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# What predicts job satisfaction in Malaysia?

Wirawani Kamarulzaman<sup>1</sup> and Mohd Burhan Ibrahim<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Malaysia.<sup>2</sup>Institute of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to address the gaps in the literature and to examine the predictors of job satisfaction. In this study, the hypothesized predictors influencing one's job satisfaction are a) gender, b) age, c) level of education, d) salary, e) role in the job, and f) years of working in the organization. This study used Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) as a data gathering tool. The questionnaires were administered to 89 male respondents, and 121 female respondents. For data analysis, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed. In addition to conducting a multiple regression analysis (MRA), descriptive statistical analysis was also carried out as part of the data analysis. Of all the predictors studied, results indicated gender as the only significant predictor of one's job satisfaction. Several recommendations for future studies were also listed.

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### Introduction

Job satisfaction is an important factor for any organization to achieve among its employees as it helps in maintaining the stability and productivity in the operations of academic institutions or other organizations (Fako, Moeng, & Forchheh, 2009). Mora, Aracil and Vila (2007) suggest that job satisfaction indicates how people value the whole package of both monetary and non-monetary returns to their jobs according to their own personal tastes, preferences and expectations

In studies to compare gender in job satisfaction, Ssesanga and Garrett (2005) found that gender has no evidence to influence employees' job satisfaction, but on the other hand Wharton and Baron (1991) argue that women in predominantly-male work settings are most satisfied with their jobs and the least satisfied women are in 'female-tilted' settings (15-30% male), apparently favoured of male minority, to their female co-workers' frustration. Conversely, Fako, Moeng, and Forchheh (2009) found that male workers are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than female workers especially in organizations where males have more opportunities for advancement or where females are the last to be employed and the first to be fired. They explained that male and female employees differ in terms of many factors that affect employees' satisfaction such as age, marital status, citizenship, years of service at the institution and so on, for example, middle-aged males were more satisfied with the type of work they did than middle-aged females. Married males were more satisfied with their jobs than married females, but having young children has no effect on job satisfaction and the effect of female workers and young children are found to be negative (Hanson & Sloane, 1992).

Furthermore a study by Van de Velde, Feij, and Taris (1995) suggest that age plays a role in one's job satisfaction as they expanded that when young adults grow older they become more satisfied with life and value intrinsic instead of extrinsic factors for life, because people prefer an environment which fulfill their needs and wishes, and thus they will have better satisfaction in their jobs. However, another study suggested that

age is not a viable predictor of job satisfaction since the researchers found a weak positive linear age-job satisfaction relationship in their study (Bernal, Snyder & McDaniel, 1998).

Job satisfaction was also predicted by the level of education and graduates' job satisfaction was linked with the knowledge and skills acquired during the study and the match between educational level and job level (Mora, Aracil & Vila 2007; Battu, Belfield, & Sloane, 1999; Verhaest & Omev, 2006). This is supported by the findings of Callear (1992) which states that the employees who were not graduates students believed that education is relevant in preparing for adult working life. In her study, she investigated the attitudes to education among school-leavers and found that it was positive. The majority of them were found to consider they had learned useful things during school years. The majority disagree that school had done little to prepare them for work and they felt that school had prepared them well particularly for the transition between school and work

According to Ritter and Anker (2002), job satisfaction relates to a few variables namely characteristics of the employees; employee size and self-employment status; the respondent's evaluation of workplace safety; perceived job security; earnings on the job; transferability of skills used on the job; union membership; and the respondent's perceptions of employer attitudes. The results of their study pointed out that job satisfaction is strongly associated with perceived job security; the safety of the workplace; higher level of education; employer attitudes; as well as union membership. High satisfaction with pay, they added, also tends to report high satisfaction with the degree of autonomy. Moreover, in a study done by Ofili, Usiholo and Oronsaye (2008), they found that poor salary was the major cause of job dissatisfaction and intention to quit. Ping Du, Lai, and Lo (2010) also found that salary with regards to other benefits and logical services has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

Role of an employee in an organization is also a predictor of job satisfaction. A study done by Brumels and Beach (2008)

Tele:

E-mail addresses: [wirawani@utar.edu.my](mailto:wirawani@utar.edu.my)

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found that role incongruity, ambiguity and overloaded have caused an employee to have the intention to leave a job conversely role incompetency has not contributed to that intention. Pearson (2008) suggested that role overloaded is a strong predictor of job satisfaction.

Another hypothesized predictor of job satisfaction is the years of working or the experience of an employee of a certain job. It was found that those who are new to a job is to be less satisfied with the job compared to those who have experiences in doing the job (Marchand, 2009).

However, those studies were not conducted in Malaysia, therefore the researcher is intended to examine the predictors of job satisfaction for employees in Malaysia, specifically in Klang Valley area. The variables for predictors include gender, age, level of education, salary, role of the employee and the years of working experience.

In exploring the predictors of job satisfaction, the following research questions are asked:

RQ1: What is/are the predictor/s of job satisfaction?

RQ2. Is there a significant relationship between the predictor/s and job satisfaction?

### Research Method

This study focused on employees who work in the human service industry where there are no specific assigned tasks or duties. Purposive sampling, which is participants are chosen based on the purpose of the research, was used. The respondents of the study comprised of 210 employees of Malaysian Alliance Assurance Berhad (MAA), Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), and Perodua Malaysia Berhad. They were 89 males; and 121 females.

This study used Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) as a data gathering tool. The MSQ is offered in a long form, and a short form, which measure on a five-point Likert scale.

The format of MSQ is a paper and pencil inventory, which measures vocational needs and social values based on job satisfaction. Developed by Weiss, Davis, England and Lofquist (1967), the MSQ is a five-dimension tool for measuring job satisfaction. Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek and Frings-Dresen (2003) in their study to obtain the reliability and validity of the instrument measuring job satisfaction concluded that MSQ has an internal consistency of .81.

Descriptive statistics was employed to examine the means and standard deviation scores of the variables. Multiple regression analysis (MRA) was done to explore the percentage of variance explained of the predictors of job satisfaction.

### Results And Discussion

The descriptive statistics indicated that female respondents are more than male respondents (58% and 42% respectively), with 48% of the respondents are at the age of below 30 years old, 55% of them were only completed secondary level of education, 70% of the respondents have the salary range of RM1000 to RM3000 per months, 57% are working in administrative department, and 70% of them has worked for more than 3 years. The summary of the demographic information is as follows:

Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was employed to obtain the R square value to measure the predictor/s of job satisfaction.

Table 2 showed that the predictors of Job Satisfaction are age, level of education, gender, age, level of education, salary,

role in the job, years of working. The above table indicates that only 14.3% of variance is explained by those predictors.

It is hypothesized that at least one of the predictors is significant. The table above showed that the null hypothesis is rejected, therefore there is at least one of the predictors is significant in predicting job satisfaction as  $p=0.000$  ( $p<0.05$ ).

Table 4 showed that only gender is significant in predicting job satisfaction,  $p=0.000$  ( $p<0.005$ ), while the others are insignificant in predicting job satisfaction. The regression equation is  $\text{Job satisfaction} = 79.627 - 9.973 (\text{gender})$ .

The interested characteristic of gender was female. The equation showed that if the employee is male, the score would be higher (79.548) than if the employee is female (79.548-9.973). This indicates that male employees are more satisfied than female employees.

### Conclusion

The study was to examine the predictors of job satisfaction in Malaysia. A number of hypothesized were analyzed the significance level of each predictor namely a) gender, b) age, c) level of education, d) salary, e) role in the job f) years of working in the organization. MRA was employed and results showed that only gender predicts job satisfaction in Malaysia with  $p=0.000$  ( $p<0.05$ ), which is however contradicts with findings of Ssesanga and Garrett (2005) who suggested that gender has no evidence to influence employees' job satisfaction. However, only 14% of the predictors explained job satisfaction in Malaysia. It is believed that other factors must be the contributors of the variance explained of job satisfaction in Malaysia.

The researcher was interested to find the job satisfaction among female employees and it was found that male employees are more satisfied with their jobs compared to female. This is in congruent with Fako, Moeng, and Forcheh (2009) who found that male workers are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than female workers especially in organizations where males have more opportunities for advancement or where females are the last to be employed and the first to be fired.

The other variables were found to be insignificant predictors of job satisfaction, which are contradicts with the literatures (Van de Velde, Feij, & Taris, 1995; Callear, 1992; Ritter and Anker, 2002; Brumels and Beach, 2008).

As to conclude, the study implies that since male employees were found to be more satisfied than female employees, it is important for the companies to conduct more training for the employees to boost up their satisfaction level. Furthermore, although previous researches have found that male employees are more satisfied than female employees, (Fako, Moeng & Forcheh 2009; Hanson & Sloane, 1992) limited research were found to indicate the reasons of such findings.

### Recommendation

A few recommendations for future research as follows to overcome the shortcomings of the study:

- 1)The respondents were not equally distributed especially for the male and female respondents. Better control of the selection of equally distributed respondents is encouraged
- 2)The lack of diversity of the selection of the companies may also be the reason of the insignificant result. It is known that MAA is an insurance company, so in future researches, the selection of the companies should be more varied to gain better result of role in the job to be one of the job satisfaction predictors.

**Table 1: The percentages of participants according to the numbers of hypothesized predictors.**

Items		Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	42
	Female	58
Age	Below 20	5
	Below 30	48
	Below 40	35
	Above 40	12
Level of Education	Secondary	55
	Tertiary	45
Salary	Below RM1000	11
	RM1000 – RM3000	70
	Above RM3000	19
Role in the Job	Non-admin	43
	Admin	57
Years of working	Below 1 year	7
	1 – 3 years	23
	More than 3 years	70

**Table 2: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.379 <sup>a</sup>	.143	.118	13.438

a. Predictors: (Constant), gender, age, level of education, salary, role in the job, years of working.

b. Dependent Variable: JS

**Table 3: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6131.342	6	1021.890	5.659	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	36659.654	203	180.589		
Total	42790.995	209			

a. Dependent Variable: JS

b. Predictors: (Constant), gender, age, level of education, salary, role in the job, years of working

**Table 4: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	79.548	5.906		13.468	.000
	gender	-9.973	1.978	-.345	-5.042	.000
	Highest level of schooling	-1.997	1.769	-.079	-1.128	.260
	Income per month	2.745	1.901	.120	1.444	.150
	job	-1.155	1.614	-.051	-.715	.475
	Years of working	.270	1.189	.019	.227	.821
	age	-.069	.160	-.040	-.430	.668

a. Dependent Variable: JS

3) Since the predictor was only explained 14% of job satisfaction, other contributing factors could be investigated to determine job satisfaction in Malaysia. The dig of literatures is highly recommended.

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