

# **Attitudes of Working Students Towards Job Satisfaction**

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1. Background of the study**

Working while studying is a kind of culture that has existed since the UNTAC period, and it is really popular amongst university students. This is possibly caused by three main reasons.

First, it would probably be a carryover style of living. Previously, the concept of working while studying was quite good and meaningful enough to be thought as an admirable perception that one can earn money to support the family and their personal expenses such as school fees whilst pursuing higher education. Since this can help minimizing a family's burden and is such an effective method of self-improvement, most students chose to adapt this action.

Second, Cambodia has a young population. According to World Population Review, Cambodia's population rates have historically fluctuated and somehow dropped moderately due to several wars and internal conflicts in the past time, especially during the Pol Pot Regime. However, there was continuous growth starting from the 1980s, and by 1995, the population had risen up to 10+ million, which then gradually increased to 16.48 million as of now (2019). This indicates that Cambodia is full of young people. Consequently, they are the main power for growing the economy, so once they could attend college, they should work and help contribute to national development.

Third, the legacy still exists, probably, because of the changes in characteristics of new generations or millennials. As stated by Rouse (2019), millennials are those who were born in electronics-filled and socially networked world. One study showed that millennials tend to be more independent, confident and tolerant, for they grew up in such a diverse and self-motivated society. These features made them know their own worth and enlarge their ambitions striving for self-dependent life. As a result, they

choose to be employed while earning their degree so that they can have more freedom and sharpen their ability at the same time. They are more patient when it comes to achieving their own goals. They can stand with various types of people from different backgrounds. In moreover, they love challenging situations as those will showcase their real talent.

Working while studying has been a trend for Cambodian university student for years. This undying culture happens to be even stronger than before.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Cognitive dissonance theory refers to any incompatibility between two or more attitudes or between behavior and attitudes (Stephen & Timothy, 2016, p.114). At times, one can have more than one attitude that contributes much to the behavior of that person. The way of conduct of an employee denotes transparently whether that staff feels content with his or her current work or not. In other words, a staff's action is a clear evidence used to scale his or her levels of job satisfaction.

Meanwhile, job satisfaction, which was described by Locke mentioned in a UK essay website, was a pleasurable and positive reaction resulting from one's job, job achievement and job experiences (2019). Not so differently, Seigel and Lane, quoted in the UK essay, stated that job satisfaction refers to the emotional response defining the degree to which people like their job (2019). However, another renowned job satisfaction theory, dispositional theory, claimed by Heller written in the UK essay, suggested that people have inborn dispositions that encompasses in them to tendencies toward particular levels of satisfaction, despite one's job (2019).

Undeniably, many adults living in this era value workplace satisfaction more than monetary compensation and to them, work-life balance is considerably vital. In addition, to scale the levels of job satisfaction amongst them, how they behave in their organization needed to be learnt as it necessarily influenced levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, the theories significantly provided us the clues and possible outcomes of our study.

## **3. Statement of the problem**

The aim of this study was to find the attitudes of working students as it affects levels of job satisfaction.

Concisely, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the profiles of respondents in terms of gender, years of work experiences and ages?
2. What are the attitudes of working students related specific work dimensions?
3. What are the levels of job satisfaction related to work dimensions?
4. What strategies were used by working students to sustain job satisfaction?

## **II. Methodology**

### **1. Research and design**

To figure out how much working students felt satisfied with their jobs, and to find out the factors affecting it, a quantitative method was used in order to analyze and finalize a reliable outcome. Quantitative research, explained by SIS international research, is a type of research that is dependent on the collection of verbal, behavioral or observational data, which can be interpreted in a subjective manner (2018).

The vital required instruments for this study were a bunch of questionnaires, online articles concerning job satisfactions, and previous studies of other researchers. This project demonstrated how positively or negatively the students reacted to their positions and explained why they thought like that.

### **2. Population and locale of the study**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the survey focused mainly on those who are pursuing their Bachelor's degree and working at the same time. We chose 74 jobholding students from various colleges and universities within Phnom Penh to participate in this study. Regardless of age and nationality, as long as they were the undergraduates performing roles for any organizations, they were the target respondents.

### **3. Data gathering instrument**

The research was done through online-based questionnaires. Hence, the major materials used for this project were google forms, internet and social media as the data was collected by providing the target people the link connecting to the form. By doing this, the results were correctly and automatically calculated which was more convenient for us to interpret the data accurately.

#### 4. Data gathering procedure

The very first step of conducting this survey was creating several questions; likewise, multiple choices questions, and rating questions, which were cohesively related to the topic. The questions were typed into the system (google form). Then, the researchers shared the responsibilities of accumulating the information; each of us sent the link to 25 people at most. To get the gathering process done, we spent two weeks. Soon after we received enough information, and we analyzed and summarized them in the hope of producing a dependable result.

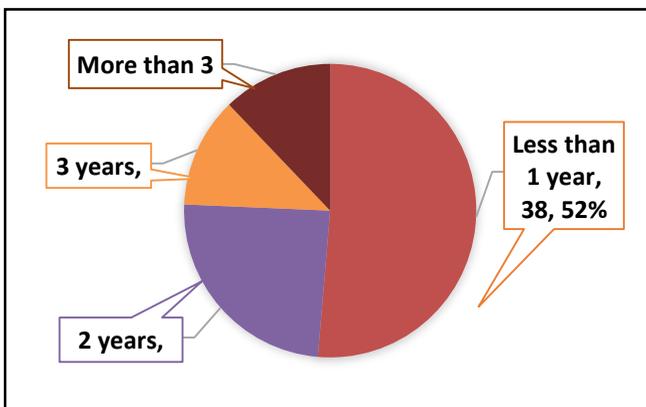
### III. Results and discussion

This chapter reveals the information that was sufficiently collected and describes each of the section of statements as the interpretation of the data.

#### 1. Respondent profiles

We thought the participants' background information could be helpful, as they provided their age, gender and work experiences, where they clarified how long they had been in the field.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of years of working experiences for the whole population. The graph points out that 51% of the participants had been in the job industry for less than one year, and the other 24% are those who have worked for two years.



Most (43%) of the participants were either 20 and 21 years old, while the next group was 22 years old (16%). Respondents were almost equally divided by gender, with 54% being male and 46% identifying as female.

Figure 1: Overall sample of respondents' work experiences

## 2. Job attitudes

Figure 2 represents the reactions of the whole sample on each dimension within their organizations.

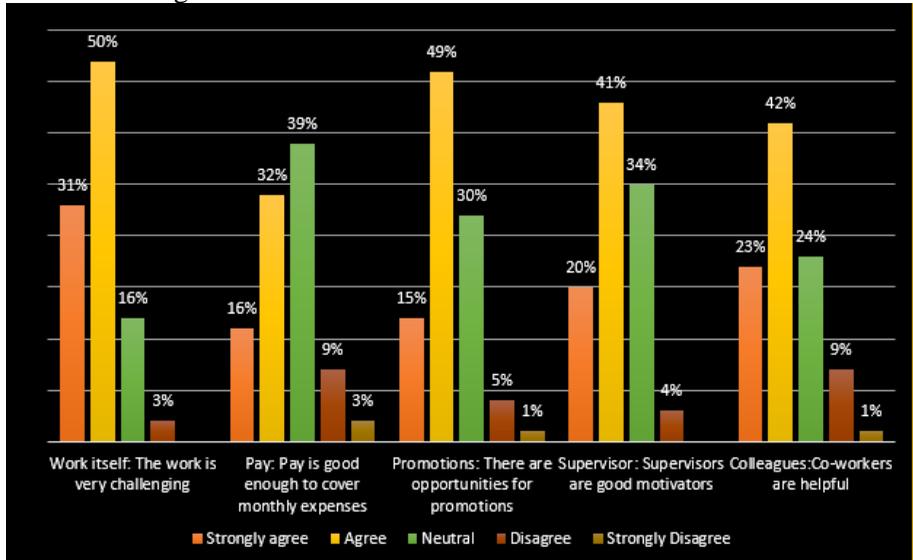


Figure 2: Respondents' level of attitude toward the dimensions in their current workplace

For the first dimension, the work is very challenging, 37 people (50%) agreed with that, another 23 respondents (31%) chose to strongly agree with the point, and the other 12 working students (16%) could not decide whether it was acceptable or not. However, there were 2 participants didn't think that their work is challenging enough.

In the second dimension, pay is good enough to cover monthly expenses, the levels of positive attitudes (strongly agree and agree) lowered down dramatically as only 12 people (16%) felt the pay is extremely suitable and 24 others (32%) also confirmed this point. Yet, another 7 respondents (9%) strongly disagreed with the point along with the 2 people who chose the same side but lighter negative attitudes, while the other 29 people (39%) thought that their salary is not too much nor too little.

For the third dimension, there are opportunities for promotions, as can be seen that the agreement rate (49%) was high which means that 36 people, along with another 11 respondents, saw lots of chances of being promoted within their companies. In contrast, there were only 5 participants who received no

chance at all. Nevertheless, the other 22 people (30%) expressed that there may or may not have chances for promotions in their workplace.

In the fourth dimension, Supervisors are good motivators, the attitudes of the respondents were seen as positive since 48 people agreed that their managers encourage them. Still, there were 3 people (4%) who had not been motivated by their current leaders, and the other 20 people (34%) didn't think that their supervisors are skillful in that area.

In the fifth dimension, co-workers are helpful and cooperative, the result shows that 31 people, as well as another 17 working students, agreed to the statement which could be implied that they have a cheerful and strong communication within their teamwork. On the one hand, 8 participants revealed that their teammates (co-workers) are not easy to be reached, and might as well performed badly in group work. On the other hand, 18 people (24%) could not figure out whether their team's relationship is good nor bad.

### 3. Strategies to improve work attitude

Figure 3 (see below) represents the level of agreement that the following strategies are effective in terms of enhancing work attitudes.

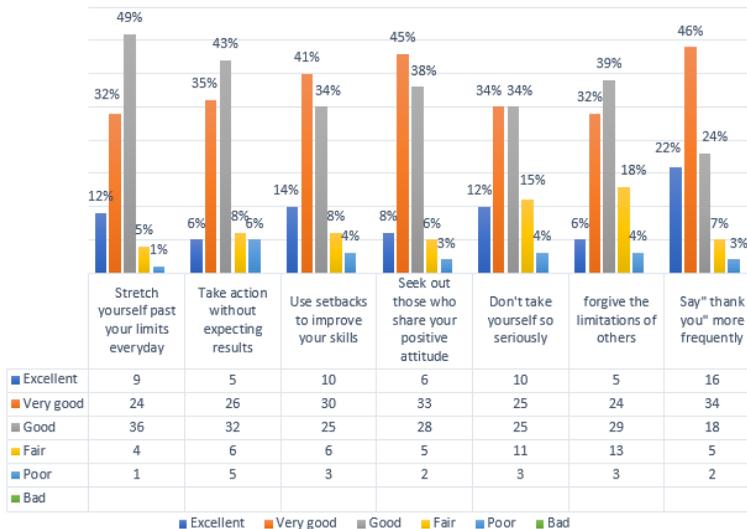


Figure 3: Level of agreement for enhancing work attitudes

For the first tip, stretch yourself past your limits every day, was voted as a good method by 36 people (49%) amongst 74 participants. It received more

positive feedback rather than the negative ones as most students (92%) labeled it as an effective strategy.

The second method, take action without expecting results, its outcome was not so different from the first one since a majority of respondents voted on the positive side of this tip. Yet, there was a bit increase in the selection of it as a poor technique.

The third tip, use setbacks to improve your skills, received even more recognition as 30 people thought it is a very good method; another 10 people rated it as an excellent strategy, and the other 25 agreed on that as well. In the contrary, only 3 respondents thought that developing one's skill through failures is a bad idea.

The fourth tip, seek out those who share your positive attitude, gained much support as the very good chart climbed to 45% (33 people), followed by the good scale 38% (28 people), and the excellent 8% (6 people). Besides, 5 others revealed that staying near the cheerful people or co-workers is such a simple technique, while the 2 left disvalued with this tip at all.

The fifth method, don't take yourself so seriously, was rated as an effective tip, too. As can be seen, two groups consisted of 25 people selected very good and good as their options. Furthermore, 10 people loved this method. Conversely, 3 people did not think it's helpful, while the rest (12 people) showed no impression toward this tip.

The sixth tip, forgive the limitations of others, received good results. A large number of participants (29) rated it as a good choice, followed by 24 others voted it as a very good solution. Nevertheless, 13 others felt that it has nothing special; plus, the 3 disagreed with this.

The seventh technique, say "thank you" more frequently, earned a great outcome. As in the graph, we can see that both excellent (22%) and very good points (46%) were quite high, while there was a bit drop of the good point (24%). Yet, only 2 people considered it as a poor method, while 5 others gave a neutral reaction.

## **IV. Discussion**

This part highlights the main points of the data presented in the previous pages. As discussed, the most noticeable features were seen as the following:

In part 1, most participants were between the ages of 20-22, and 41 out of the 74 respondents were male; a majority of the overall sample had been working for less than one year.

In section 2, every work dimension seemed to equally gain positive reaction from the participants, for most of them possibly had a friendly working environment surrounded by reliable supervisors and co-workers. Yet, the negative attitude toward the pay was slightly higher, which means that some of them did not receive suitable wages.

In section 3, a majority of respondents were dissatisfied about pay. As mentioned above, salary is not enough to cover daily expenses to some participants. Probably, things are getting more and more expensive while staff's salary still remain at a low rate compared to the increase of the price of products.

In section 4, all of the strategies were greatly supported by the respondents. However, the last one, say Thank You more often, is the most frequent used method among the seven tips. This indicates that most of them, working students, said the word 'thank you' more often within their workplace in order to enhance their work attitude since this word is not hard to speak out once you would like to show your appreciation, and it has a positive effect on the receivers as well, which means that it boosts a delightful mood for both parties. That is why it was picked as the most powerful tip.

## **V. Conclusion**

From the findings, the following were concluded:

Working students' attitude toward job satisfaction in their workplace seemed to be positive. They happened to agree with the statements highlighting the good points of their organization like their current position, leaders, co-workers, opportunities for promotion, but were a bit disappointed with respect to their wages.

They all rated the given strategies as similarly helpful for producing a better work attitude, but the most popular one was showing appreciation by saying “thank you” at their workplace.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Since most of them (according to the data) like each dimension but wage, the company and the government should consider giving employees more value by providing them the proper salary and reducing the tax rates.

Attitude has a direct impact on work performance of an employee. And as there are several effects that employees’ reaction that could relate to their job, the company should maintain a good working culture; also, training, consultation, reward and motivation should be created in order to make a positive attitude of a staff.

To create a better job attitude, employees should handle their internal emotions first. Despite of having a paced schedule between learning and working, they should have a relaxed mindset, enjoy the things they are doing, keep some space for refreshing their brains and don’t get stuck in one place for the whole day of working or studying. They should get to know and communicate with their colleagues more often as this will help reducing the awkwardness or negative thinking toward one another so that they can get along well and won’t feel pressured while doing their job.

In general, to enhance positive job attitude and job satisfaction within workplace, both employers and employees need to understand one another. Employees should do what they love and should be more open to the surrounding environment whereas, employers should think of staff’s demands and try to fulfill them if they are reasonable enough.

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