

Job Satisfaction of Garments Industry in a Developing Country

**¹ Abdul Gaffar Khan, ² Syed Moudud Ul Huq, ³ Md. Nazmul Islam*

^{1,2,3}Department of Business Administration, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Santosh, Tangail, Bangladesh

Received 19 September 2018, Accepted 9 December 2018

ABSTRACT:

The Readymade Garments (RMG) industry occupies a unique position in the Bangladesh economy. It is the largest exporting industry in Bangladesh, which experienced phenomenal growth during the last 25 years. More than 78 percent of Bangladesh's export earnings come from the garments industry. The industry plays a key role in employment generation and in the provision of income to the poor. Nearly four million workers are directly and more than twelve million inhabitants are indirectly associated with the industry. But their satisfaction level of working in their workplace is always neglected. So, this paper attempts to underpin the factors that influence them working with great extent of satisfaction. To support this paper, we conducted primary survey on 100 respondents who are working in different garments factories of Bangladesh. Particularly, descriptive analysis, correlation matrix and regression analysis are the primary tools used for the data analysis. The analysis shows that 7 factors have been influenced quite significantly while relationship between co-workers and supervisor has no significant impact on overall job satisfaction of the workers. This paper also provides a number of insights for the potential think tanks and stakeholders of the country.

Keywords: *Readymade garments, Job satisfaction, Workers, Working environment, Bangladesh*

INTRODUCTION

The Ready-Made Garments (RMG) industry captures a unique position in the Bangladesh economy. Ready-made garments are mass-produced finished textile products of the clothing industry. Though the history of Readymade Garment Industry is not older one but Bangladeshi clothing business has a golden history. Probably it started from the Mughal age in the Indian subcontinent through Dhakai Muslims. It had global reputation as well as demandable market around the globe especially in the European market. Employee satisfaction is a measure of how happy workers are with their job and working environment. Job satisfaction, a worker's sense of achievement and success, is directly linked to productivity as

well as to personal wellbeing (Source: Harvard Professional Group, 1998). A satisfied worker is more likely to be creative, flexible, innovative and loyal. Unhappy employees are motivated by a fear of job loss, and will not give 100 % of their effort for very long. Though fear is a powerful motivator, it is also a temporary one, and as soon as the threat is lifted, performance will decline. There are many factors in improving or maintaining high employee satisfaction, which wise employers would do well to implement. To measure employee satisfaction, many companies will have mandatory surveys or face-to-face meetings with employees to gain information. Both of these tactics have pros and cons, and should be chosen carefully. Surveys and

*Corresponding Author, Email: gaffar.mbau@gmail.com

meetings can truly get to the center of the data surrounding employee satisfaction, and can be great tools identify specific problems leading to lowered morale. Before liberation in 1970 in Bangladesh there was only one garment factory but now there are 4740 garment factories in Bangladesh. The number of workers in garments sectors is increased day by day. Job satisfaction means an attitude that reflects the extent to which an individual is gratified by or fulfilled in his or her work. It's indicated that personal factors such as an individual needs and objective, determine this attitude along with group and organization factors, such as relationships with coworkers and supervisor, working environment, salary structure and other working conditions.

The level of wages is the most significant source of dissatisfaction for workers in the RMG industry. But Bangladeshi garments industry labor cost is very poor than other country. RMG owner often deny that they have the power to improve the wages or conditions of workers (Ferdous, 2011). The sector has created jobs for about 4.5 million people of which 80 percent are women who mostly come from rural areas. This industry of Bangladesh has been the key export division and a main source of foreign exchange for the last 25 years. Garment factories in Bangladesh provide employment to 40 percent of industrial workers. But without the proper laws the workers are demanding their various wants and as a result conflict is began with the industry. Workers made strike, layout to capture their demand. Sometimes bonus and the overtime salary are the important cause of crisis. Insufficient government policy about this sector is a great problem in garments industry. In this study, we tried to find out what is the lacking of the owners of the RMG sectors towards the performance enhancements of our garments industry. We found out that the workers are the key success factors of that industry. The garments industry contributes the highest portion of our country's GDP. So enhancing the performance of that industry in terms of diminishing the dissatisfactory factors of the workers may drive our country from developing to a developed one (Huda and Akhtar, 2011).

This study covers the factors affecting job satisfaction of the workers of garments sector. The organizational factors include Working

Environment, Salary Structure, Relationship with Co-workers and Supervisors, Job Security, Recognition and Reward, Hygiene Canteen Facility, leave policy, Medical facility; Individual factors include age, designation, department they are the independent variables; Overall job satisfaction is the dependent variable. This study contributes to the existing literature in the following ways: firstly, it identifies the present status of satisfaction level of garments workers; secondly, it categorizes and analyzes the individual impact factors that affect worker satisfaction in ready-made garment sectors; and finally, it provides some recommendations for formulating and improving the level job satisfaction in the RMG sector.

The rest of the part of this paper is organized as in section 2 we discuss the previous studies on job satisfaction, methodology and findings discusses in section 3 and section 4 respectively while in section 5 we provide some policy implications for the stakeholders to improve the current condition of satisfactory level in the work place.

Literature Review

Worker satisfaction is defined as workers overall effective state of mind resulting from an approval of all aspects of his work (Hossan et al., 2012). It is also revealed that work satisfaction might increase when an employee participates in decision making, he can trust his supervisors, recognize his job as challenging and intrinsically rewarding (Gürbüz, 2009). While, Meng et al. (2014) also found that referent, expert and reward powers used by supervisors or managers have positive relationship with satisfaction with supervision.

A worker's level of pleasure toward his work varies with specific aspect of the work. These depend on mainly payment (Shabnam and Sarker, 2012). According to the same study the maternity benefit with full payment and health care facility of the worker also can ensure the labor satisfaction of the RMG workers. Bangladesh is a developing country with low per capita income; salary plays an immense role here to determine the worker satisfaction and industry's productivity. So, when workers are greatly dissatisfied with the salary, they must not be happy with the benefit packages they get. Workers quality of work-life depends on festival

bonus, attendance bonus and wage increment of a worker (Zohir, 2007). When someone's work is interesting, pay is fair then a situational approach leads one to predict worker is pleased with their work (Taylor, 2008). This study also include satisfaction of worker depends on adequate provident benefits and supportive financial benefit. (Huda and Akhtar, 2011) found that workers of garment sector in Bangladesh are not satisfied with wage and promotion policy but they are satisfied with their overtime benefits. Workers satisfaction in RMG sector is not only dependent on financial factor like salary, bonus & incentives' and other financial benefit like health care sick leaves etc, but also depend on some nonfinancial factors like work description and orientation, unbiased evolution of work performance, flexibility, training, job security, efficient and supportive line manager, good work environment etc. (Sarker and Afroze, 2014). It is known that work satisfaction is a matter of perception and that perception may or may not be accurate. This satisfaction is due to the workers' lack of awareness regarding the standards of working environment (Khatun and Shamsuzzaman, 2015).

Boateng et al. (2015) have been found that giving employee's responsibility improves employee satisfaction and if the leadership is task oriented and committed to relational behaviors would improve employee work satisfaction. Worker satisfaction is often associated with human need and condition. Labor standards and rights are commonly ignored in the RMG factories in Bangladesh: poor practices include the absence of trade unions, informal recruitment, and irregular payment, sudden termination, wage discrimination, excessive work, and abusing child labor. In different ground, Bansari, (2010) finds that recruitment policies are highly informal compared to western standards and there are no written formal contracts and appointment letters. They are therefore vulnerable to losing their jobs at any time. However, fear of losing their jobs and lack of alternative job opportunities compel workers to continue in unsatisfactory employment. Even labor standards and rights are commonly ignored in the RMG factories in Bangladesh. Work areas are often over crowded with limited workspaces, injuries, fatalities, disablement and death from

fire and building collapses are frequent in the RMG sector. The absence of labor standards monitoring system and ineffective building codes, poor enforcement and outdated labor laws, and a lack of awareness of labor rights among workers are the major dissatisfaction in this sector.

Rahman and Hossain (2010) provide an overview of the present compliance situation in the garment factories in Dhaka city. Both descriptive and inferential research were conducted to identify different dimensions of compliance of garment industry, such as housekeeping storage, working environment, production layout and controlling system, and management policies and practices in Bangladesh. They found out a close relationship between compliance and productivity. Rogers (2010) in his writing mentioned that Bangladeshi garment workers are the lowest paid garment workers in the world. Although their minimum wage was supposed to have risen to about \$40 a month in November 2010, many garment factories owners are still paying the old minimum wage of \$24 a month. He also mentioned that most Bangladeshi garment workers do not belong to unions and most of the union leaders are working for the interest of the garment factory owners and those who are actually trying to help them are being harassed by the employers. So, there is still a question that what are the factors actually blame for dissatisfaction for Bangladeshi garments workers? No consensus evidence has been found regarding the answers of the above. To address this issue, this paper hypothesizes that there requires significant improvement in a number of factors that influence overall job satisfaction and productivity of the workers.

RESEARCH METHOD

Data Collection and Time Frame

Both primary and secondary data have been collected for the period of 2014-15. Both secondary and primary data are collected but primary sources of data collection are given priority over the secondary sources. Primary data have been collected through questionnaire which comprises 23 statements and respondents had to give their level of responses on 5-Point Likert Scale. Length of the statements is small and the average interviewing time was approximately

ten minutes. The value for respondent answers are given on the following way: strongly disagree=1; disagree= 2; neutral =3; agree=4; strongly agree=5.

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data have been used from different articles, publications, books, news published in the daily newspapers, speeches in conferences, other related literatures, websites of BGMEA, BKMA, BEPZ, DEPZ, and Ministry of Commerce etc.

Variables Setting

The research design adopted for this study is exploratory in nature. By analyzing literature review and conducting two focus group discussions (FGD) with RMG workers, 9

variables have been identified that effect job satisfaction of RMG workers in Bangladesh. Among them 8 were independent variables in the following: working environment, salary structure, relationship with co-workers and supervisors, job security, recognition and reward, hygienic canteen facility, leave policy, medical facility and dependent variable is set for overall job satisfaction.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the demographic variables of the respondents (table 1)¹. For inferential statistics, correlation and regression analysis has been used. Data have been analyzed with the help of SPSS (Version 20).

Table 1: Descriptive summary of statistics

	Age	Designation of Respondent	Department of Respondent
Tools	Valid	100	100
	Missing	0	0
Mean	2.20	2.53	1.95
Std. Deviation	0.550	1.962	1.086
Minimum	1	1	1
Maximum	4	7	5

Table 2: Designation of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Operator	47	47.0	47.0
	Inspector	15	15.0	62.0
	Iron Man	13	13.0	75.0
	Packing Man	10	10.0	85.0
	Cutting Man	3	3.0	88.0
	Input Man	2	2.0	90.0
	Helper	10	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0

Table 3: Respondents based on department

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sewing	50	50.0	50.0
	Quality	14	14.0	64.0
	Finishing	29	29.0	93.0
	Cutting	5	5.0	98.0
	Fusing	2	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0

¹ Source: Author’s calculation based on questionnaire

For the data set, the mean is the sum of the values divided by the number of values. The mean of a set of numbers x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n is typically denoted by, pronounced "x bar"., the mean of age of the respondents is 2.2 that mean the average age of the respondents is of 21-30 years old. The mean of the second demographic factor designation of the respondent is 2.53 and department of the respondent is 1.95. The standard deviation is a measure of how spread out the data is. The square root of variance gives us standard deviation. For age of the respondent standard deviation is below 1, so we can say the variation is low. However, the standard deviations for designation of respondent and department of respondents are more than 1 and the variations in them are high.

Our sample size is 100 and among them we find that there is 47 Operator, 15 Inspector, 13 Iron Man, 10 Packing Man, 3 Cutting Man, 2 Input Man, and 10 Helpers (table 2). So, proportionately we find that 50% respondents are of sewing department, 14% are of quality department, 29% are of finishing department, 5% are of cutting department, and rest are from

2% fusing department (table 3).

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the pair-wise relationship between the constructs studied, such as Working Environment (WE), Salary Structure (SS), Relationship with Co-workers & Supervisor (RCS), Job Security (JS), Recognition & Reward (RR), Hygiene Canteen Facility (HC), Leave Policy (LP), Medical Facility (MF) and Overall Satisfaction (OS). Table 4 clearly indicates that the factors are correlated with Overall satisfaction (OS) of the employee in the organization. From Table 5, it can be traced that maximum correlation existed between overall satisfaction and Medical Facility ($r = 0.424$), followed by Hygiene Canteen Facility ($r = 0.423$), Recognition & Reward ($r = 0.405$) and Job Security ($r = 0.397$). Though Relationship with Coworkers & Supervisor (RCS) is crucial for overall satisfaction, it was least correlated according to the data ($r = 0.144$). All these factors were correlated with each other and with overall satisfaction which statistically significant at $p = 0.000$.

Table 4: Correlations matrix

Variables	WE	SS	RCS	JS	RR	HC	LP	MF	OS
WE									
Pearson Correlation	1	0.215*	0.212*	0.228*	0.143	0.141	0.155	0.120	0.260*
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.042	0.045	0.031	0.180	0.186	0.144	0.260	0.013
SS									
Pearson Correlation		1	0.138	0.366**	0.209*	0.304**	0.253*	0.311**	0.329**
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.193	0.000	0.048	0.004	0.016	0.003	0.002
RCS									
Pearson Correlation			1	0.344**	0.203	0.206	0.183	0.122	0.144
Sig. (2-tailed)				0.001	0.055	0.051	0.084	0.252	0.175
JS									
Pearson Correlation				1	0.287**	0.167	0.326**	0.621**	0.397**
Sig. (2-tailed)					0.006	0.117	0.002	0.000	0.000
RR									
Pearson Correlation					1	0.614**	-0.061	0.111	0.405**
Sig. (2-tailed)						0.000	0.565	0.296	0.000
HC									
Pearson Correlation						1	0.090	0.017	0.423**
Sig. (2-tailed)							0.400	0.872	0.000
LP									
Pearson Correlation							1	0.478**	0.273**
Sig. (2-tailed)								0.000	0.009
MF									
Pearson Correlation								1	0.424**
Sig. (2-tailed)									0.000
OS									
Pearson Correlation									1
Sig. (2-tailed)									

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Results

In regression analysis we mainly regress our exogenous variables through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) that enables us to support our original hypothesis. In regarding the analysis we set overall job satisfaction as dependent variable and eight independent variables such as: (i) Working Environment; (ii) Salary Structure; (iii) Relationship with Co-workers and Supervisor; (iv) Job Security; (v) Recognition and Reward; (vi) Hygiene Canteen Facility; (vii)

Leave Policy; and (viii) Medical Facility.

Model summary (Table 5) shows that the value of R Square is .401 i.e. 40% variation of dependent variable is explained by the independent variables that are included in the model.

ANOVA test results (tables 6 and 7) shows that P value is lower than value i.e. $P < 0.05$ which clearly explains null hypothesis rejected that there is a significant relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Table 5: Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.633 ^a	0.401	0.342	0.511

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Medical Facility, Hygiene Canteen Facility, Working Environment, Relationship with Coworkers & Supervisors, Salary Structure, Leave policy, Recognition & Reward, Job Security.

Table 6: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	14.154	8	1.769	6.781	0.000 ^b
Residual	21.135	81	0.261		
Total	35.289	89			

- a. Dependent Variable: Overall Satisfaction

- b. Predictors: (Constant), Medical Facility, Hygiene Canteen Facility, Working Environment, Relationship with Coworkers & Supervisors, Salary Structure, Leave policy, Recognition & Reward, Job Security

Table 7: ANOVA^b

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.649	0.470		1.381	0.002
Working Environment	0.42	0.079	0.136	1.502	0.004
Salary Structure	0.41	0.072	0.055	0.565	0.020
Relationship with Co-workers and Supervisors	0.38	0.069	-0.053	-0.554	0.12
Job Security	0.46	0.098	0.057	0.465	0.002
Recognition and Reward	0.55	0.086	0.173	1.485	0.005
Hygiene Canteen Facility	0.206	0.088	0.271	2.341	0.022
Leave Policy	0.055	0.083	0.069	0.670	0.049
Medical Facility	0.243	0.097	0.304	2.499	0.014

- a. Dependent Variable: Overall Satisfaction

All coefficients of independent variables have been displayed very strong relationship with overall job satisfaction except the variable of relationship with co-workers and supervisors has shown no such evidence of relationship. So, from the evidence of regression the workers of garments factory highly demand the recognition and reward for better performance, job security, congenial working environment, revision of salary structure on the basis of inflation in commodity market. Additionally, they also expect better medical facilities for themselves and for their family members with hygienic canteen and flexible leave facilities. So, these factors should be taken into consideration by management bodies of garments industry to eradicate the dissatisfaction of workers at their workplace.

CONCLUSION

The readymade garments as an emerging sector in Bangladesh all stakeholders should pay their kind concentration for the satisfaction of readymade garments workers. This sector remains less work efficiency because of workers work dissatisfaction and shortage of skilled manpower. In addition, the mid-level management of Bangladesh RMG industries lacks efficiency in productivity. The infrastructural improvement, proper application of labor law, stable politics and application of compliance issue in this sector is essential for the development of RMG sector. Adequate compensation facility, reasonable and lawful working hours, job security of workers, proper appointment policy, leave policy, safe working environment for worker etc. are essential for the satisfaction of the readymade garment workers in Bangladesh. Minimum wages have been revised but workers demanded for Tk. 5000 as their minimum wage but have Tk 3000 as their minimum wage and still the garments factory owners are the lowest paid garment workers in the world. Many garment factories have introduced fire exit and fire extinguishers at the factories but there is tendency to lock the main gate deliberately. Therefore, the mere existence of fire exits and fire extinguishers cannot ensure the safe work environment. Therefore, it can be mentioned that there may be some positive changes regarding some labor standards, which

are not satisfactory at all and the overall quality of work life of the garments factory workers in Bangladesh has remained as dissatisfactory. If the above requirement of the readymade garments workers can be fulfilled, this sector will make branding Bangladesh to the world. Work efficiency and commitment of RMG workers will be developed, dissatisfaction will be decreased, worker likelihood will be better, foreign currency earning will be improved and socioeconomic condition of Bangladesh will be enhanced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research recommends the following policy implications for the stakeholders so that they can improve the overall job satisfaction among the workers of garments industry in Bangladesh.

- Organizations can improve job satisfaction by introducing systems such as flexible work arrangements, favorable leave policy, training opportunities, safe working environment, job security or continuity, flexible benefits etc
- Management should ensure job security and develop proper leave policy for the garments workers.
- The government of Bangladesh should take steps to establish health care centers at the industrial areas.
- As working hour of garments sector is lengthy garments factory owners should provide hygiene canteen facility for the workers.
- Developing awareness among the garment factory owners about their legal rights and responsibilities.
- Garment factory should encourage workers' trade unions so that workers can know and properly place their rights and responsibilities to their employers. Besides, the workers will feel themselves as part of their organizations.
- As most of the workers come from the rural areas, government should raise the issue to establish dormitories for the garment factory workers of Bangladesh.
- There must be proper monitoring by the government regarding the implementation of relevant legal provisions by the garment

factory owners of Bangladesh and the implementation of punishment for the garment factory owners regarding the violation of legal provisions.

If a garments industry implements above suggestions, the satisfaction of workers will raise which increase its productivity as well.

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