HAPPINESS AND SATISFACTION IN IT JOBS

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ABSTRACT

It is well known that happy workers are assets of an organisation. They are more likely to improve themselves through self-enhancement. So, the case of self-awareness is strong. It is clear to see why increased self-awareness is an important factor in an employee’s work happiness. Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job. The happier people are within their job, the more satisfied they are said to be. The Information Technology (IT) sector has emerged only recently in the world market and it has assumed centre stage both in our society and the world. The flourishing Indian economy has helped the IT sector to maintain its competitiveness in the global market. The IT and IT enabled services industry in India has recorded a growth rate of 22.4% in the last fiscal year. This paper analyses the satisfaction of their job vis-à-vis that of other sectors. Job satisfaction can simply be defined as the feelings people have about their jobs. Job satisfaction is important not just because it boosts work performance but also because it increases the quality of employees’ life. The most common technique for measurement of job satisfaction is the use of rating scales where employees report their thoughts and reactions to their jobs. A workforce with high job satisfaction leads to an improvement in work quality and productivity, and leads to satisfied loyal customers. In the IT Industry the environment is quite congenial leading to motivation of employees with the result the productivity is increased and this indicates the level of their job satisfaction.

Keywords: Information Technology, Jobs, Happiness and Satisfaction, Productivity, Economic Growth
INTRODUCTION

Science has worked for years to find out what keeps humans happy and satisfied. Happy people made a happy world (Agnihotri, 2012). And happiness cannot be bought. It is a feeling that is triggered by the ‘happy hormones’ or endorphins which are “natural hormones that your brain releases when you are relaxed, like after a great meal, a good workout or a good laugh,” says Dr. Mini Rao, a psychologist. It is well known that happy workers are assets of an organisation. One thing that all happiness expert agree on is that happiness is not a destination. Rather, it is the result of a range of activities and feelings. Or to use that rather corny phrase, happiness is a journey (Rowan, 2008). According to Aristotle, “Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence”.

In one’s life one comes across a lot of people who are unhappy at work. Such people can be grouped under two categories. The first are those who are unhappy because of genuine mismatch between them as a person and the career they have chosen. The second are those who have chosen their career path well but are still unhappy. In many cases, they have been happy up to a certain point but have reached what is called ‘satisfaction saturation point’. This is the point where a career that was once fulfilling and exciting has over time become dull, routine or unsatisfactory.

Happiness at work starts with self-awareness which can be defined as the act of ‘focusing attention on oneself’. In other words, keeping an eye on how things are for himself/herself. Why is it important to be happy at work? The answer for this is that those who are self-aware have a clear sense of where they want to be and how to get there. Also, self-aware people take more responsibility for their behaviour. These are all important aspects of improving employee’s job satisfaction at work place. This, in fact, is interrelated to improved communication which has a strong impact on an employee’s work happiness. Self-aware employees are more inclined to identify the things in their lives that need change or improvement. Eventually, they are more likely to improve themselves through self-enhancement. So, the case of self-awareness is strong. It is clear to see why increased self-awareness is an important is an important factor in an employee’s work happiness.
HAPPY WORKERS

Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job. The happier people are within their job, the more satisfied they are said to be. Logic would dictate that the most satisfied (“happy”) workers should be the best performers and vice versa. This is called the "happy worker" hypothesis. However, this hypothesis is not well supported, as job satisfaction is not the same as motivation or aptitude, although they may be clearly linked. A primary influence on job satisfaction is the application of job design, which aims to enhance job satisfaction and performance using methods such as job rotation, job enlargement, job enrichment and job re-engineering. Other influences on satisfaction include management styles and culture, employee involvement, empowerment, and autonomous work position.

Many managers do not realize that employee performance and morale can be adversely affected by seemingly minor problems such as frequently-broken duplicating machines, absence of important office supplies, or poor maintenance of company property. Management inattention to such 'little things' translates to employees as a demonstration of managerial incompetence. Employees respond to such irritation in three stages: acceptance, tolerance, and rejection. Job satisfaction declines significantly through each stage, and can result in employee withdrawal or resignation. Employee job satisfaction levels can be improved by first determining present job satisfaction levels and then developing a strategy for improvement. Techniques for improvement depend on whether employees are in the acceptance, tolerance, or rejection stages (McAfee, et al., 1988).

DEFINITION OF JOB SATISFACTION

According to Wikipedia, job satisfaction can simply be defined as the feelings people have about their jobs. It has been specifically defined as a pleasurable (or un-pleasurable) emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job, an effective reaction to one’s job, and an attitude towards one’s job. Job satisfaction is in regard to one's feelings or state-of-mind regarding the nature of their work. It can be influenced by a variety of factors, e.g., the quality of one's relationship with their supervisor, the quality of the physical environment in which they work, degree of fulfilment in their work, etc. These definitions suggest that job satisfaction takes into account feelings,
beliefs, and behaviours (Anon., 2012a). Another definition of job satisfaction by eNotes.com (Anon., 2012b) is that job satisfaction, a worker's sense of achievement and success, is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal wellbeing. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well, and being suitably rewarded for one's efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. The Harvard Professional Group (1998) sees job satisfaction as the keying radiant that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a general feeling of fulfillment.

Job satisfaction is important not just because it boosts work performance but also because it increases quality of employees' life. Many people spend so much time at work that when it becomes dissatisfying, the rest of their life soon follows. Everyone's job is different but here are 10 factors that psychologists regularly find are important in how satisfied people are with their jobs. They are: (1) Little hassles, (2) Perception of fair pay, (3) Achievement, (4) Feedback, (5) Complexity and variety, (6) Control, (7) Organisational support, (8) Work-home overflow, (9) Honeymoons and hangovers, and (10) Easily pleased? If you're a manager looking to improve satisfaction at your workplace then start with point number 1: find out about people's little hassles and address them. It might not look like much but people will really appreciate it (Anon., 2011).

Despite considerable interest in the study of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, our understanding of these phenomena has not advanced at a pace commensurate with research efforts. It is argued that a major reason for this lack of progress is the implicit conception of causality accepted by most psychologists. It is called the policy of “correlation without explanation.” The present approach to the topic of job attitudes emphasizes a more conceptual approach to the problem. Using Rand's theory of emotions as a starting point, the concepts of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, value, emotion, and appraisal, and their interrelationships are discussed. The present theory of job satisfaction is contrasted with previous theories. Data illustrating an approach to satisfaction based on the present theory are given. Other issues discussed are: value hierarchies; the dynamic character of values; overall job satisfaction; the Herzberg two-factor theory; the measurement of satisfaction and values; and rational vs. irrational values (Locke, 1969).
Low job satisfaction often leads to poor employee performance and productivity. Some facts that may affect employee job satisfaction include compensation and benefits. Job security, along with a peaceful and safe work environment, may also help improve job satisfaction. According to many experts, challenging and exciting work will also lead to happier employees. Open communication between supervisors and employees can help ensure employee job satisfaction in many instances (Edwards, 2003).

**HOW JOB SATISFACTION IS MEASURED?**

Job satisfaction is a very important attribute and is frequently measured by organizations. The most common technique for measurement is the use of rating scales where employees report their thoughts and reactions to their jobs. Questions can relate to rates of pay, work responsibilities, variety of tasks, promotional opportunities, the work itself, and co-workers. Some examinations present yes-or-no questions while others ask to rate satisfaction using a 1-to-5 scale, where 1 represents "not at all satisfied" and 5 represents "extremely satisfied."

Job satisfaction, the dependent variable, was measured by the response to the question: "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do—would you say, you are very satisfied, moderately satisfied, a little dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?" The independent variables were the personal demographic characteristics—income, education, occupation, age and gender. Income was measured by the response to the question: "In which of these groups did your earnings from (the occupation identified earlier) for last year fall? That is, before taxes and other deductions." Education was measured in terms of years of formal education completed for which credit was received. Respondents were classified into occupations based on their answers to the questions about the kind of work they do and what their jobs were called. Occupation was then dichotomized into blue-collar and white-collar based on 1970 and 1980 census occupational classifications. Age was recorded in exact years since date of birth. Gender was interviewer coded into male and female.

Workforce is the most important factor and the only sustainable long-term competitive advantage of an organization. In today’s intensely competitive global
environment, there is a strong demand for workforce participation in organizational decision making to enable the achievement of higher productivity of an organization. One aspect of workforce participation is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is defined as how much, employees like or dislike their work and the extent to which their expectations concerning work have been fulfilled. Understanding job satisfaction is critical to the success of an organization and continues to be a major topic of research interest.

WORKERS’ ATTITUDE AND JOB SATISFACTION

The field of industrial/organizational psychology has a long, rich, and, at times, controversial history related to the study and understanding of employee attitudes and job satisfaction. Some of this research is very specific and aimed primarily at other researchers, while other publications provide practical guidance on understanding, measuring, and improving employee attitudes (e.g., Edwards and Fisher, 2004; Kraut, 1996). One likely future direction of employee attitude research will be to better understand the interplay between the person and the situation and the various internal and external factors that influence employee attitudes. In particular, a better understanding of the role of emotion, as well as broader environmental impacts, is needed and has been largely overlooked in past research. In addition, ongoing research will provide more in-depth understanding of the effects of employee attitudes and job satisfaction on organizational measures, such as customer satisfaction and financial measures. Greater insights on the relationship between employee attitudes and business performance will assist HR professionals as they strive to enhance the essential people side of the business in a highly competitive, global arena (Saari and Judge, 2004).

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) SECTOR

The IT sector is of recent origin of about three decades old. In this era of IT, people carry out all their activities such as bill payments, reservation for journey, social networking, bank transactions, telemedicine, applying for jobs, getting date of birth certificates of children, etc., using Internet facility with the help of computer by remaining at home at any time whether it is day or night. Therefore Internet has been
The use and proliferation of IT in a short span of about three decades, its popularity and the passion it has evoked is quite impressive. A large number of persons and professionals are employed in this industry. The employees can be classified as casual, contingency, full-time, part-time, self-employed, independent contractor, temporary, and wage labour. India is home to a large number of IT professionals, who have the necessary skill and expertise to meet the demands and expectations of the global IT industry. The cost of skilled Indian workforce is reasonably low compared to the developed nations. This makes the Indian IT services highly cost efficient and this is also the reason as to why the IT enabled services like business process outsourcing (BPO) and knowledge process outsourcing (KPO) have expanded significantly in the Indian job market. India has a huge pool of English-speaking IT professionals. This is why the English-speaking countries like the US and the UK depend on the Indian IT industry for outsourcing their business processes.

The emergence of Indian information technology sector has brought about sea changes in the Indian job market. The IT sector of India offers a host of opportunities of employment. With IT biggies like Infosys, Cognizant, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services, Accenture and several other IT firms operating in some of the major Indian
cities, there is no dearth of job opportunities for the Indian software professionals. The IT enabled sector of India absorbs a large number of graduates from general stream in the BPO and KPO firms. All these have solved the unemployment problem of India to a great extent. The average purchasing power of the common people of India has improved substantially. The consumption spending has recorded an all-time high. The aggregate demand has increased as a result. All these have improved the gross production of goods and services in the Indian economy. So, in conclusion it can be said that the growth of India's IT industry has been instrumental in facilitating the economic progress of India (Anon., 2010). Therefore it is more appropriate to deliberate on whether the employees working in this IT industry enjoy job satisfaction or not. This aspect is discussed in the following sections.

**JOB SATISFACTION IN IT INDUSTRY**

Business today is dynamic, with a steadily increasing pace of change. Timely and actionable information is the best way to combat the elements. An organization is as strong and successful as its employees are. By measuring employee satisfaction in key areas, organizations can gain the information needed to improve their satisfaction, motivation, retention and productivity. HR policy is one of the key steps to gain job satisfaction.

Addressing the essentials, including fair compensation policy, valuable benefits policy and the ability to balance work and life are crucial components of an organization’s overall retention strategy. Organizations must not only create a mix of benefits policy that retain and motivate what is often a very diverse workforce, but they must also continually fine-tune that mix policies with the job satisfaction (Human Resource, 2012).

Some factors of job satisfaction are universal and consistent. Both employees and HR professionals note compensation and benefits are important to employee job satisfaction. However, research has shown that there are more important factors that contribute to job satisfaction, such as relationships with immediate supervisors, management recognition of employee job performance, and communication between employees and senior management. These factors have more to do with the organizational culture and working conditions in the company.
Job satisfaction in the IT industry is nearly double the UK average, research has revealed. The survey of 200 IT professionals by Loudhouse Research found that 81% of IT professionals in the UK are happy in their job. "Although not a complete surprise, this is a fantastic number," said Phil Cross, IT professional audience manager at Microsoft UK, which commissioned the study. IT employment industry analyst David Foote of Foote Partners says that while he has not seen the Conference Board report, he has personally found the biggest correlation between job satisfaction and company size, with a higher percentage of those working for small companies expressing job satisfaction while employees of large companies are generally less satisfied. He says that may be exacerbated by an economic recession, like the one we are currently experiencing, because employees of large companies who have the expectation of serving as specialists are more likely to find themselves asked to do more work and be more of a jack-of-all-trades as their companies implement workforce reductions (Davis, 2010). This high level of satisfaction is in contrast to only 42% of happy respondents to the latest quarterly Employee Outlook Survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), he said. The majority of those in the industry see IT as a long-term career choice, with 67% of respondents expecting to be working in the sector in 10 years. Almost half of respondents (47%) also said that they have ambitions to become a director or entrepreneur. "There are always new challenges, things to look forward to and things to learn, which helps keep things interesting," said Cross.

Tristram Bardrick, sales manager at the National Computer Centre (NCC), said the survey clearly shows the motivating factors for people who work in IT. "As an industry we should be committed to fostering this excitement and positive attitude." Virtualisation is ranked as the most exciting type of IT project for this year, followed by mobile and cloud computing. "It is encouraging to see that the things the IT professionals are focused on and excited about are the same things technology suppliers are concentrating on," said Cross. IT professionals have a positive view of technology and believe it can help businesses during the recession, the survey found.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents said they can help their company steer through the recession and 81% said technology can change the world for the better. Conversely, the top three dislikes were time spent fire fighting or troubleshooting,
unrealistic user expectations, and feeling permanently on call. "The technology industry is constantly trying to address these problems, but it is likely that some or all of these elements will remain to some degree," said Cross. Just over half of the respondents (51%) said they find their job more stressful than a year ago and 46% said their job is more challenging and difficult than five years ago (Microsoft, 2010).

In this regard, the experience of IT professionals is on par with the national average. In the CIPD research, 41% said they are under excessive pressure every day or at least once a week. But on the whole, the research shows that people working in IT are positive about their career choice, which is encouraging, said Cross.

A workforce with high job satisfaction leads to an improvement in work quality and productivity, and leads to satisfied loyal customers. A workforce who dislikes his/her job is more likely to have higher absenteeism and turnover (Spector, 1997). In the IT Industry the environment is quite congenial leading to motivation of employees with the result the productivity is increased and this indicates the level of their job satisfaction.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Happy people made a happy world. According to Aristotle, “Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence”. Happiness at work starts with self-awareness which can be defined as the act of ‘focusing attention on oneself’. Over a span of almost three decades IT sector turned out to be front runner in providing jobs for a large number of people. Therefore it is imperative to deliberate on whether the employees working in this IT industry enjoy job satisfaction or not. This aspect is discussed in this paper. The survey of 200 IT professionals by Loudhouse Research found that 81% of IT professionals in the UK are happy in their job. The majority of those in the industry see IT as a long-term career choice, with 67% of respondents expecting to be working in the sector in 10 years. Almost half of respondents (47%) also said that they have ambitions to become a director or entrepreneur. In the IT Industry the environment is quite congenial leading to motivation of employees with the result the productivity is increased and this indicates the level of their job satisfaction.
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