

Job Satisfaction and Individual Characteristics: A Study of Academic Staff in Higher Education

****Dr. Mohd Rafiq Teli**

***Dr. S. Mufeed Ahmad**

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of two individual characteristics namely, gender and age of employees on their Job satisfaction. The impact is examined through an empirical study involving 183 academic staff members from two top universities (Jawaharlal Nehru University and Banaras Hindu University) of India, using the independent samples test and one way Anova test. The results provide that among the two individual characteristics of academic staff members under study, only gender of the employees has a significant impact on their Job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Gender, Age, Academic staff.

Introduction

Higher education institutions owe their success largely to the effort and contribution of their academic staff. Academic staff is responsible for the academic activities of the institution and is the pivot around which all the educational programs, such as curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, evaluation, etc., rotate. Therefore, for higher educational institutions to be effective and productive, satisfied academic staff is very critical.

Job satisfaction is a pivotal and critical determinant of Job performance, manpower retention and employee well-being. Research has proven that employees with high Job satisfaction exhibit high energy, pleasurable engagement and enthusiasm and employees with dissatisfaction show distress, unpleasant engagement and nervousness (Heller et al., 2002). It, therefore, becomes imperative for every Organization to strive to maintain a satisfied workforce, especially for the higher education institutions which are highly labor intensive, since their effectiveness is predominantly dependent on their employees.

Owing to its importance, the concept of Job satisfaction has been extensively researched. However, very few research studies have empirically examined the impact of individual characteristics such as gender and age of the employees on their Job satisfaction. This study, therefore, is an attempt to fill the gap in this field and provide a new perspective to the findings of previous studies on the subject of Job satisfaction. The present study focuses on gender and age of employees as individual-level variables which are made salient in organizational settings and thus produces distinct experiences for different gender and age groups in the organizations. These unique experiences are hypothesized to create distinct sets of predictors of Job satisfaction for organizational members.

****Dr. Mohammad Rafiq Teli** is a scholar in the Department of Management Studies, University of Kashmir.

***Prof.(Dr.) S. Mufeed Ahmad**, Professor, Department of Management Studies and Director J&K State Resource Centre, University of Kashmir.

Literature Review

Smith et al. (1969) described in their “Job description index” that working condition, co-workers, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and work itself are some factors that affect the Job satisfaction intensity of the teachers. Job satisfaction is perceived as an attitudinal variable measuring the degree to which employees like their Jobs and the various aspects of their Jobs (Spector, 1996). Job satisfaction means the contentment of the employees because of their Jobs. It is the personal evaluation of the Job conditions (the Job itself, the attitude of the administration etc.) or the consequences or the rewards (wages, occupational security etc.) acquired from the Job (Fletcher and Williams, 2006). Siddique et al. (2002) indicated that salaries, fringe benefits, security of service, chance of promotion and social status are some factors that have relationship with the Job satisfaction of the teachers. Some of them have significant while other have insignificant relation with the dependent variable that is Job satisfaction. Santhapparaj and Alam (2005), in their research with faculty from three private universities in Malaysia, found that pay, promotion, working condition and support of research have positive and significant effect on Job satisfaction. Telman and Unsal (2004) recognized that the factors affecting Job satisfaction into internal, external and personal. Internal factors include characteristics related to the basic nature of work. External factors are the conditions such as physical work, promotion conditions, relationships with superiors and co-workers, creativity, Job security, organizational structure and culture. Personal factors include factors such as demographic characteristics (gender, age, length of service, educational level etc.), personality traits and incentive, knowledge and skills.

Gender & Job satisfaction

Santhapparaj and Alam (2005) stated that female academic staff in private universities in Malaysia was more satisfied than their counterpart in all facets being studied including working environment and pay. Ahmadi and Keshavarzi (2012) who studied the Islamic Azad University (Iran) faculty members’ views of the effective factors in Job satisfaction found that female teachers are more satisfied with their Job compared to men. However, in contrast, Sabharwal and Corley (2009) found that female faculty members expressed lower levels of satisfaction when compared with male faculty members. Moreover, Okpara et al. (2005) revealed that gender differences exist in the levels of Job satisfaction of Tietjen university teachers. The study showed that female teachers hold negative perceptions about their pay, supervision and promotion, thus producing a low level of overall Job satisfaction, while their male counterparts hold favorable opinions about pay, promotion policies and supervision and thus indicating high level of Job satisfaction. Based on this discussion, we propose our first study hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Gender of an employee has an impact on his/her Job satisfaction.

Age and Job satisfaction

According to a survey conducted, Job satisfaction among academic staff in Malaysian public university is affected by various factors and age seemed to have a significant impact on the respondents' level of Job satisfaction (Noordin and Jusoff, 2009). The study indicated that the academic staffs in the Associate Professor group who were more than 44 years old enjoyed a significantly higher level of Job satisfaction than their Senior Lecturer counterparts who were within the 31-44 age groups. Okpara (2004), states that overall Job satisfaction was lower for academicians below the age of 35 and increased progressively around the age of 55 years and above. Further in a study conducted by Jyoti and Sharma (2009), on the Job satisfaction of university teachers in Jammu, whereby, after the initial years, the level of Job satisfaction increases and remains almost constant till 45 years and then it decreases during 46-50 years, after that it again starts increasing and is maximum during 56-60 years. This study highlighted that the Job satisfaction is the least during the age of 20-25 years and maximum during 56-60 years. According to Baruch's (2004), older employees are more likely to have proven themselves already and have enjoyed their Job's benefits, so they do not care much for competition and changing things but on the other hand, younger employees' satisfaction can be predicted by the opportunities for personal growth they are given and the prevailing enthusiasm as they still have a long way to go before they retire and they care both for what they are currently doing and for what is to come. Based on this discussion, we present our second study hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Age of an employee has an impact on his/her Job satisfaction.

Research Design & Methodology

The sample

The sample of the study consisted of the respondents from two top ranked universities of India i.e. Jawaharlal Nehru University and Banaras Hindu University. The elements included professors, associate professors and assistant professors of the aforementioned universities.

A total of 200 questionnaires were administered to the potential respondents chosen from 2 sample Universities (100 questionnaires in each University), out of which 183 usable responses were received, for a final response rate of 91.5 percent.

Data Collection Tool

For data collection, Paul E. Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) was used. JSS is a 36 item, nine facet scale to assess employee attitudes about the Job and aspects of the Job. Each facet is assessed with four items, and a total score is computed from all items. A summated rating scale format is used, with six choices per item ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Items are written in both directions (positive and negative), so about half must be reverse scored. The nine facets are Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Fringe Benefits, Contingent Rewards (performance based rewards), Operating Procedures (required rules and procedures), Coworkers, Nature of Work, and Communication.

For the 4-item sub-scales, as well as the 36-item total score, a mean item response (after reverse scoring the negatively-worded items) of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction. Mean scores between 3 and 4 represent ambivalence.

Reliability

Coefficient alpha of the questionnaire used was computed to be 0.85, indicating a good internal consistency.

Results & Discussions

Respondent Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' age and gender. Out of the total 183 respondents, 99 were male (54.09%) and 84 were female (45.90%). The respondents belonged to three age groups, viz, 28-38 (N=68), 39-49 (N=66) and 50 and above (N=49).

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
<i>Male</i>	99	54.09
<i>Female</i>	84	45.90
Age group (years)	Frequency	Percent
28-38	68	37.15
39-49	66	36.06
50 and above	49	26.77

As is evident from the data above, the number of male respondents in the final sample are little more than the females. However, the three age groups are fairly equally represented in the final sample.

Gender and Job Satisfaction

Group wise mean scores are presented in Table 2. Mean score of 4.01 for the female academic members of the sample universities indicate that they are satisfied with their overall Job. However, a Mean score of 3.32 for the male academic members indicate their ambivalence towards the overall Job. It, therefore, can be said that female academic members/respondents have a higher level of overall Job satisfaction than their male counterparts.

Table 2: Analysis of Gender and Job Satisfaction.

S.no	Sub-scale	Item Numbers	Mean* (N=183)	Group wise Mean	
				Female (N=99)	Male (N=84)
1	<i>Pay</i>	1,10,19,28	3.94	3.37	4.50

2	Promotion	2,11,20,33	2.75	2.25	3.25
3	Supervision	3,12,21,30	4.75	5.25	4.25
4	Fringe Benefits	4,13,22,29	2.5	3.50	1.50
5	Contingent Rewards	5,14,23,32	2.75	3.50	2.00
6	Operating Conditions	6,15,24,31	2.87	3.25	2.50
7	Co-workers	7,16,25,34	5.12	6.00	4.25
8	Nature of Work	8,17,27,35	4.75	4.50	5.00
9	Communication	9,18,26,36	3.62	4.75	2.50
10	Overall Job Satisfaction	1-36	3.66	4.01	3.32

*Mean scores of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction. Mean scores between 3 and 4 are ambivalence (Spector, 1985).

Further, the findings of the Table 2 indicate that the male academic members have reported higher mean scores than their female counterparts, in case of three Job facets namely Pay, Promotion and Nature of Work.

Further, Independent sample test was utilized to ascertain whether the difference in the mean scores of the respondent male and the female employees of the sample universities with respect to Job satisfaction is statistically significant or merely an outcome of a random variation. The results indicate that the perceptual differences of employees are statistically significant when the differences are evaluated on the basis of gender as the *p* value is less than .05 (Table 3), indicating that the female employees are more satisfied with their Jobs as compared to the male employees of the sample universities.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test (Gender).

Construct	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Job Satisfaction	.456	.475	-1.123	182	.047*	-.69642

**p*<.05.

Age and Job Satisfaction

In order to evaluate the influence of age of the academicians on Job satisfaction, data was analyzed using one way ANOVA and the summary is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Age and Job satisfaction analysis

Age group (years)	Frequency	Mean* Score (Overall Job satisfaction)	S.D	Anova	Sig**
28-38	68	3.32	0.63	.763	.467 ^{ns}

39-49	66	3.86	0.86		
50 and above	49	4.01	0.75		

**Mean scores of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction. Mean scores between 3 and 4 are ambivalence (Spector, 1985). **p<.05. ns=not significant. S.D- standard deviation.*

As is evident from the data above, age group 50 & above has the highest mean score (M=4.01), indicating satisfaction towards the overall Job. However, mean scores of remaining two age groups i.e., 29-39 & 39-49 lie between 3 & 4, depicting the ambivalence or mixed feelings of the respondents towards the overall Job. However, the perceptual differences of respondent employees regarding Job satisfaction are not statistically significant when the differences were evaluated on the basis of age as the *p* value is above .05 (Table 4.4). The statistically insignificant difference suggests that age has no effect on the perception of respondent employees regarding the Job satisfaction.

Conclusions

In view of the findings obtained in the present study, which has been detailed above, it is quite safe to conclude that the employees of the two universities under study have reported more or less mixed/ambivalent perception regarding the Job satisfaction. The results obtained in the present study through independent samples test, it is quite safe to conclude female academic members reported higher satisfaction with their Jobs as compared to the male faculty members. Therefore hypothesis H₁:- *Gender of an employee has an impact on his/her Job satisfaction* can be safely accepted. Further, the results of the *one way ANOVA* test revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the three age groups under study with respect to the overall Job satisfaction. Therefore, it is quite safe to conclude that age has no impact on the level of Job satisfaction of an employee. Hence, hypothesis H₂:- *Age of an employee has an impact on his/her Job satisfaction* can be safely rejected. This finding is in agreement with the findings of studies by Pook et.al. (2003) and Sarker et.al. (2003), who have reported that age of an employee is unrelated to Job satisfaction.

References

- Baruch, Y. (2004). The desert generation: lessons and implications for the new era of people management. *Personnel Review*, 33(2), 241-256.
- Fletcher, C and Williams, R. (2006). Performance Management, Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment. *British Journal of Management*. 7(2): 169-179.
- Heller, D., Judge, T. A., & Watson, D. (2002). The confounding role of personality and trait affectivity in the relationship between Job and life satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(7), 815-835.
- Locke, E. A.,(1976). The Nature and causes of Job satisfaction. *Handbook industrial and organizational psychology*. Rand McNally College Publishing, Chicago.
- Noordin, F., & Jusoff, K. (2009). Levels of Job satisfaction amongst Malaysian academic staff. *Asian Social Science*, 5(5), P122.

- Okpara, J. O. (2004). Personal Characteristics as Predictors of Job satisfaction: An exploratory study of IT managers in a Developing Economy. *Information Technology & People*, 17(3), 327-338.
- Okpara, J. O., Squillace, M., & Erondy, E. A. (2005). Gender differences and job satisfaction: a study of university teachers in the United States. *Women in Management Review*, 20(3), 177-190.
- Pook, L. A., Füstös, J., & Marian, L. (2003). The impact of gender bias on job satisfaction. *Human Systems Management*, 22(1), 37-50.
- Sabharwal, M., & Corley, E. A. (2009). Faculty Job satisfaction across gender and discipline. *The Social Science Journal*, 46(3), 539-556.
- Santhapparaj, A. S., & Alam, S. S. (2005). Job satisfaction among academic staff in private universities in Malaysia. *Journal of social Sciences*, 1(2), 72.
- Sarker, S. J., Crossman, A., & Chinmeteeptuck, P. (2003). The relationships of age and length of service with job satisfaction: an examination of hotel employees in Thailand. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18(7), 745-758.
- Sharma, R. D., & Jyoti, J. (2009). Job Satisfaction of university teachers: An empirical study. *Journal of Services Research*, 9(2).
- Siddique, A., Malik, N. H., and Abbass, N., (2002). "Determining Teacher's Level of Job Satisfaction in Faisalabad City". *International journal of agriculture & biology* 1560– 8530/2002/04–3–372–374.
- Spector, P. E. (1985). Measurement of human service staff satisfaction: Development of the Job Satisfaction Survey. *American journal of community psychology*, 13(6), 693-713.
- Spector, P.E. (1996). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, cause, and consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Telman, N., & Unsal, P. (2004). *Employee Satisfaction*. Istanbul: Epsilon Press.