

Employees' Job Satisfaction on Accomplishing Routine Tasks: A Study on Programme Assistants in the Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka

K. Selvakumaran^{1†}, E.S. Wickeremasinghe² and W.A. Upananda³

¹Centre for Livelihood Credit Management Services, Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka

²Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

³Department of Banking and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

[†]skumaran.jfn@gmail.com

Abstract: Job satisfaction describes feelings and attitudes of employees generate towards their jobs. The objective of this research study is to ascertain the levels of job satisfaction and analyzing the predictors of job satisfaction experienced amongst the Programme Assistants in the Northern Provincial Council. For the purpose, 137 Programme Assistants were sampled by using stratified random sampling method. The questionnaire measures job satisfaction on six job facets in three dimensions, namely, extrinsic factors: pay, promotions, supervision; General factors: co-workers, working condition, and Intrinsic factor: work itself. This study found that Programme Assistants of Northern Provincial Council (NPC) were not satisfied with their jobs in key facets. Therefore Provincial Council should take measures to restructure promotion system, appropriate salary scale and providing other pay benefits. Further, NPC should consider improving working conditions, and nature of work.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Northern Provincial Council of Sri Lanka, Programme Assistants.

I. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely researched areas in organizational psychology [7] and organizational behaviour [5, 21] literature. The consequences of this vast literature have alerted managers to focus on new ways of satisfying their employees. One of them is attributed to the development of new management approaches that seek to place employee related factors in the foreground [10]. This construct has facilitated human resource managers in various ways enhancing and improving the employee motivation and satisfaction during their work life at the organization [4]. In any administrative setup, employees work plays an important role for organizational achievements. Therefore, it is highly important for management team to recognize employees' work and provide them with an opportunity to grow while looking after their own welfare. Work predominantly occupy most of employees' time which provides economic benefit to sustain their livelihood. According to Wilson and Resenfeld [20], one major reason for conducting research on the subject of job satisfaction is that positive or negative attitudes influence on the work behaviour [8].

The Government Employees are one of the most important workforces for any Nations' operations because they provide public service to the citizens of the country. Their satisfaction and motivation should be analyzed and monitored so that Governments can identify how committed the employees are towards the provision of public services.

The graduates were recruited for the post of Programme assistants under the Government's "Unemployed Graduate Development Programme" in the Northern Provincial Council and all over the Sri Lanka. The Programme Assistants in the public sector are most important in many aspects. Graduates in various disciplines of studies were recruited as Programme Assistants to the Northern Provincial's Public Sector organizations for the first time. They take major role in post-war development activities in the Provincial Public Administration. Many of the Programme Assistants take more responsibilities than they were intended to. Many serve as sectional or departmental heads and they play an important role in the provincial public administration set up in Sri Lanka.

The Chief Secretariat, Ministries and Departments for NPC started functioning from 01/01/2007. At present there are five Ministries headed by Secretaries and there are 33 departments or divisions for different sector that come under the purview of these five Ministries. Those are (1) Ministry of Agriculture, (2) Ministry of Education, (3) Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicine, (4) Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Reconstruction and (5) Ministry of Local Government.

The Department of Provincial Public Administration (NP) indicated that the amount of Programme Assistants' job turnover was 238 out of 1137 that was around 21% and the analysis of secondary data, observations and interview emphasize that the employees were at lower level of organizational commitment, job involvement and higher intention to leave their job.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) To what extent employees' job satisfaction existing in the Northern Provincial Council?
- 2) What factors could influence on job satisfaction level of Programme Assistants in the Northern Province?
- 3) What factors have significant relationship with job satisfaction in the Provincial Council?

III. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To examine the job satisfaction level of the Programme Assistants of the Northern Provincial Council.
- 2) To explore the factors influences on job satisfaction level of the employees.
- 3) To investigate that what factors have significant relationship with job satisfaction in the Provincial Council.
- 4) To offer necessary recommendations aimed at improving job satisfaction level of Programme Assistants.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

- H₁: There is strong positive relationship between Intrinsic factors and job satisfaction.
H₂: Intrinsic factor highly influences on employees job satisfaction.
H₃: Promotion influences at lower level in extrinsic factors of employee job satisfaction.
H₄: Working condition highly influences in General factors of job satisfaction.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction is a momentous concept in any work environment so attention is paid by many researchers. Definition of job satisfaction is “the sense of achievement and arrogance felt by employees who get pleasure from their employment and complete it well” or it could be defined as an encouraging emotional condition resulting from the work [11]. The definitions of job satisfaction as follows:

- Job satisfaction formally defined as the degree to which individuals feel positively and/or negatively about their jobs.
- Job satisfaction can be described as a general attitude towards one's job; the differences between the rewards received and what they actually believe they should receive [16].
- The definition of job satisfaction can therefore be summed up as a collection of attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviour one has toward his or her job.

In general, job satisfaction can be simply defined as the extent by which an individual is fulfilled with his or her job. Many factors can contribute and affect job satisfaction levels by which some can be related to the individuals, the work itself or the management.

The importance of the job satisfaction relies on the fact that the lack of satisfaction can lead to unfavourable outcomes such as increased level of employee turnover. This can in turn adversely affect the structure of the organization.

FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION

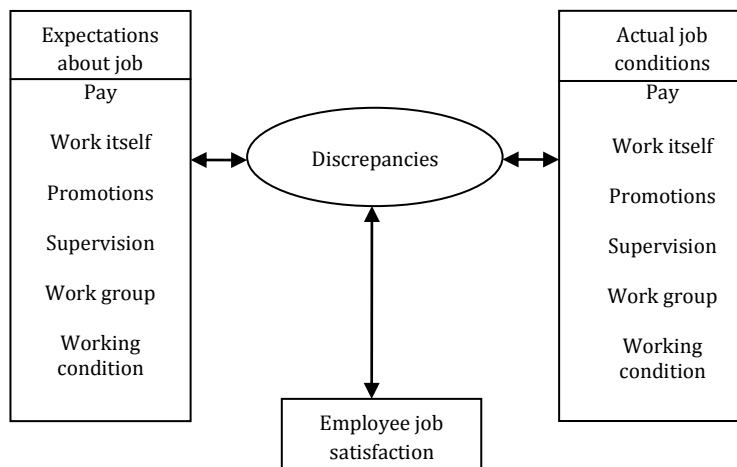


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of job satisfaction

- **EXTRINSIC FACTORS**

The research study includes pay, promotion, and supervisor or supervision under the extrinsic factors of job satisfaction.

PAY: Wages and Salary plays a significant role in determining the level of job satisfaction, and are as significant to white collar workers as to blue collar workers. Pay is such an important determinant

of job satisfaction because it is instrumental in fulfilling so many of the needs. Money means the purchasing power of foods, shelter, and clothing and it gives them recreational activities after the working hours to refresh their mind. High salary conserve as a symbol of achievement and source of recognition. Employees often see pay as a reflection of managements system for their contribution to the organization. Fringe benefits are also important in satisfaction (E.g. Medical facilities, Vehicle facilities, Residential facilities) if employees are allowed to choose the type of benefits they prefer from a flexible benefit plan; it will increase the level of job satisfaction.

PROMOTION: Dissatisfaction with promotions as well as training programs can have an effect on employees over all job satisfaction and intentions to quit exceeds that of high work load and low payments. Locke [11] indicates that employees' urge for psychological growth, status and sense of justice would drive them to seek for promotions. For that reason, management should keep in mind that promotions can be a tool for improving employees' motivation and job satisfaction by satisfying their higher level needs. This could not always be the case as achievement and hard work might not be enough contributors to earn a promotion. In a society where personal connections can affect the chance for fair promotion system, job dissatisfaction would most likely be the outcome.

SUPERVISION: A relationship with immediate supervisor is an important antecedent of employee's job satisfaction. The consideration a supervisor has for his/her subordinates' feelings, well being, and contributions are an important predictor of job satisfaction. Research has shown that employees who have supportive supervisors experience less job satisfaction than employees without supportive supervisors.

Employee friendly supervisors who respond the emotional problems of subordinates, maintaining friendly relationships, mutual understanding, give their contributions to increase job satisfaction. This behaviour of the leadership result low turnover of employees, relieve their grievance and reduce the absenteeism. On the other hand, production-oriented supervisors who view their subordinates as “people to get work done” cause low satisfaction, and consequently relatively high rates of grievances, turnover and absenteeism.

Employees tend to reach job satisfaction when they have given an opportunity to participate in decision making which deal with their jobs and career. However, it cannot be said that greater participation in decision making increases job satisfaction, and lesser participation decreases job satisfaction. Vroom reports that the effect of participation in decision making on satisfaction depends on the “strength of the need for independence and the degree of authoritarianism”.

- GENERAL FACTORS

This research study includes the co-workers and working conditions under the general factors of job satisfaction.

CO-WORKERS: The nature of the work group will have an effect on job satisfaction. Friendly, cooperative co-workers or team members are a modest source of job satisfaction to individual employees. The work group especially a “tight” team, service as a source of support, comfort, advice and assistance to the individual members. A “good” work group makes the job more enjoyable on the other hand, if the reverse conditions exist, it may lead to dissatisfaction.

WORKING CONDITION: It makes sense that people that are comfortable within their working environment will work far more effectively and will enjoy the working process more than those who are uncomfortable. Therefore you should consider certain aspects of your employees' workspace quite carefully. There are several issues that affect the comfort of the working environment. That is noise, ventilation, work space, comfort environment and stress.

- **INTRINSIC FACTOR**

In this research study the work itself included under Intrinsic factor of job satisfaction.

THE WORK ITSELF: Along with pay, the content of the work itself plays a very major role in determining the level of satisfaction employees are with their jobs. But large amount of workers like to do dynamic and challenging tasks and they do not like monotonous repetitive tasks.

In general, jobs with a moderate amount or variety produce the most job satisfaction with too little variety cause workers to feel bored and fatigued. Jobs with too much variety and stimulation cause workers to feel psychologically stressed and "burned out".

Jobs that give workers some autonomy in how they do their work also provide the greatest job satisfaction. In contrast, management control over work methods and work pace consistently leads to high levels of job dissatisfaction.

Robbins *et al.*, [16] refer to the work itself as "the extent to which the job provides the individual with stimulating tasks, opportunities for learning and personal growth, and the chance to be responsible and accountable for results." According to Robbins [15], employees prefer jobs that present them with opportunities to execute their competencies on a variety of tasks and that are mentally stimulating.

THEORIES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Researchers have also assumed a more empirical approach, identifying the variables responsible for positive or negative responses towards work. The following theories have been identified chronologically in the theoretical work on job satisfaction.

- **HERZBERG'S TWO FACTOR THEORY**

The research conducted by Herzberg determined what people actually want from their jobs. They had to describe work situations in which they felt good or bad in their jobs. The feedbacks received were then categorized into satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The characteristics related to job satisfaction included advancement, recognition, the work itself, achievement, growth and responsibilities. Herzberg referred to these characteristics as 'motivators'. The characteristics related to dissatisfaction, which included working conditions, supervision, interpersonal relationships, company policy and administration were referred to as 'hygiene' factors [15].

According to Mullins [14], Herzberg's two factor theory is effectively a theory of job satisfaction. Furthermore, Baron and Greenberg [3] state that Herzberg's two factor theory, also known as the motivator hygiene theory, focuses on factors that are responsible for job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. There are some factors that would encourage job satisfaction if they were present,

but feelings of dissatisfaction when they are absent. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction actually originates from divergent sources [3]. These factors or characteristics were referred to as hygiene factors or maintenance factors. They do not actually contribute to work satisfaction and therefore have a negligible motivational value [19].

- DISCREPANCY THEORY

This theory argues that satisfaction is the function of what a person actually receives from his job situation and what he thinks he should receive or what he expects to receive. When actually received satisfaction is less than expected satisfaction, it causes dissatisfaction.

Here they maintain that satisfaction is determined by the differences between the actual outcomes a person receives and some other outcome level. The definition of outcome level may be that a person feels should be received or expects to receive. It is argued that what is received should be compared with another outcome level and when there is a difference when received outcome is below the other outcome level dissatisfaction results. According to Locke, "job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it is offering".

VI. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The Programme Assistants were selected for investigating this research study in the Northern Provincial Council. A stratified random sampling technique was obtained by independently selecting a separate random sample from each population stratum. The sample comprises a census of each ministries (stratum) selected. This sampling technique applied to the Northern Provincial Council when the total population has been divided into specific blocks or stratum like ministries or sections. Deductive method was used for this research study.

There were 137 Programme Assistants have been sampled to this study from the population of 899 Programme Assistants worked in various Ministries and Departments. There were 128 Programme Assistants responded. The response rate is 93%.

Primary and Secondary data were used for the study. Primary data were collected through the direct interview and questionnaire and secondary data collected from Annual report, record books, journals, websites and etc. The questionnaire was administrated to Programme Assistants in the Northern Province. Likert scale has been used in this research study. A five point scale from strongly disagree (-2) to strongly agree (2) was adopted in the questionnaire.

The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS 15.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The mean, standard deviation, correlation, and multiple regressions were used to get the findings.

VII. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research statistical findings for main variables have been scheduled in the following Table 1:

Table 1: Variables of the job satisfaction

Variable	Mean	Correlation-r	Beta value	Level of job satisfaction
Extrinsic factors	0.13	0.465	0.212	Poor satisfaction
Intrinsic factor	0.38	0.552	0.428	Poor satisfaction
General factors	5.32	0.258	-0.009	Fair satisfaction

Table 2: Extrinsic factors of job satisfaction

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of satisfaction
Supervisor	3.5	4.687	Lower satisfaction
Pay	0.68	3.353	Poor satisfaction
Promotion	-4.05	3.780	Dissatisfaction
Extrinsic Factors	0.13	9.368	Poor satisfaction

The empirical study of this research indicates that the mean value of extrinsic factor was 0.13. This situation is explained that the Programme Assistants were poorly satisfied with the extrinsic factor of job satisfaction. The r value 0.465 indicates that there is moderate linear relationship (Criteria 0.3 to 0.7) between Extrinsic factors and job satisfaction.

SUPERVISION: The cumulative mean value of 3.5 indicates that the Programme Assistants in the Northern Provincial Council were fairly satisfied with supervisors.

PAY: The empirical study reveals that the Programme Assistants were poorly satisfied with their payment. The cumulative mean value of 0.68 indicates that the Programme Assistants in the Northern Provincial Council were poorly satisfied with their pay.

PROMOTION: The empirical study reveals that the Programme Assistants were nearly dissatisfied with their promotion system. The cumulative mean value of -4.05 indicates that the Programme Assistants in the Northern Provincial Council were dissatisfied with their present promotion system. And the Beta value of promotion 0.094 indicates that influences at lower level than other factors (Supervision 0.352, Pay 0.127). The Hypothesis H_3 is accepted.

Table 3: Intrinsic factor of job satisfaction

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Satisfaction
Work itself	0.38	6.182	Poor satisfaction
Intrinsic factor	0.38	6.182	Poor satisfaction

The empirical study of this research indicates that the mean value of intrinsic factor was 0.38. This situation is explained that the Programme Assistants were poorly satisfied with the intrinsic factor of job satisfaction. The Hypothesis-1 tested with the r value 0.552 indicates that there is moderate linear relationship (Criteria 0.3 to 0.7) between extrinsic factors and job satisfaction. And the Beta value of intrinsic factor 0.428 indicates that Intrinsic factor highly influences than other factors (Extrinsic factor 0.212, General factors 0.009). The Hypothesis H_2 is accepted.

THE WORK ITSELF: The programme assistants were poorly satisfied with their nature of the job in the Northern Provincial Council. The mean value of 0.38 indicates that the programme assistants were poorly satisfied with their job itself in the province.

Table 4: General factors of job satisfaction

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of satisfaction
Co-worker	3.83	3.130	Fair satisfaction
Working condition	1.49	4.033	Lower satisfaction
General factors	5.32	5.897	Fair satisfaction

The empirical study of this research indicated that the mean value of general factors was 5.32. The *r* value 0.258 indicates that there is weak linear relationship (Criteria 0 to 0.3) between General factors and job satisfaction.

WORKING CONDITION: The mean value of 1.49 indicates that the Programme Assistants were lower satisfaction with working condition. And the Beta value of working condition 0.684 indicates that the variable highly influences than co-worker (beta 0.531) in general factors. The Hypothesis H₄ accepted.

CO-WORKERS: The mean value of 3.83 indicates that the programme assistants were fairly satisfied with co-workers.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors affecting on job satisfaction of Programme Assistants and assessing the level of job satisfaction in the Northern Provincial Council of Sri Lanka. The findings clarified that the highest influencing factors affecting employees' job satisfaction was the Extrinsic factors (mean=0.13, poor satisfaction) and Intrinsic factors (mean=0.38, poor satisfaction) in the Northern Provincial Council. Under the Extrinsic factors the Promotion (mean=-4.05, Dissatisfaction) adversely or seriously affect the employees' job satisfaction in the Province. Under the extrinsic factor the Pay (mean= 0.68, poor satisfaction) and work itself (mean= 0.38, poor satisfaction) of Intrinsic factor revealed that Programme Assistants were poorly satisfied. With that the Working condition (mean=1.49, Lower satisfaction) of General factor (mean=5.32, Fair satisfaction) were revealed that the Programme Assistants were lower satisfied.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Supervisors failed to assign proper duties and pay reasonably and response to Programme Assistants in the Province. Therefore supervisor should prepare list of duty in uniform manner in order to rectify irregularities and pay attention to response to Programme Assistants.
- 2) The Northern Provincial Public Administration should take in to account to create an appropriate salary scale to the Programme Assistants. And the Provincial Council should revise the other pay benefits (Cost of Living Allowance, Loans, Advances, casual travelling claim, special travelling claim, insurance, etc.) appropriate to the cost of living.
- 3) The Northern Provincial Council should take in to account to design fair promotion system based on performance and implement for Programme Assistants.

- 4) The Northern Provincial Council should consider to design a new service minutes including certain level of authority, skill utilization, Job recognition and prosperity of the career for Programme Assistants to eradicate the shortcoming.
- 5) The Provincial Council should provide proper working condition to the Programme Assistants regarding work space, comfortable office environment, proper equipments and other facilities within office.
- 6) Therefore the Northern Provincial Council should take in to account to implement these research recommendations to increase the level of job satisfaction and to retain the Programme Assistants.

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