within the workplace.**

*Mental health and work-life balance:*

During this analysis, a critical facet demands attention—the mental health landscape within the factory's work environment. This part intends to shed light on the multiple dimensions that influence mental health, fostering a holistic understanding that transcends numerical metrics to capture the lived experiences of employees within the factory.



### **Mental Health and Work-Life Balance Insights:**

The following efforts underscore the company's commitment to nurturing a supportive work environment that prioritizes mental health and a healthy work-life balance for the workforce.

#### **Mental Health Initiatives:**

- ▶ **Focus on Mental Health:** Specialized policies, programs and committees dedicated to mental health, including a committee trained on mental wellbeing support and collaboration with medical experts.
- ▶ **Collaboration with Health Experts:** The factory works with medical professionals, psychiatrists, and psychologists for support related to mental health and well-being.
- ▶ **Employee Relationships:** Emphasizes respectful interactions for improved mental well-being. Relationships built on respect fostered loyalty and employee satisfaction.
- ▶ **Care through Social Engagement:** A social committee orchestrates events, fostering friendship and care for employees' mental health. Personalized interactions, like concern for employees' well-being, enhance motivation and dedication.
- ▶ **Ongoing Surveys and Employee Satisfaction:** Regular well-being surveys and initiatives like "I Love My Company" aid in identifying employee challenges, significantly contributing to overall satisfaction.

#### **Work-Life Balance Strategies:**

- ▶ **Prioritizing Work-Life Balance:** The company emphasizes a healthy work-life balance, respecting break times, vacations, and remote work on Saturdays.
- ▶ **Friendly Work Environment:** Focuses on creating a friendly workplace for better work-life balance.
- ▶ **HR Strategies for Employee Well-being:** The HR department's approach prioritizes employee happiness, employing in-house psychologists and welfare officers. Initiatives like social activities (monthly events, annual company dinner...) and psychological first aid ensure a balanced well-being for employees.



During discussions, middle managers highlighted a mental health focus since 2017-2018, with specialized policies, a dedicated committee for various topics (e.g., sexual harassment prevention, financial education), and training on mental well-being. They monitor cases, recognize symptoms, and ensure a mental health program collaborates with medical professionals. Additionally, they mentioned that the fact of having relationships between employees being built on respect is something that plays a role in the employees' mental health, which creates an atmosphere of loyalty and satisfaction. For example, one employee shared:

*"I was once talking with my supervisor discussing something related to work, and out of the blue he asked me: you look tired, why wouldn't you take a vacation?" she then added that: "when I see someone dealing with me in this way, it increases my motivation for giving the best I can, and increases my loyalty and dedication for the factory, and at the same time I wouldn't mind providing extra support as needed."*

Another aspect of caring for mental health was that there is a social committee, which handles the special occasions, birthdays, and external events for the company.

The study uncovered a strong inclination among middle management towards maintaining a healthy work-life balance. In the discussions, middle managers expressed appreciation for an organizational culture that values and respects this balance. This manifested in various ways, such as recognizing the importance of adhering to break times, honoring vacation periods, accommodating requests for extended vacations even when vacation balances are low, and facilitating remote work on Saturdays. Additionally, participants emphasized the significance of fostering a comfortable working relationship with colleagues for extended periods, underscoring the need for a friendly work environment as a crucial component of achieving optimal work-life balance.

### **Gender equity:**

In this part, the focus shifts towards an integral aspect of workplace dynamics—gender equity within the factory's operational atmosphere. This part endeavors to unravel the gender-related experiences, perceptions, and opportunities within the work environment, with a specific lens on the middle management. The analysis navigates through areas such as representation, professional growth opportunities, and the effectiveness of existing policies in fostering an inclusive environment.



Highlight of the factory efforts can be summarized as follows:

### Insights on Gender equity:

The following efforts underscore the company's commitment to nurturing gender equity.

- ▶ **Childcare Support:** Demonstrated by the availability of a free childcare facility with safe transportation to all employees with their children., contributing to work-life balance.
- ▶ **Safe Working Environment & family friendly policies:** The factory's policies are considered family-friendly, provide support to both genders such as providing transportation after overtime (males dropped at assembly points and females to their homes' doorstep).
- ▶ **Recruitment Process Gender Neutrality:** The factory adheres to gender-neutral recruitment practices, ensuring job announcements do not specify gender. Discriminatory statements are prohibited in various aspects such as promotions, evaluations, and compensation.
- ▶ **Equal Pay and Additional Benefits:** The factory adheres to the "equal pay for equal jobs" concept, eliminating gender and nationality-based pay gaps. Migrant workers receive additional housing benefits.
- ▶ **Diversity and Inclusion Policy:** Factory policies, such as the diversity and inclusion policy, outline targets for the inclusion of people with disabilities and specify percentages for female workers and leaders. Additional policies, like non-discrimination, women's rights, and harassment, further highlight the commitment to gender equity.
- ▶ **Female Leadership Empowerment:** A noteworthy aspect is the high representation of females in middle management, challenging traditional industrial norms. The factory's support for women's empowerment is evident through this representation.
- ▶ **Client-Enforced Gender Equity Program:** The factory aligns with its client's gender equity program through "Her program," which ensures equal opportunities for all genders, ethnicities, and nationalities, focusing on five main pillars.

In line with these findings, the HR manager affirmed the factory's commitment to gender equity through initiatives like compliance with a client-mandated gender equity program and an internal initiative called "Her program." This program, focusing on equal opportunities for all genders, ethnicities, and nationalities, includes five pillars, such as gender inclusion and enhancing women's representation in leadership. The factory reinforces its dedication to gender equity through family-friendly policies, support for working mothers with on-site nurseries, and unbiased practices in evaluations and compensations. The HR manager highlighted the factory's adherence to salary parity, following the company's position-based remuneration scale, with the only distinction being an additional housing benefit for migrant employees. This aligns with the 'equal pay for equal jobs' principle, emphasizing fair compensation practices within the factory.



The desk review aligns with the insights provided by middle managers and the HR manager. The factory's policies, particularly the diversity and inclusion policy, explicitly outline targets for the inclusion of people with disabilities and specific benchmarks for gender diversity across various roles, including female workers, leaders, staff members, and staff leaders. In addition to the presence of several policies that are aimed towards gender equity such as the non-discrimination policy, the women's rights policy, and the prevention of sexual and other unlawful harassment policy.

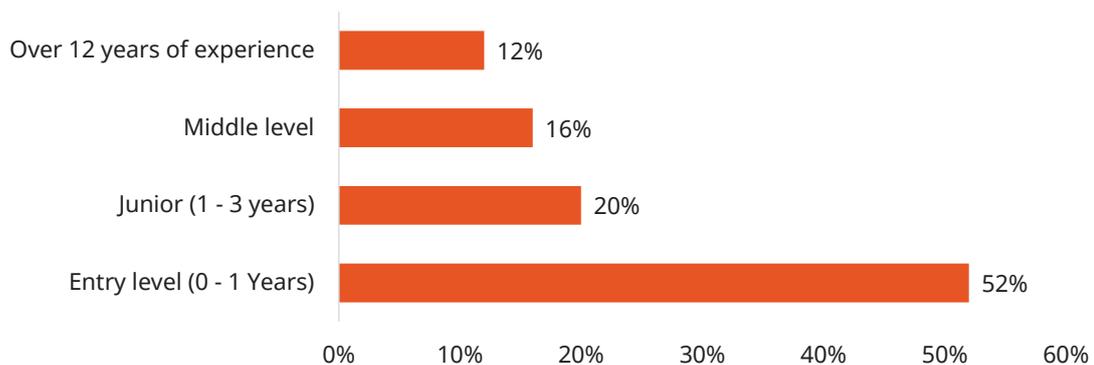
## ► 5.2. Career Progression to Middle Management:

This section delves into the journey of career progression toward middle management roles. The focus extends beyond the surface to unravel the professional trajectories of individuals who have risen to these crucial positions within the factory. Factors steering individuals towards middle management roles are conceived through a combination of survey responses, focus group discussions, and in-depth key informant interviews. The avenues of professional development, mentorship, and training that pave the way for these career advancements are explored. Additionally, the perceived alignment between individual career aspirations and organizational opportunities is analyzed.

### Entry Levels and Joining the Factory

Upon probing the level at which current middle managers joined the factory, insights revealed a distribution: 52% started at the entry level (zero to one year of experience), 20% at the junior level (1-3 years), 16% at the middle level, and 12% with over 12 years of experience.

**Figure 3: Level of Experience upon Joining the Factory**



Interestingly, most middle managers had limited prior knowledge of the factory. Entry-level employees often encountered the factory through university outreach efforts. Meanwhile, later-career arrivals were either directly contacted by the factory, recommended by acquaintances, or applied through job postings. Notably, factors motivating their choice included the company's international stature, positive word-of-mouth, and structured interview processes, despite potentially higher offers elsewhere. One middle manager mentioned:



*"I underwent six interviews simultaneously and received job offers from all six. However, I opted for this factory due to the systematic and organized approach evident during the interview process. Coming from a previous experience where there was a lack of organizational structure, I admired the efficiency and orderliness of this company's process. The commitment to well-defined systems motivated my decision to join this factory over others, despite the fact that those alternative companies were offering higher salaries." **Female Jordanian Middle Manager***

### **Motivations and Perceptions**

The motivating factors mentioned by middle managers for joining the factory were diverse. Apart from international exposure and positive feedback, pivotal incentives included competitive salaries, specialized work matching their expertise, transportation provisions, and a well-defined vision and values of the company. Notably, many mentioned that the respectful and understanding atmosphere during interviews significantly influenced their decision to join, overshadowing potentially higher-paying offers from other companies. One middle manager mentioned:

*"I previously worked in a different factory. What attracted me to join this factory was the substantial presence of industrial engineers, the predominant Jordanian composition in middle management, the renowned international client, and the overall international nature of the company." **Female Jordanian Middle Manager***

### **Recruitment Practices and Perceptions of the Garment Industry**

When discussing hiring and recruitment practices, middle managers highlighted the factory's antidiscrimination policy in hiring practices, emphasizing selection based solely on competencies, disregarding personal aspects like marital status or gender. Additionally, salary parity and suitability for the experience were underscored in recruitment practices.

**Regarding the crucial qualities for success in middle management and the criteria prioritized during the selection of Jordanian middle managers, several essential skills were highlighted.** These included problem-solving, technical expertise, effective communication (both vertical and horizontal), critical thinking, human-centric leadership, patience, mutual respect, proactive learning, personal development drive, teamwork, time management, result orientation, high focus, self-confidence, project management skills, flexibility, transparency, authenticity, open-mindedness, and the ability to work with diverse cultural backgrounds. Interestingly, proficiency in English language as a standalone skill was not mentioned during the discussions.

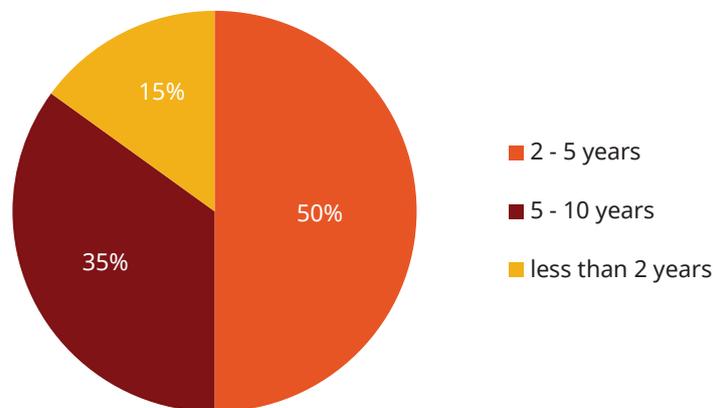
Surprisingly, prior to joining, most had no perceptions of the garment industry. However, a few held negative impressions, associating the industry with migrant worker dominance and a lack of interest in Jordanian talent development. The sources through which they discovered the factory were varied, ranging from word-of-mouth via friends or community outreach to direct contact through universities and job postings.



An interesting point related to in-factory promotions was revealed. **When asked if they were promoted internally or hired externally for their first middle management role, 80% of the middle managers shared that they were promoted internally, and only 20% shared that they were hired externally.** For those who were promoted internally for their middle management positions, and when asked about how many years of experience they had to accumulate before reaching the first middle management position:

- ▶ 15% shared that they had to accumulate less than 2 years of experience.
- ▶ 50% shared that they had to accumulate 2-5 years of experience.
- ▶ 35% shared that they had to accumulate 5-10 years of experience.

**Figure 4: Years of Experience Accumulated Before Reaching the First Middle Management**



## Training, Development, and Promotion Transparency

### *Investment in Capacities and Career Progression*

Middle managers highlighted substantial investment in their development, involving internal and external training, task immersion, and structured preparation. Notably, promotions weren't limited to specific roles, exemplified by a worker elevated to staff level post-bachelor's degree completion. Smooth interaction with the HR department was underscored, encompassing career path delineation, ongoing training needs analysis, and semi-annual evaluations.

### *Training and Development Experiences and its impact on Performance and Job Satisfaction*

**Regarding training, all middle managers, whether internally promoted or hired externally, mentioned they underwent programs geared towards preparing them for middle management.** External training involvement varied, with 64% receiving both internal and external training and 32% solely internal training. Middle managers also emphasized that their supervisors played pivotal roles in offering guidance and mentorship, emphasizing the significance of training, encompassing technical and soft skills. For example, middle managers mentioned they received trainings on leadership, training of trainers (TOT), English language courses, in addition to Microsoft Excel courses. Department-specific



training sessions are also conducted to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of each department's operations. The HR department structured training system and planning contributed to building and developing their skills. It is worth to mention that some employees attended external trainings in countries like China, Italy, and Singapore.

All middle managers attested to the positive impact of training on their performance and job satisfaction. Specifically, leadership training was cited for enhancing skills like delegation, fostering insights into leadership versus management. They also shared that trainings gave them the ability to better understand their roles and how to perform their tasks in the best way possible.

Middle managers confirmed that signing commitments in exchange for external training is not obligatory, citing only three instances five years ago involving a training program in Sri Lanka. Despite signing commitments, individuals were not obstructed from leaving upon resignation, signaling a shift in the company's approach. The HR manager clarified that commitment signing was limited to those three cases and discontinued thereafter, emphasizing the company's recognition that impeding career growth may adversely affect performance. Presently, middle managers are only required to submit a training report and share acquired knowledge with colleagues post-training.

As for promotions' transparency process within the factory, 48% shared that it was very transparent, 40% shared that it was transparent, 8% were neutral, and 4% shared that it was slightly transparent.

### **Workplace Influence on Career Progression and Performance Evaluation:**

Middle managers re-emphasized that workplace environment, including implemented policies and practices, significantly shapes their career progression and experiences. These policies not only elevate their experiences beyond their peers' experiences in other factories but also streamline work processes, making tasks clearer and more manageable. Regarding performance evaluation, a semiannual system occurs, led by direct managers midway and at year-end. These assessments focus on strengths, weaknesses, and collaboratively set goals for improvement. They align with individual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and job descriptions, requiring both manager and employee signatures for completion. The Kaizen culture additionally encourages and rewards valuable employee suggestions, fostering an environment of continuous improvement. Recognitions and rewards, including promotions, bonuses, salary raises, and incentives for exceptional ideas, serve as acknowledgments for notable achievements.

### **Management Insights on Talent Development and Progression**

#### *Investment in Local Talents:*

According to Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), the pivotal factors contributing to the development and progression of local talents towards middle management are a clear career path and investment in the training of young engineers.



The General Manager underscored the factory's distinctive edge in investing extensively in local talents, particularly fresh graduates from industrial engineering. **Over the nine years of the factory's existence, they've nurtured over 200 industrial engineers, with around 60 still employed in the factory. This investment is seen as a contribution to the country, as former employees assume leadership roles in other factories and international organizations.** He also mentioned what he considered a success story on the level of the group, as one of the factory engineers was attracted to work as the head of the planning department in Bangkok factory for the group. Moreover, within the span of two years, the impact of investing in these young, fresh graduate engineers became evident, showcasing a notable return on investment, leading to engineers delivering workshops and training sessions in other factories within the group. The resulting competent and cohesive middle management, comprising mostly local engineers, enhanced leadership and communication within the factory.

#### *In-House Training Center:*

The presence of an in-house training center has been attributed to the need for knowledge transfer between engineers who received international certifications in lean management and those who did not. This center serves as a hub for over 300 annual trainings, enabling engineers to become speakers and trainers within the group.

#### *Performance Evaluation, HR Evolution and Ensuring a Supportive Workplace Environment:*

The General Manager emphasized HR's evolution into a strategic business partner, evident in the semiannual performance evaluation process aligning objectives and KPIs with organizational strategy. Employee growth is prioritized through recognition of experience, inclusion of years of service in evaluations, and a focus on career paths and continuous development through certified training. The commitment to well-being is reflected in facilities, healthcare benefits, social activities, and dedication to modernization.

#### *Strategic approach towards Middle management:*

The HR manager mentioned that the factory's middle management structure is notably distinctive in its intentional focus on industrial engineers, aligning with the vision of providing employment opportunities for the local workforce and emphasizes a belief in the strength and knowledge of the young generation. This commitment is underscored by a unique collaboration with top universities in Jordan, ensuring a talent pool of high-performing graduates. **The factory's distinctiveness lies in its proactive engagement with academia to directly source graduates and subsequently provide them with real-world opportunities for skill application.**

The top management's confidence in the capabilities of industrial engineers, bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application, reflects a strategic alignment between recruitment practices and operational needs. This approach not only enhances the onboarding process but also contributes to the overarching goal of cultivating a workforce adept at applying academic knowledge in real-world industrial settings.



The HR manager outlined the factory's holistic approach to middle managers recruitment, retention, and development, including active participation in job fairs, direct communication with academic institutions and fresh graduates, and transparent career progression pathways. The commitment to an open day interview with provided transportation demonstrates a dedication to streamlining the recruitment process. A compelling package, comprising competitive salaries<sup>5</sup> and additional benefits like free transportation, medical insurance, performance-based bonuses, on-site nursery facilities, and collaboration with international brands, aims to attract and retain talent.

The factory prioritizes internal candidates for positions, utilizing effective communication channels for job opportunities. The HR manager emphasized transparent communication during orientation sessions and one-on-one meetings, underlining the commitment to employee growth. Furthermore, migrant middle managers play a supportive role, contributing expertise and mentoring local counterparts in line with the factory's need for international insight. The HR manager highlighted the cost-effectiveness of hiring local talents, citing the competitiveness of the local workforce and equitable compensation practices. **The statement implies that the local workforce's skills and competencies are on par with, if not exceeding, those of migrant workers.**

The factory's career path system, established in 2018, focuses on yearly training needs analysis, creating a comprehensive training calendar for both soft and technical skills. Transparency and fairness in the progression opportunities is ensured through communicating the evaluation results during the probationary period before making the promotion permanent. These performance evaluations, conducted monthly with transparent feedback, have a process similar to that of the semiannual evaluations. The combination of rewards for good performance and support for improvement when needed was cited for its contribution to a positive work environment. Challenges in career progression, particularly with married females opting to leave, are being addressed through a recently implemented remote working policy to support work-life balance.

#### *Audit and Compliance:*

The Internal Auditor reported that the factory's recruitment and hiring processes align 95% with the standards set by the main client, with career progression audits indicating alignment with the career path policy and no findings of discrimination based on gender or nationality. Equal pay for equal jobs is also reported to be applied uniformly. Regarding employee development, the audit procedure for performance evaluations involves a thorough review of employees' files, assessment of received evaluations, and verification of adequate support provided. For employees scoring below 2 out of 4, the company is obligated to empower them through internal and external training, a process verified by the audit.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on a salary benchmarking across the sector that was done by the factory.



## ► 5.3. Middle Management Practices:

This section will focus on the core of the factory's structure: the middle management. This section looks closely at how middle managers handle their roles, lead, and contribute to the organization. By combining survey data and qualitative insights, the section aims to highlight the practices that make middle management effective, covering issues such as communication, decision-making, and the relationship between middle managers and their teams. The goal is to identify patterns that reveal successes and challenges in these practices, offering a detailed understanding of how middle management connects organizational goals to practical strategies. This analysis sheds light on the intricate relationship between leadership, execution, and the factory's overall operations.

### Support and Strategic Alignment

**When asked about the organization's support for middle management roles and responsibilities, survey results showed that 76% of the middle managers saw that factory offered excellent support, 20% mentioned good support, and 4% were neutral.** Additionally, participants were asked about the provision of opportunities for professional development and growth within their middle management roles and all participants confirmed that they were provided with such opportunities.

During the focus groups discussions, middle managers shared that management values individual development and respects the difference in capabilities, supports decision-making, maintains an open-door policy, respects their opinions, and collaborates on decisions without imposing conflicting choices.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), highlighted support for middle management, emphasizing alignment with the company's global vision and dynamic strategy; prioritizing sustainability, innovation, and employee focus at every level, emphasizing collaborative responsibility to engage and foster diverse perspectives.

### Retention and Task Alignment Strategies

During the discussions, middle managers outlined the factory's strategies for retaining talent, highlighting the emphasis on fairness, equity, and an inclusive policy. They emphasized extended support, transparency, respect, continuous development, benefits, and the factory's commitment to understanding and meeting their needs effectively.

The HR Manager underscored key strategies for retaining middle managers including open dialogue and supporting manager-led initiatives, empowering middle managers with decision-making authority aligned with job descriptions, values, and the code of conduct. **Additionally, and also importantly, a competitive salary and reward system play a pivotal role in retaining middle managers.**

The Internal Auditor shared insights into strategies addressing turnover, emphasizing the shift in approach from focusing solely on workers' turnover to include staff at all levels, in addition to engaging with new employees, especially those in critical roles, during the internal audit process. It was noted that steps to allow more time during the orientation phase has improved turnover rates, with ongoing enhancements in the orientation process, including specific hours allocated for each department and an extension of the orientation process duration from one day to one week.



In discussions about task alignment with job descriptions, 64% of middle managers noted close alignment between their current responsibilities and outlined job roles, highlighting the comprehensive nature of their job descriptions. **Job descriptions undergo an annual review, with individual meetings before promotions, ensuring a thorough understanding of new tasks and clarity on evaluation criteria for the initial three months.** Interestingly, the middle managers expressed a willingness to support colleagues beyond their designated job descriptions, indicating a flexible approach to responsibilities.

### Communication and feedback:

The evaluation of communication between middle and top management unveiled a diverse perspective, with 40% perceiving it as excellent, another 40% as very good, and 20% as good. Middle managers underscored the openness of communication, emphasizing the acceptance of feedback and collaborative decision-making with top management. **They highlighted the effectiveness of suggestion boxes, citing instances where employee proposals, like remote working on Saturdays, were accepted.**

Discussion with KIIs focused on the significance of feedback mechanisms, emphasizing the utilization of KPIs, turnover assessments, HR-led surveys, and external evaluations to gather employee input. These mechanisms, including regular well-being assessments by HR, surveys, and questionnaires, aid in aligning improvements with identified needs. Additionally, internal and external assessments by third-party companies, alongside periodic reviews of HR reports on turnover, contribute to a systematic approach in addressing employee concerns and enhancing overall satisfaction.

Further communications and feedback mechanism were highlighted including various grievance channels at the factory such as **grievance boxes**, an open-door policy with the management and HR department indicating comprehensive strategy for collecting and addressing employee feedback within the factory, which were all confirmed by focus groups participants.

### Strategic role of middle managers:

When probed about their grasp of the factory's overall strategy, 76% felt they understood it completely, while 24% felt it was adequate. Regarding involvement in departmental strategies aligned with factory goals, 64% were extensively involved, 28% significantly, and 8% moderately. They unanimously confirmed recognition for their strategic contributions.

Middle managers perceive themselves as the bridge between top management and their teams, translating the overarching strategy into actionable plans.

In terms of decision-making authority, they claim autonomy within their scope of work, however, they tend to take decisions in collaborative ways to make sure everyone is included in decision making following a policy of inclusive decision-making. Additionally, they cite instances where their initiatives led to procedure improvements, showcasing management's support for strategic decision-making and risk-taking. They also mentioned that they have the ability to go to the top management and require changing certain SOP that has been passed down from the group headquarters and they mentioned some cases where the top management asked them to prepare an analysis and a case study to share it with the headquarters, and thus, the headquarter would change a procedure that has been ongoing for years not only in Jordan's factory but in all the factories under the group. Another one mentioned



that she had the support from the management to change the whole procedure for her department and how other departments interact with it, which improved the way of working in her department.

*“When I assumed the role of department head at the factory, the standard practice was to fulfill any incoming request to our department without question, and we would face criticism for not meeting these demands. Over time, I gained deeper understanding of the processes, and despite initial complaints about unmet requests, I engaged in discussions with top management. Upon alignment with our strategic direction, they supported me in reshaping our approach. Previously, the process was to approve requests, even if not fully convinced, only to face rejection at the top management level. Presently, we have the autonomy to reject requests, accompanied by transparent explanations to other departments if needed. Management encourages us to decline requests that do not align with the overall strategy or lack essential necessity, eliminating unnecessary efforts. Consequently, other departments now comprehend the rationale behind rejections without needing to explain, resulting in notable improvements and cost savings.”*

**Female Middle Manager**

The General Manager emphasized the collective nature of strategy development, involving the entire team in understanding the vision. It was also emphasized that middle managers are seen as active contributors who not only comprehend the strategic vision but also possess the capability to make informed decisions.

Similarly, The HR Manager outlined a systematic goal-setting approach for middle managers, incorporating different tools such as defining long-term targets, and KPIs, showcasing a structured process aligned with overall company strategy. This emphasizes the pivotal role of middle managers in translating high-level strategy into actionable goals, fostering organizational strategic alignment. Meanwhile, the Internal Auditor underscored the integration of the factory's strategy into departmental KPIs through the "strategy house," with regular evaluations and monthly reviews indicating continuous assessment.

### **Understanding of policies and their implementation:**

**When asked about their familiarity with the factory's core policies and guidelines related to their roles, 68% shared they are extremely familiar, 28% are very familiar, and 4% shared they are moderately familiar.**

During discussions, the middle managers highlighted their active role in policy creation for their departments. To ensure policies remain current, they conduct annual reviews, aligning them with any process updates. Some policies are displayed in multiple languages across departments ensuring all employees understand and adhere to them.

The factory policy standardization process involves periodic training upon updates, not just during orientation, followed by implementation checks and addressing employee challenges. Additionally, all managers confirmed receiving guidance or training on enforcing factory policies within their teams.



**When inquired about the implementation level of factory policies within their departments or teams, 48% acknowledged full implementation, 48% recognized substantial implementation, and 4% perceived moderate implementation.**

During discussions, middle managers appreciated how factory policies streamlined work procedures and added value to their operations. They diligently followed international or group standards, aligning policies with optimized processes. Yet, at times, resistance to policy changes emerged, prompting training sessions to elucidate benefits and ease of task execution.

When asked about having clear accountability for policy implementation within their departments or teams, all of them confirmed that there is clear accountability. During the discussions, the middle managers mentioned that the internal audit department conducts periodic audits on the implementation of policies based on the needs for each department, as a result of these audits they see if there were any findings that need to be corrected, ensuring continuous compliance with the policies.

The General Manager outlined a systematic approach to enforcing policies within the factory. Policies are treated as outlined procedures, with clear annual reviews involving various stakeholders, including department heads, auditors, and ISO representatives. The engagement of the middle management is highlighted, especially in the Lean department, which is seen as instrumental in disseminating Lean practices throughout the factory. **The evolution of employees from engineers to Lean consultants demonstrates a successful cultural shift towards Lean management.** The general manager emphasized the importance of Lean principles not only as a team effort but as a culture integrated into the entire organization.

The Internal Auditor shed light on the evaluation process of policy compliance emphasizing a comprehensive assessment covering various criteria like labor law, ISO standards, and client standards. The auditing process involves interviews, sample collection, and regular follow-ups. Specific challenges, like inventory discrepancies, are addressed by proposing solutions such as monthly audits. The auditor's approach is proactive, focusing on continuous improvement and timely corrective actions. The mention of sharing successful practices with other departments indicates a collaborative approach to policy enforcement and improvement.

## ► 5.4. Future Outlook of Middle Managers:

This part seeks to shed more light into how do middle managers perceive their future roles, plans, and the challenges they expect at work. This part aims to understand the collective vision that middle managers hold for their roles and the trajectory of the factor while at the same time navigating through themes of career advancement, skill development, and the evolving landscape of the industry, aiming to unravel the narratives that illuminate not only the individual ambitions of middle managers but also their collective impact on the dynamic future of the factory.



When asked about their awareness of career development opportunities for middle managers, all of current middle managers confirmed their awareness of the career path for their roles. During discussions, they mentioned having a clear career path outlined from their first day, defined in their contracts, led to their understanding of the experience and knowledge levels required to progress.

They also shared that there are some indicators about how the management works, for example, one of them shared that she had applied to a junior position but during the interview when they noticed her experience they decided to invest in her to a different position that is more suitable for her experience, others shared that this thing has happened with them as the management would consider the person's skills, knowledge, and experience and then they will try to invest in those in the best suitable way possible.

*"I initially submitted an application to the factory four years prior to my eventual employment, applying for a junior position. In the initial interview, they expressed the need for someone in a junior role, but I communicated that my level of experience exceeded that of a junior position after these years. After some time, they reached out to me, expressing interest in offering me a position more aligned with my level of experience."* **Female Jordanian Middle Manager**

Additionally, during the discussions, they shared that there are no barriers to advancement within the factory, emphasizing that it's up to individuals to seize the opportunities available. However, they mentioned challenges like fierce competition for the same positions, often with three candidates competing for a single role.

**When inquired about their satisfaction with the factory's current career development opportunities, 60% expressed being very satisfied, 36% reported satisfaction, and 4% remained neutral.** Regarding their immediate supervisor or manager's support for career development, 68% found them to be very supportive, while 32% saw them as supportive. Assessing the company's commitment to promoting leadership development among middle management employees, 56% observed a high level of commitment, and 44% noted commitment. Concerning available career growth opportunities in the next 2-5 years, 56% viewed them as satisfactory, while 44% considered them very satisfactory.

When discussing their specific career goals or aspirations for their future within the factory, all of them mentioned reaching higher positions through working on developing their knowledge and skills, strengthening and developing their weaknesses, and taking new certifications. And some of them mentioned reaching higher positions at the level of the group itself, not only the factory.

## ► 5.5. Commitment to Empowering Jordanians:

When discussing the particularities behind the empowerment for Jordanian talents, the General Manager mentioned a commitment between himself and the company's owner to empower Jordanians, not just in recruitment but in creating an environment where they can thrive, innovate, and assume leadership positions.



**The success stories are highlighted, demonstrating that the middle management, comprising 88% Jordanians, has become a pool of leaders, driving the company's success over the years. The decision to prioritize Jordanian talent is not just a response to immediate needs but aligns with a broader, sustainable management approach.** The focus on global trends, technology, and modernization indicates a forward-looking approach, requiring a workforce that is not only qualified but also quick in decision-making, adaptable, and technologically proficient.

**The choice to invest in local talent is strategically aligned with the business goals of the company.** The General Manager articulated the need for individuals who are not only educated and experienced but also possess the energy and eagerness to learn and develop. The emphasis on continuous improvement, adherence to policies, and the ability to keep pace with technological advancements are highlighted as critical elements of the company's strategy.

The management's interest in local talent is also tied to a cultural shift within the organization. The narrative suggests that the company is adapting to global changes, such as digitalization and modernization. The mention of lean practices, policy adaptability, and regular training and development programs indicates a culture that is not static but dynamic and responsive to change.

Furthermore, factory management recognized the importance of experience and also values the energy and fresh perspective that the younger generation brings.

### **A Call for Holistic Industry Advancement**

**In extending advice to other factories in the sector, the General Manager highlighted Jordan's untapped potential, urging a reevaluation of how factories engage with local talent.** Drawing from their own factory's success over nine years, the General Manager advocates for consistency in approach, emphasizing the long-term commitment to a strategy that encourages innovation and continuous improvement. The message extends to fostering a positive sector image, with a focus on leaving a lasting imprint and contributing to the industry's advancement.

The General Manager specifically called for a shift in mindset toward Jordanian young graduates, suggesting that factories in the sector should reconsider their practices to provide opportunities for these individuals. Overall, the recommendations encourage a holistic approach—leveraging local talent, maintaining strategic consistency, fostering innovation, and actively contributing to the positive narrative of the sector. The message is optimistic, promoting sustained efforts to unlock the full potential of Jordan's industrial landscape.

*"Jordan boasts a wealth of untapped talent that can be harnessed, mirroring the opportunities we've provided over the past nine years. Our experience serves as a testament to how these talents can contribute significantly, showcasing creativity, productivity, and leadership in improvement initiatives. I firmly believe that our impact on the sector wouldn't have been possible without the inclusion of these young talents. Therefore, I advocate for other factories to reevaluate and extend more opportunities to Jordanian talents, empowering them to make meaningful contributions."*

**General Manager**



## ▶ 6. Conclusions

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As we bring this investigation into the realm of middle management employment within Jordan's garment sector to a close, this case study sought to unravel the success achieved by Pine Tree Company for Textile Manufacturing (PSC) in attracting and retaining Jordanian talent. As the industry traditionally leaned on migrant workers, this investigation aimed to spotlight a paradigm shift evident in this garment factory. The primary goal was to comprehend the key elements and practices fostering the recruitment and sustained employment of Jordanians in these knowledge-intensive service roles. Throughout a systematic exploration of surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, coupled with a nuanced analysis of the accumulated data, the study examined factors shaping employee satisfaction, ranging from working conditions and compensation to career prospects, workplace culture, and management policies. The resulting findings and recommendations stand as a roadmap, offering actionable insights for industry stakeholders, governmental bodies, and relevant organizations. The ultimate aspiration is to catalyze widespread adoption of successful strategies, thereby fortifying the foundation for a robust and locally empowered middle management within Jordan's garment sector.

For the purpose of this case study, 25 Jordanian middle managers were surveyed and then included in focus group discussion, and 4 key informant interviews were conducted with the General Manager, the Factory Manager, the HR Manager, and the Internal Auditor.

### **Commitment to Empowering Jordanians**

The General Manager's insights provide a profound understanding of the deliberate commitment to fostering a thriving environment for local professionals.

The success stories within the middle management, predominantly comprising Jordanians, stand as a testament to the fruition of this commitment. With 88% of the middle management being Jordanian, the factory has cultivated a pool of leaders who have played a pivotal role in the company's sustained success. This decision to prioritize local talent is not merely a reactionary measure but aligns seamlessly with a comprehensive, sustainable management approach.

The strategic alignment becomes evident when considering the dynamic needs of the industry, marked by global trends, technological advancements, and a relentless pursuit of modernization. The emphasis on qualifications is coupled with a need for a workforce that embodies agility, innovation, and technological proficiency—an imperative for staying competitive in a rapidly evolving landscape.

The investment in local talent extends beyond a strategic business move; it reflects a cultural shift within the organization. The factory's adaptability to global changes, its incorporation of lean practices, policy flexibility, and a robust training culture paint a picture of a dynamic, responsive, and forward-looking workplace.

Acknowledging the value of experience, the General Manager underscores the vitality of infusing the workforce with the energy and fresh perspectives brought by the younger generation. This delicate balance between the wisdom of the older generation and the dynamism of the youth is seen as a crucial element in driving the factory's success.



The endorsement from the factory manager, affirming the exceptional performance of Jordanian middle managers and talents, adds weight to the narrative of local empowerment.

In extending advice to peers in the industry, the General Manager advocates for a paradigm shift in how factories engage with local talent, particularly young graduates. The call for consistency in approach, a commitment to innovation, and active contribution to the positive narrative of the sector encapsulates a forward-looking, optimistic vision. The recommendations resonate not only as a strategy for individual factory success but as a broader call for industry-wide transformation, unlocking the untapped potential within Jordan's industrial landscape.

### **Overall Satisfaction**

The investigation into the satisfaction of middle managers within the factory has unveiled a multifaceted landscape defined by various elements. The survey and subsequent focus group discussions illuminated a high level of contentment among middle managers, attributing their fulfillment to a range of factors. The foundation of robust support and clear career progression, coupled with family-friendly initiatives like on-site childcare facilities, stood out prominently. The open-door policy, shared professional background, autonomy in decision-making, and commitment to skill development all contributed to their satisfaction in their roles. Beyond job responsibilities, motivators such as a well-structured salary, diverse incentives, and a supportive work culture played pivotal roles in fostering commitment. Insights from key informant interviews emphasized the factory's commitment to investing in local talents, exemplified by various HR initiatives. In essence, the comprehensive picture painted reveals a workplace where middle managers derive fulfillment not only from their professional trajectories but also from the inclusive and dynamic ecosystem cultivated by the factory. This narrative of satisfaction not only captures the present state but also serves as a guiding compass for sustained success and continued employee engagement.

### **Work Environment, Mental Health, and Work-Life Balance**

The evaluation of middle managers' satisfaction with the work environment and company culture presents a nuanced landscape, with a balanced spectrum of responses. Lean management and Kaizen principles emerge as cornerstones, fostering continuous improvement and innovation. A commitment to learning opportunities, fair policies, gender inclusivity, and a familial atmosphere contribute to a secure and flexible workplace. The General Manager's holistic vision, aligned with sustainability goals, reflects the factory's commitment to excellence. Internal audits and a clearly defined career path further guide the commitment to sustained workplace culture evolution. Proactive mental health initiatives and a dedication to work-life balance showcase the factory's comprehensive approach to employee well-being, solidifying its position as a workplace that prioritizes both professional and personal growth.

### **Gender Equity**

The outlined initiatives distinctly underscore the factory's unwavering commitment to fostering and sustaining gender equity within its organizational fabric.



The provision of a free childcare facility and safe transportation is representative of the factory's commitment to its female employees, relieving mothers of stress by offering qualified babysitters. The emphasis on a secure working environment, extending to transportation and after-hours policies, further manifests the company's dedication to the well-being and safety of its female workforce.

A notable aspect of the factory's commitment to gender equity is the significant representation of females in middle management positions, challenging traditional industrial norms. This not only underscores the factory's support for women's empowerment but also serves as a model for fostering diversity and inclusion within the workplace.

The factory's alignment with its client's brand-mandated gender equity program, exemplified through the "Her program," reinforces its dedication to providing equal opportunities for all genders, ethnicities, and nationalities. The adherence to gender-neutral recruitment practices, family-friendly policies, and the elimination of gender and nationality-based pay gaps are tangible demonstrations of the company's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment.

In essence, these efforts underscore the factory's holistic approach to gender equity, positioning it as a beacon for promoting equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion within its organizational culture.

## Career Progression to Middle Management

### *Joining the Factory and Reaching Middle Management*

The diverse journey of middle managers to the factory, regardless of entry-level or later-career status, showcases limited prior industry knowledge. Various paths, from university outreach to recommendations, highlight multiple talent attraction strategies. The factory's reputation and structured recruitment processes played a crucial role in their decisions to join the factory, often outweighing more lucrative offers. Motivating factors included international exposure, competitive salaries, specialized work, and a respectful atmosphere. Transparent and fair recruitment practices, underscored by antidiscrimination policies and competency emphasis, signify the company's commitment to merit. Success criteria for middle management roles blend technical skills, leadership, communication, and adaptability, with English proficiency not emphasized.

Significantly, 80% of middle managers were internally promoted, revealing a strategic focus on nurturing talent within, with 65% achieving this milestone within five years. The transparency in the promotion process, acknowledged by 88% of respondents, reflects the factory's commitment to fair and open career progression. Overall, these diverse paths and motivating factors illustrate the factory's proactive talent acquisition, development, and upward mobility, establishing it as an appealing workplace for career growth and fulfillment.

### *Training and development*

The commitment to middle managers' development at the factory is distinctly characterized by a robust investment strategy, encompassing internal and external training, task immersion, and structured preparation. The flexibility in promotion pathways, exemplified by elevation to staff levels post-bachelor's degree completion, underscores a dynamic approach to career advancement.



The emphasis on training, both internal and external, is a cornerstone of the factory's approach, with a comprehensive curriculum covering technical and soft skills. Supervisors play a pivotal role in providing guidance, and department-specific training ensures a holistic understanding of the factory's operations. The proactive stance of management, supporting any training deemed beneficial by employees, showcases a commitment to continuous skill development.

International training opportunities further enrich the skill sets of middle managers, with a structured system, including annual and monthly training plans, ensuring a strategic alignment with skill development needs. The positive impact of training on performance and job satisfaction is acknowledged by middle managers, with leadership training particularly praised for enhancing delegation skills and fostering a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics.

Moreover, the factory's approach to post-training commitments has evolved, with a shift from mandatory commitments to a more supportive stance. The discontinuation of commitment signing, except for three isolated instances five years ago, reflects a recognition that hindering individuals from pursuing better opportunities may impede their overall performance. Presently, the obligation post-training revolves around knowledge-sharing, aligning with the factory's commitment to openness and collaboration.

This collective approach to training and development processes underscores the factory's dedication to nurturing a skilled, motivated, and transparently advanced middle management team.

#### *Management Insights on talent Development and progression*

The factory's success in nurturing local talents towards middle management is underscored by a multi-layered approach centered on clear career paths and substantial investment in the training of young engineers. Over the course of nine years, the factory's commitment to this strategy has resulted in the development of over 200 industrial engineers, with a significant impact and return of investment evident within two years, showcasing that local workforce's skills and competencies are on par with, if not exceeding, those of migrant workers. This investment has not only contributed to the factory's internal competence but has also extended its influence beyond, with former employees assuming leadership roles locally and globally.

The establishment of an in-house training center has played a pivotal role in facilitating knowledge transfer and skills development. The emphasis on continuous development is further reflected in the transformation of the HR department into a strategic business partner, actively contributing to the processes of the factory. Moreover, the commitment to employee well-being is evident not only through training initiatives but also through facilities, healthcare benefits, and engaging social activities.

The distinctive middle management structure at the factory, predominantly composed of industrial engineers, reflects a deliberate commitment to local talent empowerment. This strategic choice, complemented by proactive engagement with universities, ensures a continuous influx of high-performing graduates, aligning with the factory's vision of providing real-world opportunities for skill application.



The recruitment approach, marked by active participation in job fairs, direct communication with fresh graduates, and open day interviews with provided transportation, showcases a dedication to streamlining the process. The comprehensive benefits package, including salary, free transportation, medical insurance, performance-based bonuses, and on-site nursery facilities, forms an appealing proposition for attracting and retaining talent.

The commitment to internal promotions, transparent communication of career paths, and the nuanced approach to diversity and inclusion, leveraging the expertise of migrant middle managers, contribute to a holistic employee development strategy. This emphasis on hiring local talents, backed by yearly training needs analysis and a structured career path system, further reinforces the factory's commitment to the growth and retention of its middle managers.

Interestingly, it was confirmed that the cost of hiring and developing local talents was evidently lower than hiring migrants for these knowledge-intensive service positions, especially that the only difference between hiring locals and migrants is the provision of housing for migrants, as trainings are mandatory regardless of the nationality of the employee, making it more cost-effective to hire local talents.

The alignment with brand standards, commitment to gender equity, and the rigorous audit process ensuring fair evaluations and necessary support underscore the factory's dedication to maintaining high standards in recruitment, career progression, and employee development. Overall, the approach of the factory positions it as an employer invested not only in the present capabilities of its workforce but also in their continuous growth and success.

## **Middle Management Practices**

### *Support and Strategic Alignment*

The factory's robust support for middle management roles is evident, with a significant majority of middle managers expressing satisfaction with the level of support provided. The commitment to professional development and growth opportunities within middle management roles is unanimously acknowledged by participants.

Middle managers emphasized the factory's values of individual development, decision-making autonomy, open communication, and collaborative decision-making processes during the focus group discussions. The General Manager highlighted the alignment of support initiatives with the group's global vision, emphasizing sustainability, innovation, and employee focus. Regular updates and inclusive strategies ensure that middle managers are integral to the factory's overarching goals.

The HR Manager's emphasis on aligning factory strategy with objectives at all levels, coupled with leadership workshops and empowerment practices, underscores the organization's commitment to fostering engagement and performance within middle management. The Internal Auditor's focus on KPI alignment and regular analysis further highlights the systematic efforts to ensure organizational awareness and ongoing alignment with company goals. Overall, the factory's approach reflects a holistic commitment to supporting, developing, and aligning middle management roles with the broader factory vision.



### *Retention and Task Alignment Strategies*

The factory's commitment to retaining talent is underscored by a strategy that prioritizes fairness, equity, and inclusivity. Middle managers highlighted key elements such as extended support, transparency, respect, continuous development, and competitive reward systems as crucial factors contributing to their retention.

The HR department plays a pivotal role in this strategy, as the HR manager emphasized the importance of open dialogue, decision-making empowerment aligned with values, and a competitive salary structure. The Internal Auditor's insights reveal proactive measures to address turnover, including an enhanced orientation process and ongoing improvements aligned with individual departmental needs.

Discussions around task alignment showcased a majority of middle managers feeling closely aligned with their job descriptions, emphasizing the thorough annual review process and individual meetings before promotions to ensure clarity and understanding. The flexible approach demonstrated by managers willing to support colleagues beyond their designated roles is recognized through formal competency registration and bonus incentives.

The HR manager stated a structured approach to task alignment, including clear communication upon promotion, regular performance evaluations, and periodic job description reviews, further enhances transparency and adaptability within the organizational framework. Overall, the factory's retention strategy encompasses a comprehensive and dynamic approach to aligning middle managers' tasks with their roles, fostering a supportive and evolving work environment.

### *Role in Team Empowerment*

The exploration of middle managers' roles in team empowerment revealed a diverse range of leadership styles, adaptable to the nature of their respective departments. Recognizing the significance of individual personalities, the HR manager highlighted the role of the HR department in aligning these styles with the factory's values, fostering consistency in leadership interactions while embracing uniqueness.

The diverse leadership styles were identified not only as a method of team empowerment but also as a strategic approach to developing future leaders within the organization. The emphasis on embedding company values into leadership practices emerged as crucial for succession planning.

Middle managers underscored their commitment to team growth and development through knowledge cascading, providing learning opportunities, and fostering teamwork. The involvement of middle management in recruitment and evaluation processes was highlighted as pivotal for empowering teams. The top management's proactive role in providing guidance, training, and development opportunities, including international programs, exemplified a commitment to enhancing team empowerment skills. Overall, the factory's commitment to empowering middle managers as team leaders and decision-makers reflects a proactive strategy for sustained organizational growth.



### *Communication and Feedback*

The evaluation of communication between middle and top management reveals a positive landscape within the factory. Middle managers expressed high satisfaction levels, with 80% perceiving communication as excellent or very good. The emphasis on openness, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative decision-making underscores the factory's commitment to fostering a communicative and inclusive environment.

The diverse grievance channels highlighted, ranging from suggestion boxes to direct communication with top management, showcase a comprehensive strategy for collecting and addressing employee feedback. The grievance approach, including an employee relations team, reflects the factory's dedication to providing accessible and effective channels for employees to voice their concerns and grievances.

Conflict resolution mechanisms within the factory, outlined by middle managers, reflect a proactive and collaborative approach. The presence of a dedicated HR department, an open-door policy, and a structured grievance procedure contribute to a supportive environment. The involvement of top management in conflict resolution discussions further demonstrates a commitment to addressing conflicts promptly and thoroughly, fostering a culture of open communication and continuous improvement.

The Internal Auditor's insights emphasized the efficacy of the system in preventing unfairness, inequality, and injustice within the company, highlighting the commitment to maintaining a respectful and equitable working environment. Additionally, the positive working relationships and dynamics between Jordanian and migrant middle managers as mentioned by the middle managers, characterized by friendship, gift exchanges, and shared celebrations, showcase a harmonious and inclusive workplace culture. Overall, the factory's approach to communication, feedback, and conflict resolution contributes to a positive and collaborative organizational climate.

### *Strategic Role of Middle Managers*

The assessment of middle managers' understanding and engagement with the factory's overall strategy reveals a high level of comprehension and involvement. A majority, 76%, feel they have a complete understanding of the factory's overarching strategy, while 64% are extensively involved in departmental strategies aligned with factory goals. The acknowledgment of their strategic contributions underlines their pivotal role in bridging top management directives with actionable plans at the team level.

Middle managers position themselves as key interpreters of strategy, translating high-level objectives into team specific KPIs to ensure alignment with the overall vision. Their autonomy within their scope of work, coupled with collaborative decision-making, reflects a balance between individual authority and inclusive practices. Instances where their initiatives led to procedure improvements demonstrate the support from top management for strategic decision-making and calculated risks.

The General Manager's perspective emphasized the collective nature of strategy development, portraying middle managers as active contributors capable of making informed decisions. The emphasis on teamwork, diverse backgrounds, and the strategic team's role in decision-making underscores the value placed on multi-disciplinary perspectives and collaborative approaches to strategy implementation.



The HR Manager emphasis on the structured approach to goal setting, incorporating the X matrix and long-term targets, indicates a systematic process for aligning individual and team goals with the overarching company strategy. The Internal Auditor's insights into the integration of the factory's strategy into departmental KPIs through the "strategy house" and the use of Lean methodologies for continuous improvement further highlight the organization's commitment to strategic alignment and adaptability.

In essence, the collaboration between top management and middle managers in translating, implementing, and evaluating strategy showcases a comprehensive approach that reinforces the factory's commitment to strategic excellence and continuous improvement.

### *Understanding of Policies and their Implementation*

Middle managers at the factory exhibit a commendable level of familiarity with the core policies and guidelines relevant to their roles, with 96% describing themselves as having high levels of familiarity. Their active involvement in the policy creation process for their departments underscores their commitment to crafting guidelines that align with their task processes and remain current through annual reviews.

The policy standardization process, characterized by training sessions, implementation checks, and addressing challenges, ensures that policies are not only understood but also effectively put into practice. With 48% acknowledging full implementation and another 48% recognizing substantial implementation within their departments or teams, it is evident that these policies play a crucial role in streamlining work procedures and adding value to operations.

The presence of clear accountability for policy implementation within departments is affirmed by all middle managers, with periodic audits conducted by the internal audit department to ensure continuous compliance. This proactive approach aligns with the General Manager's emphasis on the systematic enforcement strategy, treating policies as outlined procedures subject to annual reviews and engagement with various stakeholders.

The General Manager's emphasis on the Lean department's role in disseminating Lean practices throughout the factory reflects a successful cultural shift towards Lean management. The incorporation of Lean principles is not just seen as a team effort but as a widespread culture integrated into the entire organization, showcasing a commitment to continuous improvement.

The Internal Auditor's insights into the evaluation process of policy compliance highlight a comprehensive assessment covering various criteria, including labor law, ISO standards, and client standards. The proactive approach to addressing challenges and proposing solutions, such as monthly audits for specific issues like inventory discrepancies, emphasizes a commitment to continuous improvement and adherence to high standards.

In conclusion, the factory's approach to policy creation, implementation, and enforcement is not just a procedural requirement but an integral part of its organizational culture, contributing to streamlined operations, adherence to standards, and a commitment to ongoing improvement.



## Future Outlook of Middle Managers

Survey results and insights from focus group discussions shed light on the shared vision of middle managers, encompassing themes of career advancement, skill development, and the evolving landscape of the industry.

The unanimous awareness of career development opportunities is a testament to the transparent and well-defined career paths outlined for middle managers from their first day, as articulated in their contracts. The flexibility demonstrated by the management in recognizing individual skills, knowledge, and experience during the hiring process highlights a commitment to personalized growth trajectories. Despite the absence of formal barriers to advancement within the factory, middle managers acknowledge challenges, particularly in the form of competition for desirable positions. The acknowledgment of this competition, where three candidates may compete for a single role, underscores the high stakes and the need for continuous development to stay competitive.

Satisfaction with the factory's current career development opportunities is notably high, with 96% expressing satisfaction. The strong support from immediate supervisors or managers for career development, reported by all middle managers, underscores the collaborative and empowering culture within the factory.

The perceived commitment of the company to promoting leadership development among middle management employees is acknowledged by all middle managers, reflecting a substantial dedication to nurturing leadership skills. Looking ahead, 56% find the projected career growth opportunities in the next 2-5 years satisfactory, with 44% considering them very satisfactory.

In expressing their specific career goals and aspirations, middle managers collectively emphasize a commitment to reaching higher positions within the factory and, intriguingly, at the level of the group itself. Their strategies involve a holistic approach, focusing on knowledge and skill development, addressing weaknesses, and acquiring new certifications. This approach aligns with the dynamic and evolving nature of their roles, reflecting not only individual ambitions but also a shared commitment to contributing to the future success of the factory.

In conclusion, the comprehensive exploration of the factory's organizational dynamics and the perspectives of its key stakeholders reveals a strategic intent, commitment to local empowerment, and a dedication to continuous improvement. The success stories within middle management underscore the efficacy of a nuanced approach to talent development, where Jordanian professionals not only find opportunities but ascend to leadership positions, contributing significantly to the factory's sustained success. The narratives of leadership styles, career development, policy implementation, and strategic alignment paint a picture of a factory that thrives on collaboration, adaptability, and a forward-looking atmosphere. As the factory looks ahead, the insights shared by its leaders provide not only a blueprint for individual success but a resonating call for the broader industry to embrace innovation, foster local talent, and collectively shape a positive narrative for Jordan's industrial landscape.



## ▶ 7. Recommendations

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Drawing insights from the discussions on the factory's practices, the following are a set of recommendations to increase hiring Jordanian talents in knowledge-intensive positions in the sector. By adopting these recommendations, factories can not only attract and retain local talents as middle managers but also foster an environment conducive to continuous growth, innovation, and strategic alignment.

### ENTERPRISE LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Attracting Local Talent:

- ▶ **Tailored Recruitment Strategies:** Develop targeted recruitment campaigns highlighting career growth opportunities, company culture, and the diverse roles available in middle management positions.
- ▶ **Local Talent Showcases:** Participate in career fairs, seminars, or workshops in Jordanian universities or vocational schools to showcase career paths and opportunities within the garment sector.
- ▶ **Internship and Training Programs:** Offer structured internship or training programs to introduce Jordanian students or fresh graduates to the garment industry, potentially grooming them for future middle management positions.
- ▶ **Employee Referral Programs:** Encourage current employees to refer potential Jordanian candidates, leveraging their networks to attract local talent.
- ▶ **Inclusive Work Environment:** Cultivate a supportive and inclusive workplace culture where Jordanian employees feel valued, respected, and comfortable, fostering teamwork and collaboration.

#### Developing and Retaining Local Talent:

- ▶ **Tailored Career Pathways:** Establish transparent promotion policies that outline the criteria and pathways for career advancement within the garments sector. This ensures fair opportunities and encourages local talents to aim for higher roles.
- ▶ **Structured Training Programs:** Design comprehensive training modules focusing on industry-specific skills and leadership development tailored for Jordanian employees aspiring to step into middle management roles.
- ▶ **Skill Enhancement Initiatives:** Offer continuous skill enhancement courses, workshops, or certifications for existing Jordanian employees to upskill and prepare them for managerial responsibilities.
- ▶ **Mentorship and Coaching:** Implement mentorship programs pairing experienced managers with Jordanian talents to provide guidance, support, and career advice for professional growth.



- ▶ **Cross-Functional Exposure:** Facilitate job rotations or cross-functional projects that allow Jordanian employees to gain diverse experiences and perspectives within the garment sector.
- ▶ **Competitive Compensation:** Ensure competitive salary structures and benefits, acknowledging the contributions and potential of Jordanian employees in middle management positions.

#### FOR INDUSTRY COLLABORATION:

- ▶ **Industry Best Practices Sharing:** Engage in industry forums or collaborations to share best practices in talent development and retention within the garment sector.
- ▶ **Skill Standardization Initiatives:**
  - ▶ Collaborate with relevant bodies to establish standardized skill development programs aimed at nurturing local talent for middle management roles.
  - ▶ Advocate for industry-wide skill development programs, in collaboration with government bodies, targeting local talent for middle management roles.
  - ▶ Encourage investment in sector-specific leadership training programs for Jordanian employees, focusing on technical and soft skills.
  - ▶ Promote sector-wide mentorship schemes for knowledge transfer and skill development.
  - ▶ Advocate for sector-wide internship or training programs to introduce Jordanian students to the garment industry.
- ▶ **Partnerships with Educational Institutions:** Forge partnerships with universities or training centers to align educational curricula with industry needs and create specialized courses or programs catering to the needs of middle management positions in the garment industry.

#### FOR GOVERNMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT BODIES

- ▶ **Skill Development Collaborations:** Design skill development programs catering to the specific needs of garment sector in cooperation with sector associations.
- ▶ **Policy Support:** Design policies supporting career advancement and training opportunities for local Jordanian talents within the garment sector.
- ▶ **Industry Awareness Programs:** Conduct workshops or awareness campaigns showcasing the potential career growth opportunities available for Jordanian talents in the garment industry.
- ▶ Articulate and demonstrate the strategic advantage of investing in local talents, emphasizing the value of their fresh perspectives, adaptability, and commitment among more experienced employees.



## ▶ 8. Annexes

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### ▶ Annex 1: Detailed Methodology:

Third Party utilized a mixed-method approach of data collection of qualitative and quantitative tools, with a special emphasis on the qualitative ones, which enabled Third Party to obtain in-depth information from different stakeholders within the targeted factory.

The data collection tools included surveys and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the Jordanian employees in Middle management roles, and Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) with the General Manager, the Factory manager, the HR manager, and the Internal Auditor in the targeted factory.

All tools were developed and finalized in collaboration between Third Party and Better Work Jordan. In the data collection phase, gender sensitive approach and ethical research considerations were followed in formulating and addressing the questions through the questionnaires, FGDs, and KIIs.

#### **Data Collection Methods and Tools, and Sampling**

The data collection tools listed in this section aimed to collect information and answer the research questions for the purpose of the case study. All tools were designed in English and translated to Arabic language and were finalized in collaboration with Better Work Jordan assigned team.

##### **1- Survey**

The Middle Management Employee Satisfaction Survey was designed to assess the sentiments and experiences of individuals in middle management roles. The survey aimed to gauge personal satisfaction, understand perceptions about support structures, communication effectiveness, and roles in strategy and policy implementation. Sections dedicated to career progression and future outlook delve into the opportunities, transparency, and support mechanisms available within the targeted factory.

The purpose of the surveys was to collect quantitative information to supply credible and reliable findings and recommendations for evidence-based decision-making.

The project's targeted population is originally estimated to be 30 Jordanians in middle management roles. Given the small number of the population, the research aimed to survey all available middle managers.

However, the final number of participants in the survey was 25 middle managers, as 3 middle managers were on leave during the period of the research and 2 middle managers who were newly hired were not included in the survey.



## **2- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

The FGD guideline was developed to further investigate the Jordanian employees' satisfaction levels, the factors that led them to work in the factory, their progression to middle management, their contributions on strategical levels, the general practices within middle management, and their future outlook. The FGDs took place after the completion of the surveys data analysis, and was guided by its results.

Ethical aspects were considered in all FGDs. In preparation for the FGDs, participants were informed about the purpose of the FGDs, and verbal consent was collected on their acceptance to answer the FGD questions. To ensure applying the "do no harm" principle and having a safe space for all participants to share their opinions and experiences, the participants were assured that the FGDs are a safe space and that what they say in the session is to remain in the session and the management would not be informed of specific sayings of any participant. The design of the tools' questions avoided stereotyping and took into consideration the mental health and well-being of the respondents. In addition, during the introduction, the facilitators informed the participants that their participation is confidential, all answers will be anonymous, and their names will be deleted from the transcription if they were mentioned during the session. They were also informed that their participation is voluntary, and they have the right to refuse to answer the questions if they are not comfortable with them. To ensure the confidentiality of the data during the data collection and analysis, facilitation of the sessions and transcription of the recordings were done by Third Party team who signed a confidentiality agreement with the company. Furthermore, to ensure that all data was collected during the FGDs, a verbal consent to record the sessions was collected from all participants.

The total number of FGDs is 5. Each FGD included 5 participants. The total number of FGD participants was 24.

All FGDs were conducted over 3 working days during November according to the middle managers' availability, with about 2 hours for each session.

## **3- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

The purpose of the KIIs is to investigate the management's practices and perceptions regarding the employment of Jordanians in middle management, their motives regarding the employment of Jordanians in middle management, the challenges they faced, and the benefits they gained from these practices.

Third party initially selected 4 Key Informants based on their role in the factory; and these are the General manager (Jordanian), the Factory manager (Migrant), the HR manager (Migrant), and the Internal Auditor (Jordanian).



## Data Analysis Process

The following quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were used:

### *Quantitative Data Analysis*

Quantitative data was collected using a free open-source tool for mobile data collection "KOBO" and extracted in an excel format. The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The data was cleaned after compilation by the research team.

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

Data analysis incorporated transferring data into meaningful results after transcribing interviews and focus group discussions, performing a preliminary read-through of the database, and organizing themes. A full transcription of the participants' answers was written in the spoken language (Arabic), and all unique answers were translated during the report writing phase.

Inductive descriptive analysis for data was utilized. This process involved rereading the quotes several times to be sure that they were suitable for the theme. After identifying the main themes, the meanings behind the quotes of each theme were interpreted and written in the form of conclusions of the main assessment findings. To ensure coverage of all themes, manual thematic analysis was used during the analysis process.

## Quality Assurance (QA)

To ensure the quality of the data collected, Third Party Consulting provided 2 enumerators with comprehensive training on the tools. In addition, TP developed quantitative and qualitative tools for different stakeholders, which allowed to provide more context and relevant information to triangulate the data.

## Training of enumerators

The enumerators were trained on using the survey collection system and collecting the data, sharing the expected situations they might face while collecting the data. Topics mentioned during the training included:

- ▶ The purpose of the research assignment;
- ▶ An overview of the project;
- ▶ Understanding the questionnaire;
- ▶ Understanding how to ethically collect good quality data – introductions, informed consent, and confidentiality, and potential bias; and
- ▶ Understanding the roles and responsibilities of enumerators.



Follow up with the enumerators was conducted to provide mitigation measures on challenges they faced during the data collection. In addition, regular quality checks on the data collected were run through TP's quality assurance staff.

### **Triangulation of Data**

Triangulation of data is a key element of the data analysis process and is required to strengthen the rigor of the findings. Third Party team used two types of triangulations to highlight any inconsistencies between different data sources. These are:

- ▶ **Triangulation Methods**, both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed and used to elucidate complementary aspects of the same subject; and
- ▶ **Data sources triangulation** was based on triangulation of data collected through the FGDs, KIIs and the different surveys used in the primary data collection. It involved examining the consistency of different data sources within the same methods. The credibility of this approach is improved through the consistent use of good semi-structured interview guides to reach a point where Third Party minimizes the impact of infrequent/outlier points of view.





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