

Do the Personal Characteristics have Association with Job Satisfaction? An Empirical Study of Sri Lanka in Organisations

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Abstract

Job satisfaction is a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances. Environmental and psychological factors are more important contributing factors in job satisfaction than pay and salary (Seidman and Watson, 1940). Satisfying employees are the most important aspect in cultivating maximum performance through their motivation. Here it is important to identify the factors which determine the job satisfaction of the employees. Specific factors, individual characteristics, and group relationships outside the job are involving satisfaction. The researcher identified the gap that most researchers focused on the job related factors which don't focus more on personal characteristics. So the present study is initiated to fulfill the gap. In this paper, association between personal characteristics and job satisfaction is identified with the samples of 360 respondents in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Further the important satisfactoral factors are also found out. The study found that there were no significant difference between the personal characteristics such as gender group, marital status, departments, status, family size, employments status of the family, and total annual income of the family of respondents on job satisfaction. But there exists significant difference among age, education, experience, and monthly income on satisfaction, ie these variables have a significant effect on job satisfaction. As the age, education, experience and monthly income increase, the level of satisfaction increases. Hence management should pay a special attention to these characteristics. Peer and social relationship, pay, rules and regulations, fringe benefits, working conditions are most important satisfactoral factors in public sector organizations. Finally, certain recommendations are given to increase the levels of job satisfaction of the employees which will enable organization to achieve its goals.

Keywords: Performance, Personal characteristics, Physiological factors, Psychological factors, Satisfaction

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Introduction

Job satisfaction is more of an attitude, an internal state. It could, for example, be associated with a personal feeling of achievement, either quantitative, or qualitative. Job satisfaction is a set of favourable or unfavourable feelings and emotions with which employees view their work. Job satisfaction is an affective attitude- a feeling of relative like or dislike toward something (Newstrom & Davis, 2001). In other words, it is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. It is a result of employee's perception how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important (Luthans, 2002). High level of job satisfaction holds positive attitudes about the job while a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job holds negative attitudes about the job (Robbins, 2003).

Job satisfaction is the result of various attitudes possessed by an employee. In a narrow sense, these attitudes are related to the job and are concerned with such specific factors as wages, supervision, steadiness of employment, conditions of work, advancement opportunities, recognition of ability, fair evaluation of work, social relations on the job, prompt settlement of grievances, fair treatment by employer, and other similar items (Blum & Naylor, 1984). However, a more comprehensive approach requires that many additional factors be included before a complete understanding of job satisfaction can be obtained. Such factors as the employee's age, health, temperament, desires, and level aspiration should be considered. Further his/her family relationships, social status, recreational outlets, activity in organizations- labour political or purely social- contributes ultimately to job satisfaction.

From the above explanation, it can be said that job satisfaction is a general attitude which is the result of many specific attitudes in three areas, namely, specific job factors, individual characteristics, and group relationships outside the job. Thus the present study is made to find out the satisfactoral factors, and the association between satisfaction and personal characteristics.

the satisfaction (Guha, 1965; Sinha & Agarwala, 1971). Some studies revealed the negative relationship (Sinha and Sarma, 1962, and Narchal, Alag & Kishore, 1984) where as some others have not found a relationships (Rao, 1970; Vasudeva & Rajbir, 1976). There have been numerous studies into job satisfaction which explore the impact of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, tenure, and education (Clark, 1993, Clark and Oswald, 1995, Hickson and Oshagbemi, 1999). In a way, the present study is intended that whether the personal characteristics have association with job satisfaction?

Research Problem.

While a person comes to work, he/she brings with him/her's total personality, his attitudes, likes and dislikes, his/her personal characteristics and these, in turn, influence the satisfaction he/her derives from his/ her's work. As work is one of the necessary aspects of the total life experience of an individual, it becomes important to examine how his personal characteristics influence his / her job satisfaction. Personal characteristics here refer to such bio-social variables as sex, age, marital status, education, length of service, and income, etc. Thus this study is conducted to find out, if any, the association between personal variables and job satisfaction of the employees in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.

Review of Literature

Job satisfaction is a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances which have observed through the 32 studies on job satisfaction conducted prior to 1933(Hoppock,1935).A study reported that environmental and psychological factors are more important contributing factors in job satisfaction than pay and salary(Seidman & Watsan, 1940). Most studies of job satisfaction have been concerned with operationalising it rather than defining it (Locke, 1969; Pestonjee, 1973; Porter, 1961, Katzell, 1964, and Kunin, 1955).

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People at higher occupational and/ or educational levels, intrinsic aspect of jobs go up in important while security drops off considerably (Hertzberg et.al, 1957). A number of studies have been carried out on the relationship between job satisfaction and personal characteristics (Hertzberg et.al, 1957, Ronan, 1970, Ganesan et.al, 2002).

The relationship between age and job satisfaction could be complex. Generally one would expect that as the person would grow older he would get greater satisfaction with his job particularly because of the experience and, therefore, the ease with which he would be able to perform it. Studies by Guha, (1965) and Sinha and Agarwala (1971) support such a relationship. Some studies revealed the negative relationship (Sinha & Sarma, 1962, and Narchal, Alag & Kishore, 1984) where as some others have not found a relationships (Rao, 1970, & Vasudeva & Rajbir, 1976). There have been numerous studies into job satisfaction which explore the impact of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, tenure, and education (Clark, 1993; Clark & Oswald, 1995, Hickson & Oshagbemi, 1999, Oshagbemi, 1998, 2000 a, b). The results suggest the existence of relationships between demographic characteristics and job satisfaction, but the evidence tends to be mixed, with positive and negative relationships sometimes identified for the interactions between the same variables. Number of studies has been conducted on satisfaction in Sri Lankan context, there are no sufficient studies on personal characteristics and job satisfaction in Sri Lankan public sector organisations, and hence the present study is initiated to find out the association among personal variables and job satisfaction.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to identify the association among personal characteristics and job satisfaction of the employees in Sri Lankan public sector organizations and secondary objectives are:

- ❖ To measure the level of satisfaction of the employees in public sector organizations.
- ❖ To find out the significant factors of satisfaction.
- ❖ To find out the significant difference between personal characteristics on job satisfaction.

Material and Research Methodology

Primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire developed by the researcher, and secondary data were collected from books, Journals, Magazines etc.

Methodology

The sample for the study is public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select sample organizations from the Colombo City. In first 125 public sector organizations were identified from Colombo 1 – Colombo 15 and then 25 organizations were selected.

It was decided to collect data from 20 respondents from each of the selected sampling unit, entailing three levels of employees, ie lower level, middle level, and higher level. Accordingly, the numbers of questionnaires distributed to different organizations were 500 of which 400 were received and only 360 (72%) questionnaires were completed properly and used for the study.

An instrument developed by the researcher was used to collect the data from employees. The questionnaire consists of 15 factors for measuring job satisfaction. Section A of the questionnaire has the personal profile of the employees such as sex, marital status, age, education, status, monthly income, experience, family size, employment status of the family and total annual income of the family. Section B consists of 20 statements to assess the perceived level of satisfaction with the seven- point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The following satisfactoral factors were included into the instrument. (1) Pay, (2) Incentives (3) Fringe benefits (4) working condition (5) Peer relationships, (6) Superior – subordinate relationships (7) Security (8) Supervision (9) Recognition (10) Rules and regulations (11) Participation in decision – making (12) Social relationship (13) Fair treatment of employees (14) Freedom of work and (15) Leadership.

With the seven - point ranging scale, data were quantified and used for the analysis using SPSS package with the statistical techniques, Mean, t-test, ANOVA, and Chi- square.

Hypotheses of the study

The following hypotheses are formulated for the study.

- 1) Personal characteristics and job satisfaction are associated.
- 2) Significant difference exists between personal characteristics on job satisfaction.

Results and Discussion

A questionnaire was used, in the present study to find out the degree of job satisfaction perceived by the employees in the public sector organizations. Based on the above score, the levels of satisfaction of the employees in the public sector organizations are presented in Table1.

Table 1: Levels of Satisfaction in public sector organizations.

| Levels of satisfaction | Low | Moderate | High | Total |
|------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|
| No of respondents | 66 | 60 | 234 | 360 |
| Percentage | 18.3 | 16.7 | 65 | 100.0 |

Low-Below 60, Moderate-60 – 100, High – Above 100

The Table 1 indicates that most of the respondents are into the high level of satisfaction, a percentage analysis shows that the high level satisfaction component for public sector is 65% which is higher than that in the low and moderate levels with 18.3%, and 16.7% respectively.

The present study is conducted to identify the factors that help us to understand what type of items employees prefer. Accordingly, fifteen satisfactoral factors have been ranked based on the mean value, and standard deviation.

Table 2: Significance Mean value and Ranking of Satisfactional Factors.

| S.N | Factors | Mean Value | S.D | Ranking | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|------------|------|---------|-----|
| | | | | Mean | S.D |
| 1 | Pay | 5.02 | 2.02 | 3 | 15 |
| 2 | Incentives | 4.86 | 1.79 | 7 | 3 |
| 3 | Fringe benefits | 4.90 | 1.90 | 5 | 10 |
| 4 | Working condition | 4.90 | 1.90 | 5 | 10 |
| 5 | Peer relationships | 5.38 | 1.70 | 1 | 2 |
| 6 | Superior – subordinate relationships | 4.60 | 1.82 | 10 | 4 |
| 7 | Security | 3.61 | 1.99 | 15 | 14 |
| 8 | Supervision | 3.78 | 1.87 | 14 | 8 |
| 9 | Recognition | 4.60 | 1.82 | 10 | 4 |
| 10 | Rules and regulations | 4.92 | 1.96 | 4 | 13 |
| 11 | Participation in decision - making | 4.78 | 1.82 | 8 | 4 |
| 12 | Social relationships | 5.04 | 1.65 | 2 | 1 |
| 13 | Fair treatment | 4.37 | 1.83 | 12 | 7 |
| 14 | Freedom of work | 4.71 | 1.88 | 9 | 9 |
| 15 | Leadership | 4.03 | 1.92 | 13 | 12 |

Mean value indicates that peer and social relationships, pay, rules and regulations, fringe benefits, and working conditions are most significant factors in satisfying workers. Security is the least important to workers. Because public sector employees in Sri Lanka don't need to worry about their job security. They have high security. Conversely standard deviation suggests that social relationships, peer relationships, incentives, recognition and participation in decision – making are the most important for satisfaction where as pay and security have least important.

After measuring level of satisfaction and identifying significant satisfactoral factors, the association between personal characteristics and satisfaction, and the significant difference among the personal variables on satisfaction have also been clearly analyzed and summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Chi square and z – test for employees on the variable of satisfaction.

| S.N | Variables | X ² | Sig. Level | N | Average | S.D | Z-value | Sig. Level |
|-----|-----------|----------------|------------|-----|---------|-------|---------|------------|
| 1 | Male | 0.385 | N.S | 237 | 101.35 | 30.16 | 0.133 | N.S |
| | Female | | | 79 | 101.03 | 29.69 | | |
| 2 | Married | 2.00 | N.S | 192 | 100.26 | 30.59 | 1.31 | N.S |
| | Unmarried | | | 124 | 103.43 | 28.55 | | |

Table 3 expresses that there is no association between gender group, marital status and job satisfaction of the employees in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Further there is no significant difference between male and female employees on the perception of satisfaction. Both the employees are equally satisfied on their job, similarly married and unmarried employees were found no significant difference on the perceived levels of satisfaction.

Table 4. Chi-square and ANOVA – test for employees on the variable of satisfaction.

| S.N | Variables | X ² | Sig. level | N | F-value | Sig. level |
|-----|----------------------------|----------------|------------|-----|---------|------------|
| 1 | Department | 7.863 | N.S | | | |
| | Personnel & Administration | | | 74 | | |
| | Finance | | | 84 | | |
| | Production | | | 10 | 2.058 | N.S |
| | Sales & Marketing | | | 24 | | |
| | others | | | 168 | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| 2 | Status | | | | | |
| | Lower Level | | | 53 | | |
| | Middle Level | 2.652 | N.S | 245 | 1.62 | N.S |
| | Higher Level | | | 62 | | |
| 3 | Family size | | | | | |
| | ≤ 2 | | | 200 | | |
| | 3 - 4 | 1.212 | N.S | 141 | 2.014 | N.S |
| | ≥ 5 | | | 19 | | |
| 4 | Employment status of family | | | | | |
| | ≤ 2 | | | 336 | | |
| | 3 - 4 | 0.760 | N.S | 20 | 1.943 | N.S |
| | ≥ 5 | | | 04 | | |
| 5 | Total Annual Income of family | | | | | |
| | < 200000 | | | 245 | | |
| | 200000 – 400000 | 7.285 | N.S | 85 | 2.445 | N.S |
| | 400000 – 600000 | | | 11 | | |
| | > 600000 | | | 19 | | |

We can observe from the Table 4 that there is no association among the personal characteristics such as departments, status, family size; employment status of the family, and total annual income of the family, and job satisfaction in public sector organizations. ANOVA test was carried out to find out the significant difference between the personal characteristics and satisfaction. These values show that there is no significant difference between the different departments, status, family size, employments status of the family, and annual income of the family of employees on the variable of satisfaction.

Table 5: Chi-square and ANOVA-test for Employees on the Variable of Satisfaction.

| S.N | Variables | X ² | Sig. level | N | Average | F-value | Sig. level |
|-----|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------|-----|---------|---------|------------|
| 1 | Age | | | | | | |
| | < 30 yrs | | | 70 | 95.43 | | |
| | 30 - 45 yrs | 6.638 | N.S | 156 | 100.00 | 7.403 | 0.05 |
| | 45 - 55 yrs | | | 98 | 95.51 | | |
| | > 55 yrs | | | 36 | 107.78 | | |
| 2 | Education | | | | | | |
| | G.C.E (O/L) and (A/L) | | | 182 | 98.68 | | |
| | Degree & Postgraduate | 0.586 | N.S | 101 | 99.80 | 3.499 | 0.05 |
| | Professional & Technical or Diploma | | | 77 | 97.14 | | |
| 3 | Experience | | | | | | |
| | <5 yrs | | | 52 | 94.12 | | |
| | 6 - 10 yrs | | | 49 | 98.18 | 5.87 | 0.05 |
| | 11 - 15 yrs | 8.675 | N.S | 25 | 92.44 | | |
| | 16 - 20 yrs | | | 37 | 102.64 | | |
| | > 20 yrs | | | 71 | 103.60 | | |
| 4 | Monthly income | | | | | | |
| | Up to Rs. 5000 | | | 33 | 88.48 | | |
| | 5000 - 10000 | | | 152 | 93.42 | | |
| | 10000 - 15000 | 20.149 | N.S | 84 | 102.38 | 2.787 | 0.05 |
| | 15000 - 20000 | | | 30 | 106.67 | | |
| | >20000 | | | 61 | 108.19 | | |

Table 5 indicates that there is no association between personal characteristics viz, age, education, experience, and monthly income and job satisfaction. Further, ANOVA technique was used to find out the significant difference between the personal variables on the variable of job satisfaction. Thus F - values denote the significant difference. Therefore age group,

educational qualifications, experience, and monthly income of the respondents have a significant effect on the perception of job satisfaction. Employees above 55 years are highly satisfied than the other age groups; and it also indicates that there is an increase in the level of satisfaction while age increases in public sector organizations. This may be due to the stability in the organizations. Most of them are, sometimes, may be relieved from the burden of their family; it could also observe that majority of the employees under the age group of above 55 are in the higher position of employment in the firm which leads to enjoy higher salaries and psychological benefits. Meantime, retirement age, in public sector, is 55. Hence, these people should be on extension which leads to no further expectation in the organizations. Therefore the satisfaction level of them may be high as compared to other age group of people.

The level of satisfaction was found high among graduates. Superior should, therefore, treat them with dignity and recognition for their personal worth. Generally employees who possessed degree and or postgraduates' degree are at the high position on their work which can work independently and enjoy with higher earnings and other fringe benefits as well as psychological benefits such as challenging, authority, achievement, etc. So such group of people can be more satisfied at work than the other group of people.

Income is the main source for all aspects of life. F- Value of 2.787 shows that income has a significant effect on satisfaction. Thus, as monthly income of the employees increases, the level of satisfaction increases in public sector organizations. Employees who have the monthly income of above Rs. 20000 are highly satisfied than the other income group of employees. It is supported by Parikh and Savlani,(1995). Similarly the work experience and satisfaction have a positive relationship. Employees with higher experience have a high level of satisfaction. Year of experience can give a general understanding of work, organization and co-workers. As soon as an employee reaches a period close to retirement, his satisfaction may increase because of the lack of alternative opportunities available to him. The present study finds that even though the level of satisfaction decreases at the experience level of 11 – 15 years, the satisfaction increases as the experience of the employees' increases.

Generally one would expect that as the person would grow older he/she would get greater satisfaction with his/her job particularly because of the experience and, therefore, the ease with which he/she would be able to perform it. Studies by Guha (1965), and Sinha and Agarwala (1971) support such a relationship.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is no association among personal characteristics which are taken in the present study and job satisfaction, and hence the hypothesis one is rejected.

Peer and social relationship, pay, rules and regulations, fringe benefits, working conditions are most important satisfactoral factors in public sector organizations. There were no significant difference between the personal characteristics such as gender group, marital status, departments, status, family size, employments status of the family, and total annual income of the family of respondents on job satisfaction. But there exists significant difference among age, education, experience, and monthly income on satisfaction, ie, these variables have a significant effect on job satisfaction. Therefore hypothesis 2 is partially accepted or partially rejected. To conclude, as the age, education, experience and monthly income increase, the level of satisfaction increases.

Recommendations

Peer and social relationships, pay, rules and regulations, fringe benefits, and working conditions are most significant factors in satisfying workers. The organizations should take action to keep these factors and pay a special attention to other factors to develop them in order to satisfy the employees.

The level of satisfaction was found high among graduates. Superior should, therefore, treat them with dignity and recognition for their personal worth and independent work also motivate employees.

Congenial working condition is mostly expected by the workers. Hence the organizations must concern with this aspect.

Another important aspect in satisfaction is the rewards. Various rewards packages can be used by the organizations. It is better to adopt performance related payment. This will satisfy high performing workers.

Challenging work, participation in decision making, authority are considered as the satisfactional items. Organisations can give a suitable training programme to develop their workers.

Further, it is better to encourage the workers to participate at special education programme and international conference which will help them to enhance their knowledge.

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