

Job Satisfaction of Staff Working with Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Two Different Settings

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ABSTRACT

Background: Several studies on job satisfaction have been done on healthcare workers in Bahrain; however, no previous research has investigated the staff working with intellectual disability patients.

Objective: To identify the level of job satisfaction of healthcare staff working with individuals with intellectual disability in two settings in Bahrain.

Setting: Psychiatric Hospital and Bahraini Association of Intellectual Disabilities and Autism (BAIDA), Bahrain.

Design: A Cross-Sectional Study Using a Questionnaire Survey.

Method: Staff working with individuals who have intellectual disabilities in the psychiatric hospital (n=41) and in the BAIDA society (n=35) were surveyed using a locally designed questionnaire in September 2011. The questionnaire is designed to assess job satisfaction in terms of eleven factors.

Result: Satisfaction in both institutes was good, slightly better among society staff. The satisfaction was not associated with age, duration of work and job type. Males were more satisfied than females in some dimensions.

Conclusion: This study revealed that staff working with persons with intellectual disabilities in the two settings were generally satisfied. Overall, the staff in the civic society was more satisfied than those in the hospital. Possible reasons for such differences were discussed, periodic similar studies were recommended for intellectual disabilities staff and other subspecialties.

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Job satisfaction describes how contented a person is with his/her job¹. Job satisfaction is a very well-studied topic in the literature²⁻⁴. Several factors can affect an individual's level of job satisfaction. Some of these factors include payment and fringe benefits, promotion and advancement opportunities in the organization, quality of working conditions, leadership and peers relationships⁵⁻⁸. Job satisfaction is usually measured at two levels: (a) factorial levels using one of the above mentioned factors and (b) overall job satisfaction which is typically a sum or an average of the factors chosen by the researcher to represent job satisfaction in the organization.

The definition of job satisfaction of mental health healthcare workers was copied from business and industry, which are not exactly the same⁹. Job Descriptive Index or Job Satisfaction Surveys rarely have been adapted for mental health healthcare workers. Those healthcare providers are one of least studied groups in terms of job satisfaction, physical and psychological health¹⁰.

Staff providing services for individuals with intellectual disabilities often experience some occupational syndromes such as stress, emotional burnout, high turnover and poor job satisfaction^{5,9}. These experiences could negatively affect the quality of care provided to the persons with intellectual disabilities.

There is a documented relationship between job satisfaction of staff and patient satisfaction⁸. Staff working in psychiatric facilities typically take a significant amount of time before deciding to leave their employment⁵.

BAIDA was established in 1992 and is the largest civic organization in the country that care for persons with intellectual disabilities and autism.

The researchers assumed that the flatter the organization is the more satisfied the staff are. Thus, it was expected that staff in civic society would be more satisfied than staff in professional bureaucracy such as hospital setting. BAIDA is a smaller organization with easier access to decision making.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the level of job satisfaction of staff working with patients with intellectual disabilities.

METHOD

The cross-sectional design utilizing a questionnaire survey to collect data from the participants was used. The job satisfaction questionnaire of the Balanced Score Card for Bahrain (BSC4B) was used. The questionnaire was developed by an independent international consultant for the Ministry of Health, Bahrain. The job satisfaction questionnaire is composed of 39 items and 11

facets scale to assess staff's attitudes towards their job. Each facet is assessed using a number of items (ranging between 1 and 8) and a total score is computed from the average of all items.

The questionnaire was subjected to pilot study, revision, panel review and validation processes. The items are marked on Likert like scale with 1 being highly satisfied and 5 being highly dissatisfied. The questionnaire takes about 15-20 minutes to complete.

The authors revised and edited the job satisfaction questionnaire to adapt it to BAIDA center. The BAIDA version of questionnaire was tested on three volunteers from the association and they were later excluded from the analysis of the main study.

In September 2011, 76 workers were surveyed using job satisfaction questionnaire. Personal characteristics (age, sex, professional background, education level and years of experience) were documented. Thirty-five workers were from Bahraini Association of Intellectual Disabilities and Autism and 41 were from the Intellectual Disabilities services at the Psychiatric Hospital, Bahrain.

Included in the study were staff who were able to read and write Arabic. Twelve months minimum in the organization and willing to participate are prerequisites. Medical doctors were excluded as they were recruited to a specific structured training program with its own benefits and incentives. Informed consent was obtained from the participants.

SPSS version 18 was used; the researchers performed several quantitative analyses. Independent samples t-test was performed. The alpha 0.05 threshold was used for all statistical tests.

For comparison purposes, five years of service and 35 years of age were used as cut-off points to split the sample into two groups. These cut-off points were selected based on the mean years of service and age.

Evaluation of job type was done only for the hospital sample where nurses' satisfaction was compared to others. The vast majority of staff at the society were teachers (88.6%) making the evaluation unviable.

RESULT

Seventy-six responses were entered and analyzed, forty-one from the Psychiatric Hospital and thirty-five from the Bahraini Association of Intellectual Disabilities and Autism.

Females composed the majority of the two samples, 27 (66%) in the hospital sample and 24 (69%) in the society sample. Thirty-four (83%) and 30 (86%) of the hospital and society samples were married.

Both samples were between 21-34 and 35-44 years old. Approximately, the staff in the society were generally younger. Nurses and teachers composed the majority of the sample. In the hospital, 21 (51%) were nurses and in the society sample, 31 (89%) were teachers/trainers.

Prior to asking the subjects to complete the job satisfaction questionnaire, two generic questions were posted for them: (a) How long do they intend to stay in their job? and (b) Do they recommend their workplace for a friend to work? The results to these questions indicated that a match of 83% (34 for hospital and 29 for society) intend to work for their organization till retirement. Thirty-two (78%) subjects in the hospital sample and 31 (89%) in the society sample reported that they would recommend their workplace to a friend, see personal characteristics in table 1.

Table 1: Hospital and Society Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics	Hospital (N=41)	Society (N=35)
	Number and Percentage	
Sex		
Male	14 (34)	11 (31)
Female	27 (66)	24 (69)
Marital Status		
Single	7 (17)	5 (14)
Married	34 (83)	30 (86)
Expected Years to Retirement		
1 Year	2 (5)	1 (3)
5 Years	2 (5)	1 (3)
10 Years	3 (7.3)	4 (11)
Till Retirement	34 (83)	29 (83)
Age of Respondent		
21-34 Years	13 (32)	20 (57)
35-44 Years	17 (41)	14 (40)
45-54 Years	9 (22)	0 (0)
55 Years and above	2 (5)	1 (3)
Job Category		
Administrative	0 (0)	3 (9)
Clerical	4 (10)	0 (0)
Specialist	9 (22)	1 (2.9)
Teacher/Nurse	21 (51)	31 (89)
Others	7 (17)	0 (0)

The results of the two settings were comparable in terms of job satisfaction facets. For the hospital and society samples, the highest areas of job satisfaction were (a) personal relationship and (b) general direction. Similarly, the lowest areas of job satisfaction were (a) development, (b) job security and (c) salary and benefits, see table 2. Five job satisfaction facets flagged as significant areas of differences between the two samples: (a) responsibility, (b) management, (c) appreciation, (d) development and (e) salary and benefits. Staff in the society were more satisfied in all facets than the hospital staff.

The sample was split according to age, below 35 years and 35 years and above. No significant differences were obtained within and between the two samples, see table 3.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Satisfaction by Dimension and Location

Dimension	Society (N=35)		Hospital (N=41)		Significance (2- tailed)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Leadership	2.14	0.91	2.30	0.96	0.31
Responsibility	1.84	0.75	2.27	0.75	0.01*
Personal relationship	1.61	0.83	1.71	0.70	0.58
Management	1.98	1.00	2.71	1.15	0.01*
Supervision issues	1.75	0.76	1.84	0.73	0.62
Job security	2.49	1.22	2.95	1.30	0.11
Appreciation	2.06	0.89	2.90	1.02	0.01*
Development	2.57	1.20	3.59	1.32	0.01*
Safety	2.36	1.10	2.67	0.97	0.19
General direction	1.61	0.94	1.72	0.88	0.59
Salary and benefits	2.29	0.87	2.97	0.97	0.01*
Overall satisfaction score	2.17	1.89	2.44	1.10	0.44

Table 3: Significant Differences within the Hospital and Society Samples According to Age

Dimension	Hospital (N=41)		Society (N=35)	
	< 35 Years	≥ 35 Years	< 35 Years	≥ 35 Years
Leadership	2.77	2.18	2.10	2.20
Responsibility	2.48	2.18	1.85	1.80
Relationship	1.79	1.67	1.62	1.60
Management	2.69	2.71	2.20	1.69
Supervision	1.75	1.87	1.73	1.78
Job Security	3.00	2.93	2.45	2.53
Appreciation	3.15	2.79	2.21	1.87
Development	3.54	3.61	2.75	2.33
Safety	2.85	2.59	2.58	2.07
General Direction	1.90	1.64	1.68	1.51
Salary and benefits	3.12	2.90	2.68	2.17

The difference within the two samples was explored according to years of service. The sample was split according to years of service, to below 5 years and 5 years of service and above. No significant differences were obtained within and between the samples, see table 4.

Table 4: Significant Difference between the Hospital and Society Samples According to Years of Service

Dimension	Hospital (N=41)			Society (N=35)		
	< 5 Years	≥ 5 Years	Significance	< 5 Years	≥ 5 Years	Significance
	Mean	Mean		Mean	Mean	
Leadership	2.77	2.18	0.07	2.10	2.20	0.75
Responsibility	2.48	2.17	0.23	1.85	1.80	0.85
Relationship	1.79	1.67	0.59	1.62	1.60	0.95
Management	2.69	2.71	0.96	2.20	1.68	0.14
Supervision	1.75	1.87	0.62	1.72	1.78	0.83
Job security	3.00	2.92	0.87	2.45	2.53	0.85
Appreciation	3.15	2.78	0.29	2.21	1.86	0.27

Development	3.54	3.61	0.88	2.75	2.33	0.32
Safety	2.85	2.59	0.44	2.57	2.07	0.18
General direction	1.90	1.62	0.39	1.68	1.51	0.60
Salary and benefits	3.12	2.90	0.50	2.38	2.17	0.50

Male hospital staff were satisfied, see table 5. For the society staff (a) management, (b) appreciation, (c) development, (d) salary and benefits were the areas of significant differences; males were more satisfied.

Table 5: Significant Differences within the Hospital and Society Samples According to Sex

Dimension	Hospital (N=41)		Significance	Society (N=35)		Significance
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Leadership	2.21	2.44	0.47	1.76	2.32	0.09
Responsibility	2.20	2.31	0.64	1.52	1.97	0.10
Relationship	1.50	1.81	0.18	1.57	1.62	0.87
Management	2.55	2.79	0.53	1.45	2.22	0.03*
Supervision	1.78	1.86	0.76	1.61	1.81	0.48
Job security	2.36	3.26	0.03*	2.27	2.58	0.49
Appreciation	2.61	3.05	0.20	1.64	2.26	0.05*
Development	3.57	3.59	0.96	2.00	2.83	0.05*
Safety	2.64	2.68	0.90	1.86	2.58	0.07
General direction	1.67	1.75	0.77	1.54	1.68	0.52
Salary and benefits	3.03	2.94	0.79	1.73	2.55	0.01*

No significant differences within the hospital sample according to job category, nurses versus others, see table 6.

Table 6: Significant Differences within the Hospital Sample According to Job Category

Dimension	Nurses (N=21)	Others (N=20)	Significance
	Mean	Mean	
Leadership	2.57	2.15	0.16
Responsibility	2.45	2.09	0.12
Relationship	1.84	1.57	0.22
Management	2.97	2.43	0.14
Supervision	1.83	1.83	0.99
Job Security	3.09	2.80	0.48
Appreciation	3.08	2.71	2.45
Development	3.57	3.60	0.95
Safety	2.88	2.45	0.16
General Direction	1.74	1.73	0.95
Salary and benefit	3.24	2.69	0.07

DISCUSSION

Evaluating staff satisfaction is important because it could reflect on the organizational performance. Poor job satisfaction could be a major cause of burnout and withdrawal syndromes, exhibited as absence, lateness, sickness and accidents¹⁰. The satisfied employee tends to be more committed. Essential medical outcome has been linked to healthcare workers' satisfaction, including prescribing behavior, patient adherence to treatment, client satisfaction and quality of services provided⁵.

The majority of both samples would like to stay till retirement in their organization; this finding indicated that the subjects were generally satisfied with their jobs. The mean scores of entire satisfaction confirm this point that staff working with individuals with ID in both settings are moderately satisfied with an average of 2.44 (SD 1.10) for the hospital staff and 2.17 (SD 1.89) for the society staff. The staff in the society were slightly more satisfied than the hospital staff; this difference, however, was not statistically significant. The degree of satisfaction could not be compared with other studies due to the lack of similar studies locally or regionally. For the hospital staff, this moderate level of satisfaction was similar to a study performed in a hospital¹⁰. The used research instrument is not designed to differentiate satisfaction arising from the nature of job or alliance with the organization.

The highest areas of job satisfaction were (a) personal relationship and (b) general direction. The lowest areas of job satisfaction were (a) development, (b) job security and (c) salary and benefits. Previous research studies found that personal relationship with co-workers play the most important role in job satisfaction and in reducing job stress¹¹. It appears that research instrument taps on satisfaction arising from job circumstances and not the nature of job itself. The dimensions do not include items that contain areas such as feelings and attitudes toward job elements, feelings arising from certain situations, physical and emotional burden.

Five areas were identified as significant areas of differences between the two samples: (a) responsibility, (b) management, (c) appreciation, (d) development and (e) salary and benefits; the staff in the society were more satisfied in all facets than the hospital staff. This can be possibly attributed to the fact that staff in the society have lower level of education and lower expectations. Staff in the society were mainly teachers/trainers with high school certification, compared to the hospital staff who were holding at least university degree. In education research, reports tend to conclude that teachers with more experiences were less likely to leave their jobs and these teachers were experiencing higher level of job satisfaction⁴.

There were no significant differences within the samples according to years of service or age. However, it appeared that staff who served more than five years and those above the age of 35 years are more satisfied than staff that recently joined the service. Again, this was not compared with other studies because of unavailability.

As expected, no statistical differences were obtained for the job satisfaction between nurses and others. This is possibly because nurses in Bahrain have recently acquired their new own cadre which promote their status among health professionals.

For the society staff, (a) management, (b) appreciation, (c) development and (d) salary and benefits were the areas of significant differences; males were more satisfied. Male staff have more opportunity to increase their income by having a second job after working hours.

Opportunities for future researches have definitely emerged as a result of this study. In addition, to overcome the limitations of data gathering, additional research is needed to observe the relationship between job satisfaction and specific factors.

Limitations of the study:

- The survey was subjected to the bias and prejudices of the respondents. Hence, 100% accuracy cannot be assured, regardless how reliable the research instrument was.
- The research was carried out in a short span of time; therefore, one might argue that the results were only generalizable to that period of time.
- The study could not be generalized to other organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the staff working with persons with intellectual disabilities in the two settings were moderately satisfied. Overall, the staff in the society were more satisfied than the staff in the hospital; this might be due to the nature of the organization and implemented policies. Examined factors such as years of service, age and job type were not found significant. Satisfaction degree in relation to gender difference was in favor of males. Periodic evaluation of job satisfaction is essential to affirm generalizability.

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