



Beyond paychecks: Demographic insights into job satisfaction among psychologists

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is a fundamental determinant of professionals' productivity, motivation, and mental well-being. This study explored the level of job satisfaction among psychologists in Bangladesh and examined its association with demographic characteristics. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional, and correlational design, data were gathered from 100 purposively selected psychologists through an online survey. A standardized and culturally adapted job satisfaction questionnaire for Bangla-speaking participants was employed to ensure contextual relevance. Data analysis included descriptive and inferential procedures such as correlation and analysis of variance. The findings revealed a generally moderate level of job satisfaction among participants, with significant variations across educational background, socioeconomic status, residential area, and work experience. Psychologists with higher income or belonging to more privileged socioeconomic groups tended to report lower satisfaction, suggesting that elevated expectations may not always align with workplace realities. These results highlight the complex interplay of contextual and demographic factors shaping professional well-being in Bangladesh's mental health sector. Although the study's scope was limited by purposive sampling and its national focus, it provides an important empirical contribution to the limited literature on occupational satisfaction within low-resource contexts. Further research across diverse geographic and institutional settings is recommended to enhance the generalizability of findings. This study contributes to a broader

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understanding of how demographic and contextual dynamics influence professional satisfaction and can guide the development of culturally sensitive, evidence-based interventions to strengthen the mental health workforce in Bangladesh.

KEY WORDS:

job satisfaction; psychologists; Bangladesh; work experience; demographic correlates.



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Introduction

Worker motivation, productivity, and organizational performance are all known to be significantly impacted by job satisfaction. According to Nahar et al. (2013), job satisfaction is an attitude variable that reflects a person's overall assessment of their work experience. Expectations, real-world employment qualities, and other workplace variables all influence it (Aazami et al., 2015). Job satisfaction is crucial for psychologists whose work directly affects public mental health, as it is not just an issue of personal wellbeing but also for client outcomes and professional efficacy. Knowing the nature of job satisfaction is especially crucial in Bangladesh, where the mental health industry is still in its infancy and psychologists frequently operate in environments with little resources. Although treating emotional and behavioral problems helps psychologists make a substantial contribution to the well-being of society, little focus has been placed on how content they are with their own working conditions.

Job satisfaction levels and workplace behaviours are significantly correlated, according to research on employee job satisfaction in Bangladesh's industrial sector. This implies that the way psychologists view and interact with their work may be influenced by demographic characteristics. Additionally, the work environment is shown to be a significant factor in determining employee satisfaction and performance, with favourable work conditions improving both job satisfaction and performance (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Recent research highlights the significance of emotional and psychological components of employment in addition to conventional measures of satisfaction. The idea of the "emotional pay cheque" emphasises that meaningful interpersonal relationships and emotional health at work are also important sources of job satisfaction (Everything DiSC, 2023).

Job happiness also depends on organisational culture and leadership. Employee happiness can be raised by encouraging a sense of appreciation and belonging among staff members through reflection on thankfulness and effective leadership techniques (Liden et al., 2025). Furthermore, how psychologists view their jobs and their general levels of happiness can be influenced by demographic factors including age, gender, and educational background as well as perceptions of the workplace (Aishatu et al., 2024). Person-job fit has a substantial impact on job satisfaction, according to research on work-life quality, particularly when Bangladesh's workforce changes as a result of modernisation initiatives (Gazi et al., 2024). According to research on work-life balance, particularly among women employees, personality factors like consciousness have a slight effect on life satisfaction, which is strongly related to job satisfaction (Pushpika et al., 2025). Furthermore, health and well-being—two crucial aspects of job satisfaction across a range of demographic groups—are impacted by psychosocial work characteristics, such as workplace stresses and support (Maneen, 2025). Job happiness is also mediated by leadership styles, and employees' reactions to various leadership philosophies may be influenced by demographic factors (Kaya, 2024).

While some studies indicate weak associations between traditional measures of satisfaction and perceived quality of care or organizational confidence, the broader psychosocial context remains vital (Kruk et al., 2018). Psychosocial elements like stress, burnout, and mental health problems like depression and anxiety have been found to have an impact on satisfaction levels (Faragher et al., 2005; Caplan et al., 1975). However, studies have found conflicting relationships between job satisfaction and demographic characteristics like age, gender, income, and experience. For example, according to some research, contentment rises with age because of modified expectations (Wright & Hamilton, 1978), but according to other research, satisfaction decreases after first employment (Mishra, 2013). According to VanVoorhis and Levinson's (2006) meta-analysis, there is no reliable correlation between school psychologists' demographic characteristics and job satisfaction. Similar patterns of inconsistency can be seen in research conducted in Bangladesh, where one study found no gender-based difference (Azim et al., 2013) and another found women to be more content than men (Hasan et al., 2020). This shows that rather than just demographics, work happiness might be influenced by more intricate, situation-specific elements.

Despite the fact that job satisfaction has been extensively researched, there is still a sizable research vacuum concerning psychologists in Bangladesh. A

large portion of the literature now in publication either uses antiquated tools without taking into account contemporary cultural changes or treats mental health practitioners as a wide group, encompassing social workers, nurses, and psychiatrists. Without separating out the distinct experiences of psychologists, the few studies that do concentrate on Bangladeshi professionals frequently generalize across industries or professions. Furthermore, the majority of previous research (Hasan et al., 2020) has not examined the potential interactions between job satisfaction and contextual factors including socioeconomic status, residential region, and educational specialization in the Bangladeshi environment. By concentrating solely on psychologists, employing a regionally tailored job satisfaction scale, and utilizing statistical methods to investigate correlations with various professional and demographic factors, this study fills that gap. The results from this purposively sampled group provide important insights into a demographic that is frequently disregarded in workforce research, especially considering how small and interwoven the Bangladeshi psychology community is.

The present study aims to investigate the overall level of job satisfaction among psychologists in Bangladesh and to examine how various demographic characteristics influence their professional well-being. Specifically, this research seeks to identify how factors such as age, income, educational background, work experience, and residential location are associated with job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study explores whether significant differences exist in satisfaction levels across demographic groups, including gender, educational attainment, and work schedule. It also examines variations in job satisfaction among psychologists categorized by age, master's specialization, socioeconomic status, and professional experience. By addressing these objectives, the study intends to provide a comprehensive understanding of how demographic and contextual variables shape occupational satisfaction within the mental health profession in Bangladesh. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights for policymakers, educational institutions, and mental health organizations seeking to enhance job satisfaction and promote the overall well-being of professionals in low-resource settings.

Method

Participants

According to the Mental Health Act (Draft, 2018), a psychologist is defined as an individual who holds a university degree in a mental health-related discipline such as clinical psychology, educational psychology, counseling

psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatric nursing, psychiatry, social work, or occupational therapy from a recognized institution. In the absence of a formal licensing authority in Bangladesh, individuals possessing an honors, master's, or M.Phil. degree in psychology, particularly those with clinical training and supervision, were considered eligible. A total of 100 psychologists participated in this study, selected through purposive sampling from Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, and nearby regions where mental health services are relatively accessible. The sample included 52 males and 48 females, aged between 20 and 40 years, representing early- to mid-career professionals in Bangladesh's emerging mental health sector.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design to assess the levels and demographic correlates of job satisfaction among psychologists in Bangladesh. Data were collected online using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms.

Measures

Personal Information Form, a demographic questionnaire was used to collect participants' background data, including age, gender, religion, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, monthly income, residential area, and years of professional experience. Job Satisfaction Scale, Job satisfaction was assessed using the Bangla version of the Brayfield and Rothe Job Satisfaction Scale (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951; Khaleque, 1995), consisting of 18 items (nine positively and nine negatively worded). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with reverse scoring applied for negative items. Total scores range from 18 to 90, with higher scores indicating greater job satisfaction. A modified version, the Hamida and Morshed Job Satisfaction Scale (2023), adapted for Bangladeshi psychologists, was utilized in this study. The adapted scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .73 in the present sample.

Procedure

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the authors' affiliated institution. Participants were then invited to complete an online survey administered through Google Forms. The survey began with an informed consent statement that outlined the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and participants' rights, including the freedom to withdraw at any time without penalty. Data were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality, and no personally identifiable information was obtained.

The survey comprised two sections: a Personal Information Form capturing demographic data and the Job Satisfaction Scale. Participants were instructed to respond honestly and attentively. The research team at the Bondhu Foundation reviewed and pretested the instrument for clarity, linguistic accuracy, and cultural appropriateness before dissemination. All responses were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the research team for academic purposes. Upon completion of the survey, participants were thanked for their voluntary participation and contribution to the study.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) were computed to summarize participant characteristics and overall job satisfaction. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to examine relationships between job satisfaction and selected demographic variables. Independent-sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA were conducted to assess group differences in job satisfaction based on gender, educational background, socioeconomic status, and other demographic categories.

Results

The study's primary purpose was to see the level of job satisfaction experienced by mental health professionals. The data collected was organized and subjected to statistical analysis. The suitable statistical techniques viz. Descriptive statistics such as mean, SD and correlation were used to examine the association between job satisfaction and other demographic variables. Independent sample t test was used to see the difference in job satisfaction due to sex-difference, educational qualifications, working hours.

The analyzed data is presented in the form of tables based on the findings under various headings.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of the Demographic Variables (N=100)

Variable	Subcategory	Frequency (n)
Age	20–30 years	58
	30–40 years	34
	40 and above	8
Sex	Male	52
	Female	48

Variable	Subcategory	Frequency (n)
Educational background	Master's degree	97
	M.Phil.	3
Master's specialization	Clinical	27
	Counseling	14
	Educational	14
	Industrial–Organizational	13
	Other	32
Work area	Clinical psychologist	18
	Counseling psychologist	45
	Educational psychologist	4
	Industrial psychologist	7
	School psychologist	3
	Child psychologist	3
	Teacher	11
	Other	9
Socioeconomic status	Lower class	3
	Middle class	95
	Higher class	2
Residential area	Urban	83
	Suburban	8
	Rural	9
Marital status	Unmarried	35
	Married	62
	Divorced	3
Monthly income (BDT)	Under 10,000	7
	10,000–30,000	24
	30,000–50,000	34
	50,000–70,000	19
	70,000 and above	16
Number of children	None	73
	One	15
	Two	7
	Three	5
Work experience (years)	1–3	54

Variable	Subcategory	Frequency (n)
Working hours per day	4–5	17
	6–7	13
	8–10	1
	10 and above	15
Work type	5–7 hours	44
	8–9 hours	56
Company type	Government	19
	Non-government	47
	NGO	34
Work type	Online	3
	Offline	59
	Both	38

Note. Frequencies represent the number of participants (N = 100) within each category.

Descriptive statistics of all the demographic variables was measured, representing the frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation of the age, sex, educational background, Masters Branch, Work Area, Socioeconomic Status, Residential Area, Marital Status, Monthly Income, Number of Children, Work Experience, Working Hours per Day, Company Type, and Work Type (Table 1).

The overall job satisfaction scores among psychologists ranged from 43 to 78, with a mean score of 55.32 (SD = 4.61). This average falls above the neutral midpoint of the Brayfield and Rothe Job Satisfaction Scale, indicating that most participants experienced a moderate level of satisfaction with their professional roles. These findings suggest that psychologists in Bangladesh generally perceive their work positively, although there remains room for improvement in certain aspects of job satisfaction. This interpretation aligns with the normative classification proposed by Khaleque (1995), which considers mean scores above the midpoint as indicative of overall job satisfaction.

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationships among age, monthly income, number of children, work experience, working hours per day, and total job satisfaction. Age of the respondent was significantly positively correlated with number of children, $r(98) = .68$, $p < .01$, and monthly income, $r(98) = .26$, $p < .05$. Monthly income was also significantly positively correlated with working hours per day, $r(98) = .40$, $p < .01$, but negatively correlated with total job satisfaction, $r(98) = -.20$, $p < .05$. No significant

correlations were found between work experience and any of the other variables. Total job satisfaction did not significantly correlate with age, number of children, work experience, or working hours per day (all $p > .05$).

Table 2*Pearson Correlation among Study Variables (N=100)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	—					
2. MI	.26*	—				
3. NC	.68**	.16	—			
4. WE	-.01	.13	.00	—		
5. WH	.07	.40**	-.16	.02	—	
6. TJS	-.10	-.20*	-.10	.01	.04	—

Note. N = 100. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3*Independent Sample T-Test for Demographic Variables in Job Satisfaction (N=100)*

Variable		N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	P value
Job Satisfaction	Male	52	55.540	4.746	.491	98	0.625
	Female	48	55.080	4.505			
	Masters	97	55.380	4.651	.756	98	0.452
	M.Phil.	3	53.330	3.055			
	5-7 hours	44	55.140	4.044	.351	98	0.726
	8-9 hours	56	55.460	5.049			

Note. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

The independent sample t-test identifies the significant difference in job satisfaction due to the demographic variables. Table-4 illustrates that there is no significant difference in job satisfaction for sex ($t = .491$, $df = 98$, $P = 0.625$), for educational background ($t = .756$, $df = 98$, $P = 0.452$), and for working hours ($t = -.351$, $df = 98$, $P = 0.726$).

Table 4*One-way ANOVA of Job Satisfaction by Demographic Variables (N=100)*

Variables		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between groups	136.022	3	45.341		
	Within groups	1971.738	96	20.539	2.208	.092
	Total	2107.760	99			
MB	Between groups	262.784	4	65.696	3.383	.012*

	Within groups	1844.976	95	19.421		
	Total	2107.760	99			
WA	Between groups	227.250	7	32.464		
	Within groups	1880.510	92	20.440	1.588	.149
	Total	2107.760	99			
SES	Between groups	439.802	2	219.901		
	Within groups	1667.958	97	17.195	12.788	.001**
	Total	2107.760	99			
RA	Between groups	148.201	2	74.100		
	Within groups	1959.559	97	20.202	3.668	.029*
	Total	2107.760	99			
MS	Between groups	4.306	2	2.153		
	Within groups	2103.454	97	21.685	.099	.906
	Total	2107.760	99			
MI	Between groups	155.863	4	38.966		
	Within groups	1951.897	95	20.546	1.896	.117
	Total	2107.760	99			
WE	Between groups	530.141	4	132.535		
	Within groups	1577.619	95	16.607	7.981	.001**
	Total	2107.760	99			
CT	Between groups	55.469	2	27.748		
	Within groups	2052.264	97	21.157	1.312	.274
	Total	2107.760	99			
WT	Between groups	33.029	2	16.515		
	Within groups	2074.731	97	21.389	.772	.465
	Total	2107.760	99			

Note: **p<0.01, *p<0.05

A one-way ANOVA revealed that job satisfaction significantly differed based on master's specialization, $F(4, 95) = 3.38$, $p = .012$, socioeconomic status, $F(2, 97) = 12.79$, $p < .001$, residential area, $F(2, 97) = 3.67$, $p = .029$, and work experience, $F(4, 95) = 7.98$, $p < .001$. These results indicate that educational background, economic conditions, living environment, and length of professional experience are key factors influencing psychologists' job satisfaction in Bangladesh. No significant differences were found for age, $F(3, 96) = 2.21$, $p = .092$, work area, $F(7, 92) = 1.59$, $p = .149$, marital status, $F(2, 97) = 0.10$, $p = .906$, monthly income, $F(4, 95) = 1.90$, $p = .117$, company type, $F(2, 97) = 1.31$, $p = .274$, or work type, $F(2, 97) = 0.77$, $p = .465$.

Discussion

In Bangladesh, the field of psychology is still in its infancy. People

frequently pursue it out of a strong personal desire to understand human behavior and lessen suffering rather than as a traditional professional degree. A lot of students enter the area with internal reasons including compassion, empathy, and a desire to improve the lives of others. According to our research, Bangladeshi psychologists consistently see meaning and worth in their profession, as seen by their average meaningfulness score of 3.6 out of 5. Finding significance in their everyday work is generally easier for psychologists than for many other professions; this sense of purpose is frequently mentioned as a major factor in the attraction of people to the field. The primary aim of this study was to assess the overall level of job satisfaction among psychologists in Bangladesh, taking into account the unique professional and cultural context in which they operate.

Despite the fact that there was no discernible difference in job satisfaction between male and female psychologists ($t = .491$, $p = 0.625$). A previous study suggested that job satisfaction among males and females has no consistent relation (VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). This could be because both groups are equally affected by systemic issues including stigma and resource limitations. Women may be able to overcome obstacles with the aid of coping mechanisms and intrinsic motivation. However, quantitative assessments could miss subtle implications of patriarchal norms, such hidden biases or unequal acknowledgment. To reveal these gendered experiences, more qualitative study is required. In the current Bangladeshi context, individuals of any age are increasingly able to pursue career opportunities without facing significant age-related discrimination, reflecting a broader cultural shift toward inclusivity and acceptance. Moreover, married women often receive direct or indirect support from their spouses and extended families, which facilitates their participation in the workforce. Many women are also able to resume or balance their careers after childbirth with the help of family networks, particularly in joint family structures. Culturally, such support systems contribute to a more equitable work environment, which may explain why job satisfaction levels between men and women in Bangladesh tend to be relatively similar (Chowdhury, 2024).

Numerous demographic and professional factors, such as age, place of employment, monthly income, marital status, length of professional involvement, work experience, educational background, organizational type (public or private), service delivery mode (online or offline), race, and relationships with coworkers, may have an impact on psychologists' job satisfaction levels. By influencing working circumstances and perceived job satisfaction, these factors may also have a direct or indirect impact on mental

health. Table 5 indicates that only certain factors—master's specialization ($F = 3.383, p = 0.012$), socioeconomic position ($F = 12.788, p < 0.001$), residential area ($F = 3.668, p = 0.029$), and work experience ($F = 7.981, p < 0.001$)—were associated with statistically significant variations in job satisfaction. There was no discernible influence from other variables. These results are consistent with previous research demonstrating that there is frequently an erratic link between job satisfaction and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, or wage (VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). Khaleque (1995) also pointed out that higher levels of stress and anxiety are associated with workplace unhappiness, underscoring the necessity of identifying the major factors that influence mental health professionals' job satisfaction. Aslam and Qureshi (2021) similarly concluded that demographic characteristics alone do not reliably predict job satisfaction in mental health professionals. Their study found that organizational support, supervisory quality, and collegial relationships played a more substantial role, highlighting the need for context-specific strategies over general policy solutions.

After aging, a person sometimes loses their work interest daily, increasing their responsibilities. Which may affect a person's professional life. Also, in this profession, people sometimes lose interest as they age. However, sometimes other reinforcement factors balance their work quality, impacting their mental health. Regarding the correlation between age and job satisfaction, Table 3 revealed a significantly negative correlation ($r = -.098, p = 0.05$), implying that there is a minor decline in job satisfaction with age. While some research indicates a more complex pattern—initial high satisfaction that progressively decreases over time—Mishra (2013) found no correlation between age and work satisfaction. Our findings could be explained by the fact that people's ability to handle the emotional demands of psychological work may deteriorate with age due to a decrease in cognitive flexibility and stress tolerance. Consequently, elder mental health providers may have lower job satisfaction levels.

The current study discovered a substantial negative association ($p < 0.05$) between monthly income and job happiness, despite the common belief that job satisfaction rises with income. This implies that pay may not be the primary factor influencing psychologists' level of satisfaction in Bangladesh. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) states that pay is a hygiene factor; it does not intrinsically motivate, but it does prevent unhappiness. On the other hand, factors like accomplishment, acknowledgment, and career advancement have a greater impact on raising contentment. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of wants (1959), psychologists' job happiness may be more reliant on higher-order

wants like self-actualization and esteem than on pay, which takes care of base needs. Depending on the demographic group, these needs—and how they are satisfied—can differ greatly, which influences how psychologists view their jobs. Being a psychologist requires a lot of mental energy. Greater roles, more responsibilities, and more exposure to clients' trauma, loss, and complicated mental health concerns are frequently associated with higher wages. These factors might negatively impact a psychologist's wellbeing and, consequently, their level of job satisfaction. This aligns with recent findings by Raza and Khalid (2022), who reported that burnout levels among South Asian psychologists were high, and that such emotional exhaustion significantly reduced job satisfaction during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study emphasized the toll of increased workloads, emotional labor, and limited institutional support in shaping satisfaction more than income alone. Prior studies have also indicated that there is a weak or inconsistent association between wage satisfaction and overall job satisfaction (e.g., Boothby & Clements, 2002). This suggests that work-life balance, intrinsic drive, and a supportive work environment may be more important elements in this area.

The present study had some limitations that future researchers should address. First, the study was conducted with a small number of mental health professionals (100), and the sample was selected mainly from Dhaka. Second, maybe participants' responses were based on what they already knew about those questionnaires. To overcome the limitations of the present study, future research may be conducted to develop new and more specific questionnaires.

Studying psychologists' career paths, stability, and contentment is a modern subject that is not often explored in Bangladesh, where psychology is still a developing science. Psychologists may find that their job happiness is analyzed in a way that serves as both a reward and an incentive. Conversely, the study's conclusions could help comprehend the needs of workers in various organizational domains, such as the reasons behind burnout and the challenges faced by psychologists in their professions, and they could also aid in the development of successful intervention plans. Gaining insight into the various elements that influence job satisfaction can assist psychologists in developing resilience, managing stressors, and preserving favorable mental well-being. Gaining insight into the determinants of employment satisfaction can support the development of retention strategies for seasoned psychologists, thereby promoting workforce stability in mental health. The study's results may provide valuable guidance for formulating organizational policies to cultivate a positive work environment. By analyzing the factors that influence job satisfaction, one

can proactively mitigate the risk of professional exhaustion and safeguard the enduring welfare of psychologists. Implementing research findings in developing training programs tailored to the unique requirements of psychologists in Bangladesh is possible. A high job satisfaction rate positively impacts the perception of mental health. Cultivating a positive public image initially inspires more individuals to seek mental health support and remove stigma.

Conclusion

Bangladeshi psychologists' job satisfaction is moderately high, according to this study, although it depends on a number of contextual and demographic factors. It's interesting to note that lesser contentment was associated with more wealth, indicating that intrinsic motivators might be more important than external ones. According to Herzberg and Maslow's frameworks, the results emphasize the significance of considering not just monetary compensation but also career advancement, acknowledgment, and fulfilling employment. These observations highlight the need for culturally sensitive approaches to assist Bangladesh's mental health workforce.

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