

Job Satisfaction and Some Selected Determinants: An Empirical Study

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Abstract :

This study is conducted to increase our understanding of role played by 'nature of job', 'pay and promotion', 'colleague' and 'supervisor' in determining the level of job satisfaction in organizations operating in Bangladesh. 355 valid responses were collected from 27 organizations on nine questions. More than 60% of the respondents were found satisfied with their job. Employees who reported themselves as 'satisfied' recorded higher level of agreement for all the independent variables than those who reported themselves as 'dissatisfied'. Multiple Regression analysis showed that 'interesting job', 'challenging job' and 'scope to increase personal competence' from 'nature of job' viewpoint; and 'quality of supervision, respect and recognition from supervisor' from 'supervisor' viewpoint were statistically highly significant for job satisfaction of employees in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Nature of Job, Pay and Promotion, Colleagues, Supervisor

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Employee satisfaction has been a major area of research since Hawthorne Studies of the 1920s (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). Each and every organization desires to have satisfied employees as it may be the decisive factor of success for the organization. For mounting up at the required level of competitiveness, this is one of the most crucial factors. Thereby, a lot of research attempts has been made to discover a lucid logical sketch of understanding about how to keep employees satisfied with their job in the organization. Locke (1976) estimated that, as of 1976, about 3,350 articles or dissertations had been written on the topic. Cranny et. al. (1992) projected that more than 5,000 studies of job satisfaction have been published. Oshagbemi (1996) predicted that if a count of relevant articles and dissertations would be made, Locke's estimate, made only 20 years earlier, would probably be doubled.

Though ample researches have already been done in this area, most of them were conducted in developed country settings. Bangladesh is that part of the world where little effort has been put forth to unfold the knowledge of what make Bangladeshi employees satisfied, though it is beyond doubt that the characteristics of employees of Bangladesh substantially differ from those of developed countries. This paper has set its objective to trim down this vacuum.

2.0 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this article are –

- (1) to know the status of job satisfaction in Bangladesh;
- (2) to see whether 'mean' level for each independent factor (which are predictors of job satisfaction) differs between those who report themselves as 'satisfied' from those who report 'dissatisfied'.
- (3) to find out the independent variables that are significant in explaining job satisfaction.

3.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Job Satisfaction Defined

Job satisfaction has usually been defined as the extent to which an employee has a positive affective orientation or attitude towards his job, either in general or towards particular facets of it (Smith et al. 1969). Locke (1976, p.1300) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience." Definitions given by Lofquist and Dewis (1969, p.53), Porter et al. (1975, p.53–54), and Locke and Henne (1986, p.21) are more or less the same. According to Bullock (1952), job satisfaction is an attitude which results from a balancing and summation of many specific likes and dislikes experienced in connection with the job. Smith (1955) defined it as an employee's judgment of how well his job satisfied his various needs. Blum and Naylor (1968) defined it as a general attitude formed as a result of specific job factors, individual characteristics, and relationships outside the job. Robins (2003) defined it as an individual's general attitude towards his/her job.

A person with high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitude towards the job, while a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job holds negative attitude about the job (Robins 2003). Kinicki and Kreitner (2003) defined it as an affective or emotional response toward various facets of one's job. It is important to note that job satisfaction is not a unitary concept. Thus, a person can be relatively satisfied with one aspect of his or her job and dissatisfied with one or more other aspects. Besides, as it is an attitude, not exerted behavior i.e. emotional response, it can only be inferred (Luthans 1998). As it can be inferred only, it is always difficult to measure exactly to what extent employees are satisfied or dissatisfied.

3.2 Reasons for Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction may come from a wide variety of sources (Quarstein and Glassman 1993, Smith et al. 1969). One study even found that if college students' major coincide with their job, they would be satisfied with that job (Fricko and Beehr 1992). McGregor (1960), Argyris (1964), and Bass (1965) argued that job satisfaction lies in the need-satisfying potential of the job environment. However, the main influences can be summarized along the following dimensions (Luthans 2005):

3.2.1 The Work Itself

The characteristics of job that allow individuals to fulfill their needs are determinants of job satisfaction (Kinicki and Kreitner 2003). Job satisfaction is enhanced by the task that is mentally challenging but allows individual to experience success, and is personally interesting (Locke 1976). Ciabattari (1986) suggested identically saying that task that is interesting and challenging can be a source of job satisfaction. Katzell et al (1992) also supported this saying that under the condition of moderate challenge, most employees experience pleasure and satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1976) in their Job Characteristics model showed that people with high-growth need look for job that is meaningful and would be satisfied when they get it. Meaningful job provides them intrinsic stimulus for job satisfaction (Thomas 2000). Hackman and Oldham (1976) also maintained that 'autonomy over the job' and 'performance feedback' are another two major sources of job satisfaction. Performance feedback was also identified as an important variable for making employees intrinsically motivated in some other researches (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, Csikszentmihalyi 1997, Mainemelis 2001). However, Kanungo (1979) argued that job satisfaction did not necessarily depend on job characteristics like 'autonomy over the job'. In addition to them, when an employee is able to accomplish a task skillfully, s/he is internally motivated (Thomas 2000). For performing task successfully an employee needs to be competent. It is assumed that the job that provides opportunity for competence development will contribute to job satisfaction. Besides, because of high job scarcity in Bangladesh getting employed in the right post is very difficult. To get the right job with right position, most people in Bangladesh start their career in jobs which provide them the opportunity to develop their competence. People expect at least such a job as will allow them to increase their competence and such a job is a source of satisfaction.

3.2.2 Pay and Promotion

Job satisfaction is a function of how fairly an individual is treated at work. Employees want pay system and promotion policies that they perceive just, unambiguous, and in line with their expectations. Their perceived fairness of pay and promotion were found significantly correlated with job satisfaction (Witt and Nye 1992).

Carraher and Buckley (1996) recognized that pay is significant for job satisfaction but acknowledged it cognitively complex. It is also multidimensional factor in influencing satisfaction in job (Judge 1993). Pay not only helps employees to fulfill their basic needs and is instrumental for satisfying higher level needs. Employees often see it as a reflection of how management views their contribution to the organization (Luthans 1998). When pay is seen as fair based on job demands, individual skill level, community pay standards, satisfaction is likely to result (Locke 1976). However, Luthans (1998) argued that fringe benefits are also important but they are not much influential.

Promotional opportunities seem to have a varying effect on job satisfaction. This is because promotions take a number of different forms and have a variety of accompanying rewards

(Luthans 1998) Promotion provides opportunities for personal growth and increased social status, allows more responsibilities which render intrinsic motivation. Individuals who perceive that promotion decisions are made in a fair and just manner, are likely to experience satisfaction (Witt and Nye 1992).

3.2.3 Supervision

Supervision is another major determinant of job satisfaction. Studies generally found that employee satisfaction is increased when the immediate supervisor is understanding and friendly, listen to employees' opinions and shows personal interest in them, and offers praise and recognition for good performance (Locke 1976). Manager should create an environment where subordinates get opportunity to play an active role in decision-making process. A participative climate created by the supervisor has a more substantial effect on workers' satisfaction than does participation in a specific decision (Miller and Monge 1986). Another dimension of good supervision is employee centeredness, which means managers interest in employees' welfare. It is commonly manifested in ways, such as checking to see how well the subordinate is doing, providing advice and assistance to the individual, and communicating with the worker at personal as well as official level (Luthans 1998).

3.2.4 Colleagues

People get more out of work than merely money or tangible achievements. For most employees, work also fills the need of social interaction. Not surprisingly, therefore, having friendly and supportive co-workers lead to increased job satisfaction (Locke 1976). A 'good work group' serves as a source of support, comfort, advice, and assistance to the individual work and of course, makes the job more enjoyable. The absence of this in the workplace has negative effect on job satisfaction (Luthans 1998).

4.0 THE RESEARCH MODEL

On the basis of above literature review, the following research model (Figure I) has been proposed to be tested. The model comprises eight factors as independent variables and job satisfaction as dependent variable.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Questionnaire Preparation

On the basis of the above literature review, a nine-item 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree) questionnaire was developed (see Appendix I). The first eight questions were related to different independent variables (see Appendix II) on different aspects of job, pay and promotion, colleagues and supervisor and the last question was related to respondent's overall level of job satisfaction. While measuring the level of overall job satisfaction, the single global rating approach was used rather than summation score approach. Two reasons seemed worthy behind this. First, the summation score approach typically includes

'nature of the job', 'pay and promotion opportunity', 'supervision' and 'coworkers' (Spector 1997). These were already considered as independent variables in this study. The researchers thought that calculation of overall job satisfaction using summation score method rather than single global score method might undermine the credibility of the research as it is complex and not easy to interpret for the respondents. Second, it is seen that the simple single global rating approach captures the essence of job satisfaction in the same way as the complex summation score approach (Wanous et. al. 1997).

5.2 Questionnaires' Reliability and Construct Validity

The analysis began with an examination of the measurement of the questionnaire in terms of its reliability and its construct validity. The composite reliability coefficients of the measurements scale satisfied Nunally's (1978) guidelines (Cronbach Alpha = 0.86). Besides, the Average Inter Item Correlation was found $r_{ij} = 0.44$, which is good.

5.3 Sample

5.3.1 Sampling Strategy

Data for this study was collected from 355 employees (Male = 324 (91.3%), Married = 233 (65.6%)) working in 27 different organizations. These 27 organizations were selected on the basis of availability of respondents. This is because employees are generally reluctant to speak out anything about job related issues to someone they don't know assuming that this kind of attitude and view sharing may create resentment in authority. This reluctance got even stronger when they were asked to response in a written form. This kind of data collection strategy might limit the generalizability of the findings. To overcome this problem a large number of respondents was chosen. Among 27 organizations, 14 organizations (51.8%) were different financial institutions including two multinational banks. From them a total of 177 responses (49.86% of the total response) were collected. From the rest 13 non-financial institutions including four multinationals, a total of 178 responses were collected comprising 50.14% of the total response. Almost equal importance was given to both financial and non-financial sectors.

5.3.2 Sample Description

After completion of data collection different calculations were done. Table I shows respective Means, Standard deviations and Standard error of Mean for each independent variables as well as the job satisfaction. The small percentage of Standard Error (S.E.) of Means (range from 1.32% to 1.78% of the respective means) reveals that the sample means are very close to the respective population means and this indicates that sample is representative of the population.

Table I: Descriptive Statistics

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	JS
N	355	355	355	355	355	355	355	355	355
Mean	3.92	3.95	3.50	3.57	3.58	3.47	3.83	3.70	3.70
Std. Deviation	1.022	0.980	1.163	1.116	1.138	1.170	1.165	1.101	1.112
S. Error of Mean	0.054	0.052	0.062	0.059	0.060	0.062	0.062	0.058	0.059
% of S.E. of Mean	1.38%	1.32%	1.77%	1.66%	1.67%	1.78%	1.62%	1.57%	1.59%

On the basis of mean, it seems that 'challenging job that result in success' (X2) turns up as the most important source of job satisfaction. 'Interesting job' (X1) comes up as second and thereby, it seems that 'job itself' emerges as the chief source of satisfaction.

Table II shows that there are positive correlations between different independent variables but no two variables are highly correlated rather a relatively moderate level of correlation is found mostly. The correlation between independent variables ranges from 0.267 to 0.609. This indicates no serious problem of multicollinearity (Cooper and Schindler 2003). Besides, Average Inter Item Correlation is $r_{ij} = 0.44$ and Cornbatch alpha is $\alpha = 0.86$ for eight questions regarding different independent variables also prove that all eight questions were relatively independent of one another and homogeneous.

Table II: Correlations of Independent Variables

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7
X2	0.481						
X3	0.292	0.341					
X4	0.267	0.400	0.600				
X5	0.355	0.395	0.478	0.567			
X6	0.388	0.431	0.465	0.423	0.597		
X7	0.328	0.375	0.454	0.442	0.446	0.505	
X8	0.313	0.394	0.469	0.513	0.555	0.499	0.609

All correlations are significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

In next step, the sample was divided in two groups, (1) satisfied and (2) dissatisfied. Employees who marked 1, 2 or 3 (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Moderately disagree and 3 = Neutral) for the question, "Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job" were taken as 'dissatisfied'. The employees who remained 'neutral' while answering this question were also taken as 'dissatisfied'. The rationale behind this is the observation that, these employees are dissatisfied but afraid of expressing in a written form due to possible disclosure of this information to the authority. This case happened particularly where the researchers were found unfamiliar to the interviewee and/or the researchers failed to gain confidence of the interviewee. But, the researchers' oral conversation with these employees revealed their dissatisfaction about overall job. The rest of the employees who marked '4' (=moderately agree) and '5' (= strongly agree) were taken as 'satisfied'. Table III summarizes the percentage of 'satisfied' and 'dissatisfied' employees. It seems that almost two-thirds of the employees interviewed were found 'satisfied' in their job.

Table III: Summary of Satisfied and Dissatisfied Employees

Level of Job Satisfaction	N	% of Total
Dissatisfied	132	37.2%
Satisfied	223	62.8%
Total	355	100%

6.0 MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS

In this section, 'mean' and 'standard deviation' are calculated for the 'satisfied' and 'dissatisfied' groups which are shown in Table IV. It is found that the 'mean' values of each and every independent variable for two groups (satisfied and dissatisfied) are different.

Table IV: Group-wise Mean and Standard Deviation

		X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	JS
Dissatisfied	Mean	3.48	3.40	2.98	3.05	2.93	3.00	3.23	3.05	2.48
	SD	1.037	1.033	1.175	1.200	1.147	1.185	1.289	1.148	0.736
Satisfied	Mean	4.18	4.27	3.81	3.87	3.96	3.75	4.18	4.08	4.43
	SD	0.922	0.788	1.040	0.941	0.944	1.068	0.922	0.871	0.496

To verify whether these visible differences of 'means' between the two groups for independent variables are statistically significant, t-ratio were performed. The reason for using t-ratio is its robustness against the violation of the normality (Runyon et. al. 1991). Before calculating t-ratio, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances were performed to be sure about the 'Homogeneity of Variances' of the comparing two groups. This was deemed necessary because the sample sizes of satisfied and dissatisfied groups are not exactly equal and this may result in violation of 'equality of variance' of the two groups. In the cases where 'Equal variance' was not found, corrected t-ratio was calculated. Table V summarizes the different F-test and t-test results.

Table V: t-test results

Variable	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	Equal Variances	t	df	Sig.
X1	3.312	0.070	Not assumed	- 6.349	249.968	0.000
X2	14.051	0.000	Not assumed	- 8.323	221.340	0.000
X3	2.550	0.111	Assumed	- 6.957	353	0.000
X4	6.055	0.014	Not assumed	- 6.734	226.012	0.000
X5	6.859	0.009	Not assumed	- 8.736	234.752	0.000
X6 ^{III}	0.020	0.888	Assumed	- 6.163	353	0.000
X7	23.548	0.000	Not assumed	- 7.374	210.966	0.000
X8	16.112	0.000	Not assumed	- 8.882	220.456	0.000
JS	44.027	0.000	Not assumed	- 26.904	202.158	0.000

In **Table V** we see that equal variance is found only for independent variable X3 and X6. Thus, corrected t ratios are calculated in most cases. The different t-ratios showed in **Table V** reveals that the differences found in **Table IV** were statistically significant.

We then proceeded on to find out which of the independent variable(s) is/are significant for predicting job satisfaction. In this regard, Multiple Regression Analysis is conducted. **Table VI** summarizes the result for the independent and dependent variables.

Table VI shows whether independent variables are capable of statistically significant in influencing the dependent variable 'Job satisfaction'. The computed value of F [$F = 35.782$; $df = 8, 346$] shows that the model is statistically significant and it is highly likely that at least one of the independent variables is capable of influencing the level of job satisfaction. It is also evident that the model explains as much as 44.0% of the variation of the 'job satisfaction' (Adjusted R squared = 0.440).

Table VI: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
X1	0.133	2.827*	0.005
X2	0.145	2.935*	0.004
X3	0.078	1.467	0.143
X4	0.077	1.370	0.172
X5	0.214	3.746*	0.000
X6	0.003	0.054	0.957
X7	0.100	1.867**	0.063
X8	0.178	3.159*	0.002

* $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.1$

ANOVA

$F = 35.782$; $df = 8, 346$; $p < 0.001$

Model Summary

$R = 0.673$, $R^2 = 0.453$

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.440$

From Table VI, it is evident that X1 (= Interesting job), X2 (= Challenging job that result in success), X5 (= Scope for personal competence development), and X8 (= quality of supervision, respect and recognition from supervisor) are highly significant ($p < 0.005$); X7 (= Friendly and supportive colleagues and subordinates) seems to be significant also ($p < 0.1$); X3 (= Satisfactory salary and fringe benefit), X4 (= Perception of salary and promotional policies as fair, just and unambiguous) and X6 (= Autonomy over the job) are found statistically insignificant in determining job satisfaction.

From the Table VI, it is also evident that X5 (= Scope for personal competence development) is the most important factor in determining job satisfaction. Then, X8 (= quality of supervision, respect and recognition from supervisor), X2 (= Challenging job that result in success), X1 (= Interesting job) and X7 (= Friendly and supportive colleagues, subordinates) come up in order of importance next. Figure II depicts the revised model.

7.0 DISCUSSION

The first objective of this study was to know the status of job satisfaction in Bangladesh. We found that more than 60% of our employees are satisfied though their extent of satisfaction

varies. The second objective was to know whether 'satisfied' and 'dissatisfied' employees possess different opinion about the determinants of job satisfaction. We found that the employees who report themselves as 'satisfied' have higher 'mean' agreement over all independent variables than those who report 'dissatisfied'. The differences showed between the 'means' of different independent variables in Table IV were found statistically significant in Table V. This means that 'dissatisfied' employees perceive their job as less interesting and challenging. They are less satisfied with the amount of pay and fringe benefit they get. They consider pay and promotional policies as less fair, just and unambiguous than those who are 'satisfied'. They also consider their job as offering them poor scope for competence development and as allowing them less autonomy over their job. They are also not satisfied with their colleagues, quality of supervision, respect and recognition they get from their supervisor.

The third objective was to know which independent variables are statistically significant in determining job satisfaction. It is found that X1 (= Interesting Job), X2 (= Challenging job that result in success), X5 (= Scope of personal competence development), X7 (= supporting and friendly coworkers and working conditions) and X8 (= quality of the supervision, respect and recognition from supervisor) are significant. Among them, X5(= Scope of personal competence development) is the most and X8 (= quality of the supervision, respect and recognition from supervisor) is the second most important variable for determining the level of job satisfaction. The model explains about 44.0% of the total variance which is substantially good for cross-sectional data set. Incorporation of more independent variables may increase the capacity of the model to explain more of the variation of the dependent variable. It was unexpected that X3 (= pay and fringe benefit) and X4 (= pay and promotional policies as fair, just and unambiguous) would be found statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$) especially when most of the employees get almost marginal salary, wages and fringe benefits. The reason for this may be cultural. We are usually cynic and reluctant to talk openly about money matters. This may resist respondents to open their heart and speak the truth. It is also surprising to see that X6 (= autonomy over the job) was found insignificant in determining job satisfaction. In most of the organizations, the authority is kept at the hand of owners. Employees consider it natural and do not expect that they will be given the power. Thus, they may not find it important for job satisfaction.

There may be a second reason behind not marking pay and promotion as important. In this study, we have found that competence development opportunity is the most important variable and 'quality of supervision, respect and recognition from supervisor' is the second most important. There is an implicit relationship between these two. In fact, supervisor opens up opportunities for subordinates by delegating responsibilities. Increased responsibilities allow subordinates to enhance or further their abilities, skills and knowledge. Besides, if the job-performed by an employee-is perceived as 'interesting' and 'challenging', then employee's intrinsic motivation increases which leads to increased employee job involvement and results in enhanced competencies. Increased competencies automatically put an employee in an advantageous

condition to demand higher pay, benefits and open promotion options. This sort of perception/understanding among employees may make them to rank pay and promotion as less important.

Considering the findings of Table IV, V and VI together, we suggest the manager should give more emphasis on X1, X2, X5, X7 and X8. If manager can increase the satisfaction level of employees in these areas, then dissatisfied employees will become satisfied.

8.0 LIMITATIONS

The present study incorporates only job, pay and promotion, colleagues and supervisor and the results show that it fails to explain a considerable amount of variance in job satisfaction. The reason seems to be three fold. First, there are other factors (e.g. work place physical environment) related to job satisfaction, which should have been incorporated. Second, the data was collected on convenient basis mostly, which might hamper the generalization of the findings. Collection of a very good sample was beyond the capacity of the researchers because of practical reasons. The sample was collected from private sector mostly, where management followed no definite hiring and firing rules. A high level of unemployment rate puts the employers in a better position to hire best people and not to worry about employee retention. Along with that a very low or no consciousness about how far a skilled and satisfied employee can help, makes the situation worse for the employees. Thus, employees always feel job insecurity and thereby are reluctant to share anything which may create some sort of volatility in his job or create suspicion in the mind of the employer. Third, as does most of the research in this area, the present study relied on single source. Thus, data from multiple sources such as employee self report, co-workers, supervisors etc. should have been collected.

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APPENDIX – I

Table II: Correlations of Independent Variables

Description of the Variables	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Moderately Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I am satisfied as my job is interesting.					
I am satisfied as the job I do is challenging and usually result in success.					

Description of the Variables	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Moderately Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I consider my salary and fringe benefit for my contribution as satisfactory.					
I consider our pay and promotional policies as fair, just and unambiguous.					
I enjoy enough space for my personal competence development.					
I can apply a great deal of my own thoughts and actions in my job.					
My colleagues, subordinates and overall working environment are friendly and supportive.					
I am satisfied with the overall quality of supervision, respect and recognition I receive from my boss.					
Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job					

APPENDIX – II

X1 = Interesting Job, X2 = Challenging job that result in success, X3 = Satisfactory salary and fringe bebenefit, X4 = Perception of salary and promotional policies as fair, just and unambiguous, X5 = Scope of personal competence development, X6 = Autonomy over the job, X7 = Friendly and supportive colleagues, subordinates and X8 = Quality of the supervision, respect and recognition from supervisor, JS = Level of Job Satisfaction.