



How Top Glove Becomes the Largest Glove Producer

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ABSTRACT

Top Glove as the world's largest glove producer provides quality and efficient gloves for healthcare purposes. This study is conducted to investigate key success factors that lead Top Glove to become a successful company. The study also gathered information about the challenges that Top Glove is facing to examine how Top Glove took over the obstacles and used its success factors to maintain its position in this industry. The findings indicate leadership, image and reputation, organizational innovation and employee satisfaction are the main contributing factors of Top Glove success.

Keywords: Employee Satisfaction, Image and Reputation, Innovation, Leadership, Organizational Success, Success Factors

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to investigate the factors that contribute to the success of Top Glove. The paper proposes that how Top Glove motivates their employees and the satisfactory level of their employees helps the company turn into a more successful and achieve a more ultimate future.

Motivation is the employees' power and encouragement to act (behave) in a certain way. This strength takes the form of an individual's willingness to do something or according to their ability. Musriha (2011), Mehta, Dubinsky, and Anderson (2003), and Risambessy, Swasto, Thoyib, Astuti, & Endang (2012) found that motivation has a significant impact on employee's job performance.

Top Glove has put a lot of effort to run its small business and turn it into a successful business as the world's largest rubber company. It has now focused on the current issue to produce disposable 3-ply face masks and surgical gloves to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. Besides, it reduces its organizational risks by foreign expansion and export strategies. This allows the company to survive if something goes wrong in one particular country as it has wholly-owned subsidiaries in other countries.

One of the key success factors of Top Glove to become the largest manufacturer of gloves in Malaysia is innovation. Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai, a founder of Top Glove, stated that the bedrock of any company is continuous learning and improvement with a focus on a healthy and happy workforce. The secret of Top Glove was embracing the latest technology advancement in innovating new products and investing in people. Also, higher emphasis on research and development leads to its rapid rise as well as



continuous learning and improvement through benchmarking against successful companies. It truly trusts that this is the only way for using an efficient low-cost strategy to produce high-quality gloves. This underlines that continuous improvement brought the success of Top Glove.

We suggested that there are a few aspects that they need to pay attention such as political aspects, national economic perspectives, and intellectual property protection. The company's return on investment will directly affect Top Glove's brand image through all of the aspects. The following literature relates to Top Glove key success factors with a wide range of measures. We highlighted the factors for a business towards future success and achievement (see Table 1).

Table 1. Selected Findings

Authors (Years)	Significant Findings
Lebdioui (2020)	Industrial policies upgrade the rubber value chain by applying price control mechanisms, quality control for export promotion, research and development, and trade promotion and market access. It protects the image and reputation of the industry.
Farahnak, Ehrhart, Torres, & Aarons (2020)	Transformational leadership brings positive effects to co-workers. However, leaders' attitudes toward the change being implemented (EBP) did not indicate any effect on implementation success through the influence on employees' attitudes toward EBP.
do Adro & Leitão (2020)	Leadership, organizational effectiveness of non-profit boards, and governance practices bring impact on Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) innovation. Leadership styles and their relation to performance also affect workers and the community in the third sector.
Bhardwaj, Mishra, & Jain (2020)	There are positive relationships between leadership and employee engagement and organizational transformation.
Low, Rahman, & Zakaria (2020)	The team orientation, power and rules orientation, uncertainty avoidance, future orientation, flexibility orientation, goals orientation, relationship orientation, innovation orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, marketing formalization orientation, long-term orientation, market orientation, learning orientation, technology orientation, ethical orientation, reward orientation, and values orientation play a moderate role in the Malaysian contractor market.
Muniandy et al. (2020)	Structure commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, ability, organizational culture, organizational structure, and leadership are the key success factors to improve competitiveness.



Authors (Years)	Significant Findings
Saura, Palos-Sanchez, & Grilo (2019)	Positive factors to start a business includes artificial intelligence, machine learning processes, and the attitude of start-up managers. The standards for success, which are also neutral factors, include the development of business plans, the type of project, the support of start-up incubators, and the geolocation of start-ups. The type of programming languages used, the quality of the job offers, and the negotiations with the business angels bring a negative effect on a start-up business if it is not well organized.
Kanamathipillai & Azam (2019)	The critical success factors for woman entrepreneurship are financial capital, human capital, social capital, innovation, and work-life balance.
Zahidy, Sorooshian, & Hamid (2019)	The critical success factors for corporate social responsibility (CSR) include financial resources, top management support, managerial or internal skills on CSR, employees' education and training on CSR, participation of key stakeholders in the CSR process. However, the three other success factors which are national economic growth, effective CSR communication, organizational structure, considered as more relevant in Malaysian context.
Pacagnella, da Silva, Pacífico, de Arruda Ignacio, & da Silva, (2019)	The team integration, clear objectives, learned lessons, use of previous technologies, time and money reserves, risk identification explain the success of a project.
Chandrarin, Omar, Yuniawan, & Lisetyati (2019)	Several factors of leadership, i.e., behavioral, culture, technical/ structural, and political are highlighted. The quality management support, technology or quality, and the ability to estimate a production cost are important success factors.
Elrehail et al. (2019)	Human resource management (planning, job analysis and design, and recruitment), employee performance, training, and development bring significant effect on the competitive advantage of a five-star hotel.
Kulathunga & Fernando (2019)	Information content, system accuracy, and system timeliness have a positive effect on user satisfaction.
Siddique & Ganguly (2019)	There are six critical success factors for manufacturing industries in India, which are Top Management Commitment, Human Resource Management, Organizational Culture, Regulatory Practice, Process Management, and Quality Management



Authors (Years)	Significant Findings
Vogelsang, Liere-Netheler, Packmohr, & Hoppe (2018)	Three dimensions that describe success factors in manufacturing companies are environmental factors, organizational factors (customer needs, employee qualification, management support), and technical factors (reliability, adaptability, availability).
Samsudin & Hasan (2017)	Top management, resource management, training, and work culture are the main critical success factors in embarking the total productive maintenance in the organization.
Gebauer, Friedli, & Fleisch (2006)	Establishing a service culture, relationship marketing, and market-oriented service development, separating service organization, expanding service offerings, define a service strategy.

Success is the achievement of present goals. It is undeniable that an organization does not obtain any success factors to lead their company towards accomplishment. There are lots of factors to drive it towards success. They are leadership, image and reputation, capabilities of management, creditability, organizational innovation, information technology, research and development, intellectual property rights, workforce innovation, organizational innovation, employee satisfaction, job satisfaction, employee involvement and relations, customer satisfaction, market opportunities and network, communication, reputation and trust, brand values, identity, image and commitment, human resources practices, training and education, employee talent and calibre, organizational learning, renewal capability, customer loyalty and alliance, culture, values, health, safety, quality of working conditions, society benefits, social, environmental, intangible assets and intellectual capital, knowledge management, strategy and strategic planning and corporate governance. According to the variety of factors determining the success of an organization, this research focuses on leadership, image and reputation, organizational innovation, and employee satisfaction as the important factors that lead to Top Glove's achievement in the competitive industry.

One successful business depends on leadership. According to Hao and Rashad (2015), leadership plays the role in the survival and success of the organization. Leaders need to determine innovation as it has a direct effect on the innovation of group members (Kaylar, 2011).

The leadership team at Top Glove knows that effective transformation requires reimagining business processes through employees. They always lead their team by giving examples. Besides, they set good management practices and corporate cultures such as non-smoking policy and health book reading projects to achieve the company vision to be a world-class partner of gloves and healthcare products. This demands the leaders to set the standard for the employees to follow. According to Bello (2012), leaders need to be open-minded and adopt traditional leadership characteristics such as incorruptness, conscientiousness, and trustworthiness. It also includes transactional leadership behaviors, such as setting ethical standards and responsible for them.



Top Glove leaders focus on employee health since they believe that employee health is the asset of the company. Also, they help employees develop their skills by delivering experiences. Despite its success, the company is continuously learning and improving. The leaders set challenges as opportunities in the future. They have great ambition and firmly believe that nothing is impossible for market development. They realize that customers insist on them to create valuable products. The leaders must have a clear direction of the business direction to create products with high quality and low cost. As small companies focused on entrepreneurs, they are required to establish organizational cultures, develop a strategic vision (Janicijevic, 2015) and identify as well as leverage opportunities and resources in the company's environments (Sirmon, Hitt, & Ireland, 2007). In conclusion, to be successful, leaders and employees need to be self-disciplined, hardworking, harmonious, and wise.

In addition to leadership, organizational image and reputation lead to Top Glove success. Reputation is considered a valuable asset for every corporation (Dolphin, 2004; Dowling, 2002). Top Glove loyalty, integrity, and transparency successfully gained a good image and reputation from the stakeholders, suppliers, retailers, and customers. It also maintains its anti-corruption principles by establishing the Top Glove Prevention and Anti-Corruption Committee (TGPAC) to prevent any unlawful things from happening. This successfully built Top Glove's image and reputation as the corporation upholds the principles in their business activities with the business partners and the governments (Top Glove Corporation BHD, 2009). It maintained its good reputation and received sales orders from Europe and the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic as the quality gloves attract government attention of other countries. It increased its shares by more than 33% since the beginning of the year. To attain the image and reputation in the global marketplace, Top Glove performs on their earning per share which is RM0.22, and return on equity 28.9% (Top Glove Corporation BHD, 2020), and received an AA-IS rating (Malaysian Rating Corporation Berhad, 2020).

In addition, corporate image and reputation are important factors in influencing the recovery process of a company from unpredictable situations (Siomkos & Shrivastava, 1993). Top Glove solved the issue that the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency barred their product from entering the border. The CBP claimed that the detention order to the imported goods is due to the labor issues in Top Glove. However, Top Glove solved this issue by blacklisting the unethical recruitment agents and terminated all the business dealing with the recruitment agents. Top Glove also educated the employees not to pay any hiring fees to third parties (Wyn, 2020). This shows that Top Glove reserved its image and reputation to the public by taking recovery action to the crisis.

Additionally, organizational innovation and knowledge play major roles in Top Glove success. Innovation is the core renewal process for all organizations. Bessant, Lamming, Noke, & Phillips (2005) stated that unless it changes the products, it poses risks to the survival and growth prospects. The company explores the latest innovation related to environmental change to embrace the new technological progress and invest in people. Baruk (2015) has emphasized that innovation can be seen in all management activities such as marketing of ideas, technology development, new (or improved) products, or manufacturing processes or devices.



To gain the market competitive advantage, Top Glove company has adopted digital innovation technologies. It is a part of the emerging knowledge base of daily life, that is "a powerful network of people, cultural relics, and institutions that produce, share and maintain specific knowledge of the human and natural world" (Edwards, 2010). This is because nowadays competitive markets have made innovation and digitization essential. Technology is rapidly disrupting industries and sector names are no exception. Management today and innovation for tomorrow effectively help organizations gain their competitive advantages, and "there may be no more pressing management issues than continuous innovation management (Doğan, 2017). Technology became one of the focuses of Top Glove management in further automating its production lines, cutting back the numbers of workers, improving production line efficiency and product quality. The largest maker of rubber gloves is also committed to fully computerizing the company's manufacturing and operating processes.

Employee satisfaction also contributes to the success of the organization. To become a successful company, employee satisfaction becomes the most important criteria in the company. Abuhashesh, Aldmour, & Masa'deh (2019) defined employee satisfaction as how people view, perceive, and feel their jobs. The commitment in the organization will increase if employee satisfaction increases (Kawiana, Dewi, Martiana, & Suardana, 2018; Jernigan, Beggs, & Kohut, 2002). Therefore, employee emotion affects their job performance. There are intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting employee satisfaction (Rahmawati, 2013). Intrinsic factors are intangible benefit such as a feeling of satisfaction, achievement, and accomplishment while extrinsic factors are tangible benefits such as money, salary, bonus, and physical reward (Elrie, Jerone, & Amanda, 2014).

Top Glove ensures its employees contribute positively to the company, while the company makes sure to take good care of the well-being of the employees (Top Glove Corporation BHD, 2019). The company had also advocated "five wells" of "clean well", "eat well", "work well", "exercise well" and "sleep well" to ensure the employees work well in the company. It also allows the company to manage and focus on the working environment while it is fairly difficult for the company to manage employees' cleanliness, eating, exercising, and sleeping. The company was also concentrating on the working environment and preparing a more comfortable and suitable workplace for the employees. Chandrasekar (2011) and Leblebici (2012) argued that satisfaction with the workplace quality affects employee performance.

The workplace is one contributing factor to employee satisfaction. A good work environment will increase employee productivity and lead to higher profits. Thus, rewards become an important factor. The reward program could be the main organization's policies to improve employee productivity and performance (Luthans, 2000).

A successful organization is considered to achieve some profitable results and has high competitiveness in its own marketplace or industry including sales, revenues, and the realization of market share (Crowell, 1998). Top Glove has reviewed its organizational success with the growth of annual revenue of RM2.44 billion from 2019 (RM 4.80 billion) to 2020 (RM7.24 billion). Top Glove also holds the world's largest market share in the rubber gloves manufacturing industry by 26%. Over the past 20 years, Top Glove has



steadily grown, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) by 23.1% of revenue and 28.2% of after-tax profit (Top Glove Corporation BHD, 2020).

To achieve a complete and thoughtful business plan, the best tool is needed to help an organization make crucial business decisions and reach long-term goals (Abrams & Kleiner, 2003). Top Glove company has developed four business strategy intents with the focus areas of cost efficiency, customer service, technology capabilities, and strategic acquisition. One of the factors that contribute to the success of Top Glove is market trends. Top Glove grabs the golden opportunity in expanding its market on a larger scale due to some emerging factors such as the spiked demand for personal protective equipment such as surgical rubber gloves. The rise in demand and sales of Top Glove has resulted in the purpose of a bonus issue of up to 5.48 billion shares to its investors (Adilla, 2020).

Organizational culture is an organizational characteristic reflected by personal verbal and/or non-verbal attitudes and accumulated in the hierarchy of the organization (Utaminingsih, 2017). In terms of management approaches that lead to company success, Top Glove company has developed its corporate governance that has become the foundation of their long-term organizational success by three principles of effective leadership, effective audit, risk management, and completeness in corporate reports, and meaningful relationship with stakeholders (Top Glove Corporation BHD, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology is a research method that covers the methods and approaches used to achieve research goals and objectives. It is the collection of information and the latest data related to the study. It is also a process to collect data for making decisions. We selected several methods for obtaining the necessary data and information in implementing this study. It comprised reports, journals, and internet sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper aims to determine the key success factors of Top Glove. They are leadership, organizational innovation, image and reputation, employee satisfaction, and organizational success. According to Ranjan and Bhatnagar (2008), different people may have different views on the key factors of success, however, they have one thing in common: the key success factors should be carefully measured to ensure the organization succeeds and continuously improves. All of these factors are important and should be a higher priority for Top Glove management. This paper focused on the area of leadership, organization innovation, image and reputation, and employee satisfaction as the four keys success factors of Top Glove. We shortly discuss these factors.

Firstly, to make an effective way to success, Top Glove focuses on the leader workforce. Top Glove realizes that success depends on how productive workers are. In this field, Top Glove leaders use their leadership skills to manage company accomplishments. Leadership provides the necessary efficiency factors for companies and has a significant impact on human resources (Taraneh, Fataneh, and Negin, 2016).



Secondly, Top Glove has shown a good image and reputation to promote the company. It will not provide any monetary donations or spending to political movements, political organizations, lobbyists, or lobbying organizations. The company does not formulate to influence public policies or support specific political parties. Reputation is one of the core concepts that a company focuses on because companies hope that there can be to gain trust and respect for their supporters. It is affected by many factors, such as employee treatment, issues of ethics, environmental commitment, company management, innovation, financial performance, and organization (Ettenson & Knowles, 2008).

Thirdly, the organization is committed to continuous improvement and innovation. Given the importance of research and development, Top Glove has approximately 460 researchers and is committed to further increasing this number. No innovation and research mean no future. A new idea, equipment, or method creates a new product or process, including the work required to invent and finalize the idea or concept (Doğan, 2017).

Fourth, employee satisfaction is the most important criteria to bring the company into success. Top Glove understands that employees are its greatest asset. It is committed to working closely with relevant departments to make necessary improvements in ensuring employee safety and well-being. Top Glove provides a suitable work environment to its employees ensuring their satisfaction and motivation. The working environment involves all aspects that affect the employee physically and mentally. This concludes that the working environment is the physical and non-physical conditions surrounding workers affecting their performance (Tulenan, 2015).

In summary, the four success factors (leadership, image and reputation, organizational innovation, and employee satisfaction) are the key drivers for future expansion. Those four factors allow Top Glove to compete and posit among the best companies in the rubber industry.

CONCLUSIONS

Top Glove succeeds as a glove manufacturer for its leadership, organizational innovation, image and reputation, employee satisfaction, and organization. The leadership who makes the team success will let employees be proud to be in the company. Furthermore, organizational innovation enables Top Glove to reach its success by doing research to reduce the costs and maintain the qualities. The qualities today maybe are not good for tomorrow that is why Top Glove companies continuously seek the best way to make a company in a good position. That is because customers always cash good qualities with low cost. Besides, employee satisfaction can reduce turnover. It helps companies save costs in training. Even though companies face some challenges, the fast response Top Glove made successfully maintains its sustainability and global achievement. In summary, one company can succeed depending on a lot of factors. The main factor is trust between employees and employers to encourage their work motivation.



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