

# Predictability of Job-Satisfaction: An Analysis from Age Perspective

**Anshuman Bhattacharya**

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*The Life Span Model of Career Development divides the life span into five different stages; Initial, Establishment, Maintenance, Growth and Decline. An individual becomes a full time member in an organization at Establishment Stage and remains engaged with the same or different employers until he reaches the Decline Stage around 60 years of age. The employee may frequently change his employers but his attitude towards the job changes in a consistent manner. The results of a survey in an insurance company with Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire fail to predict overall satisfaction at any stage. It is concluded that appropriate modulation in each aspect while designing contents of a job for an employee at a particular age group may increase his satisfaction to a large extent.*

**Anshuman Bhattacharya** is Research Scholar, Faculty of Commerce, Banaras Hindu University.  
E-mail: anshumanbhattacharya@hotmail.com

## **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is commonly interpreted as the intrinsic sense of accomplishment emerged from performing tasks while carrying out one's contractual obligations. Locke (1969) defines job satisfaction as, "Pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values." The appraisal is based primarily on core job characteristics comprising skill variety, task identity, and task significance, and on critical psychological states that include experienced meaningfulness of the work and knowledge of actual results of the tasks. These parameters determine the resultant pleasurable state of the individual (Hackman & Oldham 1976). Korman, Greenhaus and Baden (1977), however, define the feeling as, "the level and direction of a worker's emotion and effect toward a job and job situation." Their definition points towards measurable nature as well as directional (positive/negative) character of the construct. They also study its linkage with individual performance and collective morale of the employees.

Job satisfaction is the outcome of convergence of individual expectations and perceived accomplishments from different facets of the job. The more is congruence between expectation and actual accomplishments stemming from a job, the greater is the satisfaction derived from it. When the feeling is stemmed from the situation as a whole, it is termed as global satisfaction (Francis & Milbourn Jr. 1980:70). Since the proposed study is all about job, the distinction between work and job should be made clear at the very beginning. Work, in occupational context, is a wider concept than job. Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979) refer the term job to the tasks undertaken in a particular setting, whereas work is taken to cover job more generally. Francis and Milbourn Jr. (1980:11) define a job as “a collection of individual tasks that a worker performs. It is the formal link with the organization and an important part in the formation of individual’s work role”. Kanungo (1982) observed satisfaction with job as a function of job’s capacity to satisfy one’s present needs, whereas satisfaction with work as a normative belief about value of work in one’s life and is a function of one’s past cultural conditioning or socialization. Janssen et al. (1999) identified four characteristics of work that render satisfaction to the workers. These are work content, working conditions, labour relations and conditions of employment. Weiss and colleagues (1967:1), however, identified a set of twenty aspects that affect satisfaction from one’s job. These are:

1. Ability utilization: The chance to do something that makes use of my (the employee’s) abilities;
2. Achievement: The feeling of accomplishment I (the employee) get from the job;
3. Activity: Being able to keep busy all the time;
4. Advancement: The chances for advancement on this job;
5. Authority: The chance to tell other people what to do;
6. Company policies and practices: The way company policies are put into practice (Procedural Justice);
7. Compensation: My (the employee’s) pay and the amount of work I (he/she) do (Distributive Justice);
8. Co-workers: The way my (the employee’s) co-workers get along with each other (Interpersonal Justice);
9. Creativity: The chance to try my (the employee’s) own methods of doing the job (Self-actualization Value);
10. Independence: The chance to work alone on the job;
11. Moral values: Being able to do things that do not go against my (the employee’s) conscience;
12. Recognition: The praise I (the employee) get for doing a good job;
13. Responsibility: The freedom to use my (the employee’s) own judgment;
14. Security: The way my (the employee’s) job provides for steady employment;
15. Social service: The chance to do

- things for other people (Socially Altruistic Value);
16. Social status: The chance to be 'somebody' in the community (Achievement Motive);
  17. Supervision-human relations: The way my (the employee's) boss handles his men (Interactional Justice);
  18. Supervision-technical: The competence of my (the employee's) supervisor in making decisions;
  19. Variety: The chance to do different things from time to time;
  20. Working conditions: The working conditions.

Working condition is the status of congenial ambience of a workplace that comprises safe, comfortable, clean and quiet surroundings suitable for maintaining and improving the performance of an employee.

Plethora of literature is available on contributing factors of job-satisfaction (Barling, Kelloway & Iverson 2003, Carraher & Buckley 1996, Major & Konar 1984, Miller & Monge 1986, Mitchell & Michel 1999, Vegt, Emans & Vliert 2001). These studies recognize pay, promotion, supervision, working conditions, co-workers, and the job itself as the most significant predictors, but the effect of age on these factors has rarely been studied. Does age have any impact on the priority of any of these factors? Is there any relationship between age and satisfaction of an employee given all other factors constant? In order to study

the specific characteristics and expectations in different age groups Miller and Form (1951) and Super (1957) segregate the life span into five stages. This arrangement is termed as 'Life Span Model of Career Development'. The five stages of one's life are as below:

### Stage One

Miller and Form (1951) term the stage Preparatory Work Period, while Super (1957) terms the Growth Stage. This stage extends from conception to approximately 14 years of age. This is characterized by socialization of the child at home and at school. The self-concept begins to form through identification with important figures in family and school.

### Stage Two

The Initial Period (Miller & Form 1951) or the Exploratory Stage (Super 1957) is generally the life span from 15 to 25 years. Experimenting and testing the realities are the most prominent characteristics of this stage. An individual, as a worker, generally initiates part-time employment at this stage of work life or sometimes toggles between different occupations.

### Stage Three

Third stage is the Trial Period (Miller & Form 1951) beginning with first full time job and continuing to a more permanent work position. Super (1957) recognizes this as Establishment Stage when an individual establishes him/herself in a particular field. He states that by the time

one reaches 45 it is clear to the individual that “the life work will be a succession of unrelated jobs.”

#### **Stage Four**

The Stable Work Period (Miller & Form 1951) is termed as the Maintenance Stage by Super (1957) spanning from 45 to retirement. The individual at this stage is mainly concerned for holding the place already made in the professional world. Sometimes little new ground though in the existing lines is broken.

#### **Stage Five**

The last phase of life is termed as the Retirement Period (Miller & Form 1951) or the Decline Stage (Super 1957). The period extends from retirement to death.

#### **Objective of the Study**

Sometimes individual employees working in the same organization differently perceive a particular job aspect; consequently, their satisfaction from that job aspect also varies (Hackman & Lawler 1971). There are many organizational factors that cause emotional exhaustion; these include variables from the categories of working conditions and social and labour relations (Schaufeli & Enzmann 1998). A number of individual and economic factors are also there that influence the perception of job content. Feeling of accomplishment and achieving material success are recognized in the Expectancy Theory (Porter & Lawler 1968) as two individual factors. The concept of pay has always been at the core

of employee satisfaction researches (some of the distinct studies are Farh, Griffeth & Balkin 1991, Harris & Locke 1974, Taylor 1947). Age is a personal factor affecting job-related perceptions through its inherent aspects (Mobley et al. 1979). The present study aims at analyzing significance of the age component in job-satisfaction. It studies the predictability of satisfaction level at different career stages (Establishment and Maintenance) and relationship between each aspect of the job and overall job-satisfaction at a particular age.

**There are many organizational factors that cause emotional exhaustion.**

#### **Method**

Employees' overall job satisfaction can be expressed on a single rating scale simply by asking if the employee is satisfied or not. Alternatively, it can be conceptualized through a facet approach. This approach is premised upon component analysis of feelings and attitudes about different elements, such as pay, supervision and work culture etc. (Riggio 1990:186). There are two questionnaires that have largely been appraised and used by most of researchers for facet analysis of job-satisfaction. These are Job Descriptive Index (Smith et al. 1969) and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss et al. 1967). The Job Descriptive Index contains sub-scales to measure attitudes towards pay, promotion prospects, supervision, co-workers and the job itself. These scales empha-

size on extrinsic features of satisfaction. Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, on the other hand, is a vivid questionnaire consisting of 100 items covering 20 aspects of a job. Weiss and his colleague also suggest a set of 20 items each representing one aspect of the job. The short form of the questionnaire comprises intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction and general satisfaction as well. The short form of MSQ has been used in the present study. The responses are scored one through five proceeding from left to right in the closed answers form. Scale scores are determined by the corresponding weight of the option chosen by the respondent. However, overall satisfaction level is the sum of all twenty weights.

### **Procedure & Participants**

A bilingual (English and Hindi) self-administered questionnaire consisting of 28 closed option opinion expressions is administered among the participants for the purpose of measuring the job-satisfaction level through satisfaction with individual component of the job. First part of the questionnaire contained demographic details of the participants. Second part contained the short form of MSQ. These questions are originally framed for measuring the importance of different facets of a job to the employee. The third section consisting of open-ended view was focused on eliciting a general perception of these respondents for their current job and the work-life they had led till the day.

The questionnaire was administered amongst permanent employees of a life

insurance company operating principally in India. The respondents were working in different branches in Varanasi; they were selected on a random basis. Each individual employee was personally requested to participate, though it had been made clear to them that their participation was voluntary. The respondents were assured of anonymity of their responses and that it would strictly be used for research only. These questionnaires were administered in August 2010 during office hours over three consecutive working days. 48 employees out of 65 (73.84 percent) returned the completed questionnaire. 2 out of these (3.08 percent) responses were rejected due to incomplete response sheet. Finally, 46 responses (70.77 percent) were analyzed for measuring their job satisfaction.

### **Demographic Details**

80.43 percent of respondents are employed in different divisions in the zonal office, and 19.57 percent are employed in one of the branches. 84.78 percent of respondents are males and remaining 15.22 percent are females. All respondents except one male and one female are married. Mean age of the respondents is 43.18 years (S.D. 3.95). Educational qualification of these respondents ranges from High School to Post Graduation. Average annual income of the respondents is Rs. 2.46 lakhs (rounded off to the nearest thousand) spread over below Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh. 40 out of 46 respondents are attached with the organization for more than 11 years. Three of remaining six respondents had an organizational tenure below one year,

around 8 years and 10 years respectively, remaining three, however, had one to three years' relationship with the institution.

**Results**

Results of the study are classified into two categories, namely descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

**Descriptive Statistics**

The sample was divided into seven age groups of five years' interval ranging 25 to 60. Overall satisfaction from all 20 aspects was averaged for getting per-employee response. Table 1 contains the overall satisfaction.

**Table 1: Overall Satisfaction**

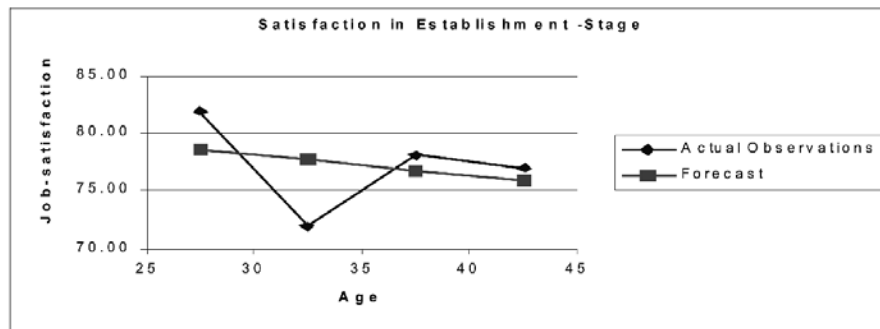
Age (Year)	27.5	32.5	37.5	42.5	47.5	52.5	57.5	Average
Job-satisfaction (Percentage)	82.00	72.00	78.09	77.07	88.63	76.75	92.33	80.98

**Regression Analysis**

When satisfaction with job was predicted taking the entire sample, it fetched the result with standard error 6.6 (Fig. 1). The sample is then segregated into Establishment stage and Maintenance stage as has been identified by Super (1957). Satisfaction has been predicted for both the stages with the help of linear regression (Fig. 2 and 3). It has been found that job-satisfac-

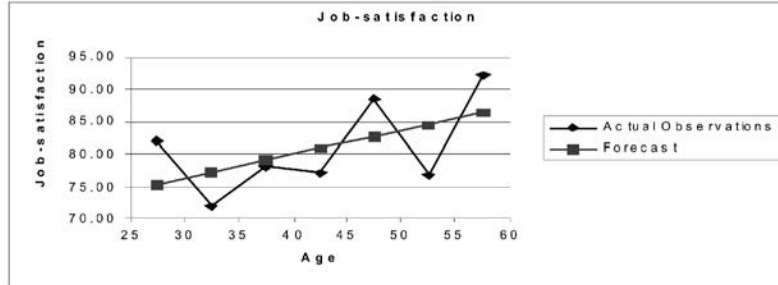
tion in the Establishment stage can be predicted more accurately (standard error 4.85) than that in the next stage (standard error 11.21) of career. The difference between actual and predicted satisfaction in Establishment stage is minimum (1.08) at the age of 42.5, however, maximum (5.73) at 32.5 years' age (Fig. 2), whereas in maintenance stage this difference is minimum (4.58) at 47.5 and 57.5 years, but maximum (9.75) at 52.5 years (Fig.3).

**Fig. 1: Job Satisfaction**



**Slope 0.36**  
Standard Error 6.60

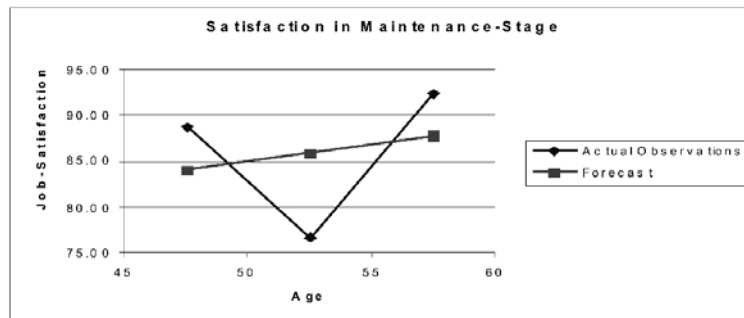
Figure 2 : Satisfaction in Establishment Stage



Slope -0.174

Standard Error 4.85

Figure 3: Satisfaction in Maintenance Stage



Slope 0.37

Standard Error 11.21

Correlation coefficient of each job-aspect with overall satisfaction has been calculated in order to probe into the reasons of discrepancy in results of the same sample. Combined correlation of the two stages reveals that variety, social status, supervision (both humanitarian and technical), security, including working conditions, company policies and practices are the least contributing aspects to the overall satisfaction (Table 2). In other words these aspects in the job profile can, if designed carefully, dramatically increase job-satisfaction. Other 13 aspects are significantly correlated with satisfaction with job. It was, however,

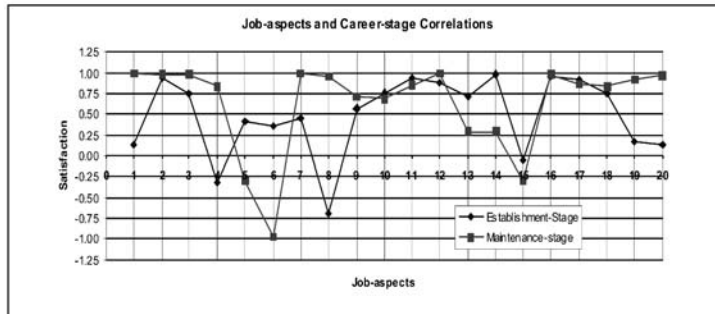
found that employee-attitudes towards activity, social status, supervision (both humanitarian and technical), security, ability utilization, and authority, responsibility, social service aspects hugely differ in the two stages. The differences can also be understood through Fig. 4.

**Variety, social status, supervision (both humanitarian and technical), security, including working conditions, company policies and practices are the least contributing aspects to the overall satisfaction.**

**Table 2 : Age and Job-aspect Satisfaction Correlations**

S. No.	Job aspects	Establishment	Maintenance	Combined
1	Activity	0.13	1.00	0.68
2	Independence	0.93	0.98	0.97
3	Variety	0.74	0.98	0.41
4	Social Status	-0.32	0.84	0.40
5	Supervision-Humanitarian	0.41	-0.30	0.18
6	Supervision-technical	0.35	-0.97	0.05
7	Security	0.44	1.00	0.08
8	Compensation	0.69	0.96	0.61
9	Advancement	0.56	0.71	0.57
10	Working conditions	0.75	0.68	0.38
11	Co-workers	0.94	0.85	0.79
12	Achievement	0.87	1.00	0.86
13	Ability Utilization	0.72	0.29	0.69
14	Authority	0.98	0.29	0.73
15	Com. Policies & Practices	-0.06	-0.30	0.14
16	Creativity	0.96	0.98	0.87
17	Moral Value	0.92	0.86	0.90
18	Recognition	0.75	0.84	0.72
19	Responsibility	0.16	0.92	0.95
20	Social Service	0.13	0.98	0.78

**Figure 4**



**Work-life Satisfaction ~ Open Window View**

It was found that seven respondents (15.22%) had left the ‘open-end view’ section blank and 17 others (36.96%) had just expressed their overall satisfaction with their respective jobs and work-lives, they had not clarified the reason for their satisfaction. Remaining 22 (47.83%) respondents expressed individually per-

ceived reasons for their satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Most of these employees were satisfied with their jobs because of congenial work environment and its capacity to fulfil the necessities of life. Two of them

specifically mentioned facilities provided for children’s education as a satisfying factor. One employee mentioned that he is satisfied with his work-life because he can meet-out familial responsibilities simultaneously with carrying out his vocational obligations. Seven respondents, however, were overwhelmed by the ‘brand-name’; they were satisfied with their work-life only because they are attached with such an internationally re-

owned organization. 5 respondents were satisfied because they faced and overcame new challenges every day. One respondent in the study was found very accommodative in nature; he states that, "work-life is satisfactory as long as you can adjust with it."

One assistant level employee was dissatisfied with organizational negligence in social programmes, whereas one manager cadre officer is very satisfied with 'the other programmes' conducted in the institution. Another assistant level employee, working in customer grievances department, is satisfied for getting chance to interact with customers, whereas another one in the same department was dissatisfied for he does not get chance for social-interactions. 16 among 22 employees were very satisfied with all other aspects of their work-life save the pay package in comparison with their workload. 3 of them were dissatisfied with prevailing 'bossism'. According to one of them, "I also found negative aspect in the name of bossism, stating that boss was always right". 8 respondents were dissatisfied with the promotional policy in the organization; most of them were of the opinion that unfair promotional policy somewhere hampers the quality of work in the institution.

## Discussion

Let us begin with the question, "why can job-satisfaction not be predicted through age?" The answer lies in the diversified relationships among individual aspects of job in different career stages. When dreams come true, it makes any

individual satisfied to the utmost level. Most of us grow up with some dreams but by the time we reach the age of 20 all fantasies are gone. When an individual enters vocational life for the first time around 20 (Initial Stage) the employee is full of zeal but gradually it turns into merely a means to earn the livelihood, more over they have yet to learn expertise in their respective fields. Due to these reasons, soon it becomes tiresome for them to perform even simple obligations in the organization (Smart & Peterson 1997). Results of the present study also corroborate a similar finding. Satisfaction with compensation aspect in respondents at Establishment stage ( $r = 0.69$ ), in contrast with those at maintenance stage ( $r = 0.96$ ), is less strongly correlated with overall satisfaction with their jobs. Perhaps this is a significant reason why employees at Establishment stage do not feel that even workload can bring about satisfaction. On the contrary, employees at Maintenance stage find it one of the most significant contributors to job satisfaction. This difference emerges because of their different levels of satisfaction with compensation. Further, employees at Maintenance stage are experts in their respective jobs; it results in their intrinsic motivation for the job.

**Satisfaction with compensation aspect in respondents at establishment stage in contrast with those at Maintenance stage is less strongly correlated with overall satisfaction with their jobs.**

Although compensation is a significant contributor to job-satisfaction, dif-

ferent stages of the career give contradictory results (Cron 1984). It is evident from the findings that activity and responsibility are reflections of each other and is mediated by compensation satisfaction. Consequently, the correlation between responsibility and overall satisfaction resembles with that of activity in both stages.

Social status is another conflicting aspect of one's job-satisfaction. Employees in the Establishment stage are (generally) still striving for achieving their dream status in the society whereas those in the next stage have either achieved or about to achieve the aspired status. They, hence, find it very significantly correlated with the satisfaction. Dissatisfaction regarding inferior social status leads them to exert themselves to the utmost level.

When employees are at the Establishment stage, they are still learning the work-roles. They themselves realize their need for supervision (both humanitarian and technical). Since they are trained in their fields, they correlate supervision only 41 and 35 percent respectively to overall satisfaction. Once they reach the next higher stage in career, they are efficient in respective vocational skills and are able to supervise themselves. They, therefore, are highly dissatisfied with supervision.

Concern for security in older ones is quite natural. This is why they, in contrast to younger employees, rank it first in contributing to the overall satisfaction. Utmost utilization of abilities, however, does not satisfy older organizational members. The reason for that may be

their higher expertise in relation to limited scope in job-profile. Their counterparts, in contrast, are enthusiastic for learning new skills. As a result they perceive utilization of abilities as a significant factor of job-satisfaction.

Authority is considered as a significant contributor to job-satisfaction. The present study also corroborates this. However employees in Maintenance stage do not support it. It may be because of their pre-existing authority in the organization.

By the age of 45 lower order needs are either satisfied or assured of being satisfied. This stage is a partition line between the lower order and higher order needs. Employees at maintenance stage, therefore, assign higher value to social service component in their job contents.

Despite the wide discrepancies, ten aspects of job consistently satisfy an individual at any of the stages in career. These are independence of activities, variety in tasks, advancement in career, congenial working conditions, friendly relationship with co-workers, and sense of achievement while on job, sound policies and practices in the organization, opportunity to utilize one's creativity in job, safeguard of moral values, and recognition of contributions to the organization.

### **Conclusion**

In general Indian employees rate their work environment, teamwork and other aspects of their work more favourably than employees of other coun-

tries in the Asia-Pacific countries (*The Hindu* 2004). The surveyed employees are obliged to their bosses and colleagues for their professional success. Congenial work environment of course can improve the satisfaction level in employees, longer working hours with moderate pay package, however, neutralizes the up thrust in satisfaction. Brand loyalty certainly works even in employment but unfortunately it does not persist for long when poor implementation of excellent policies is observed all over by these enthusiastic employees (Cloutier & Vilhuber 2008). The present study also supports the view. Maintenance-stage employees who expect the management to provide for more opportunities to utilize their abilities are more dissatisfied with company policies and practices.

On the premise of empirical results and foregone discussion thereon, it might be concluded that age is not a factor affecting job-satisfaction. But when the reasons were analyzed through individual aspects of job, we get a comparatively clear view. The expectation trend can well be ascertained on the premise of age factor. It will help in designing the job contents for a cadre which one reaches at a particular age. The management, in this manner, can enhance the satisfaction level of their employees.

The study however raises a few questions. Does the result hold well even in other professions? To what extent other factors affect one's attitudes in the work place like justice-perceptions, work-values and aspiration levels operate on predicting expectations and satis-

faction with a particular aspect of his/her job?

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