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## ANTECEDENTS OF JOB SATISFACTION: A STUDY OF TELECOM SECTOR

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**Key words:** Pay and benefits, communication, performance appraisal, supervision and collegiality, career development and management, job satisfaction, job commitment.

**Abstract:** This study is based on the assumption that “a happy worker is a productive worker”. The research was conducted to identify the significance of those factors that lead towards job satisfaction and commitment of employees working in the telecom sector of Pakistan. The associations among pay and benefits, performance appraisal system, career development and management, supervision and collegiality and open communication (independent variables) were investigated with job satisfaction (dependent variable). The relationship between job satisfaction (dependent variable) and job commitment (outcome) was also hypothesized. Through questionnaire survey responses from 221 employees working at managerial and non-managerial positions were collected, which showed the significant association of supervision and collegiality and open communication on job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction was also found highly correlated and dependent upon job commitment. Managerial implications and conclusions are presented based upon these results.

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PP. 66-73

### Introduction

Telecom sector has emerged as the fastest growing sector during the last several years in Pakistan. Initially, licenses for operating mobile cellular services in Pakistan were awarded to two companies i.e. Instaphone and Paktel simultaneously in 1990. Mobile Technology, being new in the country, made mobile phone a luxury till the late 1990's. However, with the introduction of Mobilink in 1994 telecom sector introduced GSM technology to telecom sector. The drastic change in the industry was experienced with the introduction of fourth mobile operator U-fone by the incumbent of Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation Limited (PTCL) in 2001. This stiffness in competition caused decline in tariff rates and improved service quality. Due to the new entrant in the market total subscribers rose to 0.3 million from mere 0.3 million till 1999-2003. This figure kept increasing consistently and touched the milestone of 5 million by end April 2005 (Engineering Development Board, 2006).

But still cellular companies could not meet the growing demand in Pakistan. Therefore, Government decided to introduce more competition in the cellular market. The year 2003 was a historic year in the telecom industry of Pakistan whereby the telecom market was opened to private operators for fixed line and introduced much awaited competition in the cellular mobile sector. Pakistan issued two more licenses to cellular companies of world fame at the rate of 291 million USD each in open bidding (Sargana, 2006). Reason being the highly competitive customer oriented structure was flourishing which was pushing operators to extend services in countryside (Engineering Development Board, 2006).

Considerable investments from the international companies have resulted in more employment

opportunities. Moreover, expansion of existing cellular operators has also created direct and indirect avenues for employment. Beside direct opportunities in the main mobile companies, jobs are also available in franchises, sales and promotion, telecom equipment manufacturing, mobile phone accessories, mobile sets and other support services. According to an estimate, almost 183 063 additional direct and indirect jobs were created in the telecom sector during the last year (PTA Annual Report, 2006).

Being promising sector of the country, it is categorized as a first and foremost resort for employment by fresh graduates due to better pay packages and progressive career path. Previous years have also witnessed a significant shift of the experienced professionals working in the field of finance, marketing, HR and engineering towards companies working under telecom sector. The reason may be better pay packages, advancement opportunities and new exposure. Despite all these benefits, mobile phone companies are facing high turnover among employees due to alternative opportunities available in the same industry and better packages offered from rival companies. This research is specifically designed to know the factors and their significance that lead towards job satisfaction in the telecom sector. The research would help the companies to predict the turnover intention among workers and retain employees on long-term basis. Because satisfied workers are strongly committed with their jobs and don't have withdrawal intentions (Slattery and Selvarajan, 2005).

### Literature review

**Job satisfaction.** Extensive review of the literature reveals that job satisfaction is positively associated with job commitment and job commitment has negative impact on quitting intentions of employees. Some authors investigated

the relationship between job satisfaction and job commitment while some job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction refers to an individual's positive emotional reactions to a particular job. It is an affective reaction to a job that results from the person's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired, anticipated, or deserved (Oshagbemi, 1997). Organizational commitment is the attitude held by individuals toward the entire organization. High levels of organizational commitment are associated with acceptance of the organizations values and willingness to expend effort on its behalf (Baron and Greenberg, 1990). In this study, organizational commitment and job commitment are combined in the definition of commitment as "a sense of loyalty to and identification with the organization, the work and the group to which one belongs. This feeling is expressed in the motivation to bring effort into one's work, the motivation to take responsibility and a willingness to learn. A precondition is that the employee is well informed and is involved in decision-making processes" (Nijhof et al., 1998). Job commitment is also associated with the internal work motivation that a person has with a specific job (Boyle, 1997).

The study of Ricke-Kiely (2006) found that satisfied workers had less turnover intentions. At contrast, the research of Curry et al. (1986) did not find any relationship between job satisfaction and commitment. In the same way, Geenberg and Baron (1990) also pointed out that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment are distinctive types of work related attitudes and that both affect important aspects of organizational functioning. However, they do not appear to be direct causes of one another, as has often been assumed.

Literature reveals different impact of job satisfaction on job commitment. Therefore this study is designed to know the factors having direct relationship with job satisfaction and the association between job satisfaction and job commitment, in a less developed country like Pakistan.

**H1:** Job satisfaction is positively associated with job commitment.

**Pay and benefits.** Pay refers to the wages and salaries of jobs in organizations (Noe et al., 2006). Benefits are the compensation component that accounts for almost 40 percent of the typical total compensation package like, health insurance, pension plans, unemployment insurance, vacations, sick leave etc (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2005). In the present scenario, pay & benefits, recognition and participation are becoming more widely recognized for its motivational value (Timm, 1984).

Workers are satisfied with pay when they make referents comparison and find equity. Pay referents are those with whom workers make pay comparisons like social, historical, organizational, and financial and market referents. Mostly employees compare their pay with co-equals outside the organization (market referent or reference group) and if find equity they are highly satisfied with their job and pay (Brown 2001; Clark, 2007). But Bygen (2004) highlighted two referents that have significant impact. The author said that employees compare their pay with that of similar others (i.e., others with the same education and work experience) in their occupation

and in the labor market as a whole. The higher the pay of reference in these areas, the lower the satisfaction.

Shapiro and Wahba, (1978) pointed out that higher paid employees in contrast with the lower paid employees enjoy higher perceived degrees of satisfaction. Furthermore, social comparison, actual pay and wage history are the major determinants for satisfaction.

**H2:** Equitable Pay and Benefits have positive relationship with job satisfaction.

**Career development and management.** Career refers to individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work related activities and experiences over span of a person's life (Bernardin and Russell, 1993). The pattern of changes that occur during an individual's career is called career development. Organizations usually design and sponsor programs to assist individuals in planning their careers which is termed as career management or assistance programs (Geenberg and Baron). Some organizations also provides career support such as coaching, protection, sponsorship and providing challenging assignments, exposure and visibility (Noe et al., 2006).

In each organizations career ambitious people exist, who are fiercely competitive, viewing her or his career as a series of tournaments (each one of which has an allocated winner who moves up to the next career ladder rung), and measuring her or his career success by objective measures such as salary, rank or promotion (Leary, 1997).

The study of Chen et al. (2004) revealed that if organizations cannot provide career development programs to satisfy the career needs of personnel, it ultimately has negative effects on job satisfaction and increase turnover intentions. Therefore, managers must understand the gap between career development programs and career needs. Such understanding may provide job satisfaction and reduce turnover behavior. Burke (2006) was of the view that organizations should understand the career aspirations of not only man but also of women. Further to career planning, top management support and commitment is also required to keep both gender in decision-making about recruitment, employee development, the development of policies and procedures and career advancement.

**H3:** Career development and management program have positive relationship with job satisfaction.

**Communication and participation.** Communication is a process that involves the transmission of meaningful information from one party to another through the use of shared symbols (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2005). The key to the effectiveness of any organization is a pattern of ongoing communication. Participation refers to when individuals can take part in decision-making (Timm, 1984).

Gray and Laidlaw (2002) emphasized the importance of communication, as it is the main predictor of job satisfaction. If communication is high within the organization, it leads towards better job satisfaction and work performance. Managers need to devise strategies to improve communication for enhanced job satisfaction and positive outcome. Gliem and Gliem (2001) took a very myopic view and stated that communication is a barrier to job satisfaction. Their study found that employees were

dissatisfied due to inadequate communication regarding decisions that may affect their jobs. For example organization could not effectively communicate job responsibilities, organizational policies and decisions, which caused dissatisfaction.

**H4 :** Open communication has positive relationship on the job satisfaction.

**Performance appraisal.** It is a process by which organizations evaluate employee's performance (Werther and Davis, 1985). In other words it is a process of evaluating employees on various work related dimensions (Geenberg and Baron, 1990).

When employees are satisfied with their job, their on job performance gets high. Another variable that leads towards Job satisfaction is fair performance appraisal system. The positive relationship between performance appraisal and job satisfaction shows that effective performance appraisal process not only provides job satisfaction but also enhances individual job performance (Harris, 2001). However, when employees perceive performance ratings manipulated for personal liking and punishment, it provides job dissatisfaction. Which also increase turnover intentions. At the other hand if performance appraisal is conducted for the purpose of rewarding employees (or avoiding negative outcomes for them) their job satisfaction and turnover intention were not affected (Poon, 2004).

**H5 :** Fair and transparent performance appraisal system has positive relationship with job satisfaction.

**Supervision and collegiality.** Supervision is the management, guidance or direction by overseeing the performance or operation of a person or group (WordNet, 2007). Collegiality is derived from the word colleagues. It is the amount of loyalty and cooperation between colleagues in a work place (Nijhof et al., 1998).

Mosadegh-Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) conducted a study to know the satisfaction level of employees with the help of different variables. Result showed that employees were more satisfaction with the factors such as the nature of the job, co-workers and supervision while they demonstrated less satisfaction with salaries, benefits, work conditions, promotion and communication. At the other hand, the results of Oshagbemi (1999) study showed that employees at higher rank were satisfied with their counterparts. Secondly, aged persons were also more satisfied with their colleagues and co-workers. However, nearly same level of satisfaction was investigated for gender. But the author further stated that the study only reveals the association not cause and effect relationships.

**H6:** Better supervision and high collegiality have positive relationship with job satisfaction.

### Methodology

**Objectives of the research.** The main purpose of the research was to measure the extent of job commitment and job satisfaction and the relationship between these two variables in telecom sector of Pakistan. Furthermore, to know the impact of different factors such as pay and

benefits, communication, performance appraisal, supervision and collegiality, career development and management on job satisfaction.

**Subjects.** For sampling, nonprobability convenience sampling method was used. Since it was an attempt to collect data from all main companies operating under telecom sector, such as Mobilink, AlWarid, U-Fone, Telenor, Huawei, PTCL etc. therefore 75 questionnaires in each company were randomly distributed. But keeping in view the large employees strength of PTCL, nearly 100 questionnaires were distributed over there. In total 450 questionnaires were floated to collect the responses of above 200 respondents.

**Procedure (distribution and response).** The efforts were made to collect primary data, through questionnaire survey from managerial and non-managerial level. Though it was difficult task to collect response of about 225-250 employees, in timely and cost effective manner. Therefore total of 475 questionnaires were distributed, through mail. The questionnaires also contained brief background information about the purpose of the study and measures for confidentiality. Initially response rate was low, therefore individuals were personally approached and wherever required, they were briefed about importance of research and how to fill in questionnaire in true spirit.

TABLE 1. VALUES OF CRONBACH'S COEFFICIENT ALPHA FOR SCALE RELIABILITY

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Pay and benefits	0.772
Performance appraisal	0.813
Career advancement	0.817
Manager and colleagues	0.824
Communication	0.844
Job satisfaction	0.835
Job commitment	0.86
For all items	0.948

By taking such steps, total responses received were 242, which became 51 % of total. But nearly 21 questionnaires were rejected on different grounds giving 221 responses. Ultimately, responses of 47% of distributed questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 17.0.

**Measures.** Primary data was collected with the help of questionnaire. The questionnaire had two sections. Section-I was designed to know the demographics of the respondents and section-II to identify the factors leading towards job satisfaction and commitment.

Job satisfaction was measured through five items taken from the study of Chen (2008) while Organizational commitment was measured with a precise version of Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) originally developed by Allen's and Meyer and (1991). The aim of the research was to measure the emotional

attachment of an employee therefore only items relating to affective commitment were added in the questionnaire.

To measure pay and benefits, supervision and collegiality, career development and management the questionnaire used by McCook (2002) was modified by reducing the number of items. For open communication (also termed as information sharing) and performance

appraisal, a customized question sets taken from the study (Singh, 2003; Delaney and Huselid, 1996; Qureshi and Ramay, 2007) were used. All the items were measured using five point likert scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Values of Cronbach's coefficient alpha for scale reliability are given in Table 1.

TABLE 2. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

	Pay and benefits	Performance appraisal	Career development	Supervision and collegiality	Communication	Job satisfaction	Job commitment
Mean	2.9	2.97	2.93	3.4	3.23	3.27	3.38
Standard error	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Median	3	3	3	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.4
Mode	2.8	2	3	3.6	3.2	3	2.8
Standard deviation	0.84	0.98	0.92	0.83	0.87	0.82	0.84
Sample variance	0.7	0.95	0.85	0.69	0.76	0.68	0.7
Range	4	4	4	3.8	4	3.8	4

TABLE 3. CORRELATION MATRIX

	Pay and benefits	Performance appraisal	Career advancement	Supervision and collegiality	Communication	Job satisfaction	Job commitment
Pay and benefits	1	0.585**	0.558**	0.342**	0.407**	0.423**	0.378**
Performance appraisal	0.585**	1	0.706**	0.460**	0.616**	0.612**	0.538**
Career advancement	0.558**	0.706**	1	0.390**	0.595**	0.579**	0.461**
Manager and colleagues	0.342**	0.460**	0.390**	1	0.581**	0.651**	0.650**
Communication	0.407**	0.616**	0.595**	0.581**	1	0.783**	0.751**
Job satisfaction	0.423**	0.612**	0.579**	0.651**	0.783**	1	0.786**
Job commitment	0.378**	0.538**	0.461**	0.650**	0.751**	0.786**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

### Research analysis

**Demographic characteristics of respondents.** Survey respondents included 173 male (78%) and 48 females (22%). Majority of the respondents were between 21 years to 35 years of age showing 60% of whole sample. 44% of respondents were having bachelor level of education while 43% had master level of education. Above master level were very low (10%). It was attempted to collect responses from both levels therefore the response was collected from a good combination of both managerial (45%) and nonmanagerial (55%). It was also found that the monthly earning of majority of employees (62%) working in telecom sector was in between 11 000 to 30 000. More than

30 000 monthly income were 18%. Subsequently, 40% respondents had 1-5 years of experience while the other significant figure of 31% were those employees spent at least 10 years or above. In Pakistan, there are two public organizations working under the telecom sector, therefore (45%) responses were collected from public organizations and 55% from private organizations.

**Descriptive analysis.** Descriptive results reveal varying results of independent variables (pay and benefits, communication, performance appraisal, supervision and collegiality, career development and management) dependent variable (job satisfaction) and outcome (job commitment). Likert scale helped to explain the intensity of satisfaction and commitment of employees towards job.

The highest calculated mean of supervision and collegiality (3.4) shows employee satisfaction towards

managers and colleagues. It indicates the team oriented and cooperative environment in telecom industry. Managers also take keen interest to solve subordinates problem.

Aggregate mean of communication (3.23) reveals the open communication policy in telecom sector. Organizations effectively communicate the policies, rules and regulations that may affect jobs of employees. Calculated means of other independent variables like pay and benefits, performance appraisal and career development are 2.90, 2.97 and 2.93, respectively. It specifies that satisfaction level among employees for these factors are not as much high.

At contrast, mean value of job satisfaction (dependent variable) signifies that employees are satisfied with their jobs. Regardless of insignificant result of some of the independent variables. Employees are generally satisfied with their responsibilities and practices of the organization.

The calculated mean of job commitment (3.38), which is also the second highest mean value, shows that employees feel a sense of belongings with their respect organization and they are even willing to expend extra efforts to make their organizations successful.

**Correlation results.** To determine the strength of the relationship between two or more variables, "Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient" is used. Correlation of all variables is shown in Table 3. As concluded in previous researches, significant positive correlation amongst the independent and dependent variables was found. Especially the analysis shed light on the strong positive effect of compensation and performance appraisal system (0.71). It shows that if the performance appraisal system in the organization is transparent and growths of the employees are based on performance appraisal data, then the employees are usually satisfied with their jobs. It further accentuates that the performances should be measured on the basis of quantifiable results and

individuals must be given specified career path based on performance.

Another significant impact of communication is found on job satisfaction, which proposes that if organization complies with the policy of open communication (0.78) then job satisfaction gets high. Organizations that communicate all policies and procedures to the employees that can effect their jobs or task responsibilities may get better results from satisfaction perspective. Secondly, it also emphasizes the need of free flow of communication/information during change process to take employees into confidence to avoid job dissatisfaction.

A (0.75) correlation of communication with job commitment reveals that if employees are clear about the objectives, mission and vision of the company and decisions are made with joint consultation of employees involved, then commitment of employees towards job gets high. In the same way the highest correlation between job satisfaction and job commitment (0.79) reveals that if employees are satisfied with the way organization determine pay and benefit, performance appraisal, career advancement, managers and collegiality and communication then employees are highly satisfied with their job. Such satisfaction also provides employee a sense of attachment with their respective organization. A happy or satisfied worker is willing to spend rest of his/her life with the organization. In nutshell, such practices help to retain employees for long term basis and decrease quitting intentions.

**Regression results.** The Regression equation is formed to test the interdependence of two variables. With the help of Independent variables (pay and benefits, communication and participation performance appraisal supervision and collegiality, career development and management), dependent variable (job satisfaction) and the outcome (job commitment) following two equations were formed.

TABLE 4. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model 1	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
	0.832 <sup>a</sup>		0.692	0.685	0.463
Model 1	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.279	0.153		1.828	0.069
Pay and benefits	0.012	0.048	0.012	0.248	0.805
Performance appraisal	0.089	0.051	0.106	1.753	0.081
Career advancement	0.086	0.052	0.096	1.676	0.095
Manager and colleagues	0.269	0.047	0.272	5.754	0
Communication	0.471	0.052	0.497	9.013	0

TABLE 5. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model 2	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
	0.786 <sup>a</sup>	0.617	0.615	0.519

  

Model 2	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.777	0.143		5.431	0
Job Satisfaction	0.797	0.042	0.786	18.784	0

Table 4 presents the regression outcomes of equation/model 1, which shows that the dependence of pay and benefits, communication, performance appraisal, supervision & collegiality and career development and management (independent variables) on job satisfaction (dependent variable). Regression analysis shows the significance of all independent variables on dependent variables, as we can see 68.47% of the variation in Job Satisfaction is explained by five independent variables, while 31.53 % is the inherent variability or remain unexplained. Correlation Coefficients, express the degree to which two or more predictors, independent variables are related to the dependent variable. We have values of coefficients Pay and benefits, Personnel appraisal, Career development and management, Supervision and collegiality, and Communication and participation, 0.01, 0.09, 0.09, 0.27 and 0.47, respectively. The values reflect positive and comparatively high relatedness of two independent variables that are “supervision and collegiality” and “communication” with job satisfaction. Especially, communication (0.47) is significantly associated with job satisfaction comparing other explanatory variables.

Table 5 shows the results of regression analysis between two variables i.e. job satisfaction (X6) and job commitment (Y2). From research model, job commitment is the outcome of job satisfaction. Therefore, it shows that if employees are satisfied from five factors (Pay and benefits, Personnel appraisal, Career development and management, Supervision and collegiality, Communication and participation) as discussed earlier, then it not only provides job satisfaction but also enhance the commitment towards job. This is the reason, second equation yields significant impact of job satisfaction over job commitment. Approximately, 61.53 percent of the variation in the job commitment is explained by job satisfaction while 38.47 is the unexplained variation. The coefficient of job satisfaction as determined by the regression is 0.80.

Tables 4 and 5 confirm the interdependence of pay and benefits, communication, performance appraisal, supervision and collegiality, career development and management with job satisfaction. Whereas, job satisfaction is found highly related with job commitment. If an employee is satisfied from pay policies, career advancement opportunities, role of managers and colleagues, transparency of performance appraisal and

communication system, then such factors would confer a high level of satisfaction towards job. Consequently job satisfaction would provide a real involvement with the job and organization. Job satisfaction leads toward job commitment, which motivate employee to put extra effort beyond that normally is expected from him, in order to help organization to be successful.

### Conclusion

Statistical analysis shows that most of the organizations working under telecom sector are complying the open communication polices and participatory approaches. Any change taking places within the organization that may affect the job of the employees are effectively communicated. Employees are clear about the vision, mission and objectives of the organization. Furthermore, it is also found that employees are satisfied with general supervision from managers and collegiality. The higher level of satisfaction is because of the cooperative environment. This may be the reason of growing performance of the telecom sector that employees are working with dedication and vigilantly due to team oriented environment. Employees do not show significant satisfaction towards other factors such as pay & benefits, performance appraisal and career development & management. However, generally employees are found satisfied with the work responsibilities, practices and procedures of the organization. Majority of employees are of the view that their jobs have personal meaning for them and they feel a sense of belongings to their organization, which evoke high commitment towards job and organization.

The correlation results show the high association of performance appraisal system with career development and management, which indicates that if employees are promoted on the basis of performance, then it increases job satisfaction. Secondly, communication is also found highly correlated with job satisfaction and job commitment, pertaining that open flow of communication not only provides satisfaction but also confer a sense of loyalty to and identification with the organization. Thirdly, job satisfaction was found most significantly related with job commitment in this study. It specifies that when an individual has positive emotional feelings to a particular

job then they accept the values and willing to expend extra effort to make organization successful.

Regression results show the high interdependence of two variables, i.e. communication and supervision & collegiality with job satisfaction while the other three (pay and benefits, performance appraisal and career development) were not significantly dependent on job satisfaction. Lastly, a high degree of dependence between job commitment is found on job satisfaction.

### Practical implication

Empirical evidences support the assumption that to achieve high level of job satisfaction and commitment, organizations particularly operating under telecom sector should take into account following key factors;

1. Pay and benefits should be offered in accordance with the duties and responsibilities assigned to each employee. Pay packages must also be equitable with other employees working in the same position in any other or same organization with whom workers make pay comparisons;
2. There is a strong need to establish transparent performance appraisal system based on quantifiable data, that could help employers to specify career planning & development and pay fixation for employees;
3. In telecom sector since, employees strongly supported the idea of cooperative and team oriented environment, therefore the role of managers and colleagues becomes critical in a way that the focus should be at flat hierarchical structure and moderate span of control;
4. The current study also investigated the vital role of communication that it plays in bringing harmony in the organization. If free flow of communication occurs and employees are well informed about their duties, company's rules and policies, then it would ultimately enhance the level of satisfaction;
5. In nutshell, if employees are satisfied, then they voluntary expend extra effort to achieve the short term and long term goals of the organization and spend rest of their career in the same organization.

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