

JOB SATISFACTION OF DOTCOM EMPLOYEES
- An Indian Experiment

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ABSTRACT

The internet revolution has brought a distinctive “click model” of business operation. The brick and mortar model enterprises are also trying their level best to have a click component. The nature of business operation, the work culture and the level of job satisfaction have undergone sea change for the dotcom companies. Dotcom, As a business proposition initiated huge investment whereas majority of their stocks is going down bringing a high level of apprehension related to job security among its employees.

This research paper highlights some of these problems and presents a picture of level of job satisfaction among employees of dotcom companies. It also identifies unique issues of job satisfaction in click companies, found rarely in “brick and mortar” model of business. This paper presents a comprehensive diagnosis of job satisfaction indices of dotcom business.

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JOB SATISFACTION OF DOTCOM EMPLOYEES – AN INDIAN EXPERIMENT

Internet has brought a big revolution and transformation to the human civilization. Time and Distance are no more indicators of success planning. The concept of ‘lag’, ‘late’ “waiting periods” are really replaced by the term “instantaneous”. The net revolution has brought a change to everything and literally given a face-lift to the concept of business and commerce. E-Business has become synonymous to enterprise success all over the globe. The term ‘Dot-Com’ has become a buzzword with every next man in neighborhood. These dot.com. Companies have transferred the modus operandi of business. So it is not exaggeration to say that the whole society has undergone a transition.

The dotcom business has grown to substantial level in the number as well as the amount of capital investment in this business. The job is very challenging. The companies are literally rats i.e. in a rat race; the rat that wins takes the market. So this game is sulking the dotcom world. The nature of employment has been techno -savy. But what about the people those who work in these dotcom companies? It is an accepted phenomenon that dotcom offers huge amount of salary to its staff but in return they have to work till late hours. They have daunting deadlines to match. They have to make themselves adaptable to the rapidly changing technology. They suffer from the fear of becoming obsolete in a very short period of time. By nature the employees of dotcom companies happen to be high achiever who wants to make it big in a short notice with a major purse but they lack in interpersonal communication and emotional support to sustain the level of daunt expected from them in dotcom industry. The ability of the money as a motivator has been marginalised in many of the earlier studies on job satisfaction .Dotcom is not an exception to this.

The nature of the job is an important factor in deciding the level of job satisfaction of employees. More important is the long-term prospect of employment in the organization that, which creates a sense of involvement and commitment to the job among employees. The dotcom business is also suffering from the latter phenomenon. Where as the brick model of business takes a long time for sustenance and growth, needs huge capital investment in infrastructure, the dotcom companies are knowledge based and more reliant upon intellectual asset proposition. These click companies (dotcoms) are also suffering from a high infant mortality rate. As per The Wall Street Journal report there has been a meteoric rise of some dotcom companies leading to unexpected plunge, shattering the lifestyles of their employees The huge amount of offer in the form of salary and facilities, the air-conditioned environment, the no-supervision, partying at times work culture and techno- savy nature of the job and potential ability of these factors in generating a high level of job satisfaction is the question addressed in this research paper.

Job satisfaction is intrinsic as well as extrinsic in nature. A satisfied employee derives his level of satisfaction from various sources. It is a feeling of affiliation that he drives out of his job context and the context in which he operates the job. The resultant psyche leads to higher level of involvement, greater degree of participation, greater cost consciousness

and timely maintenance of job schedules. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling one's important job values, provided these values are compatible with one's needs. Job satisfaction is the most widely researched subject in the area of human resource management. According to an estimate of Locke (1976) about 4000 articles have been published till 1976 in the area of job satisfactions. Yet there is perhaps not a single area in social science fraught with ambiguity or conflicting opinion of methodological nuances than the work satisfaction. Paradoxically there are very few areas more researched than Job satisfaction. Brayfield-Rothe (1951) used a scale to measure overall job satisfaction. This scale contains 18 items in relation to job satisfaction put in a semantic five point scale (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree). So the possible total scores varied from 18 to 90 with the undecided or neutral point at 45. A total score above neutral point explains 'satisfaction' and below is the level of dissatisfaction. The degree of satisfaction can be observed from the relative distance of the respondents from the neutral points.

As stated, large number of studies have been conducted on job satisfaction. These studies have brought variations in findings of job satisfactions and also on the context of the job behavior. In the earlier decades of study, Rothlisberger and Dickson (1939) found no clear relationship between job satisfaction and performance whereas Vroom (1964) found a very weak relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. Studies conducted in the eighties and nineties found out that job factors are not unidirectional in their effects. They served to be both sources of positive and negative satisfaction. The personal factors like skill, experience, education, mental health have a significant influence on the overall job satisfaction. The latter studies have also identified that job security, recognition for good work and good environment are treated as more important than promotion making. These findings are mostly observed in technology driven and heavy equipment industries like computers, satellite, four wheeler industries.

The important factors identified in the earlier studies related to job satisfaction are the poor working condition, peer group behavior, routine nature of the job and the working hours. These particular findings from the majority of the researches conducted in western business environments were typically from software based industries and business operating with severe time constraints, stiff deadlines and varying work order. In contrast lack of alternative job opportunity, job insecurity, profit centered company policies with limited employee welfare orientation, absence of recognition were major causes of dissatisfaction.

METHODOLOGY:

No earlier study on job satisfaction related to this growing business area of dotcom world was found during the literature survey. One of the prejudices that can be set forth for this limited research outlook is the nature and amount of rewards related to the job. Since the jobs in the dotcom world are techno-savvy with intelligent manpower source and a reward system unparallel to many conventional industries, it is presumed that the level of job satisfaction should be high. But it is being observed that the rate of failure of dotcom

business has led to generation of job insecurity among employees. Constant technological up gradation leading to fear of obsolescence is also a factor of concern for generating job dissatisfaction in dotcom industry. This study is conducted among sample of one hundred fifty executives at various levels starting from content manager to vice presidents of dotcom companies, spread over six cities of India viz. New Delhi (26), Mumbai (30), Calcutta (21), Bangalore (36), Hyderabad (23), Chennai (14). The samples obtained from each of the cities are given in the parentheses. The ratio of male-female for the over all study is taken as 2 : 1 (100M : 50F). The average life of the companies selected for the study is more than one year. The nature of the dotcom companies covered were both (B to C) and (B to B) kind of operations.

The researcher decided to follow the Brayfield – Rothe Scale of 18 items with a contextual modification to fit in the dotcom kind of business operations. The scale for Perceived Importance of Job Facets was used to measure relative importance of the specific job factors as perceived by the dotcom employees. Specific aspects of the job (functional commonalities were associated and attempts were made to keep the nature and hierarchical diversity of job content to possible minimum) in the form of fourteen items were given in a five point scale. A pilot study over a small sample (respondents known to the researcher and whose opinion are not accounted for in the latter study) was undertaken to modify the questionnaire. A split -Half technique tested the reliability of the questionnaire where the reliability coefficient (0.75) was statistically significant.

A part of the questionnaire also covered the job facets and life satisfaction components covering job related factors and personal factors. In this section the first part covered ten factors concerning the satisfaction regarding specific aspects of the job. The indices are representative of job factors reflecting to dotcom business operations affecting employee attitudes. The response pattern was in a dichotomous format. The question related to satisfaction with family and social life were also put in dichotomous format with options of satisfaction / dissatisfaction. Open-ended questions were put to supplement the exploration through structured questionnaire and to understand the major causes of job dissatisfaction of dotcom employees.

The dotcom organizations were briefly studied to understand the nature of business (portal, vortal), nature of operation (media / entertainment / business facilitator / game and contests), size and composition of work force and overall financial performance to correlate the major findings of opinion survey with the operational structures of dotcom companies.

Results:

Some of the relevant and significant results of the study are presented in the following tables.

Table 1: Level of satisfaction with the job and company

Respondent's	With the job	With the company
Satisfaction	109	37
Dissatisfaction	41	113

The results from the table shows that majority respondents (73%) are satisfied with the job they are doing whereas a majority (75%) is dissatisfied with the company in which they are working. This finding is self-contradictory. As an explanation it is observed that the nature and content of the job is the driving force behind satisfaction whereas the apprehensions and operational problems for long term survival of the company are the indicators of dissatisfaction.

Table: 2 The mean ranks and rank orders of the dotcom employee's ratings of perceived importance of specific job aspects to the overall satisfaction.

Aspects of job	Mean Ranks	Rank Orders
Salary	4.14	1
Autonomy in Operation	4.08	2
Recognition for Good Work	4.02	3
Desired Job	4	4
Opportunity for Compensatory Overtime	4	4
Open Communication	3.92	5
Job Status	3.88	6
Participatory Decision Making	3.85	7
Work Autonomy	3.80	8
Working Environment	3.77	9
Relation with Colleagues	3.61	10
Job Variety	2.66	11
Working Hours	2.51	12
Job Security	2.03	13

From Table – 2, it is observed that salary is rated highest for providing job satisfaction in the dotcom companies. The nature of the job with its scope for creative execution finds a higher rating compared to the issues like job security. Extended working hours and fear of loss of job due to venture failure creates the highest dissatisfaction with rating scores below the average values.

Table: 3 Mean differences in overall job satisfaction according to some personal factors.

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t	p
Age up to 25 years	63.62	7	0.08	N.S.
Age above 25 years	63.33	7.94		
Experience up to 1 year	65.18	10.21	- 1.95	
Experience above 1 year	65.48	6.32	- 1.96	< .05
Female	64.14	6.08	- .33	N.S.
Male	64.65	7.00		
Married	63.62	7.61		
Unmarried	62.28	8.43	-0.10	NS

From the analysis of table – 3 it is evident that there is no significant influence of personal factors on the overall job satisfaction except experience. The experience in other kinds of software operation is a basic requirement for jobs in dotcom companies. So it is the most / relevant personal factor related to job satisfaction.

Table: 4 Level of satisfaction with various aspects of job:

Aspects of job	Percentage of satisfied employees	Percentage of dissatisfied employees	Chi Square	p
Job Security	56	94	6.76	< .01
Working Hours	70	80	1.96	NS
Job Status	60	90	4.00	<.05
Salary	120	30	33	<.01
Working Condition	45	105	16	<.01
Recognition for Good Work	101	49	6.76	<.01
Participatory Management	90	60	4.84	<.05
Peer Group Relation	99	51	7.84	<.01
Open Communication	94	56	6.76	<.01

Work Autonomy	102	48	5.76	<.01
Behavior of Boss	105	45	14.44	<.10

From the analysis of Table – 4, it is found that a significant percentage of the respondents were dissatisfied with job security, job status, working hours, working condition. On the other hand, it is observed that a high percentage of respondents are satisfied on parameters like salary, recognition for good work, peer group relation, work autonomy and behavior of boss through participatory management style and the facility of open communication with the boss.

Table 5: Level of satisfaction with family and social life of dotcom employees

Factor	Percentage of satisfied employees	Percentage of dissatisfied employees	Chi-square	p
Family life	39	111	23.04	<.01
Social life	30	120	38.44	<.01

From the analysis of table No.5, it is observed that a majority of the respondents are dissatisfied with their family and social life. These may be attributed to the fact of extended working hours, non-regular life style and work pressure reflected in social behavior of the dotcom employees.

Table 6: Correlation between job satisfaction and performance of respondents

No. of respondents	r	t	p
150	.69	2.80	<.01

From tale – 6, it is found that there is a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and performance. The sense of accomplishment due to project mode of operation and creative execution is one of the factor responsible for the high correlation between job satisfaction and performance.

Table 7: Correlation between job satisfaction and perception of job security of the dotcom employees

No. of respondents	r	t	p
150	- .31	2.85	<.05

The result from the table – 7 reveals that there is a significant negative correlation between the level of satisfaction and perception of the employees on the job security. The concept of high volatility of dotcom business has gone in to the mind of employees for which their apprehensions regarding tenure of job in the life of the company has a negative correlation.

Table 8: Correlation between Job satisfaction and Job status

No. of respondents	r	t	p
150	-.45	2.69	< .01

Though dotcom companies are offering an exorbitantly high salary structure, the respondents did not find the usual job status associated with the salary. The reasons being the non-reliance of money lending financial institutions and other facilitating organizations like insurance companies, credit card management centers in providing customized services to the dotcom employees in comparison to the reliance level with other brick and mortar companies. So we observe job satisfaction having a negative correlation with job status.

Table 9: Important causes of job dissatisfaction as perceived by the Dotcom employees.

Causes of Dissatisfaction	Percentage
Volatile Nature of Industry	73%
Turn Around of Venture Capitalists	70%
Faulty Business Model	68%
Market non-responsiveness	60%
Lack of Job Security	60%
Lack of Job Status	59%
Problem of Family & Social Life	57%

From the analysis of Table – 9, we find a peculiar and unique contextual trend emerging for the doctom employees. The satisfaction indicators for conventional companies are related to nature of the job in the context of the farm only. The macro-phenomenon like state of the industry had a very insignificant role in generating job dissatisfaction. But this divergence is clearly indicative in the present study. The lucrative offer and creative job responsibility have brought people to work for these click companies but the nature of the industry is largely affecting the level of job satisfaction. The fear of immediate collapse and loss of job due to non-response of the market to the dotcom products are significant factors for job dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSION:

The present study highlights some of the major reasons for creating job dissatisfaction among dotcom employees. Although conventional sources of dissatisfaction like salary, promotion, security, autonomy for work are not relevant in dotcom business but the level of satisfaction is limited due to some emerging phenomenon like volatile industry structure, flat organizational design, literally a non-responsive market and other allied factors. So the probability of managing these dissatisfaction indicators at the organization level seems a remote solution. The intervention of psycho-social machinery for creation of intra-organisation and inter-industry job confidence is the call of the day for increasing job satisfaction levels in the dotcom industry.

N.B. Names of the dot.com. companies selected for the study are disguised on company's request

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