Research Journal of Social Sciences & Economics Review

Vol. 3, Issue 3, 2022 (July – September) ISSN 2707-9023 (online), ISSN 2707-9015 (Print)

ISSN 2707-9015 (ISSN-L)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.36902/rjsser-vol3-iss3-2022(119-127)

RJSSER

Research Journal of Social
Sciences & Economics Review

Private and Public Sectors University Employees: A Study of their Life Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction and Perceived Stress

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Abstract



This study aims to determine difference in life satisfaction, job satisfaction and perceived stress of private and public sector university employees. It was hypothesized that life satisfaction, and job satisfaction of public sector university employees would be more and their perceived stress would be less than private sector university employees. As additional variables, employees' difference was also assessed on the variables of marital status, birth order, educational level and economic position of the employees.120 employees including 60 from public and 60 from private sector universities participated in this study. Participants were asked to complete study scales. Result analysis of t-test clearly shows insignificant difference between public and private sector employees on all the variables. Hence, it is clear that public and private sector employees' life satisfaction, job satisfaction and perceived stress is similar and they do not differ on these factors. The research has positive implications as it makes it clear and suggest to those interested in adopting teaching as profession in public sectors only that they may without any hesitation apply in private sector universities also.

Keywords: Private and Public Sectors, University Employees, Life Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Perceived Stress

Introduction

A growing body of literature and research depicts the importance of satisfaction in life and job. Life satisfaction is a profoundly personalized sensation that is determined more by one's worldview than by actual surroundings or experiences. Life satisfaction is influenced by a wide range of things and is not solely reliant on a particular event. Numerous factors affect how happy you are in life.

Life satisfaction includes physical and emotional health as well as material well-being, connectedness, and production (Campbell, Converse & Rogers, 1976).

Coleman (2012) discovered that occupational stress affects both an employee's overall performance at work and their level of job satisfaction. This is because the majority of employers today seek improved employment outcomes. Additionally, Malaysia's fast-growing economy on the Asian continent has resulted in a significant rise in the number of international universities in this South-East country during the past decade. However, this rapid rise in the number of international universities is causing more obstacles for both academic and non-academic employees in the course.

As a comprehensive term for a conscious assessment of one's existence, life satisfaction is frequently confused with (as well as incorporated into) a more comprehensive notion subjective wellbeing (SWB). Thus, Subjective Wellbeing refers to perception of one's own life and a variety of emotional and physical challenges (Frisch et al., 2005).

Another researcher, Cummins (1995), defined the term life satisfaction and added new variables to this domain which includes safety and location. Nature and nurture also play important role in the debate of life satisfaction.

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Watson and Clarke (1984) emphasized the role of personality qualities in predicting life satisfaction (a top-down model). The top-down analysis emphasizes that, despite environmental changes, a person's ability to overcome environmental stress and ability of breaking down a big problem into smaller and justifiable chunks, plays a vital influence in life happiness. Conversely, state theorists (a bottom-up model) claim that the environment plays a role in life satisfaction, defining it as oscillations in life satisfaction caused by the environment. In conclusion, new study reveals that both trait and state life satisfaction have a significant impact on one's life happiness (Campbell, Converse & Rogers, 1976).

Employees' feelings about their jobs and the intensity of adaptability they have, in their organization, are referred to as job satisfaction. According to Locke (1976), it is "a pleasurable or positive emotional state coming from the appraisal of one's employment or job experiences". Thinking in a specific manner generates feelings in the same manner, and because our biology and perception have a complicated reciprocity, acting in a certain way can also generate the thinking patterns accordingly. Thinking patterns are extremely significant in achieving satisfaction. As a result, when we interpret our tasks, our minds and emotions are involved. Whatever and wherever a person works, does not matter, the essential thing is the proportion to which he/she has effectively completed the obligations. Acquired indemnity and happiness in the job is at the basis of job satisfaction.

The far more widely recognized theory of job happiness is the two-factor hypothesis. Based on the two-factor hypothesis (Herzberg et al., 1959), work satisfaction and dissatisfaction are distinct concepts that cannot be examined using a single scale. However, this method called into question the assumption that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction happen in the same proportion.

Stress seems to influence anyone and everyone. Chronic stress occurs when one's beliefs, expectations, and the requirements of their domain are not in synch. An accurate assessment of the conditions and events is necessary for the understanding of stress. A person's approach to thinking significantly affects how he/she experiences stress. Self-esteem, internal resources, and external resources are a few of the aspects that could have an impact on how stress is perceived. Adverse or demanding circumstances result in negative emotional strain which is known as stress (Dyrbye, 2006).

Stress in relationship to surroundings can be identified and how an individual adapts to the requirements of that habitat; claim Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Individuals' mental and physical wellbeing are going to be threat due to the disparity between environmental requirements and human ability to cope with all of those demands. A person's wellbeing is put at risk when there is an overwhelming degree of anxiety present, which provides further source of anxiety symptoms on topping of the financial pressure they are already experiencing (Ross & Huber, 1985).

Stress could be triggered by the job fit cycle and interruptions in the Cohen and Mansfield (1995) stress coping model. It can be claimed that a multitude of variables that influence an individual's atmosphere, have an effect on mental health.

Workload and work-life balance are identified as two major stressors for head teachers, compromising their physical and mental health (Phillips, Sen, & McNamee, 2007). There is evidence that university staff efficiency, workplace stresses, and psychological health are all significantly correlated with the susceptibility of lecturers to stress-related job illnesses (Jacobs, et al., 2007).

The job fit cycle was developed by Cohen and Mansfield (1995). According to this model, stress is the result of a number of factors that function in an individual's surroundings. Individual talents and personality traits are also highlighted as crucial aspects that can enhance or hinder job adjustment and happiness. Sources of stress, person-job fit, and outcomes are the three components of the stress cycle outlined by the model.

While defining sources of stress, theorists asserted that job resources, personality attributes, and non-work-related variables can all put strain on people at work. Work-related obligations and stressors are the most common sources of stress. When individual elements and environmental variables are in conflict, it adds to the stress of people who are already working in a stressful workplace. All the characteristics described above can be classified into three levels: institutional, unit, and patient.

Employees working full-time and those working part-time jobs were studied in order to investigate the correlation between level of perceived stress and level of job satisfaction. The findings disclosed that perceived stress is negatively correlated with job satisfaction and shows a significant i iivate and i ubite bectors emversity Employees

impact on employees with part-time jobs and part-time studies. This owns ramifications for students as well as for other professional groups (Derrer & Davis, 2007).

In Iran, a survey was conducted on Khomeinishar University personnel in the Esfahan province. According to the findings of the study, marital status has no substantial impact on job satisfaction (Iravania, et al., 2013).

Married life satisfaction and personal wellbeing are correlated. Fatima and Ajmal, (2012) looked at whether marital contentment and general happiness are related or not. The findings demonstrate that even a variety of factors; particularly flexibility, intimacy, supervision, faith, empathy, age differences, communication, honesty, loyalty, and civility play an important role in achieving fulfilment and satisfaction in married life.

Similarly, stress-related disagreements between spouses could cause infertility in couples, as well as reduces the life satisfaction, solitude in the marital partnership, and depression, as suggested by Siddiqui and Tabbasum's (2010) study on sterile couples.

According to Khalid and Irshad's (2010) research results, people working for public organizations are more pleased with their jobs then individuals working for private sector organizations. When academics employees feel their work was not being supported, they become less driven to do respective job effectively in the classroom, and when lecturers are unsatisfied with their work settings, they choose to shift organizations or quit their jobs pretty quickly. Less happiness and a more negative outlook were expressed by teachers who intended to leave the job (Smith, 2007). As job satisfaction has influence on teacher retention and working conditions, research into this topic is significant for a better insight.

Methods

This study aims to investigate the link between perceived stress and employment, life, and perceived stress in Pakistani culture. Moreover, it focuses on analyzing gender bias and the variations between the four characteristics that were described in this study for married and unmarried employees.

Objectives

- To find out the differences among married couples and unmarried single employees in job satisfaction, life satisfaction and perceived stress.
- To ascertain the differences in satisfaction with life, job and perceived stress among employees working in Private and Public sector Universities.

Hypotheses

After analyzing literature review of this study, following hypotheses were formulated:

- 1. Married and unmarried employees would differ on study variables i.e., job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and perceived stress.
- 2. There would be significant differences in satisfaction with life, job and perceived stress among employees working in Private and Public sector Universities.

Participants

This study comprised of full-time (40 hours/week) working employees in the education sector. Study participants were selected through convenient non-random sampling from different universities of private and public sector, located in Karachi, Pakistan. The sample consisted of (n=120) full time universities employee of both gender (f=60) and (m=60). Teaching and non-teaching both employees were part of the study. The mean age of the participants used as sample was M=32.70 and SD= 9. 105. There academic background includes: bachelorette, masters and post-graduation i.e., MPhil/PhD. Moreover, sample also represented a myriad of departments which included biological sciences, social sciences, engineering, computer sciences, and management sciences.

Inclusion/ Exclusion Criteria

All the participants were full time employees, the least hours of their job were 08 hours /day or 40 hours a week;

- The minimum level of their education was graduation (14 years);
- Participants' age ranges between 20 to 60 years;
- Only university sector full-time employees were part of the study;
- All part-time university employees with education less than 14 years were part of the study;.

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Instruments

Satisfaction with Life Scale

To measure the level of satisfaction with life The Satisfaction with life Scale was used. The 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale, designed to evaluate overall life satisfaction, consists of five items. The 5-item scale enables respondents to describe their level of agreement and disagreement for the above checklist on a 7-point Likert scale. Participants can give objects a score between 1 and 7. The sum of the five components, with a possible range of 5 to 35, gives us the final score. Whereas points 1 through 3 showed Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Slightly Disagree, respectively, points 4 and 5 suggested neither Agree nor Disagree, while points 6 and 7 indicated Agree and Strongly Agree. Moreover, In addition, a score between 30 and 35 indicates a life that is very satisfying, one between 18 and 29 indicates a life that is partially satisfying, and one between 5 and 17 indicates a life that is least and least satisfying. Many studies have validated the convergent, criterion, and discriminant validity of the Satisfaction with Life Scale. Internal consistency i.e. 0.87 and test retest reliability is 0.82 have been reported by previous research studies (Pavot, & Diener, 1993).

Job Satisfaction Scale

Job Satisfaction scale is a tool used to explore the different nine domains of job regarding satisfaction. Nine subscales in the Job Satisfaction Survey are only loosely related to one another. Overall, an internal consistency score of 0.70 has been validated (Spector, 1985).

The Job Satisfaction Scale has both positive and negative phrases for some of the items. Each point has a maximum total score between 4 and 24. However, by adding all together results of 36 criteria ranging in value from 36 to 216, we may evaluate overall job satisfaction. Each item on the job satisfaction survey was given a rating between 1 and 6.

Perceived Stress Scale

A person's intensity of perceived stress during the previous month is measured using the perceived stress scale. It has 10 items and is self-administered; it does not have subscales. As a result, it can evaluate recent or current levels of perceived stress, not levels of stress that have been for an extended period of time. The PSS does not have cut-offs for categorizing responses in levels of "high," "medium," or "low" stress because it is not a clinical scale. Typically, it is employed as a count or ordinal scale measure. Negatively expressed things with a score range of 4-0 are included in items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10 of the total 10. On the other side, the items that are positively mentioned and scored between 0 and 4 are 4, 5, 7, and 8. High perceived stress scale. The scale has been used in multiple previous studies, analyses, and tests and is quite trustworthy and valid. Foundation reliability was found to be 0.82 Cronbach's alpha, and there was a strong association between the PSS and the DASS subscales, evaluating stress at r=0.64, depression at r=0.61, and anxiety at r=0.54. Stress and its many symptoms have been discovered to be closely linked. As a result, it was confirmed to be a concept with satisfactory psychometric qualities (Andréou, et al., 2011)

Procedure

Ethical committee of the university approved this study to be conducted. University heads were formally contacted to take permission for data collection. After permission was granted employees were approached individually, an informed consent was taken. Basic knowledge about the study which includes: objectives, aim and rationale of the study. After taking their approval they were requested to participate in the research and requested to complete JSS, TS, SWLS and PSS. Statistical analyses was done after the completion of data.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics were considered while conducting the research. During the administration of the questionnaire, participants had the option to end the survey at any time. After completing the survey, participants received a debriefing on the study.

RESULTS Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Demographical Variables of the Participants

Variables	Categories	N	%	Total
Gender	Male	60	50.0%	
	Female	60	50.0%	120
Marital status	Married	70	58.3%	
	Unmarried	50	41.7%	120

Sector	Public	60	50.0%	
	Private	60	50.0%	120
Family structure	Nuclear	40	33.3%	
	Joint	80	66.7%	120
Family status	Upper	7	05.8%	
	Middle	106	88.3%	120
	Lower	7	05.8%	
Birth order	First	36	30.0%	
	Middle	60	50.0%	120
	Last	24	20.0%	
Academic	Graduates	44	36.7%	
Qualification	Masters	56	46.7%	120
	Post Masters	20	16.6%	

The table 1 showed that out of 120 there are 60 (50%) males and 60 (50%) females on gender of the participants. On the Marriage there are 70 married (58.3%) and 50 unmarried (41.8%). In terms of sector, the number of participants in both public and private sector is the same that is 60 (50%). The last category is of Academic qualification of the participants is divided into three categories. The first group is of graduates that are 44 (36.7%) participants, second group is of Master which are 56 in number (46.7%) and the third group that is of post-masters which are 20 (16.6%) participants.

Cronbach Alpha of Satisfaction with Life Scale, Job Satisfaction Survey, Trust Scale and Perceived Stress Scale

Scales	No. of items	a Reliability
Satisfaction with life scale		
(SWLS)	5	0.720
Job Satisfaction Survey		
(JSS)	36	0.694
Perceived Stress Scale		
(PSS)	10	0.892

Table 2 shows that all the scales used in Study have an acceptable reliability value (>.5). The reliabilities are good and acceptable. Therefore, decision was taken to proceed with the study. The reliabilities range from the value of .6 to .89. The reliability of Satisfaction with Life Scale is .72, the reliability of Job Satisfaction Survey is .69 and the reliability of the Perceived Stress Scale is .89.

 Table 3

 Descriptive Statistics of Variables under Study

Variables	M	SD
Satisfaction with life		
(SWL)	23.08	6.045
Job Satisfaction		
(JS)	137.23	21.110
Perceived Stress		
(PS)	18.08	6.347

Table 3 indicates the descriptive of scales. Mean scores of Satisfaction with life Scale, Job satisfaction, and Perceived Stress falls within moderate, moderate and low range is shown.

Table 4Mean Difference of Life Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Trust in Close Relationships and Perceived Stress with Reference to Marital Status of Employees

Variable	Marital	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig
	Status						
	Unmarried	50	22.90	5.88			
SWLS	Married	70	23.2	6.19	118	26	.790
	Unmarried	50	134.6	21.59			
JSS	Married	70	139.1	20.70	118	-1.157	.250
	Unmarried	50	19.3	6.32			
PSS	Married	70	17.2	6.26	118	1.804	.074

Note: SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale, JSS= Job Satisfaction Survey, PSS= Perceived Stress Scale, M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation and CI=Confidence Interval

Table 4. An independent-samples t-test indicated that there was negligible difference between un-married (M =22.9, SD = 5.88) and married (M =23.2, SD =6.19), t (118) = -.26, p >.05, on variable of satisfaction with life. Result showed that there was no significant difference between unmarried (M = 134.6, SD = 21.59) and married (M =139.1, SD =20.70), t (118) = -1.157, p >.05, on variable of Job Satisfaction. Result also showed that there was no significant difference between married (M = 19.3, SD = 6.32) and un-married (M =17.2, SD =6.26), t (118) = 1.804), p >.05, on variable of perceived stress.

Table 5 *Mean Difference in Life Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, and Perceived Stress of Employees of Public and Private Sector Universities*

Variables	Sector	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig
SWLS	Public	60	23.28	5.23			
	Private	60	22.87	6.80	118	.37	.707
JSS	Public	60	134.25	19.67			
	Private	60	140.22	22.21	118	-1.55	1.22
PSS	Public	60	19.13	6.64			
	Private	60	17.02	5.90	118	1.84	.068

Note: SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale, JSS= Job Satisfaction Survey, PSS= Perceived Stress Scale, M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation and CI=Confidence Interval

Table 5. An independent-samples t-test indicated that there was negligible difference between public (M =23.28, SD = 5.23) and private (M =22.87, SD =6.80), t (118) = .37, p >.05, on variable of satisfaction with life. Result showed that there was no significant difference between public (M = 134.25, SD = 19.67) and private (M =140.22, SD =22.61), t (118) = -1.55, p >.05, on variable of Job Satisfaction. Result also showed that there was no significant difference between public (M = 19.13, SD = 6.64) and private (M =17.02, SD =5.90), t (118) = 1.84), p >.05, on variable of perceived stress.

Discussion

The results of the study demonstrated that there is no significant difference upon the life satisfaction, perceived stress and job satisfaction among the married and unmarried participants which rejects our first hypothesis (*There will be significant differences in job satisfaction, life satisfaction and perceived stress between married couples and unmarried single employees*).

Studies conducted in Finland and the Czech Republic, relevant studies found no substantial differences in job satisfaction between unmarried/single and married/couple employees. Another study from South Africa showed that there was no significant relationship upon marriage satisfaction between married and unmarried individuals (Botha, & Booysen, 2012).

The findings of the second hypothesis (*There will be significant differences in satisfaction with life, job and perceived stress among employees working in Private and Public sector Universities*) revealed that there is no significant difference between the private and public sectors in the four variables of the study, namely job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and felt stress (P> 0.05).

Similarly, in 2013, Gupta and Pannu investigated job satisfaction in various organizational sectors. Employees in both the private and governmental sectors were found to be equally satisfied. The participants did not show any difference on job satisfaction because it is determined by healthy job environment, good organizational commitment, and good employees' intrapersonal relationship. The positives and negatives of the whole work environment have been termed as the quality of work life.

This includes traits like the organization's facilities' sufficiency and quality, organizational setting like policies and procedures, the leadership style that is used, operations, and general contextual aspects (Noor & Abdullah, 2012).

Employers interested in enhancing employee job satisfaction should consider staff perceptions of the quality of their working environment because these perceptions have a significant impact on employees' decisions to join, remain with, or leave the organization (Bagtasos, 2011).

Similarly, the variable degree of stress a person feels about their life revealed no difference in stress perception between single and married employees; both are equally content with their lives and jobs (P > 0.05).

The employees' marital status did not affect by the level of stress. Because the cultural differences and mainstream culture has convinced both the partners to work equally and contribute to

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living. The women empowerment has demolished the idea of male as the only sole earner. Hence, this might be the cause that the results showed no significant results on married and unmarried workers. The studies revealed that women working as equal to men contributed to economic development. Studies have proven that gender equality and the empowerment of women are essential for sustainable development. As a result, it is claimed that gender equality is a concern for human rights, a requirement for sustainable development, as well as a sign of it (Alvarez & Lopez, 2013).

Additionally, it is acknowledged that gender inequality is pervasive throughout all cultures and that sustainable development cannot be realized unless strong measures are taken to address it (Stevens, 2010).

Furthermore, UN Women (2014) correctly said that achieving gender equality is essential to building a just and sustainable world and improving women's roles in supporting their families and communities. On the other hand, if gender equality is not upheld, the nation's progress will be slowed.

Additionally, Education level noted to play a significant role among employees. As a result, highly educated employees were found to be more satisfied with their occupations when compared to lower or average educational employees. Education levels was noted in the study done in Islamabad and Rawalpindi the twin cities of Pakistan with the goal of investigating level of satisfaction of job among private and public sector employees.

Conclusion

It was discovered that the married or unmarried employees, their interpersonal relationships and marital status has an insignificant impact on satisfaction with life, stress perception, and work satisfaction. Satisfaction with life, work, job, and perceived stress were discovered to be unconstrained of organizational sectors. There is a need to discover and look at the factors that caused the results to be non-significant. Also, the study should be replicated with a comparatively larger sample size and also with a qualitative design to explore and contribute more to the knowledge body.

Implications of the Study

This research has significant societal conclusions. Knowledge about employees' stress concerns would help policymakers better understand their lives and jobs, and it will be good for policymakers to establish regulations and policies that address employees' core difficulties to refine their overall wellbeing.

Management of human resources will lay hold of actions to upgrade the standard of life of the employees based on the findings of the current study. Hiring a psychologist on the job would assist employees overcome stress more effectively.

Limitations of the study

The following are some of the limitations of the current study:

- The sample size was small. It would have been preferable to take a larger sample size.
- The sample was drawn solely from employees of educational organizations;
- It was a cross-sectional study

Recommendations for future research

- It is recommended that future researchers focus on comparison among employees of different domains such as, finance services industry, health care, and so on. Making a comparison between part-time and full-time personnel.
- A customized intervention to reduce stress level and to enhance their capacity to cope will definitely improve satisfaction with both life and job.

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