

Does Job Security Matter for Generation Y? A Behavioural Analysis

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Abstract

Understanding the need and expectation of an employee in an organisation itself is quite dynamic and abstract, which is difficult to define and non-measurable. But over the years, the young and energetic new generation is looking forward for job satisfaction than the job security. Amid the existing body of knowledge regarding job satisfaction and job security, this paper specifically tries to understand the relationship and impact of both of them qualitatively on Generation Y based on conceptual review and focus group discussion. The study explores that for Gen Y, their professional life is more about achievement and interest. The study concludes that although job security is important, however the job satisfaction has taken a front seat. Gen Y is experimental and more inclined towards interesting job which provides them the required thrill and adventure.

Keywords: Job Security, Job Satisfaction, Generation Y, Job Interest, Workplace, Employee, Organisation

Introduction

As it is well known that the expectations of employees are very hard to predict. Organisations have been trying to understand the needs and nature of expectations of employees from a long time. Expectation itself is very abstract and quite dynamic concept. Thus it is difficult to define, and the perception towards job satisfaction and job security changes from generation to generations. It has been a long discussion that how employee expectation impact job satisfaction and job security. Over the years, it has been considered that the new generation or say, Generation Y (Gen Y) is striving for job satisfaction over the job security. To our knowledge, the previous theories of job satisfaction pose an upper edge over the job security. Everybody feels that a secured job is not enough rather a balanced and attractive work environment is always preferred. When we talk about balanced work environment; it encapsulates a work place which gives an employee peace of mind, growth prospects and individual goal alignment with the organisation goals. Thus it itself becomes a complex phenomenon, and the specific role of job satisfaction vis a vis job security is difficult to understand. While we see that the attitude of Gen Y is to lead a challenging and successful life, the impact of the same on professional life with respect to job security and satisfaction has not yet been specifically stressed in current literature. This study has tried to bridge that gap. Since, it has also been talked that Gen Y is much interested in switching the jobs instead of sticking to those, understanding

employee needs and their importance is becoming critical for the organisations. Gen Y generally believes that, life is neither secured nor permanent and hence searching for a job with security appears unattractive and unappealing to them.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the review of literature and is constructed on job security and job satisfaction and their determinants. Steers and Porter (1992) pointed out that job satisfaction shapes immediately after joining an organization. Employees in any organization need a congenial working environment. They want to work in a hassle-free environment and are willing to stay in an environment that provides satisfaction rather than optimized change (Kirmizi & Deniz, 2009).

The classical definition of job satisfaction defines “A pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976). Locke’s definition implicitly states that the importance of both job security and job satisfaction affect feeling and cognition or thinking. Most of the theories, measures, and models in job satisfaction research have given importance to cognitive orientation. Job satisfaction affects daily variation in work and non-work behaviours and also individual differences that moderate the associations and actions. It was observed that the present generation like adventure and makes their life a place of happenings by frequently changing their job from one organisation to another organisation. They are very much career-oriented.

The young generation is quite optimistic in nature and McClelland’s Needs Theory is more suitable in assessing the job satisfaction and its determinants in a lucid manner. According to him the major needs of the employee in an organization are:

- Need for Achievement
- Need for Affiliation
- Need for Power

In the lieu of the above statement, Harvard Business School “Working Knowledge” Newsletter, April 2006 has quoted that “Managing multigenerational workforces is an art in itself. Young workers want to make a quick impact, the middle generation needs to believe in the mission, and older employees don’t like ambivalence.”

Besides it, understanding the job facets also placed crucial role in analysing the employee needs so as to develop the suitable strategy to hold the good worker by analysing diverse dimensions of the job satisfaction. These are:

- Are the tasks enjoyable?
- Do the employees enjoy working with their supervisors and co-workers?
- Are payment and individual goal taken into consideration?
- Is the work profile stress-free and opportunity driven?

In current times, in addition to manufacturing sector, tremendous scope and avenues have been created for youths in many emerging sectors like branded retail, software, entertainment etc. Due to this, the new generation workforce has got ample opportunities and got the scope of reinventing themselves. Thus, the need for achievement has started overpowering the need for power and affiliation. Hence Gen Y has open up to trading on job satisfaction to job security.

Let us have a glance on the different generation and related behaviour among the different groups.

Table-1: Work Place Value among Different Generation

Work Place Value				
	Veterans	Boomers	Gen-Xers	Millennials (Gen Y)
Career Goals	Build a legacy	Build a stellar career	Build a portable career	Build parallel careers
Rewards	Satisfaction of a job well done	Money, title, recognition, corner office	Freedom is the ultimate reward	Work that has meaning for me
Work-Life Balance	Support me in shifting the balance	Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself	Give me balance now! Not when I’m 65	Work isn’t everything. Need flexibility to balance my other activities
Job Changing	Carries a stigma	Puts you behind	Is necessary	Is part of the daily routine
Training	I learned the hard way, you can too!	Train ‘them too much and they’ll leave	The more they learn, the more they’ll stay	Continuous learning is a way of life

Source: When Generations Collide

Review Of Literature

The existing literature provides evidence for a strong relationship between job security and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction arising from job security is considered to be a major factor affecting the quality of the employer-employee relationship. Job security is essentially a part of job satisfaction whereas job satisfaction is more comprehensive.

The study of Blanchflower and Oswald, (1999) indicates that US workers in secure jobs record higher degree of job satisfaction. Even the available European data supports the strong connection between the feeling of having a secure job and the reporting of higher job satisfaction.

The study done by Moguerou in 2002 using data from the Survey of Doctorate Recipients concluded that job security is a primary determinant of job satisfaction in all sectors of employment irrespective of any genders. Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000) used the ISSP to study the determinants of job satisfaction and showed that job security significantly raises the individual's job satisfaction and it is ranked 7th in importance among all the determinants of job satisfaction.

Furthermore, According to Hammer (2000) and Denton (2000) the job satisfaction is the key to the employee retention and all satisfied and happy workers always considered being dedicated, sincere and loyal to the organisation. Similarly, Judge and Church (2000) have a view that the nature of job profile, payment, nature of co-worker, promotion etc. are playing an important role in determining job satisfaction of an employee. However, the lack of job satisfaction contributes to employee's intention to quit the job (Moore 2002). The research findings of the study done by Bull (2005) supports this assertion. Employees in any organization need a stable and pleasant work environment.

It is found from the literature that the Gen Y average tenure in a given job is now 2-4 years, Gone are the days of 20 - 30 years spent with the same organization and a company pension upon retirement. Since the members of this generation are not likely to remain in one job for a longer time and hence employers have the responsibilities to create an internal environment which shall motivate younger workers through various knowledge-building opportunities and other monetary incentives for retaining the employees. (Turetsky 2006). While a study conducted by the students of The Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas shows that Gen Y's is self-confident and has expectation to quickly move up the career ladder. That's why these researchers label them the "entitlement generation."

Methodological Framework And Discussion

The current study explores the significance of job security and job satisfaction from the perspective of Gen Y qualitatively. An effort has been made to explore out the extent to which job security and job satisfaction effect Gen Y. The study is based on the review of literature existing text (secondary data) and a primary study done subsequently in the form of focus group discussion of 20 working personnel as the respondents in the age group of 22-25 years from diverse background from NCR (Delhi) region. Initially they were asked to comprise their view on their current job and on job satisfaction. Further their answers were aggregated and analysed.

A Predicament Between Job Satisfaction And Job Security

In today's dynamic and multi-faceted environment, fast-moving approach by the youth, i.e., the Gen Y is seemingly inevitable or precisely, pivotal to competency-based survival. However, in order to accomplish this rapid pace, Gen Y has botched to maintain the seriousness and sanctity of professionalism. To them, what matters is not the continuity and sustenance in their work profiles; instead, majority of them look for frequent changes in pursuance of their dreamy desires of attaining easy progress, temporary though. In fact, in this apparently never-ending and consistently increasing career-driven battle, their priority has taken a paradigm shift from stability and security to job satisfaction resulting in frequent change in jobs, no matter how favourable or unfavourable these changes may be, since they have a higher risk appetite and doing short-term planning. It can be easily ascertained that this endowed yet susceptible component of the multi-generational workforce is obsessed with unbound growth in terms of position and remuneration, seeking a promising career at the cost of job security and stability.

A national survey which was conducted to understand the nature of Gen Y workers highlighted that the Gen Y workforce members are least satisfied with their jobs and always have a tendency to more-on for something better. Furthermore, it was found that 4 out of every 10 employees were seriously taking into consideration in leaving their current position which shows their vulnerability of 40%. Shockingly, it is anticipated that these numbers can go beyond half, i.e., above 50% in the age group ranging from 25 to 34 years. Moreover, recent studies on job satisfaction reveal that there is an essential association of job performance with job satisfaction. Even it was found that job satisfaction differed from person to person and time to time, depending on their determinants and organisational context. Therefore, there is a great need to formulate and implement innovative mechanisms to enhance the job satisfaction level among the employees.

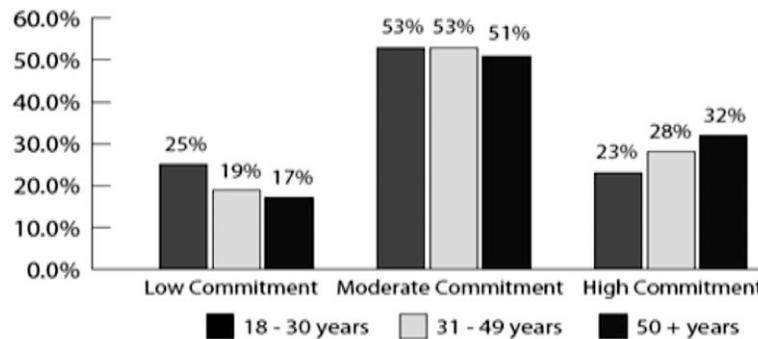
Figure: 1-Levels of Commitment to the Employer among Employees by Age Group

Figure Source: Shen, Pitt-Catsouphes & Smyer (2007)

The figure above depicts the commitment levels of employees under different age-groups. The young employees representing Gen Y are highly career-centric; they vouch for innovation and cannot tolerate the plague of stagnancy at any cost. This compels them to hunt for something better always. Therefore, in purview of their continuous thirst for professional excellence and even more interesting profiles, they tend to chase the jobs which give them a suitable opportunity to utilize their ideas. Further, they look for avenues to showcase their talents. This is why there is low commitment level in terms of longevity at workplace.

However, if we move to a slightly higher belt of age assortment, mediocrity in thoughts as well as working styles result in moderate commitment of workers. This is possibly for a fact, that the mid-age group workers, who are believed

to have assumed additional responsibilities of upbringing their families refrain from taking risks and thereby, prioritize the hygiene factors above the motivators. Nevertheless, the employees who are old and having longer period of services by and large have higher levels of commitment than other groups. They are more saturated and contented on account of having served their organisation for longer period. Primarily, they have achieved whatever they have dreamt of and with the passage of time, the zeal for something new and unique drops down. As such, taking risks would not be a good idea, especially, when they are at the stage of obtaining Provident Funds, Gratuities and conclusive promotions prior to superannuation; etc. On the contrary, young minds realize about their present organisation to be stepping stones for their budding careers and that is why they do not show high level of commitment as like as their older counterparts do.

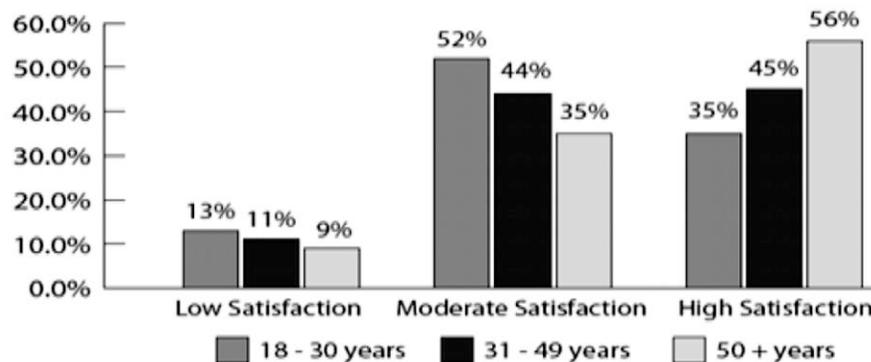
Figure: 2- Job Satisfaction Levels in the Workforce by Career Stage

Figure Source: Shen, Pitt-Catsouphes & Smyer (2007)

Job satisfaction, being an important attitudinal aspect of employees varies significantly in different age-groups. Today's millennials, being highly energetic and idealists believe in respect, trust, healthy environment, well-defined career path and enticing emoluments. Their search for lucrative opportunities is an on-going activity as on their top-to-do list. On analysing the satisfaction levels as shown in the above graph, it can be easily interpreted that

among different age groups comprising of 18-30 years, 31-49 years and 50 years and above, the younger generation is visibly not satisfied with their jobs since those profiles do not commensurate their aims and aspirations; hence, these employees are always looking forward for changes, while the older people are relatively much more contented, and therefore, unwavering.

Analysis Of Focus Group Discussion

The data was collected from the respondents regarding their experience from current job and future expectations. All the narratives were content analysed to arrive at different

determinants, herein referred as themes that might have an impact on Gen Y. As detailed in methodological framework, the focus group discussion was conducted among selected 20 participants. The results of the same are listed in the table 2.

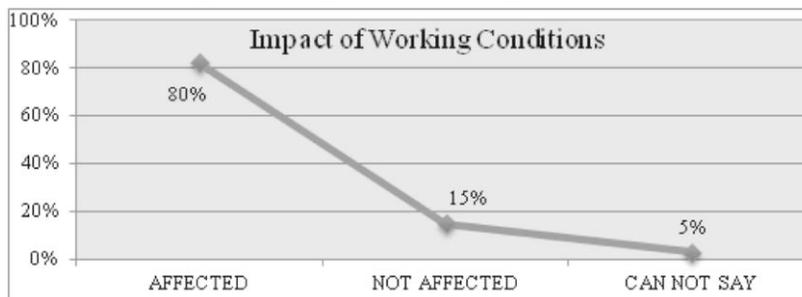
Table 2: Qualitative Analysis

Theme	Frequency of Occurrence	Examples
Need of Job Security	11 (55%)	I would like to join government job
Risk Appetite and Job Change	13 (65%)	I don't mind changing job very often
Job Interest / Interesting Job	16 (80%)	I would like to do a job which is more interesting or gives me thrill
Skill Focus	12 (60%)	I am confident of my skill and I can get job anywhere easily
Satisfaction	8 (40%)	I am happy at my work place
Dissatisfaction	12 (60%)	I am searching a new job
Negative Work Environment	16 (80%)	Working conditions / culture are not good.
Positive Work Environment	3 (15%)	The work culture and facilities are good

The analysis gave an insight that most of the individuals are not satisfied with their current job. And as most of them are confident of their skills and competencies hence don't mind changing jobs. Many of them are interested in joining

government jobs also. The analysis also indicates that they are more inclined towards interesting job/ job which give them the thrill.

Figure-3: Impact of Working Conditions



It is also found out from the discussion that due to discontent, work load and excessive stress, people are more inclined towards government jobs as compare to private jobs. It is because of regularity in salary, assured promotion,

retired pension, and tension-free working conditions. People now prefer government job to secure their future as a matter of job satisfaction but it may not be correct for the present generation who believes in risk and return.

Figure-4: Preference between Government Job and Private Job



Concluding Note

It was observed that the present Gen Y want to make their life happening and enriching, by frequently changing their job from one organisation to the other. These people are in search of a place where they can follow their dreams and live upto their aspirations. Hence, they are not interested in seeking job security at work place. However, they are looking for interesting jobs, which give them the challenges and thrill every day; and thereby contributing in satisfaction. Although the industrial psychology has just created the dilemma over the notion on “happy worker is a productive worker.” In fact, job satisfaction builds the ground for better work with gratitude. However, in present times, the career interest has started playing a major role for Gen Y, as it gives them the delight and serves as a valence for their enhanced satisfaction, which in turn, motivates and vitalises this potential work force for putting its effort to achieve the organisation goals. Thus in current times the job security has taken a second seat to job satisfaction, as the Gen Y is having ample opportunities in different fields. If a secured job is creating excessive stress and not giving any thrill or pleasure to the Gen Y, it is likely to create job burnout for employees.

Further, the increasing level of openness and acceptance level of recruiters for taking workforce from interdisciplinary field (if the candidates are promising) has opened gates for the Gen Y. Thus, it has become imperative for the organisations to take care of making job interesting for the Gen Y to keep them satisfied, which will in turn, boost up the overall productivity.

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