



Cross-Cultural Competence and Job Exhaustion on Life Satisfaction among Bangladeshi Employees in Malaysia

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Abstract

In the competitive environment to survive in the marketplace, every worker needs to be satisfied with their life. Workplace exhaustion is a dominant challenge faced by different organizations all over the world. Cross-culture competence refers to knowledge, skills, and influences that ease people's smooth integration into a multi-cultural society. Cross-culture competences, thus, highlight an individual's ability to work effectively in a diversified culture that is different from one's own culture. The aim of the present study was to explore the role of exhaustion and cross cultural competences in life satisfaction of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia. For this purpose 300 self-administrative questionnaires were distributed; 266 workers responded but 18 of them answered the questionnaire partially. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The results demonstrated that exhaustion and cross-cultural competencies have a significant role in workers' life satisfaction. The outcomes of this study will facilitate organizations to understand the main contributors to life satisfaction, and enable them to take necessary corrective actions to enhance this.

Keywords: Life satisfaction; job exhaustion; cross culture competence; Bangladeshi Employees.

1. Introduction

Nowadays life satisfaction is being exceptionally studied by researchers. With an estimation of 22.0 million new competitors, the labor force has reached at 73.9 million from 2005 to 2015 [1]. A significant amount of foreign currency is remitted by around 7% of the total labor force which covers 11.1% of the national gross domestic product - a key concern for the international labor market[1].

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Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment minister of Bangladesh, according to the report of human resource online.net (2017), has announced that provisional work permits have been issued by the Malaysian government to undocumented workers. Minister informed that the present government of Bangladesh has initiated a process for the legalization of 2,067,000 undocumented Bangladeshi workers abroad through diplomatic efforts. There are many Bangladeshi workers who are working in other countries like 800,000 in Saudi Arabia, 1000,000 in Iraq and around 267,000 in Malaysia. Another report from Free Malaysia Today (2017) (<http://says.com/my/news/government-to-bring-in-1-5-million-bangladeshi-workers-to-malaysia>), suggested that already 2.1 million Bangladeshi workers have a work permit to work in Malaysia. Around 275 million workers will be hired by East Asian countries like Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar, Indonesia, and the Philippines by 2030. (<http://impactalpha.com/asian-countries-in-2030-will-be-divided-between-the-worker-rich-and-the-worker-poor>). China will also have to hire foreign workers as its working age population will reduce significantly by 2013. South Asia has a huge population and may perhaps “sell to other countries” some of its working age population. Among different South Asian countries India and Bangladesh have significant surplus labour force. Skilled workers find it easy to integrate themselves into new working environment[2]. Similarly, the study of labor workforce issues at the career level is paramount; while turnover is costly to organizations, exhaustion is even more detrimental to the field. The present study investigated the effects of cross-cultural competences and job exhaustion on life satisfaction of Bangladeshi workers staying in Penang, Malaysia. This study will facilitate organizations’ understandings about the main contributors to life satisfaction, and enable them to take necessary corrective actions to enhance this.

2. Life satisfaction

Without any doubt life satisfaction is a broad idea that refers to feeling of contentment. It is defined as one’s entire assessment of feelings and attitudes from negative to positive rather than the feelings and emotions that are knowledgeable at moments (<http://inplainsite.org>). According to [3] the most important indicators of well-being are positive effects, negative effects and life satisfactions. Reference [4] revealed that food, health, security along with other elements affect quality of people’s life. Like sadness or happiness, life satisfaction can be defined as a state of emotion (positivepsychologyprogram.com). According to [5] measuring the overall well-being of an individual in general, consequential from an evaluation of life, life satisfaction is a construct. Economically prosperous countries have a tendency to treat it as an additional aspect. When compared to inferior nations, it has been shown which living conditions are most important determinants of life satisfaction (www.ceunit.com). People in poor countries are more satisfied with their lives than that of rich countries between the correlation of income and also measuring how happy people are with their lives. Life satisfaction isn’t just a way to see, it’s also a way to determine how miserable they are in turn, what makes people happy and what makes them unhappy as the individual’s personal experience (positivepsychologyprogram.com).

2.1 Exhaustion

Being emotionally overextended and depleted is called exhaustion [6]. The most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome of exhaustion is to be exhausted [6]. In different studies, the state of exhaustion plays a significant role in determining outcomes such as turnover (e.g., [7;8;9]). The Malaysia field, by its very nature

and reliance on information and communication technologies, allows work to always be accessible. Due to the high frequency of this construct's occurrence over a variety of studies, the perceived workload characteristic may not be job specific but may apply to many areas of the Malaysia field. Malaysian career experience may be exhaustive for workers if they are to complete too many tasks in a given time. In Malaysia, workers find it very difficult to strike a balance between work and personal life [10]. In this study, we look at individuals' time in their Malaysia career to examine career-family conflict (CFC). The concept illustrates the influence of the continued (and often incompatible) demands of career and personal life in Malaysia. According to [7;11] an additional factor that can be extremely stressful and exhausting is work-family conflict (WFC). Examining the role of CFC acknowledges the underlying identification mechanisms at play as we define ourselves by our various responsibilities in life. While one's responsibilities can include career, family, community, civic etc. [12], we focus predominantly on career and family. We assert that one's career can have a certain level of importance; it can be a greater (or lesser) part of an individual's life responsibilities. If one's career takes on greater meaning, this importance is not typically job-specific but focuses on the portfolio of Malaysia career experience. For our context with a lack of favoritism, the perception of being treated impartially [13] is important. If professionals perceive that the outcomes received such as promotions, responsibilities are fair over the course of his/her career experience, not just a particular organizational context, then fairness may be linked to the profession [14]. Reference [15] revealed that fairness was an important predictor of a career-level outcome i.e. career satisfaction with regard to pay. Reference [16] found in a military personnel study that a perceived lack of career-related fairness was not connected to a specific job but to characteristics of the field. In different studies career control indicates individuals' control over their professional growth[17]. Reference [18] identified that workers' amount of control over their career influences the effects of stress on their health. Control over one's career also provides individuals with opportunities to adjust their work according to their needs, abilities, and circumstances [14]. Busy professionals would find control over their career as more facilitative [19] People in control of their career may choose when and how to dedicate time to work [14]. Additionally, studies have found a negative relationship between control and exhaustion at the level of the professional federal civil servants [17] and nurses [20].

H: There is a relationship between exhaustion and life satisfaction.

2.2 Cross-cultural competencies

The ability of an individual of functioning effectively in another culture is called Cross-Cultural Competencies (CCC) [21]. Reference [22] stated that there are two well known mechanisms of CCC: stable and dynamic. According to [23] stable competencies like personality traits confine people's ability of gaining dynamic ones, e.g., knowledge and skills. [24] explained the idea of [22] by opposing that the antecedents of CCC were actually personal attributes, cultural knowledge, and skills rather than CCC itself. For the international business (IB) field, they defined CCC specifically as working productively with people from diverse national cultural backgrounds in drawing upon a set of personal attributes, an individual's effectiveness, knowledge, and skills [24]. For this study, we choose CCC as the predictor variable which is to some extent wide-ranging from other comparable concepts but focuses on performances and workplace outcomes. It is important to mix with the host and understand their perceptions. In international work settings, cross-cultural skills demand workers' aptitude

to handle stress [22;25]. For expatriates to enhance psychological outcomes on international assignments, these abilities will enhance efficacy to run and lead multicultural work teams[26,27]. Capability in various host country situations to appropriately interpreting unknown cues and making correct ascription of host nationals' behaviors is called Perceptual skills [25] With perceptual skills, expatriates are able to make an effort and put strength to understand and handle cross-cultural challenges and handle new information carefully[22]. Interacting effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, interpersonal skills augment foreign workers' efficacy [25]. To promote subordinates' loyalty and satisfaction, leaders must possess the ability to guide their followers [28]. Due to reciprocity, through respect and obedience, followers will reimburse favor which improves leadership's efficacy [29]. For adaptation and performance expatriates need to have relational skills in a mutli cultural environment [30]. Reference [27] For speaking and using local languages fluently, expatriates capture the local language skills which are used as a determinant of successful expatriate adjustment and performance established by many earlier studies [31,32]. Working together in their interactions with locals in their native language, expatriates have a propensity to face language complication because of their natural predisposition. Reference [33] urged that local language skills help expatriates to learn proper host values for building and maintaining work and social relationships. In work and non-work dealings of expatriates with local groups and communications, local languages competency will smooth the improvement of interactions with their host country colleagues. As a result, the next hypothesis is:

H: There is a relationship between cross culture competences and life satisfaction.

3. Methodology

Quantitative data for this study were collected using a questionnaire. Moreover, a comprehensive literature review was done to develop the questions items on cross-cultural competences, job exhaustion and life satisfaction. A convenient sampling technique was applied to select the respondents. Both primary and secondary sources were used for the accomplishment of this study. Secondary data were collected from different books, journals, articles, periodicals, govt. reports, research papers and others related papers. A questionnaire was prepared and administered to collect data from primary sources.

The participants answered the five-point Likert-type scale covering 1 SD (strongly disagree), 2 D (disagree), 3 NA/ND (neutral), 4 A (agree) and 5 SA (strongly agree). Ten of the 36 items assessed workers' satisfaction levels on specific job features. For measuring the reliability of the items, reliability test was done through SPSS 22 version with a result of .864. According to [34] reliability indicates the level of consistency. Reference [35] argued that alpha values equal to or greater than 0.70 are measured to be a satisfactory condition. Accordingly, the measures in this study possess sufficient reliability. Several demographic variables included gender, age, educational attainment, marital status, and work experience and job designation. The demographic items were used as control variables. For the survey a group of five employees was appointed to administer. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed to Bangladeshi workers who were working (in factory, construction, services, and others) in Penang, Malaysia and 266 employees gave feedback. Out of 266, responses of 18 employees were found incomplete.

4. Findings

4.1 Profile of respondent

Table 1 shows participants' demographic information. There were less female respondents (7.5%) than male ones (92.5%). Participants in the 30-34 age range accounted for 10%. Meanwhile, a number of participants (17.5%) were below 25 years old, and those in the 25-29 age range were 40%, (21.3%) participants were 35–39 years old, and 40 years old and over 40 years old was 11.3%. Most respondents had below secondary school certificate (60%), master's degree (1.3%), and secondary school certificate (25%), and higher secondary certificate respondents (11.3%). In addition, Bachelor of Arts was only 2.5%. 26.3% participants were from service sector, factory workers (27.5%), a big number of construction workers (37.5%), and others (8.8%). Furthermore, majority of respondents were married (60%) and single 40%. Finally, 27.5% participants were working for below 5 years, 35% for 5-9 years and 37.5% for more than 10 years.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Profile			
	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	148	92.5
	Female	12	7.5
	Total	266	100
Age	Below 25	28	17.5
	25-29 years	64	40.0
	30-34 years	16	10.0
	35-39 years	34	21.3
	40-Above	18	11.3
	Total	266	100
Marital Status	Single	64	40.0
	Married	96	60.0
	Total	266	100
Educational qualification	Below S.S.C	96	60.0
	S.S.C	40	25.0
	H.S.C	18	11.3
	Honors.	4	2.5
	Masters	2	1.3
	Total	266	100
Job Sector	Manufacturing	44	27.5
	Construction	60	37.5
	Service	42	26.3
	Others	14	8.8
	Total	266	100
Duration of Work	Below 5 years	44	27.5
	5-9 years	56	35.0
	Above 10 years	60	37.5
	Total	248	100

4.2 Life Satisfaction

Exhaustion and cross-cultural competencies have impact on life satisfaction of workers. The study explored how exhaustion and cross-cultural competencies affect the life satisfaction of Bangladeshi workers. This section presents the findings of the study according to the research objective.

4.2.1 Exhaustion Vs. life satisfaction

Superior life satisfaction is usually achieved through analysis of workers' needs and how they are maintaining their life. Table 2 show the percentage of responses of the respondents. The respondents' responses for exhaustion and life satisfaction were then cross-tabulated. The responses showed that 12.1% respondents strongly disagreed, 20.2% disagreed, 16.9% were neutral, nevertheless 28.2% agreed and 22.6% strongly agreed with a particular statement. Here the Chi-square value = 34.469 reflects the relationship between two variables. P-value = 0.005 less than the consequence level which is 0.05 also supported the acceptance of the question that exhaustion affects superior life satisfaction (Figure 2).

Table 2: Frequency of Responses

Rating Scale	% of Responses
SD (Strongly Disagree)	12.10%
D (Disagree)	20.20%
NA (Neutral)	16.90%
A (Agree)	28.20%
SA (Strongly Agree)	22.60%

		Exhaustion					Total
		SD	D	NA	A	SA	
Life Satisfaction	SD	8(3.2)	8(3.2)	6(2.4)	6(2.4)	2(.8)	30(12.1)
	D	6(2.4)	8(3.2)	8(3.2)	14(5.6)	14(5.6)	50(20.2)
	NA	00	6(2.4)	10(4.1)	14(5.6)	12(4.8)	42(16.9)
	A	10(4.1)	12(4.8)	10(4.1)	28(11.3)	10(4.1)	70(28.2)
	SA	6(2.4)	2(.8)	12(4.8)	16(6.5)	20(8.1)	56(22.6)
Total		30(12.1)	36(14.5)	48(18.5)	78(31.5)	58(23.4)	248(100)

Figure 2: Exhaustion* Life satisfaction

Bracketed values represent the percentage; Chi-square =34.469; p-value =0.005 of Exhaustion Vs Life satisfaction. Evidently, exhaustion plays a pivotal role in workers' life satisfaction.

4.2.2 Cross-cultural competencies Vs. Wish remain to stay satisfied in life

The percentages of responses on cross culture competence and life satisfaction are shown in Table 3 and Figure 3. In this part, cross-cultural competencies and workers' intentions to stay satisfied in their life were cross-tabulated. The responses showed that 9.7% respondents strongly disagreed, 16.9% disagreed, the responses of 16.9% were neutral; however, 40.3% agreed and 16.1% strongly agreed with the given statement. Here the Chi-square value = 29.649 reflects the relationship. P value= 0.020 was also supportive to the acceptance of the questions that the cross-cultural competencies have an effect on workers' life satisfaction. As the P-value is less than the significance level which is 0.05, so the significance level shows that cross-cultural competencies have effect in workers' life satisfaction.

Table 3: Frequency of Responses

Rating scale	% of responses
SD (Strongly Disagree)	9.70%
D (Disagree)	16.90%
NA (Neutral)	16.90%
A (Agree)	40.30%
SA (Strongly Agree)	16.10%

		Cross Cultural competencies					Total
		SD	D	NA	A	SA	
Life Satisfac n	SD	2(0.8)	6(2.4)	6(2.4)	2(0.8)	8(3.2)	24(9.7)
	D	10(4.1)	6(2.4)	6(2.4)	14(5.6)	6(2.4)	42(16.9)
	NA	8(3.2)	6(2.4)	6(2.4)	16(6.5)	6(2.4)	42(16.9)
	A	4(1.6)	12(4.8)	18(7.3)	38(15.3)	28(11.3)	100(40.3)
	SA	6(2.4)	6(2.4)	10(4.1)	8(3.2)	10(4.1)	40(16.1)
Total		30(12.1)	36(14.5)	48(18.5)	78(31.5)	58(23.4)	248(100)

Figure 3: Cross-cultural competencies Vs. Wish remain to stay satisfied in life

Bracketed values represent the percentage; Chi-square =29.649; p-value =0.020 of cross-cultural competencies vs. life satisfaction.

Accordingly, it is recognizable from the exceeding data analysis that most workers do agree that cross-cultural competencies are helpful in improving or achieving life satisfaction. Moreover, the results of this study are in agreement with previous studies which revealed strong relationship between cross-cultural competencies and life satisfaction [21, 23, 24]. From above analysis, there is strong statistical evidence of the relationship between cross-cultural competencies and life satisfaction as well. More workers (40.3 percent) agreed that

cross-cultural competencies are helpful in keeping workers satisfied whereas only 28.20 percent workers agreed that cross-cultural competencies help in achieving superior life satisfaction. From this analysis we can say that exhaustion and cross-cultural competencies are very important for retaining workers' life satisfaction.

5. Discussion and conclusion

After analyzing the data, it is statistically proven that there is a strong relationship between exhaustion and life satisfaction. This is a strong evidence of the relationship among above variables. Furthermore, this analysis also gives statistical evidence that cross-cultural competencies are more helpful in retaining workers' satisfactions. Thus, it is concluded that at present labour force factor becomes ineffective to retain workers' satisfactions in another country unless Bangladesh government makes an action plan according to the current and future needs of workers. In addition, it is not viable to keep the workers unsatisfied in the long run. Bangladesh government can establish some benchmarks in light of the best practices in other counties in this regard.

6. Contribution of paper

Thus, this paper has provided a strong statistical evidence of the relationship between exhaustion and life satisfaction. Furthermore, it has added to the current knowledge of this discipline by providing statistical evidence that cross cultural competencies are more helpful to keep workers satisfied.

7. Limitations of the study

The analysis does have some limitations. In view of the fact that the study was conducted among Bangladeshi workers only and in one city, it is not possible to generalize the findings. The responses of employees working in organizations in other countries might be different who work under different working environments. Thus, the scope of this study is very limited.

8. Recommendations for future research

Future studies should use data collected over a longer period to look into exhaustion and cross culture competencies and their relationship with life satisfaction. In addition, a study on exhaustion, life satisfaction and cross cultural competencies might be conducted covering the above variables in different counties with diverse groups.

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