

Perceived Overqualification, Job Satisfaction, Somatization and Job Stress of MNC Executives

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The present study assessed the relationship of Perceived Overqualification, Job Satisfaction, Somatization and Job Stress of MNC executives. The samples constituted of 52 executives who were randomly selected from different Multinational Companies. Perceived Overqualification Questionnaire developed by Khan and Morrow, Job Satisfaction Scale by Gayathridevi and Velayudhan, Somatization checklist by Derogatis, Lipman, Rickels, Uhlenhuth, and Covi, Work Place Stress Scale developed by Martin Company and American Institute of Stress were the tools used for the assessment. It has been inferred from the statistical analysis that Perceived Overqualification was found to be negatively related to Job Satisfaction. But Perceived Overqualification was not found to have any relationship either with Health Status or the Job Stress of the Executives. The study finds that women executives' experience more Job Stress than men, but men report poor Health Status than women.

Keywords: Perceived Overqualification, Job Satisfaction, Somatization, Job Stress.

All firms, whether they are directly involved in foreign markets or not, are exposed to international competitive forces that can have serious consequences for both survival and performance. To successfully manage an international corporation, it requires an understanding of complex economic, political and governmental issues and an appreciation for the fact that there are differences in how these issues may affect a firm across various nations (Glowinkowski & Copper, 1987). To serve this purpose the whole gamut of employees of multinationals need to be well equipped and should have the zest and willingness to toil. Thus working in a multinational corporation brings in stress and consequently jaded bodies and minds.

Companies expect more from less and pressure inevitably falls on employees. To figure out the factors that lead to better

performance of the employees, extensive research is needed. To better the performance, an understanding of what factors affect the performance of the employees is important. A number of studies have supported the impact of Job Satisfaction, Job Stress and Somatization on the performance of employees. Perceived Overqualification is also one of the factors that is expected to have an impact on work life of people (Feldan, Doennghaus & Jurnley, 1995)

Perceived Overqualification is defined as the extent to which an employed individual perceives that he or she possesses surplus job qualification or has limited opportunities to acquire and use new job related skills. Perceived Overqualification is said to exist when individuals perceive that they possess education, experience or skill that exceed the required job requirements. It may stem from

a lack of promotional opportunities associated with the job, which leads to dead ends (Green, Intosh & Vignoles, 1999).

In every day language it is common to state that a certain occupation requires a certain level of education. In such a simple picture of such a relationship between education and work it is implicitly assumed that jobs of a worker with lower qualification: the productivity of the latter is zero. On the other hand people with higher qualifications than required for the job they have are thought to fully waste their abundant qualification: their productivity in a job below their educational level equals the productivity of worker with an adequate educational background for this kind of job (Feldman, 1996).

Job satisfaction is defined as a positive feeling about one's job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics (Robins & Timothy, 2007). Jude, Thoresen & Bono conducted a study job performance and job satisfaction and they found out that both are highly correlated. The dimensions of job satisfaction identified by the researchers are nature of the work, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and coworkers (Smith, Kentall & Hullin, 1969). Studies on job satisfaction has found that job characteristics and job complexity mediates the relationship between personality and job satisfaction (Timothy, Bono & Edvin, 2000). Wages and salaries are recognized to be a significant but cognitively complex (Shawn & Ronald, 1996)) and multi dimensional factor in job satisfaction (Timoty, 1993). There is considerable empirical evidence that one of the major reasons employee give for quitting a company is that their supervisor does not care about them (Marcus & Coffman, 1999). There is also evidence of a positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Tait, Padgett & Baldwin, 1989), and that the conditions of the causality is that the people who are satisfied with their lives tend to find more satisfaction in their work

(Jude & Wantanabe, 1993)

Somatization is the presence of at least four medically unexplained somatic symptoms during the past 6 months. Somatization by definition has two components: 1) an absence of underlying pathology for which a specific treatment that can be administered, and 2) a conviction by the patient that there must be a specific treatment that can and should be recommended. Typically, there are underlying feelings of depression, anxiety or other feelings, which are not recognized or acknowledge by the person instead, what the person may be aware is all the physical correlates of these underlying difficulties. Anxiety and depression had direct effects on somatic symptoms in somatoform disordered patients (Koh 2008).

Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important (Shuler, 1980). The stimulus causing the stress is said to be the stressor. Job Stress is a chronic state caused by a condition in the work place that negatively affects an individual's performance and overall well being of the body and mind (Ahmad & James, 1991). One or more of a host of physical and mental illness manifests Job Stress. In some cases Job Stress can be disabling. In the early stages Job Stress can 'rev up' the body and enhance performance in the work place, thus the term 'I perform better under pressure'. However if this condition is allowed to go unchecked and the body is revved up further, the performance ultimately declines and the persons health degenerates. Studies by industrial/organizational psychologist found that job performance is at its highest when employees under a medium level of stress (Branthwaite & Ross, 1988). The sign of Job Stress vary from person to person, depending on the particular situation, how long the individual has been subjected to the stressors, and the

intensity of the stress itself. In a study on IT professionals, it has found that women experienced higher levels of stress and being overworked. Women professionals appeared to be more sensitive to the total number of elements in the work environment that were changing (total amount of change) as a precursor to stress. (Gallivant, 2003). The most visible causes of work place stress are: Task demands, physical demands of a job, role demands, workplace culture, interpersonal demands, personal or family problems (Robbins & Timothy, 2007). Another important factor which leads to job stress is job instability and other job characteristics like job demand, job control etc. Job demand is positively correlated with job stress (Wallgren 2007).

The study focuses on various factors that play a major role in the work life of executives of various MNCs. Many a time the employers find it difficult to keep the employees satisfied. This is one of the serious problems faced by the Organizational Behavior Researchers. Hence arises the importance of relating certain factors that hampers the work life of employees. The expansion of educational provision in the last few decades has left too many highly qualified people. Thus the labor market has entrants who are over educated for the jobs they hold. Since over education is one of the determinants of Perceived Overqualification the study gains importance. The impact of Perceived Overqualification on Job Satisfaction, health status and Job Stress is assessed in the study.

Hypotheses

- i. There will be a significant relationship between Perceived Overqualification, Job Satisfaction, Somatization and Job Stress.
- ii. Men and Women executives of MNCs may not differ in terms of Perceived Overqualification, Job Satisfaction, Somatization and Job Stress.

Method

Sample:

Fifty-two executives working in MNCs of which twenty-seven were Men and twenty-seven were women. They were taken on a random order from the Multinational Corporation, Chennai.

Tools:

Perceived Overqualification questionnaire developed by Morrow (1991) was used to measure Perceived Overqualification. The questionnaire consists of both positively and negatively phrased statements.

The Job Satisfaction Scale designed by Gayatri Devi and Velayudhan. A (2008) was used to measure Job Satisfaction. The scale consists of 75 items, positively and negatively phrased statements pertaining to Self-Esteem, Work-Schedule and Interpersonal Relationship. The reliability of Self-Esteem, Work-Schedule and Interpersonal Relationship are .72, .79, .81 and .84 respectively.

The Somatization variable was measured with the 19 items checklist developed by Derogatis, Lipman, Rickels, Uhlenhuth, and Covi (1974) the check list reflects a psychological self-report on symptoms of depression. The 19 items pertained to the frequency of problems or complaints, such as headaches, feelings of low energies, and worrying too much about things. The response ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal). The check list has a reliability of .90.

The workplace stress scale was used to measure Job Stress. The scale was developed by the Martin Company and the American Institute (2001) which consists of 8 items. The response was given on a 5-point scale that ranges from 'Never' to 'Very Often'.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that Perceived Overqualification is found to have a negative correlation with all the four variables of Job Satisfaction. The present job scenario gives the picture that getting into a job is not an easy task, and against this backdrop the relevance of Perceived Overqualification seems to diminish. But once in a job one may perceive that his education, experience or skill exceed the job requirement or he or she may see new career prospects ahead that makes present job less satisfying. A study conducted by Kaiser (2002) revealed that higher education attainment is negatively correlated with Job satisfaction which is relevant to the present finding. Another study conducted by Feldan, Doennghaus & Jurnley (1995) found Perceived Overqualification as a factor affecting work life of people.

Even though today's organizations try to make the best out of their men, the employees are found to experience a significant amount of Perceived Overqualification and this in turn influences Job Satisfaction. The perception of Overqualification may be attributed to over education. As the government policies have made higher education cheaper and more available, it is being availed by a large number. So the number of highly qualified goes on increasing and this indeed makes it difficult for them to find jobs that suit their qualification and may finally end up in a job that requires less skill. Hartog (2000) found that Overeducation is generally regarded as the special indicator of the imperfect allocation on the labor market.

Perceived Overqualification may also stem from lack of promotional opportunities associated with the job, which leads to dead end, which indeed leads to low Job Satisfaction. In a study conducted by Smith, Kendall & Hullin (1969) have identified nature of the work, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and co-workers as a various dimension of Job Satisfaction. Warr

(1987) proposed that people are likely to perceive opportunities for skill utilization when they encourage to use skills they have and acquire new skills.

Table-1: Relationship between Perceived Overqualification and Job Satisfaction

Variable	'r'
Perceived Overqualification Self - esteem	- 0.53*
Perceived Overqualification Work schedule	- 0.52*
Perceived Overqualification Security	-0.46*
Perceived Overqualification Interpersonal relationship	-0.48*

* P<.05

Table-2: Relationship between Perceived Overqualification with Somatization and Job Stress

Variable	'r'
Perceived Overqualification Somatization	0.21
Perceived Overqualification Job Stress	0.21

Table-2 shows the correlation of Perceived Overqualification, Somatization and Job Stress. The result shows that Perceived Overqualification is not related to Somatization and also Job Stress. Depression and anxiety play a major role in Somatization, the fact that perceived overqualification doesn't have a role in making a person anxious or depressed seems to back up the above finding. Koh (2008) examined the relationship between depression, anxiety in somatic disordered patients and found that both anxiety and depression had direct effects on somatic symptoms in somatoform disordered patients.

One of the factors that lead to Job Stress is the high demand for performance; since Overqualification is one of the determinants of Perceived Overqualification and the perception that one is overqualified reduce the pressure on ones performance. Perceived

Overqualification may not add to Job Stress. Job instability is another factor that leads to Job Stress, Perceived Overqualification makes a person shift from one job to another, and thus job stability no longer puts them in stress. Wallgren (2007) conducted a study to test the relationship between job characteristics (job demand, job control) and

job stress. The results show that job demand was positively related to job stress. Perceived Overqualification gives a person the feeling that the job he holds is a meager one; this makes the person least bothered about his performance. Thus the hypothesis 1 is partially accepted.

Table-3: Mean, SD and 't' value of Perceived Overqualification, Somatization and Job Stress of executives.

Variable	Group	Mean	S.D.	't' value
Perceived Overqualification	Male	25.24	6.53	1.40
	Female	27.75	6.29	
Job Satisfaction Self esteem	Male	61.52	12.87	1.72
	Female	54.40	16.53	
Work schedule	Male	118.84	14.94	2.33*
	Female	109.29	14.52	
Security	Male	36.04	7.109	1.40
	Female	33.37	6.55	
Inter-personal Relationship	Male	53.92	13.73	1.93
	Female	47.22	11.17	
Somatization	Male	93.40	10.15	2.15*
	Female	86.88	11.52	
Job Stress	Male	15.96	4.58	2.18*
	Female	18.44	3.58	

* p<.05

Table 3 shows that men and women do not differ in the Perception of Overqualification but differ in other variables such as Job Satisfaction, Somatization and Job Stress. This findings reveal that Sex difference do not bring a change in the perception of Overqualification. It may also attribute that since men and women can avail the same kind of education they may perceive over qualification to the same extent. The 't' test results from the table 3 shows that there is a significant difference between the men and women with regard to their satisfaction with work schedules they have. This finding leaves room to think that men differ from women in the way they like their jobs in terms of schedule. This difference may be attributed to the marked difference between the sexes' perception of hours of work, extended working condition etc.

The results also indicate that Self-esteem, Security, Interpersonal Relationship was not found to show any significant difference among male and female MNC executives. It is a well known fact that working in a MNC enhances Self esteem for both men and women, similarly male and female MNC executives feel secure as working in a MNC. India gives more security than in any western country. Interpersonal Relationship is one of the significant factors which MNC thrust on its executives, thus the satisfaction derived through Interpersonal Relationship could be of the same level for both male and female executives. The table also indicates that men and women differ in terms of Somatization. Women's health status is found to be better than that of men. This shows that men are having more frequent temper outburst, headaches, feeling of being trapped, low

energy and other health related problems. Men holding more responsibilities in their work settings may affect their health.

In the group women are found to experience more Job Stress than men. It may be due to their dual role between family and work commitments, role conflict, and lack of emotional ventilation, job instability, technology and physical demands and sensitivity. In a study by Gallivan, 2003 it has been found that women professionals appeared to be more sensitive to the total number of elements in the work environment that were changing (total amount of change) as a precursor to stress. But men seem to have more chances to refresh themselves and to share their emotions and also comparatively more free than women in household involvements in an India.

The perceived over qualification negatively affects Job Satisfaction of MNC Executives. It affects neither health status nor the Job Stress of the MNC Executives. Women executives experience more Job Stress than men, but men report poor health status than women.

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