# Patterns of Gender Differences in Work Satisfaction in the Information Technology Industry

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## Abstract

*The new technologies have changed the world of work. It has produced opportunities for women to work in the labour market. Moreover, at the same time, it expects to behave traditionally. There is a gender gap in work satisfaction in the information technology industry. This study tries to capture gender differences in work satisfaction in the information technology industry in Delhi's National Capital Region (NCR). This study is based on a sample of 353 respondents in the information technology industry in NCR Delhi. Descriptive statistics, the chi-square test and the logistic regression are used to analyze the data. The results indicate that work satisfaction varies with gender. Further, work-life balance, difficulty in social interaction at the workplace and income significantly affect the work satisfaction of women. For men, work-life balance and social interaction difficulties at work do not affect work satisfaction. However, job change and income significantly affect the work satisfaction of men in the information technology industry.*

*Keywords*: Gender, information technology, social interaction, work-life balance, work satisfaction.

## Introduction

There is a gradual change in domestic division of labour from agriculture to industrial to the information age. Information technology-based industries are the new labour market space that employs many young men and women. There is sub-sector in the information technology industry like the business process outsourcing industry and call centres which use women in a more significant proportion. However, full-time secure job in the information age has declined significantly. That is the reason for declining work satisfaction among men and women in the labour market. Job seekers are not only the new young entrants in the labour market but also those who were already there in the labour market and wanted to leave their previous job for various reasons.

Further, women have to adjust themselves in many ways to survive in the labour market. They have to negotiate the domestic division of labour within the household to minimize the strain produced to balance work and home life. For women, making a balance between work life and home life is a challenge in Indian society. The persistent incursion of work into the traditional life of women increases their stress and undermines happiness. The result is that women spend less time interacting with friends, relatives and neighbours. Also, she has to adjust herself in the organization and at home. The result could be that both managers in the organization and family members in the household are dissatisfied.

Social interaction is another problem that could be an essential source that adversely affects the work satisfaction of women. Women are judged for every behaviour which does not conform to the conventional gender socialization in the family. That is why women face many problems in social interaction at the workplace.

One important implication is that women change their jobs and settle with jobs available to them in the nearby area of their home. That is nothing but an attempt made by women to overcome work-life balance so that they could give more time to their household work and family members. Income seems to be a simple consideration for changing jobs for men as well as women. More than money, women change their job to better adjust to work-life balance. Thus work satisfaction differs significantly between men and women, producing gender inequalities in the information technology industries.

## Review of Literature

Wajcman (1991) argues that new technologies seem to disrupt the traditional pattern of sex-typing and, in so doing, open up prospects for altering the sexual division of labour. Customarily, the work of women is undeniably not considered essential in a male-dominated society. That was why they had low or no negotiating power in the workplace. New technologies have undoubtedly broadened the space for asserting women's agency, challenging the outmoded stereotype that man is the bread earner and woman is the homemaker. More remarkable than before, the involvement of women in the workforce led to the wearying of the view of male as wage earners and an increase in the dual wage-earner household. Young couples gradually share the household work; the convention 'segregated conjugal role' is slowly translating to 'joint conjugal role' (Young & Willmott, 1973).

Work-life balance denotes the sense of balance among the household and the workplace's roles. Better work-life balance requires fulfilment, satisfaction and energy offered for the multiple roles that an individual fills (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Women, as compared to men, face challenges in work-life balance. Women are more dissatisfied with their work than men in view of the inconsistency between work and household responsibilities.

Women must also compromise at home and in the workplace to continue in the labour market. Women are likely to speak formally and respectfully with less profanity (Henley, 1977); this refers to *affiliative speech,* which is typical of women as against powerful and *assertive speech,* which is adopted mainly by men (Tannen, 1994). Women are also anticipated to be modest in gestured communication. They are expected to bow and smile more than men, and their speeches are rated higher in warmness than men (Johnson, 1994). Such anticipations make social interaction at the workplace more problematic for women than men.

Compared to women, men tend to influence and show supremacy in their interaction with others. They are blatant and unconcealed, do not delay criticizing others, and issue directives to get things done. This interaction style makes men more proficient, which benefits them to make career progressions and be paid more than women. Gender stereotype also survives and thrives in the workplace, inhibiting women from being as deliberate as men; this is why only a few women reach the higher echelons. Even entry-level bargaining, a salary offer or a work environment entails an assertive communication style. Women's affiliative dispositions go to their disadvantage; they start their careers with a small salary compared to men (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

Men tend to hold on to traditional views about women. They show discomfiture with women who do not fit in the traditional feminine role. People in the workplace like women who toed the line to gendered stereotypes in the workplace. They are viewed as sociable; nonetheless, they are not essentially regarded as competent (Lindsey & Zakahi, 2006). The dominating interaction style reflects men's power,

vigour and resilience a n d  is regarded as unsocial for women. So women have to face firm opposition and discomfort either way.

On the one hand, a woman whose interaction behaviour is not affiliative is perceived as profane with gendered expectations (Carli et al., 1995). On the other hand, if a woman adopts a traditional and feminine mode of interaction, she is viewed as lacking incompetency. Overall, women have low job satisfaction as compared to men.

**Theoretical framework**

The feminist writers observe that traditional inequalities have been reproduced in information technology industries. Work satisfaction is patterned differently for men and women. The root cause is discriminatory structures and practices seen in the family and cherished by family members through socialization and reproduced and practised by workers in the workplace. Socialization in the family strengthens consciences of caring, passive nurturing, compliance and submission, which propagates in the workplace and goes against women.

Feminist ideas central to the work of Oakley, Caplow, Marchand and Runyan are essential to understanding the gender differences in work satisfaction in the information technology industry. Oakley (1974) talked of the structuring of the mother-housewife role as women's principal role. The identity of women is determined by this primary role only. It is difficult for women to set aside this mother-housewife role learned through socialization. Even if women work outside the family, she is seen as secondary breadwinner compared to men(Caplow, 1954).

Although significant changes are happening in the labour market, particularly in information technology industries which employ women in large numbers, Marchand (2000) and Runyan (1997) refer to this as the feminization of labour. However, various constraints operate on women in the labour market. They are reduced in importance to the bottom of the occupational structure and experience poor work satisfaction.

Against this backdrop, there are two objectives of the study. The first is to examine the association between gender and work satisfaction in the information technology industry. The second is to describe the variation in the effect of selected factors on work satisfaction among men and women.

**Hypothesis**

In view of the objectives mentioned above following null (H0) and alternative (H1) hypotheses have been constructed for testing using empirical data collected from the information technology industry.

1. H0: Work satisfaction does not vary according to gender.

   H1: Work satisfaction varies significantly according to gender.

2. H0: Work-life balance does not have any consequence on work satisfaction.

   H1: Work-life balance has a statistically significant effect on work satisfaction.

3. H0: Job change does not affect work satisfaction.

   H1: Job change has a significant effect on work satisfaction.

4. H0: Social interaction at the workplace does not affect work satisfaction.

   H1: Social interaction at the workplace significantly affects work satisfaction.

5. H0: The income earned does not affect work satisfaction.

   H1: The income earned has a significant effect on work satisfaction.

**Data and Methods**

A sample of 400 employees in the information technology industry in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi was administered a questionnaire to obtain data related to work satisfaction. However, only 353 respondents could return the completed questionnaire, with about 78.4 percent response rate. Data were collected on the following variables:

1. Work satisfaction: This dependent variable takes two values – satisfied and not satisfied.

2. Gender: It is a dichotomous variable which takes two values – women and men.

3. Work-life balance: This independent (predictor) variable takes two values – not a challenge and a challenge.
4. Difficulty in social interaction at work: This is a scale-level variable constructed from three ordinal items.
5. Job change: This is an ordinal variable with three values – continuing with the first job, changed one job, and changed more than one job.
6. Income: This is a scale level variable measured in Indian rupees.

Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics, bivariate analysis and logistic regression. A clustered bar diagram is also constructed to understand relation between gender and work satisfaction. The Chi-square test finds associations when both dependent and independent variables are categorical. Logistic regression is performed separately for men and women. Before performing logistic regression, factor analysis is carried out to ascertain that difficulty in social interaction is measured out of three ordinal items. These three items measure the extent to which respondents have difficulty interacting with superordinates, subordinates and coworkers. Each of these items has four options 1 to 4. 1 represents 'very less extent', 2 'some extent, 3' great extent' and 4 'very great extent. For inferential statistics level of significance is taken as 0.05 unless otherwise mentioned.

**Findings and Discussion**

The descriptive statistics related to 353 respondents are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of six variables used in the study.**

| Variables | Frequency (n) | Percent | Mean (Standard Deviation) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | |
| Woman | 144 | 40.8 | -- |
| Man | 209 | 59.2 | -- |
| | | | |
| **Work Satisfaction** | | | |
| Not satisfied | 152 | 43.1 | -- |
| Satisfied | 201 | 56.9 | -- |
| | | | |
| **Work-life Balance** | | | |
| No a challenge | 198 | 56.1 | -- |
| Challenge | 155 | 43.9 | -- |
| | | | |
| **Job Change** | | | |
| First job | 58 | 16.4 | -- |
| Changed one job | 143 | 40.5 | -- |
| Changed more than one job | 152 | 43.1 | -- |
| | | | |
| **Difficulty in Social Interaction** | -- | -- | 6.85 (1.61) |
| | | | |
| **Income (**In thousands of rupees) | -- | -- | 20.31 (10.82) |

Of the total respondents, 40.8 percent are women, and 59.2 percent are men; 43.1 percent are not satisfied with their current job while 56.9 percent are satisfied with their work; 56.1 respondents feel that work-life balance is a challenge, and 43.9 percent does not feel work-life balance a challenge; 16.4 percent are in their first job, 40.5 percent have changed one job, and 43.1 percent have changed more than one job; the

mean (M) social interaction is 6.85 with a standard deviation of 1.61, and the mean income in thousands of rupees is 20.31 with a standard deviation of 10.82.

A Chi-square is done to test the association between gender and work satisfaction. It also tests the first hypothesis. For that, a crosstable (Table 2) is constructed, showing the relationship between gender and work satisfaction. From the crosstable, it is clear that 67.1 percent man are satisfied with their current work while only 41.1 percent of women are satisfied with their job.

**Table 2: Crosstable depicting the association between gender and work satisfaction.**

| Work Satisfaction | Gender | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Women** | **Men** | |
| Not Satisfied | 84(58.3) | 68 (32.5) | 152(43.1) |
| Satisfied | 60(41.7) | 141 (67.5) | 201(56.9) |
| **Total** | **144** | **209** | **353** |

*Note: The figure in parenthesis denotes column percent.*

A chi-square test also reveals that there is a statistically significant variance in work satisfaction between women and men: $\chi^2$ (1, n = 353) = 23.142, p = 0.000. Thus alternative hypothesis holds for the first hypothesis, i.e. work satisfaction varies with gender. The situation will be clearer with Figure 1, which depicts the clustered bar diagram showing gender differences in work satisfaction. Among women, 58.3 percent are not satisfied with their work, while for men, only 32.5 percent are not satisfied with their work.

**Figure 1: Clustered bar diagram showing variation in work satisfaction according to gender.**
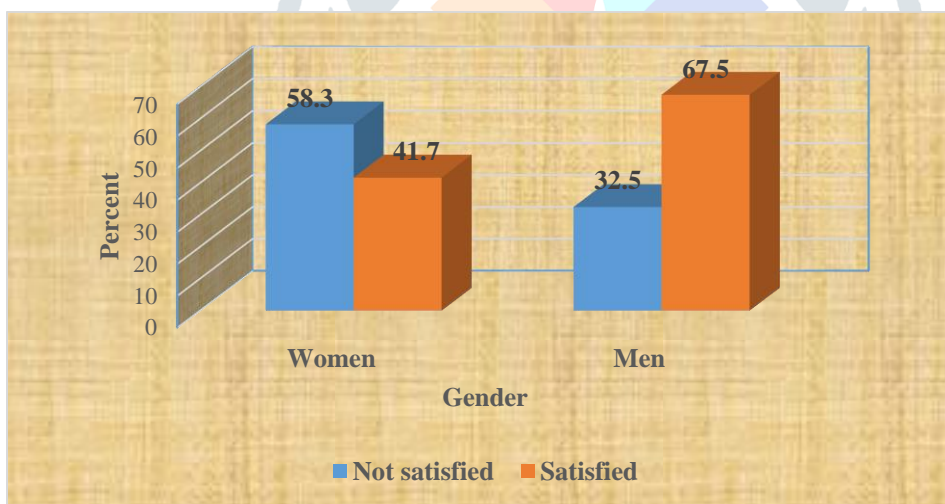


Factor analysis is carried out to reveal underlying factor structure to measure difficulty in social interaction at the workplace. Factor analysis helps identify a small number of factors out of several items. Principal component analysis (PCA) was performed on the three items representing difficulty in social interaction. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value was 0.56, slightly less than 0.6, while Bartlett's Test reached statistical significance. The PCA reveals the presence of one component with eigenvalues greater than one, explaining 58.57 percent of the variance. An inspection of the scree plot also reveals the presence of one factor as only one component was extracted, so the solution cannot be rotated. Thus all items are strongly loaded on one component. To discover the reliability of three items, Cronbach's Alpha is calculated. The alpha coefficient of three items is 0.63. It suggests that the three items have high internal consistency. Thus, the factor analysis result supports using one variable consisting of three items. This variable measures difficulty in social interaction at the workplace and is reliable. So the total of three items as discussed above represents

difficulty in social interaction at the workplace. The measure of difficulty in social interaction varies from 3 to 12. 3 means minimum difficulty in social interaction, while 12 means maximum difficulty in social interaction. Mean difficulty in social interaction is mentioned in Table 1. Difficulty in social interaction is one independent variable used in logistic regression.

Logistic regression is carried out separately for women and men to find what factors predict the likelihood that women and men would report that they are satisfied with their work. Logistic regression assesses how well the independent variables predict work satisfaction among women and men. It also indicates the relative importance of each independent variable. Here the regression model contains four above-mentioned independent variables. The model containing all the four independent variables is statistically significant for both women, $\chi^2$ (5, n = 144) = 64.41, p < 0.000 and men, $\chi^2$ (5, n = 209) = 138.16, p < 0.000.

Table 3 depicts the logistic regression model predicting work satisfaction for women. The model explains variance in work satisfaction between 36.1% (Cox and Snell R squared) and 48.5% (Nagelkerke R squared). It also correctly classified 74.3% of cases. Of the four independent variables, three independent variables (work-life balance, difficulty in social interaction and income) made a statistically significant contribution to work satisfaction.

Among these three significant predictors of work satisfaction, the strongest predictor of work satisfaction is income. For the variable income, the odds ratio is 1.087, meaning that with every one thousand increase in income, women's work satisfaction is likely to increase by 1.087 times, controlling for other variables. Thus alternative hypothesis holds for the fifth hypothesis for women. The work-life balance is also a significant predictor of work satisfaction among women. When work-life balance is challenging, women are 0.123 times less expected to be satisfied with work. Thus the second null hypothesis is rejected, and an alternative hypothesis prevails. The variable difficulty in social interaction has an odds ratio of 0.340, indicating that for every unit of increase in difficulty in social interaction, the women are 0.340 times less likely to be satisfied with their work, controlling for other variables. Thus the fourth null hypothesis prevails. Further, it is interesting to note that job change does not affect the work satisfaction of women. Despite changing several jobs, women remain dissatisfied with their work. Again the third null hypothesis prevails for women.

**Table 3: Logistic regression model predicting work satisfaction of women.**

| Variables | B | SE | P value | Odds ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work-life Balance** | | | | |
| Not a challenge@ | | | | |
| Challenge | -2.09 | 0.52 | 0.000* | 0.123 |
| | | | | |
| **Job Change** | | | | |
| First job@ | | | | |
| Changed one job | -0.625 | 0.59 | 0.288 | 0.535 |
| Changed more than one  job | 0.782 | 0.61 | 0.198 | 2.185 |
| | | | | |
| **Difficulty in Social Interaction** | -1.08 | 0.29 | 0.000* | 0.340 |
| | | | | |
| **Income (**In thousands of rupees) | 0.08 | 0.03 | 0.008* | 1.087 |
| | | | | |
| **Constant** | 8.177 | 2.61 | 0.002 | 3558.582 |

Note: @ denotes reference group; * denotes statistical significance at $p < 0.05$; B refers to unstandardized coefficient; SE means standard error.

Now let us consider Table 4, which represents the logistic regression output for determining the work satisfaction of men. The model explains variance in work satisfaction between 48.4% (Cox and Snell R squared) and 67.5% (Nagelkerke R squared). It also correctly classified 90.4% of cases. Of the four independent variables, only two independent variables (job change and income) have a statistically significant impact on work satisfaction.

**Table 4: Logistic regression model predicting work satisfaction of men.**

| Variables | B | SE | P value | Odds ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work-life Balance** Not a challenge[@] | | | | |
| Challenge | -0.436 | 0.718 | 0.543 | 0.646 |
| **Job Change** First job[@] | | | | |
| Changed one job | -0.404 | 0.766 | 0.598 | 1.498 |
| Changed more than one job | 1.421 | 0.700 | 0.042* | 4.142 |
| **Difficulty in Social Interaction** | 0.034 | 0.194 | 0.861 | 1.035 |
| **Income (**In thousands of rupees) | 0.462 | 0.079 | 0.000* | 1.588 |
| **Constant** | -8.695 | 2.081 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

Note: @ denotes reference group; * denotes statistical significance at $p < 0.05$; B refers to unstandardized coefficient; SE means standard error.

Among these two significant predictors of work satisfaction, the strongest predictor of work satisfaction is job change for men. It is interesting to note that there is no effect on job change when men change one job. The improvement in work satisfaction comes when men change more than one job. The odds ratio for men changing more than one job is 4.142. That means compared to the first job, the work satisfaction of men who changed more than one job is likely to increase by more than four times, controlling for other variables. Thus third null hypothesis is rejected for men. For the variable income, the odds ratio is 1.588, meaning that with every one thousand increase in income, a man's work satisfaction is likely to increase by more than one and a half times, controlling for other variables. Thus fifth null hypothesis is also rejected for men. The second and fourth null hypothesis prevails for men. That is because the other two independent variables, work-life balance and difficulty in social interaction, do not affect men's work satisfaction.

Wajcman (1991) argued that new technologies opened the chances for changing the sexual division of labour. More and more women are entering the labour market. However, it has failed to break the traditional gender stereotype thinking. That is why gender inequality in work satisfaction persists in the information technology industry. Comparing each predictor for women and men can be done to have a clear picture of patterns of gender differences in work satisfaction in the information technology industry in NCR Delhi.

Let us consider the first predictor/ independent variable, work-life balance. The evidence indicates that balancing work and home life is challenging for women and not men. Also, it is a significant predictor of work satisfaction for women. Instead, it adversely affects the work satisfaction of women. However, it has no effect on the work satisfaction of men. The claim made by Young & Willmott (1973) that the segregated conjugal role is slowly translating into the joint conjugal role is misplaced. Women in the information technology industry must share the burden of household drudgery and office work. That results in role conflict, which in turn adversely affects the work satisfaction of women.

The second predictor is a job change. Again, job change does not affect the work satisfaction of women. However, it significantly affects men's work satisfaction when they change more than one job. It is conspicuous

today that long-term permanent jobs are over. That is why young people in the labour market constantly engage in a job changes. However, this job change does not bring work satisfaction to women in the information technology industry. The prime reason women change jobs is to settle for a job that facilitates work-life balance, which is seldom realized. That is the reason that women change jobs without having work satisfaction.

The third predictor is difficulty in social interaction at the workplace. Men and women both face difficulty in social interaction in the workplace. However, difficulty in social interaction goes contrary to women's work satisfaction. Traditional gender stereotypes that operate in a family are reproduced in the workplace. As Henley (1977) argued, women are more expected to talk formally and politely. They are also expected to have affiliative rather than assertive speech, as explained by Tannen (1994). Such hopes make social interaction at the workplace more problematic for women than men. That is why the difficulty in social interaction adversely affects women's work satisfaction while it does not affect the work satisfaction of men.

The fourth predictor is income. Income in the form of salary, allowances and other monetary benefits is a crucial determinant of work satisfaction of men and women. The data here also suggests that income significantly affects the work satisfaction of both men and women. However, for each one thousand increase in income, men's work satisfaction is likely to increase by one and half times, and this figure is just over one for women. That means an increase in income strongly influences the work satisfaction of men more than women. Here, Babcock & Laschever (2003) views hold that women start their careers with a small salary compared to men. This scenario depicts gender differences in work satisfaction in the information technology industry in NCR Delhi.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that work satisfaction differs significantly according to gender. Working outside does not relieve a woman of their household chores. Women have to face role conflict that adversely affects their work satisfaction and well-being. Women have to bear the double burden of working outside and working in the household. It is interesting to note that men and women frequently change their job in the labour market. However, the reasons for changing job is not entirely the same. Women change their work to adjust between household drudgery and office work but without work satisfaction. For men, changing jobs is for better working conditions and more salary. Social interaction at the workplace is also a fundamental challenge to women. There is a fundamental contradiction in the information technology industries. Although it employs women in large numbers, it expects women to behave in the traditional submissive way to ensure their dignity. Finally, income seems to be an essential factor for work satisfaction for all, irrespective of gender. However, it is more beneficial for men than women.

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