

Job Satisfaction among Employees of U.P. State Electricity Board as Affected by their Organizational Hierarchies

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ABSTRACT

Employees' attitudes are vital in determining organizational efficiency and maintaining a positive environment within the organizations. Job satisfaction is one of the most important employees' attitudes which strongly affect performance, well-being of the employees and also the climate within the organizations. It is tapped as an independent as well as a dependent variable as it has a number of correlates and it also influences other aspects of employee's behaviour and organizational effectiveness. In view of the above, this investigation was conducted to ascertain the effects of organizational hierarchy of the employees, if any, on job satisfaction among the employees of different cadres (junior engineer, engineer and class-III employees working in U.P. State Electricity Board). The sample comprised 315 employees with age range of 25-59 years. They were administered the personal information blank and job satisfaction scale for data collection. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. It was found that the organizational hierarchies exert differential effects on job satisfaction among employees. The results are thoroughly discussed and interpreted and the implications of the findings are also highlighted. In addition to it, suggestion for additional researches and limitations of this investigation are also underlined.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Organizational Hierarchy, UPSEB, Employee's Attitude

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INTRODUCTION

It has been revealed in various studies that job satisfaction is an important attitude of the employees which significantly influences their behavior in the organization and also in their personal life. A satisfied employee often shows positive behavior and gestures towards his colleagues, authorities and the family. As a result of it, the quality of life among satisfied employees is noticed to be significantly higher than that of the unsatisfied employees. The satisfied employee is also assumed to perform better and show inclination to remain in the organization in which he or she is presently working (Pushpakumari, 2008; Alamdar et al., 2011). This suggests that the management should be quite considerate towards enhancing the level of job satisfaction among the employees and making the employees feel satisfied and happy, as it will be helpful in enhancing the well-being among them and also in increasing the productivity of the organizations (Gibson, 2012).

It must be kept in mind that there is no single determinant of job satisfaction. The variables like work environment, personal characteristics, job characteristics, managerial styles, psychological environment within the organizations, need, satisfaction and chances of growth for the employees and some other factors also contribute to job satisfaction. Hence the managerial approach to the employees should preferably be employee-oriented to ensure a better work climate and employee retention. The managers should realize that there comes a stage when employees prefer to enjoy praise and recognition and are not lured by extrinsic motives (Herzberg, 1959; Franek & Vecera, 2008). This must be taken into account while developing any plan or programme within the organization to realize the objectives of organizational efficacy and employee satisfaction (Richard, 2009).

The views as mentioned above establish that job satisfaction is an important component of the cluster of the employee's attitudes. Since it has so many implications, this variable has been exhaustively studied and discussed by researchers from the field of industrial and organizational psychology as well as business management (Robbins et al., 2009). The behaviour of the employees is viewed as an important factor to meet the competitive situations in the market and ensure the productivity of the company (Armstrong, 2009; Judge & Eatabable, 1993). The scholars plead that how an employee will behave in his or her work context will be determined, to a great extent, by the work attitudes possessed by the employee and job satisfaction is an important predictor of it.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is described as a positive emotional state which is based on the job experiences of employees (Durbin, 1985). It is an optimistic feeling of employees for their job, i.e., achieving the job values leads to job satisfaction (Cronley & Kim, 2017). Newsstorm (2007) stated that job satisfaction indicates the feelings of employees, being either positive or negative and affecting their behaviour towards their job. If their feelings are positive or optimistic, they feel emotionally attached with the job. In other words, it is an indication of satisfaction with the present job.

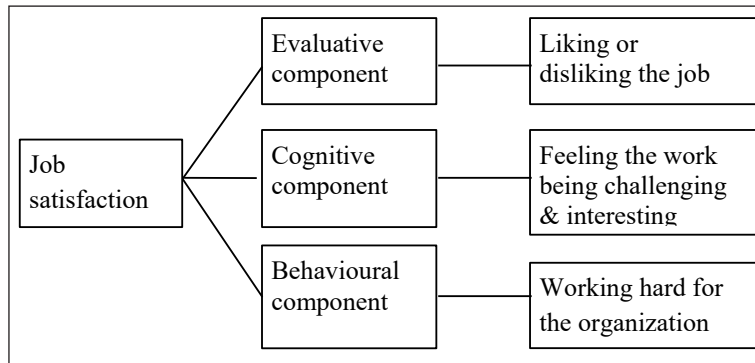


Fig. 1: The Components of Job Satisfaction

As an attitude, job satisfaction, also, has three components, namely cognitive, evaluative and behavioural component (Fig. 1). If the cognitions about the job are positive, it will inculcate the positive feeling about the job in an employee which will, ultimately, lead to increased efforts for performance and a keen desire to remain in the organization (Richard, 2009).

Job satisfaction may be of two types: (i) global job satisfaction, i.e., the job satisfaction as a whole about the job being performed by the employees; it includes all the aspects of the job, and, thus, may be termed as the overall job satisfaction, and (ii) job satisfaction may be specific also. It refers to the feeling about a particular aspect of the job such as pay and benefits, or work conditions, or growth or any other aspects of the job (Mueller & Kim, 2008). Since both the types of job satisfaction affect the performance and well-being of the employees, the management must be considerate to it to improve the performance as well as the organizational efficiency (Cronley & Kim, 2017).

Organizational Hierarchy

Organizational hierarchy (also known as organizational level) refers to the position of an employee in the vertical hierarchy of authority within the organization which may range from group IV of employees (bottom position) to the top most level in the organization (Chris, Berger & Cummings, 1978). The organizations comprise different types of hierarchical groups. Number and types of such groups may differ from one organization to the other depending on their size and functions. The larger the organization is, the greater the number of hierarchical groups and vice-versa within the organizations. It is assumed that variation in the number of hierarchical groups and variations in employee's attitudes can lead to so many organizational consequences, including negative outcomes also. In case, it is negative, it may prove to be a costly affair not only for the organization concerned, but also for the employees and the society (Robbins et al., 2009). Thus, it becomes imperative for the researchers in the area of organizational behaviour to plan the studies from different points of view to assess the effects of hierarchical expansion of the organizations on various aspects of employees' behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a number of correlates of job satisfaction (Fig. 2). The two relatively more exhaustively debated theories of employees' motivation advocate that job satisfaction is influenced by the basic needs as well as the higher needs of employees; however, the higher needs (motivator factors) are relatively more significant contributors to job satisfaction (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1959; Cross & Carbery, 2016). But, surprisingly, in one study, the employees gave more importance to salary and their status in the organization than to any other factor (Abuhashesh et al., 2019). However, in general, the role of motivating factors has been found to be more valuable in increasing the job satisfaction among employees.

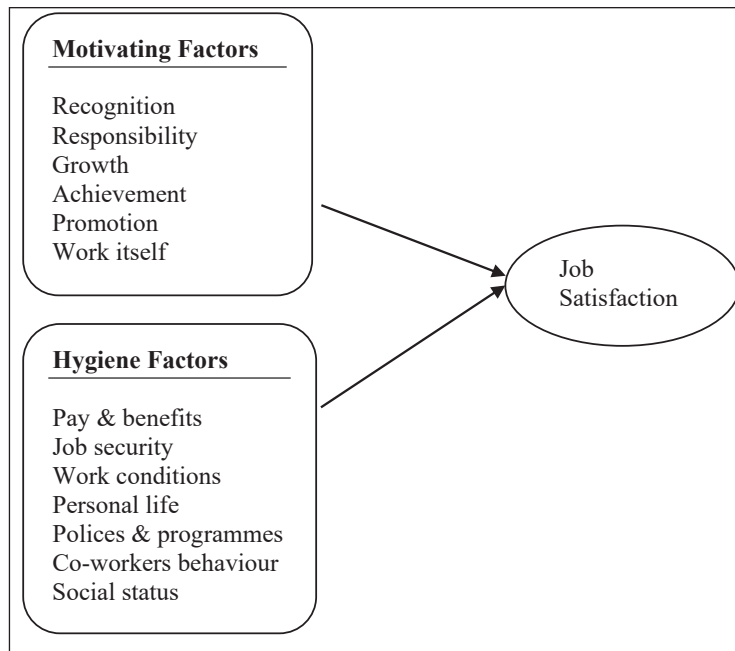


Fig. 2: A Model Depicting the Correlates of Job Satisfaction

Besides the factors shown in model 2, organizational size also happens to be one of the factors affecting job satisfaction (Blau, 1999; Pandey, 2000), often it is inversely related to job satisfaction. The term organizational size refers to the size of the operating unit, such as branches of the plant, rather than the entire corporation (Lyman et al., 1975).

The factors determining the effects of enlargement on performance may be of various types (Hanan, 2009). Okele and Mtyuda (2017) illustrated that where there is a lack of resources, and crowd of programmes, it causes disappointment among employees. Thus, the availability of the things in the organizations as valued by the employees, of course, influences their feeling about their job (Bussing et al., 1999; Barber et al., 1992).

Troesch and Bauer (2017) studied job satisfaction and stress among the teachers of two career levels. Results indicated that second career teachers were found to be more satisfied with their occupation than the teachers of first career level. Spencer and Byrne (2016) obtained that senior managers exhibited higher job satisfaction as compared to junior managers. Singh and Dewani (1983) measured job satisfaction among banking staff and found that it correlated positively with the hierarchy of the employees. Robertson and Kee (2016) reported that job satisfaction

correlated with quantity of time, place, managerial style and interaction with colleagues. Regular workers were reported to be more satisfied with their work as compared to the part-time workers.

Alamdar et al. (2011) have reported that pay, promotion, job security and other work related factors affected job satisfaction among the medical staff. In some other studies also, job satisfaction was found to be positively and significantly associated with the performance of the academic staff (Wahid, 2015; Theresa & Henry, 2016).

Some researchers have tried to study the effects of organizational structure on satisfaction of employees. For example, Kampini (2018) found that the structure of the organization helps employees enhance their job satisfaction in various ways. The organic structure is more effective from this point of view. Katsikea et al. (2011) found that centralization correlates negatively with job autonomy, but job autonomy correlates positively with job satisfaction. Iqbal, Guohao and Akhtar (2017) have reported positive effects of organization culture on job satisfaction and other positive attitudes of employees.

Thus, it is obvious that job satisfaction is an important attitude of the employees which influences their performance, well-being and intention to remain in the organization. The managers should pay due attention to this aspect of employees' behaviour to safeguard the interest of their organizations.

PRESENT STUDY

As it is evident from the studies mentioned above, job satisfaction has been studied from different points of view. The variables like job characteristic, work condition, managerial approaches, job feedback, organizational culture, pay, organizational structure etc. have been tapped in previous studies to examine their effects on job satisfaction (Campbell, Fowles & Weber, 2000; Alamdar et al., 2011; Iqbal et al., 2017; Kampini, 2018). But, the studies exploring the effect of organizational hierarchies on job satisfaction are only rarely available (Troech & Bauer, 2017; Singh & Diwani, 1983). This fact, therefore, justifies the need of the present study.

The present study targeted the recruitment of participants from U.P. State Electricity Board (India) for data collection which has not attracted the attention of researchers of this area so far. This is one of the important contributions of the present study as the above organization is facing

heavy financial deficits, showing continuously poor performance and struggling with high level of job dissatisfaction among its employees (Singh, 2005). The findings of this study are expected to be helpful in planning and executing the organizational programmes to improve the level of job satisfaction among its employees and thereby enhancing the organizational efficiency of UPSEB, as such studies in other corporate sectors have been found to yield very positive results (Chris, Berger & Cummings, 1978; Thomas, 2015). But the sector of electricity in Uttar Pradesh has not received the attention of scholars as it actually deserves.

There are many moot questions in this area of research so far as the effects of organizational hierarchies on job satisfaction among employees are concerned. The lack of convincing findings about the effects of organizational hierarchies on job satisfaction provides the basis for the present study (Hee et al., 2020; McCartney, 1978).

No doubt, researches are available which examined the effects of various organizational factors on job satisfaction, even then the role of organizational hierarchy still remains to be properly evaluated from the point of view of its effects on job satisfaction in our organizational context in general and as it may be associated with job satisfaction among employees of UPSEB in particular (Singh, 2005). So keeping in view the works done in the related areas, this investigation attempted to evaluate the differential impact of organizational hierarchies, if any, on job satisfaction among employees of U.P. State Electricity Board, as such studies are practically non-existent in our context.

Objective: To evaluate the differential effects of organizational hierarchies, if any, on job satisfaction among the employees of UPSEB (India).

Hypothesis

H. Employees with different organizational hierarchy would differ significantly in job satisfaction.

Ha The class three employees would score significantly low on job satisfaction scale as compared to the groups of junior engineers and engineers.

Hb The group of junior engineers would score significantly high on job satisfaction scale as compared to class three employees, but low in comparison to engineers' group.

- Hc The group of engineers would score significantly high on job satisfaction scale as compared to the groups of junior engineers and class three employees.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The present study was designed to determine whether the organizational hierarchy of the employees in their organization exerts differential effects on their level of job satisfaction so that efforts could be maximized to enhance the level of job satisfaction among the employees disregarding their status in the organization. Thus, organizational hierarchy was tapped as the causal variable and the job satisfaction was measured as the outcome variable.

Sample: The sample of the study comprised 315 employees (all male participants) belonging to class three (N=110), and two engineers' cadres-junior engineers (N=95) and engineers (N=110), employed with U. P. State Electricity Board (U.P.S.E.B, India) and working at its Jaunpur and Varanasi district centers. The concerned authorities were contacted to seek permission for meeting the employees and administering the tools on them. The selection of centers was based on purposive sampling. The age of the participants ranged from 25 to 59 years and the mean age being 40 years. All of the participants were regular employees of U.P.S.E.B. with at least two years of work experience.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

- Only male employees were recruited for the sample.
- The employees aging below 25 years or above 59 years were excluded from the sample.
- Only regular employees with at least two years' experience were included in the sample.
- The participants possessing normal health were included, while others with some health issues were excluded.
- Only willing participants were recruited and administered the measure of job satisfaction.

Tools

Personal Information Blank: A personal information blank was prepared to seek personal information relating to age and experience of the employees, their hierarchy (level) in the organization, and the size of the organization etc.

Job Satisfaction Scale: Index of Job Satisfaction (Brayfield & Rothey, 1951; Hindi version Singh & Singh, 1997). This scale consists of 18 items with 5 alternative response categories. It has 9 positive items which are scored as 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1 for completely agree, agree, not sure, disagree and completely disagree responses respectively, while the remaining items are scored in reverse order. Its split-half reliability is 0.86, and test retest reliability is 0.89 and validity is also well established (0.88). The higher the score of the employees on this scale, the higher the job satisfaction and vice-versa.

Procedure

The participants were taken in full confidence before starting the testing and the purpose of study and procedure of responding were clearly explained to them. They were asked to fill the questionnaire carefully and were also told not to leave any item unanswered. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and request was made to respond to the items of the tools without any fear and hesitation. After the data collection was over, they were warmly seen off.

RESULTS

The responses of the participants were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics to estimate the effects of organizational hierarchy on job satisfaction among them. Although the results approve the global hypothesis, the results are not strictly in accordance with the proposed sub-hypotheses. Table 1 shows that junior engineer group emerged as the most satisfied group ($M=84.60$) followed by the groups of engineers ($M=71.97$) and class-III employees ($M=62.07$). It may be noted that employees of class-III are least satisfied in comparison to the employees of the other two groups, while the employees of engineer group stood between the two groups.

Table 1: Mean and S.D. of Engineers, Junior Engineers and Class-III Group of Employees of U.P.S.E.B on Job Satisfaction Scale

Groups of Employees	Mean	S.D.
Junior Engineer (N=95)	84.06	9.45
Engineer (N=110)	71.97	6.48
Class-III (N= 110)	62.07	6.36

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA between Engineers, Junior Engineers and Class-III Group of Employees of U.P.S.E.B on Job Satisfaction Scale

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	MS	F-Ratio
Between groups (bg)	1981627.57	2	990813.79	3.08
Within the group (wg)	97518089.10	313	311559.39	P<.05
Total	99499716.67	315		

Table 3: Significance of Difference Between Means of Engineers, Junior Engineers and Class-III Groups of Employees on Job Satisfaction Scale

Groups Compared	T-Ratio	P
Engineer vs Jr. Engineer	10.51	0.01**
Engineers vs Class-III	11.45	0.01**
Jr. Engineer vs Class-III	19.81	0.01**

Note: All t-values are significant at $p < .01$ level.

The differential effects of organization hierarchies on job satisfaction were examined by using ANOVA and t-test. It can be observed from Table 2 that the obtained F-ratio is significant at 0.05 level, which establishes the differential effects of organizational hierarchies on job satisfaction among the three cadres of employees. Table 3 shows that all the t-ratios (Engineer vs Jr. Engineer=10.51; $p < .01$; Engineers vs Class-III=11.45; $P < .01$, and Junior engineer vs Class-III=19.81; $P < .01$) are statistically significant, evincing the differential effects of organizational hierarchies on job satisfaction. But it needs to be mentioned in this contest that the

results are not strictly in accordance with the sub-hypotheses.

DISCUSSION

It was hypothesized in 'Ha' that class-III employees would show significantly low job satisfaction in comparison to junior engineers and engineers. This sub-hypothesis was approved as this group of employees was found to be the least satisfied group as compared to the other two groups. The significantly lowest level of job satisfaction among class-III employees makes us speculate that low salary, pessimism regarding career growth, poor standards of living, limitation of resources and discrimination by the authorities and also the undue subordination etc. may be attributed for low level of job satisfaction among them. The management must be considerate to these aspects of job also to ensure a better work climate for the class-III employs as it will be helpful in making the organizational climate favourable in the eyes of the employees which will ultimately contribute to enhanced job satisfaction and better organizational efficiency (Hee et al. (2020; Scott & Mitchell, 1976). Though salary does not often correlate strongly with job satisfaction, its role in enhancing job satisfaction cannot be denied as denying its role may be damaging for the organization (Judge et al., 2010). Ihsani and Wijayanto (2020) have suggested that factors like organizational culture and motivation among employees need to be addressed properly for enhancing job satisfaction which will be instrumental in improving the performance of the employees. The similar suggestions have been given by Iqbal et al. (2017) also.

Hb stated that group of junior engineers would score significantly high on job satisfaction scale as compared to class-III employees, but low in comparison to engineers' group. But, as the result Table 1 shows, this group of employees scored significantly highest mean on job satisfaction scale in comparison to both the groups. It seems as if the group of junior engineers enjoys better returns as compared to the input by it in the job and this may be one of the basic reasons for its highest mean score on job satisfaction scale (Robbins et al., 2009; Locke, 1997). This leads to the partial confirmation of 'Hb'. Lee and Lin (2014) have reported that if the employees feel to be better paid for their work as compared to others, it will certainly enhance their level of job satisfaction. The junior engineers in U.P. State Electricity Board are well paid and face low stress regarding

their job as compared to the engineers' group. This fact might have been responsible for their highest mean score on job satisfaction scale. The input and output ratio seems to be in their favour. As a result, their level of job satisfaction is significantly higher than that of the other two groups of employees covered in this study. This type of psychological perception of salary and work augments the job satisfaction among employees (Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi, 2012; Scott & Mitchell, 1976).

'He' stated that the engineers' group would exhibit higher level of job satisfaction as compared to the groups of class-III and junior engineers. But it did not happen so. Although this group scored significantly higher mean in comparison to class-III employees, yet it was found to be less satisfied than the group of junior engineers. This suggests that group of engineers does not feel the returns from its job as being compatible with their input and job expectations. So the 'He' is also only partially accepted. The findings of this study contradict the view of Spencer and Byrne (2016) as they obtained higher job satisfaction among senior level managers in comparison to the junior level managers. The results reported by Troesch and Bauer (2017) are also contradicted as they too reported higher job satisfaction among the employees of upper cadre in comparison to lower cadre employees. Franek and Vecera, (2008) have also stated that salary is not the only factor which contributes to positive attitudes among employees, rather employee oriented leadership style and the satisfaction of higher needs must also be given priority to ensure a better work climate within the organization. The findings suggest that psychological factors seem be more valuable and satisfying for the engineers than their financial gains (Singh & Diwani, 1983). The management must realize that after a certain level of physical and economic achievements, psychological variables like praise, self-esteem, progress, policies, participation in decision making and managerial styles etc. play more crucial role in determining the behaviour of the employees (Kendall et al., 1964). Some other researchers have also reported that individual expectations, cordial work context and participative management seem to be the panacea for increasing employee satisfaction, morale and commitment (Scott & Mitchell, 1976; Thomas, 2015; Hee et al., 2020).

Some of the previous researchers have obtained that people having higher level in the organization exhibit higher satisfaction because of getting high salaries, comfortable conditions in job context and also the better opportunities to utilize their potentials (Darrat et al., 2017; Bardan et al., 2015; Kahn, 1985). But the results of this study partially contradict the above view as the group of engineers scored significantly low on job

satisfaction scale than the group of junior engineers. This suggests that the role of psychological factors cannot be ignored in determining the work attitudes of the employees, i.e., the financial and power variables are not the only determinants of job satisfaction. Okele and Mtyuda (2017) have also reported that lack of resources for the employees leads to disappointment among them and this aspect of work context needs to be properly addressed in the organizations. The ultimate aim of performance and retention of talented employees cannot be realized without creating a cordial climate within the organizations (Armstrong, 2009; Khalid, & Zia-Ur-Rehman, 2013). Newsstorm (2007) has also suggested that management needs to maximize its efforts for enhancing and maintaining the positive attitudes among employees for creating a cordial climate within the organization and to realize the organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

The differential effects of hierarchies of the employees in the organization were assessed in this study. Three groups of employees, namely, junior engineers, engineers and class-III employees were targeted for data collection. All of them were regularly employed with U.P. State Electricity Board. The analysis of data revealed that the employees working in junior engineers' cadre showed the highest level of job satisfaction followed by the employees of engineers' and class-III cadres respectively. It seems as if the employees in these cadres need additional psychosocial reinforcements to feel more comfortable in their organizational context. If the context is made relatively more enriched, it would be instrumental in enhancing the level of job satisfaction and would also contribute to the general well-being among the employees. The management needs to realize it to deal with employees' dissatisfaction and promoting good will within the organization for achieving the twin goals of organization, i.e., satisfaction among employees and organizational efficiency.

The findings of this study further suggest that the status of the employees in the organization (hierarchy) is not the only factor correlating with job satisfaction. The significantly low mean of the engineers' group as compared to the group of junior engineers establishes that after a certain period of time motivating factors become more valuable for the employees than the hygiene factors.

It is also indicated that managers need to pay due respect, show affection and consideration towards the employees disregarding their status and cadre in the organization as it will be very much useful in enhancing satisfaction, involvement and commitment among the employees. Such positive attitudes are strongly positively associated with employees' performance and their intention to remain in the organization. This approach will propel among the employees a feeling of enthusiasm, positive approach towards the organizational goals and will also make them feel that they are really important for the organization. One more benefit of this approach will be that it will increase the acceptability of the organizational goals among the employees which will work as a catalyst for enhanced performance and well-being.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the results obtained in this research may be mentioned as follows:

Since job satisfaction is associated with employees' performance and their well-being, so no stone should be left unturned to enhance employees' satisfaction and well-being which, in turn, will be instrumental in increasing the organizational efficiency, promoting employees' involvement, commitment and in controlling the intention of workers to leave the organization.

The findings of this study very clearly suggest the need of assessing job satisfaction of the employees from time to time to plan the suitable strategies in case the level of job satisfaction of employees has decreased or a decreasing trend is noticed. It will be helpful in managing job satisfaction and performance of the employees.

The assessment of job satisfaction will certainly help the managers to identify the factors which may be responsible for the decreasing trend in job satisfaction. In such a case, reformatory steps can be initiated to increase and maintain the optimal level of job satisfaction among the employees and also for retaining the best talents of the organization.

Another very important implication of the findings of this study may be that the managers can make attempts to reinforce the employees for better performance and positive mindset to deal with their work related problems, if any. This approach is expected to create amicable work environment within the organization which will prove to be beneficial for both the stakeholders.

If the management succeeds in maintaining the positive climate within the organization, it will enhance not only the job satisfaction, but will also promote employees' engagement, psychological contract and organizational citizenship behaviour etc among employees. The managers need to play affectionate, positive and galvanizing role for realizing these goals, if they really need to compete with other organizations.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

As regards the limitations of this research, the sample was localized to a particular area of Uttar Pradesh (India). This limitation must be kept in mind while making generalization of the findings and conducting similar studies. It was a comparative study and it included only one variable, job satisfaction. So the future researchers should cover other variables also, such as job security, organizational culture, job design, managerial styles and other extrinsic and intrinsic variables to assess employees' attitudes and their impact on employees' engagement, organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, job performance, organizational effectiveness, employees' well-being and so on.

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