

Gender, Marital Status and Job Satisfaction An Empirical Study

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Abstract

This study attempts to identify the level of job satisfaction of employees in Bangladesh and to test whether job satisfaction level differs among employees in terms of their gender and marital status. Data are collected from 224 respondents. It is found that Bangladeshi employees, irrespective of gender and marital status, are 'moderately satisfied'. No statistically significant evidence is observed indicating differences in job satisfaction level between 'male' and 'female' or between 'married' and 'unmarried'.

Keywords: Gender, Marital Status, Job Satisfaction.

Introduction

Specific employee attitude related to job satisfaction is of major interest in the field of organizational behavior and the practice of modern human resources management (Tett and Meyer 1993). The interest stemmed from the commonsense belief that the satisfied employees are more productive than those who are dissatisfied. It is also believed that satisfied employees are more committed to their job than their dissatisfied counterparts are (Robbins & Judge, 2011). Considering the gravity of the issue, a large number of studies have investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and various organizational variables. For example, several researchers have examined the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Agho et al., 1993). Other researchers have examined the link between satisfaction and performance (Lawler and Porter, 1969, Locke 1976), cohesion (Odom et. al. 1990), age and gender (Hulin and Smith 1964; Weaver 1974; Forgionne and Peeters 1982) gender, organizational level, and management practices (Bruke, 1995) and organizational climate (Argyris, 1973). However, most of these researches are based on the organizations and employees in developed countries. Negligible amount of studies were carried out in developing country context. But it is undeniable that the characteristics of individual employees and organizations in developed countries vary significantly from those of developing countries due to differences in economic realities, culture, norms, values and other concerns. Keeping this vacuum of study in mind, the present study is framed to investigate into the aspects of job satisfaction of employees in Bangladesh. The study is aimed to know (1) what is the mean level of job satisfaction in Bangladesh, and (2) whether, in Bangladesh, level of job satisfaction differs on the basis of difference in gender and marital status of the employees.

Job Satisfaction Defined

Job satisfaction has been widely studied over the last four decades of organizational research (Currivan, 1999; Lund 2003). It has been defined and measured both as a global construct and as a concept with multiple dimensions (Locke, 1969, 1976; Price 1997). Bullock (1952) defined job satisfaction as an attitude which results from a balancing and summation of many specific likes and dislikes experienced in connection with the job. According to Smith (1955) it as an employee's judgment of how well his or her job has 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. The most referred definition was given by Locke (1976) who viewed it as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Similar forms of definitions were given by Lofquist and Dewis (1969, p.53), Porter *et al.* (1975, p.53–54), Locke and Henne (1986, p.21). Robbins & Judge (2011) expressed it as an individual's general attitude towards his/her job.

The overall job satisfaction depends on what one expects and what he or she receives. An employee will remain satisfied with fewer amenities, provided he or she expects less. However, dissatisfaction occurs when one gets less than what he/she expects. Overall or general job satisfaction describes a person's overall affective reaction to the set of work and work-related factors (Cranny *et al.*, 1992). It involves workers' feelings toward different dimensions of the work and work environment (Cranny *et al.*, 1992).

Measures of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is rather a complex phenomenon. A person may be relatively satisfied with one aspect of his or her job while he/she may be dissatisfied with other aspect(s). Therefore, many researchers do not view it as a unitary concept, rather they consider it as a construct with multiple facets (Cranny *et al.*, 1992). Satisfaction with pay, promotion, supervisor, and co-workers are some key examples of such facets found in the literature (Cranny *et al.*, 1992). Some of the most common and most important facets of job satisfaction are those measured by the Job Descriptive Index (JDI), such as, satisfaction with the work itself (various attributes of work such as opportunities for showing creativity, autonomy, task identity, etc.); satisfaction with pay (one's perceived difference between actual and expected pay); satisfaction with promotions (assesses attitudes towards the organization's promotion policy); satisfaction with supervision (assesses attitudes towards one's supervisor); satisfaction with co-workers (reflects one's attitudes about fellow employees); and one's overall feelings about the job (Balzer *et al.*, 1990). Earlier research by Roedel and Nystrom (1988) also showed statistically significant relationships between the different facets of job satisfaction as measured by the Job Descriptive Index and the 'job characteristics' as measured by the Job Diagnostic Survey. In order to provide a better picture of the measures of job satisfaction we elaborate on its various facets in the following section.

Work Itself

Work itself may be a source of job satisfaction. According to Locke (1976), Job satisfaction is enhanced by the task that is mentally challenging but allows individual to experience success, and is personally interesting. Similarly, Ciabattari (1986) argues that the task that is interesting and challenging can be a source of satisfaction. Challenging job along with performance feedback is identified as variable which makes employees intrinsically motivated. (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, Mainemelis 2001) Katzell *et al* (1992) also maintains the same view demonstrating that under the condition of moderate challenge, most employees experience pleasure and satisfaction. People with high esteem need look for job that is meaningful and they are satisfied when they get it (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Thomas (2000) argues that job that is meaningful provides intrinsic stimulus for job satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1976) also postulate that 'autonomy over the job' and 'performance feedback' are another two major sources of job satisfaction. However, Kanungo (1979) denied the significance of job characteristics like 'autonomy over the job' as the determinants of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, when employees are able to accomplish their task activities skillfully, they are internally motivated (Thomas, 2000).

For performing task successfully employees need to develop competence. Thus, opportunity for competence development has become instrumental for job satisfaction. Competence development reduces feeling of insecurity and increase possibility to grab better opportunity.

Pay and Promotion

Wages and salaries are recognized to be significant but cognitively complex (Carragher and Buckley, 1996) and also multidimensional factor in job satisfaction (Judge, 1993). Money not only helps people fulfill their basic needs but also is instrumental in providing upper-level needs satisfaction. Employees often see pay as a reflection of how management views their contribution to the organization (Luthans, 1998).

Job satisfaction is a function of how fairly an individual is treated at work. Employees want pay system and promotion policies to be just, fair, 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). When pay is seen as fair based on job demands, individual skill level, community pay standards, satisfaction is likely to result (Locke, 1976). About fringe benefits, Luthans (1998) argues that they are important but not very 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). Promotions provide opportunities for personal growth, more responsibilities and increased social status. Individual who perceives that promotion decisions are made in a fair and just manner, are likely to experience satisfaction (Witt and Nye, 1992).

Supervision

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). Employee centeredness is seen as a sign of good supervision. 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 employees at personal as well as official level (Luthans, 1998). Besides, 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).

Colleagues

People get more out of work than merely money or tangible achievements. For most employees, work also fills the need for social interaction. Not surprisingly, therefore, having friendly and supportive co-workers leads 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).

Working Environment

McGregor (1960) and Bass (1965) argue that job satisfaction lies in the need-satisfying potential of the job environment. Employees are concerned with their work environment for both personal comfort and better performance. If the working condition is good, the personnel will find it easier to carry out their job. In other words, if things are good, there may not be any job satisfaction problem. Otherwise, the likeliness of job dissatisfaction increases (Luthans, 1998). Studies demonstrate that employees prefer physical surroundings that are not dangerous or uncomfortable. In addition, most employees prefer working relatively close to home, in clean and relatively modern facilities, and with adequate tools and equipment (Locke 1976).

Job Satisfaction and Gender

Whether gender affects job satisfaction or not, is one of the talked about issues in recent organizational behavior literature (Goh *et al.* 1991; Mason 1995;). However, the results of many studies concerning the relationship between job satisfaction and gender are incoherent. Some studies have found women to be more satisfied than men (Bartol and Worman 1975; Clark 1996).

On the other hand, some studies found men are more satisfied than their female counterparts (Hulin and Smith 1964; Weaver 1974; Forgiogne and Peeters 1982). The reason behind different level of job satisfaction reported for male and female employees may be their different types of expectations from the job (Campbell *et al.* 1976). For example, to male employees, career is of central importance, which is not for their female counterparts (Kuhlen 1963).

Research suggests that men and women use qualitatively different criteria in their assessment of work (Oshagbemi 2000). Female employees place more value on the social factors of a job than do males and male employees place more value on the opportunity for self-expression in their jobs than do females (Centres and Bugental 1966). Schuler (1975) finds that the females value the opportunities to work with pleasant employees more than males, whereas males consider the opportunity to influence important decisions and direct the work of others as more important. There are many evidences to support the hypothesis that men and women differ in terms of work related values (Keith and Glass, 1977; Jurgensen, 1978).

On the other hand, it is also worthy to note that most of the studies have found no significant difference in the level of job satisfaction between male and female employees, particularly when a number of other variables were statistically controlled (Hunt and Saul 1975; Lorence and Mortimer 1985; Verca *et al.* 1983).

Job Satisfaction and Marital Status

Another influential biographic variable that might have bearing on job satisfaction is marital status of the employees. However, there are not enough studies to draw any conclusion about the effect of marital status on job satisfaction but the limited research conducted on this area consistently indicates that married employees are more satisfied with their jobs than are their unmarried coworkers (Austrom *et. al.* 1988; Federico *et. al.* 1976; Garrison and Muchinsky 1977; Watson 1981). The reason may be marriage imposes increased responsibilities that may make a steady job more valuable and important. And job satisfaction is required to have a steady job. Many, in such cases, strive to coup up or adjust them with the facets they are dissatisfied with.

Research Hypotheses

In line with the enquiry into the relationship between job satisfaction and gender as well as marital status in the context of Bangladesh we have developed the following seven hypotheses.

- Hypothesis 1: H_o : Employees in Bangladesh are generally not satisfied.
- Hypothesis 2: H_o : Male employees in Bangladesh are generally not satisfied.
- Hypothesis 3: H_o : Female employees in Bangladesh are generally not satisfied.
- Hypothesis 4: H_o : Married employees in Bangladesh are generally not satisfied.
- Hypothesis 5: H_o : Unmarried employees in Bangladesh are generally not satisfied.
- Hypothesis 6: H_o : There is no difference in the level of Job Satisfaction between male and female employee.
- Hypothesis 7: H_o : There is no difference in the level of Job Satisfaction between married and unmarried employee.

Methodology

Questionnaire and It's Construct Validity

On the basis of the literature review on job satisfaction, an eight-item questionnaire is developed to measure the level of job satisfaction. In setting up questionnaire, question on 'working environment' is ignored as we assumed that the working condition for all employees, no matter whether they are male or female, married or unmarried, remain same working in the same organization.

The questionnaire is prepared following 5–point Likart scale. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree and 3 = Neutral). Conceptually '3' represents neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the item. Thus, recording '4' and '5' represent satisfaction, the higher the score, the greater the satisfaction level. Similarly, recording '1' and '2' represent dissatisfaction, the lower the score, the greater the level of dissatisfaction.

The analysis begins with an examination of the measurement of the questionnaire in terms of its reliability and construct validity. The composite reliability coefficients of the measurements scale satisfied Nunally's (1978) guidelines (Cornbatch alpha = 0.85). The responses for eight questions given by each interviewee are then added together and the sum found is then divided by 8 (as there were 8 questions). The resultant numerical value was taken as the indicator for the respective interviewee's overall level of job satisfaction in a 5-point scale. The mean response of more than '3' is construed that generally as a whole the employees are satisfied with their jobs.

Sampling Strategy

Data for this study are collected from 224 employees (Male = 112, Female = 112, Married = 92, Unmarried = 132) working in 28 different organizations. These 28 organizations are selected randomly. Among 28 organizations, 13 are different financial institutions and 15 are non- financial institutions. However, majority of the responses (a total of 144 responses i.e. 64.28%) are from the financial institutions. This is because of greater availability of female employees in those organizations. Due to social norms and different practical reasons like safety, easy transportation facility (financial institutions are located in convenient places in terms of transportation/communication), better working environment and fixed office timing, female employees are more willing to work in the financial institutions or educational institutions than other types of organizations.

Data Analysis Techniques

After collection of responses all numerical values of different respondents are entered in SPSS 16 version. Then they are divided into four major groups: 'Male', 'Female', 'Married', and 'Unmarried'. Using the data entered into these groups is then used to calculate Means and Standard Deviations. Presence of multicollinearity and the reliability of the measurement are checked with appropriate statistical tools. To verify whether the differences among different groups are statistically significant or not, calculations of *t*-ratio are performed.

Results

Table I shows correlations among different questions asked holding gender and marital status controlled. It is evident that there are statistically highly significant positive correlations between different questions asked. But the strength of association between any two questions ranges from weak to moderate level (the range is 0.23 to 0.59) and thereby not strong enough to cause any multicollinearity problem (Mason et al. 1999).

Table I: Correlations among Different Questions Controlling Gender and Marital Status

	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆	X ₇
X ₂	0.593						
X ₃	0.378	0.385					
X ₄	0.334	0.548	0.439				
X ₅	0.502	0.554	0.373	0.447			
X ₆	0.413	0.458	0.395	0.517	0.527		
X ₇	0.235	0.450	0.276	0.275	0.382	0.292	
X ₈	0.330	0.461	0.363	0.550	0.502	0.545	0.377
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All correlations are significant at 0.001 level (2-tailed). ▪ Average Inter Item Correlation, $r_{ij} = 0.43$ 							

Besides, average Inter Item Correlation, r_{ij} is found 0.43 and thus we can conclude that there is no multicollinearity problem (Cooper and Schindler 2003). Cornbach's alpha is calculated to verify the reliability of the measurement i.e. to verify that the indicators used for measuring the level of job satisfaction are consistent. The Cornbach alpha is found 0.85 for eight questions. All of these prove that all eight questions are relatively independent of one another and measurement construct is valid.

In Table II, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Standard Error of Mean of all groups are depicted. It seems that Means, Standard Deviations and Standard Error of Means for different groups are different. It appears that 'male' employees are less satisfied than that of 'female' in their job. And 'married' employees are less satisfied than that of 'unmarried'. A verification of whether these visible differences are statistically significant, inferential statistics is used.

Table II: Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction (JS) of Different Groups

	All	Male	Female	Married	Unmarried
N	224	112	112	92	132
Mean (JS)	3.944	3.904	3.985	3.845	4.014
Std. Deviation	0.731	0.785	0.673	0.877	0.602
Std. Error of Mean	0.049	0.074	0.064	0.092	0.052

In Table II, it seems that mean levels of job satisfaction (JS) of all different groups are more than "3" and around "4" which indicates that employees are 'moderately satisfied' with their job. To verify whether these findings are statistically significant or not, hypothesis testing is done (Table III).

In Table III, *Second Row* shows different Null (H_0) and Alternative (H_a) hypotheses. *Column (3)* in Table IV shows *t*-Values for different groups and at $\alpha = 0.01$ all null Hypotheses (H_0) are rejected i.e. Hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are rejected. It means that generally employees of all groups are satisfied.

To pinpoint the level of satisfaction i.e. whether employees of different groups are 'moderately satisfied' (i.e. $JS = 4$) or 'extremely satisfied' (i.e. $JS = 5$), use of inferential statistics is required. To this end, at first, it is checked that whether any group(s) are moderately satisfied or not. *Column (4)* in Table III, shows *t*-Values, when $JS = 4$, for different groups and at $\alpha = 0.01$. All values are found within the range of critical values and thereby all Null Hypotheses (H_0) are accepted. As all groups are found 'moderately satisfied', further use of hypothesis testing using ' $JS = 5$ ' is deemed not required.

In Table II, it appears that 'male' employees are less satisfied than that of 'female' in their job. And 'married' employees are less satisfied than that of 'unmarried'. To verify whether these visible differences are statistically significant, calculations of *t*-ratio are performed. The reason for using *t*-ratio is its robustness against the violation of the normality (Sachs, 1984).

Table III: Inferential Statistics of Job Satisfaction of Different Groups

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>df</i>	$H_0 : JS \leq 3$	$H_0 : JS = 4$
		$H_a : JS > 3$	$H_a : JS \neq 4$
<i>Groups</i>	<i>t - Value</i>		<i>t - Value</i>
All	223	+ 19.328	H_0 not accepted. - 1.147 H_0 Accepted
Male	111	+ 12.187	H_0 not accepted. - 1.294 H_0 Accepted
Female	111	+ 15.489	H_0 not accepted. - 0.236 H_0 Accepted
Married	91	+ 9.242	H_0 not accepted. - 1.695 H_0 Accepted
Unmarried	131	+ 19.352	H_0 not accepted. - 0.267 H_0 Accepted
Level of Significance, $\alpha = 0.01$			

But before calculating *t*-ratio, *Levene's Test for Equality of Variances* is carried out to be sure about the 'Homogeneity of Variances' of the comparing two groups. This is deemed necessary as there is a comparison between 'married' and 'unmarried' where sample size of both groups are not equal, which may result in violation of 'equal variance assumption'. In the cases where 'Equal variance' is not found, corrected *t*-ratio is calculated. Table IV summarizes the different F-test results. It is evident that in case of 'marital status', the assumption of 'homogeneity of variances' is violated. In that comparison, the corrected *t*-ratio is used.

From Table II, the result shows that female employees' opinions are more consistent about the level of job satisfaction than that of "male" employees. (Male Std. Deviation = 0.785 and Female Std. Deviation = 0.673). And from Table IV, no statistically significant difference is found between the level of job satisfaction of 'male' and that of 'female'. ($t = - 0.821, df = 222$). Thus, Hypothesis 6 is accepted.

'Married' employees' opinions vary slightly than that of 'unmarried' employees (Married Std. Deviation = 0.877 and Unmarried Std. Deviation = 0.602). From Table IV, it is also evident that the level of job satisfaction does not differ from 'married' to 'unmarried' employees ($t = - 1.607, df = 149.268$). Thus, Hypothesis 7 is also accepted.

Table IV: *t* - test for Equality of Means of different groups

Groups	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			<i>t</i> - test for Equality		
	F	Sig.	Variance	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
'Male' and 'Female'	1.660	.199	Equal	- 0.821	222	.413
'Married' and 'Unmarried'	9.924	.002	Unequal	- 1.607	149.268	.110

Discussion

It is found that employees of all groups are 'moderately satisfied' with their job and the variability among the respondents' level of job satisfaction is not that significant (Std. Deviation ranges from 0.602 to 0.877). Relatively small sizes of Standard Error of Means (ranges from 0.049 to 0.092) indicate that the 'sample mean' of different groups well represent the population means. 'Moderate level of job satisfaction' among employees may be attributed to the socio economic condition of the country. Bangladesh is placed at the bottom end of the least developed countries plagued with high unemployment and poor human development. The concept of state sponsored social security is almost nonexistent here and consequently people are mostly concerned about the secured source of income. In these circumstances, a job with an organization is viewed as a source of livelihood and a means of social identity. It gives them a strong sense of security. Therefore, whatever benefits they receive from the job, even though they consider it not fair enough as they might have higher expectations, they are satisfied.

The study shows that there is no significant difference between male and female employees in Bangladesh. This is contradictory to the findings of many other studies, particularly conducted on developed country context. It contradicts with Bartol and Worman (1975); Clark (1996); who found women to be more satisfied than men and also with Hulin and Smith (1964), Weaver (1974), Forgie and Peeters (1982) who found men to be more satisfied. This unique result may be attributed to the fact that male and female receive their respective expatiations from the job in Bangladesh. As it is argued that male employees are more concerned about dominance and authority, probably they get it in their job (Centres and Bugental 1966); Schuler (1975). Because Bangladesh is predominately a male dominated country and here male are usually given more challenging responsibilities in the job than their female counterparts. On the other hand, female employees emphasize social aspects in the workplace (Centres and Bugental 1966); Schuler (1975). Being in a conservative society, the Bangladeshi male employees usually show honor to and cooperate their female colleagues in the workplace.

Married and unmarried employees are found to have no significant difference in terms of job satisfaction also contrasts the findings of Austrom et. al. (1988), Federico et. al. (1976), Garrison and Muchinsky (1977); Watson (1981) which show that married employees are more satisfied than the unmarried employees. The finding may also be attributed to the significance of a job in one's career, irrespective of his/her marital status in Bangladesh. To maintain a secured source of income everybody is concerned about having a steady job and consequently they try to develop a positive feeling about the job by ignoring its negative aspects. Moreover, even though a person is unmarried, it does not mean he/she doesn't have family burden. Being a collectivist society, culture of Bangladesh upholds the concept of extended family where everybody as a member of the family sustains the sense of obligation to support the family.

Conclusion

Job satisfaction is a complex concept determined by a wide range of variables. It is rather a perception about one's own job and hence difficult to measure accurately. So it is very sensitive to make any definite conclusion about the level of job satisfaction or its determinants.

In this study, it is found that the overall level of job satisfaction of employees in Bangladesh is 'moderate'. It is also found that 'gender' and 'marital status' do not play any significant role in determining the level of job satisfaction in Bangladesh. These findings are contradictory to the findings of many other studies, particularly conducted on developed country context. So the present study highlights a striking difference in terms of attitude towards job satisfaction between developed country and developing country perspective. However, it puts light on the need for further research on the reasons behind such differences in findings.

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