

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG  
HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WORKING AT A TERTIARY CARE  
HOSPITAL OF PAKISTAN**

**Imrana Aziz, Ramesh Kumar\*, Anita Rathore\*\*, Manohr Lal\*\*\***

Dow University of Health Sciences Karachi, \*Health Services Academy Islamabad, \*\*Liaquat University of Health Sciences Jamshoro,  
\*\*\*Capital Development Authority Hospital Islamabad-Pakistan

**Background:** Work environment is believed to be a major factor for better performance of human resource for health in any organization. This study concentrated on multiple factors involved in job satisfaction was appraised to critique their efficient significance in calculation of the health professional liking. Factors included job matched with workers' skills/experience, incentives, supervision, administrator support; convenient work load, training, appreciation, low pay and job protection were major contributors in job satisfaction. **Methods:** A mix method study was done in 2014; an initial descriptive cross sectional survey was done followed by qualitative approach. Eighteen in-depth interviews with health care providers were conducted after taking written consent. Nodes, sub-nodes and final themes were generated during qualitative data analysis. **Results:** Main findings and themes were generated after making the nodes and sub-nodes from the most frequent responses. These themes were; absence of work pressure, work place safety, social support, learning opportunities, and employee influence on conditions and recognition individual or team efforts. **Conclusion:** Work environment is a major contributing factor towards job satisfaction among the health workers.

**Keywords:** Work environment, job satisfaction, health workers and human resources

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**INTRODUCTION**

Organization depends on working environment of human resource that ultimately effect on-job satisfaction of the employees. Job satisfaction is a multi-layered behaviour that depicts a professional's reactions and feelings towards his/her job.<sup>1</sup> This is epitomized in medical care provision where a health care worker's satisfaction influence their performance resultantly, compliance among their patients.<sup>2,3</sup> This is obvious that job satisfaction can be measured by conducive working environment, institutional factors and the social side of the workers in which they can perform in better way.<sup>4</sup>

An organization's overall productivity and quality of individual work is related to job satisfaction in. Beyond organization's realm it has effects on motivation, career, health and relation with co-workers.<sup>5-7</sup> A study conducted in Turkey, which also shows that the positive working environment, low fringe benefits and poor salaries are the main factors behind the job satisfaction in health workers working in health organization of public sector while socio-demographic characteristics were found having no significant relation with their job satisfaction.<sup>8</sup> Other factors like introduction to job, in-service training, and monthly income had significant positive effects on overall job satisfaction.<sup>9,10</sup> The workers inspiration, dedication, supportive attitude of the administration and higher ups and performance in any organization are directly related with the positive

working environment that will ultimately effect on the organizational development and timely achievement of the goal. Security measures and workplace violence are also common factors in the working environment that has to be managed properly.<sup>11</sup> An individual output and performance are highly dependent on the surroundings physical environment of the institution. Personal and psychological satisfaction regarding the organization is vital in productivity and development of the organizational output.<sup>12</sup> Human resource is the key factor in building of any organization. It is imperative to deploy the right person on right place on right time for service delivery organization on effective performance.<sup>13</sup>

Health professional's migration due to low income is a common phenomenon in developing countries.<sup>14</sup> Moreover various studies on work environment carry out along with medical professionals prove the significance of mutual coordination and behaviour in job pleasure which includes lack of supervision, participatory workplace environment, distress and the time pressure at workplace. Time pressure plays very vital role in job liking in any institute. It is to be noted that decrease working hours will positively effect on job liking by workers.<sup>15</sup> Literature revealed that the both monetary and non-monetary incentives are very crucial in the motivation of health professionals. These intrinsic factors are well tackled by management and

administration of an organization. Health professionals have low motivation due to poor working environment due to poor management and lack of governance in health system.<sup>16</sup> Permanent employees are less satisfied with job as compared to contractual staff. The finding revealed that as age of employee increases the level of job satisfaction decreases.<sup>17</sup>

Owing to factors like low salary and scarcity of resources; those working with public sector were not satisfied and had low motivation.<sup>18</sup> Private sector with its competitive edge and robust staff retention policies provides more fringe benefits and perks to medical professionals when compared to public sector. Medical professionals working in private sector are happier with their job due to factors like: (1) organizational dedication, (2) lower levels of psychological misery, (3) proper working relation, and (4) proper sleeping hours as compared with physicians working in public sector. Private sector physicians also experienced greater levels of institutional support and honesty, which acted as a moderator at the back of more constructive approach and healthier atmosphere in private sector.<sup>19</sup>

Another driver of job satisfaction is the “perception of working environment”; which differs between a tertiary care setting and a primary level care setting. A study conducted in Italy shows that the level of job satisfaction in health care workers was very low working in district level hospitals as compared to those who were working in tertiary care facilities.<sup>20</sup> Job satisfaction can be improved by better communication, good management practices, and clear job description in any organization. Conflict management is an important issue in management and to provide good working relation at the working place.<sup>21</sup> Working environment factors amongst health professionals working in tertiary care settings of Pakistan are largely not known that need to be studied. So far, limited studies have been conducted among health professionals regarding their work environment. Findings of this study will help in policy formulations for decision makers in improving the work environment at health care settings of Pakistan.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

A mixed method study with an initial descriptive cross-sectional survey followed by in-depth interviews was conducted to develop a construct on the working environment and factors influencing it at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Islamabad. Health workers included: ward boys, receptionists, laboratory technicians, administration staff, doctors, nursing staff and heads of departments working in PIMS Islamabad by convenient sampling

method. Health professionals who were not Pakistani national were excluded from the study. Eighteen in-depth interviews were conducted with objectively structured model (Kristensen 1999 Model) with three nurses, three doctors, three lab technicians, 3 doctor’s attendants, three receptionists and three head of the organization. Data was analysed by making the nodes, sub-nodes and final themes were generated from the most frequent responses by the participants. Ethical approval was taken from the institutional review board of Health Services Academy Islamabad.

## RESULTS

Keeping in view all the stressors and indicators results were analysed as per following six thematic areas with the followings main findings, and themes were generated after making the nodes and sub-nodes from the most frequent responses.

It was observed that there were no proper skill mix (5:0) and the work load was 3300 patients/day total with low number of health care workers. Task shifting was observed within different cadres with no specified time for breaks. Most of the participants agreed that low salary and time pressure at work were factors not liked by them. Few of them disliked the political interference and some of them mentioned job insecurity. All of them believed that: low incentives, improper posting as per qualification/merit, lack of resources, extra work and work schedule, undefined outcomes, less chances to grow, restrictions due to governmental procedure, power failure, lack of privacy, leg pulling, no career path, administration, uncertainty and monopoly regarding their disliking factors in their job satisfaction.

Workplace safety measures were available but occupational safety equipment was not used as a routine. Few of the staff members were trained in civil defence. Overall the environment of the hospital was clean and hygienic with proper security measures at the organizational level. Majority of the participants were of the opinion of respect with good working environment. Few of them added that clear Job description and commitment and some of them intended that the flexibility and multiplicity were the strong factors for their job satisfaction. All of them agreed that honesty, prevention of diseases in community, empowerment of community, good environment, on transferable, administration, research and development, permanent and public services, academic position, good working relationship and teaching were the main contributing factors for their inclination to work in the Health department.

Socially there was strong collaboration with colleagues at all level with positive communication. There was medical association present for their

support. Poor patients were supported by *zakat* and other available funds. Workers were used to arrange regular social gathering in the form of tea club and lunches etc. All of them suggested that friendly and cooperative working environment, focus on their work, timely work, completing the task, frequent and open communication with staff, services to end users, positive feedback, friendly communication with patients, regards to others, guidance for poor patients, free medication and medical services to the needy population need development.

Regarding opportunities there was no proper formal in-service training for healthcare staff except few workshops etc. Doctors had more opportunities as compared to lower staff. All of them suggested that friendly and cooperative working environment, focus on their work, timely work, completing the task, frequent and open communication with staff, delegating the duties to subordinates, positive feedback, recognition to the juniors' efforts, placing the personnel as per their expertise, training for time management, respect and appreciation for work, avoiding irrelevant task, adequate staff were important. Participants reported that training opportunities and career structure should be provided. Some said that monetary benefits should be given and some of the participants agreed that they needed just verbal appreciation.

Employees decisions are made at higher level, they were totally unaware regarding these decisions. There was no proper mechanism for sharing of management issues with staff. Views included: proper channel of communication, proper guidance, provision of accommodation, make clear objectives, give power to work, utilize the resources optimally, avoid unnecessary phone calls, proper place for posting, time management courses, administrative support, separate offices, proper planning, avoiding irrelevant task, discipline, punctuality, freedom to work according to schedule, isolation from visitors, punctuality and regularity and honesty for improvement of the time management in public sector of Pakistan. It was observed that there was no proper mechanism of incentives and remuneration for the employees on their work. There was no system placed for award or recognition for employees.

## DISCUSSION

Global evidence on job satisfaction does allow comparing results from our study. However due to qualitative design findings cannot be generalized and need to be confirmed by further research in other areas of Pakistan. With this limitation in mind, the study evaluated factors influencing working environment among healthcare workers in public

sector of Pakistan and the results highlighted overall disliking. These results are almost the same as in a study conducted in Brazil.<sup>22</sup> Participants were dissatisfied with the working environment and were of the opinion that they needed good and healthy working environment for better output of the organization.<sup>23</sup> A study conducted in Spain proved that the workers' thinking regarding psychological and emotional issues were very crucial and should not to be ignored while improving the work environment of any organization that will ultimately play a vital role in job happiness of the health workers.<sup>24</sup> Overall dissatisfaction among health workers at public sector of Islamabad has many factors but working environment has more repercussions for good organization and their sustainability. According to Smith, workers retort inauspiciously to limiting work environments therefore it is critical for organizations to construct working environment that facilitate employees and inspiring the workforce to reach a higher satisfaction level in their jobs.<sup>25</sup>

This study shows that the participants were not satisfied with their training opportunities at their organization. Similar study conducted in Mali had proved that the trainings were very important to build the capacity of healthcare workers and improve job liking. Training is shown to boost the self-confidence and motivation of health professionals towards getting improved quality of care.<sup>26</sup>

The results also showed that participants were satisfied with their relationships with professional colleagues, staff and service seeker. These findings are consistent with the study in Japan, where it was found that job satisfaction was related with good quality relations, coordination and a response to give a good value of concern in health organization. Many researches done on healthcare workers for to the significance of coordination and relation in job motivation, and that kind of relations will lead to greater patient safety, increased liking and more patient well beings. Communication and coordination with right team work approach are very crucial factors in creating the positive working environment in the organization that will ultimately affect the organizational performance.<sup>27</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Congenial environment at workplace can affect not only motivation but also career decisions, relationships with others and personnel's future growth in their chosen area of expertise. Medical professionals work in an environment which is not only unpredictable but also extremely demanding; these are enough reasons for developing feelings of uncertainty and reduced job satisfaction. Job

motivation of healthcare workers is also an essential part of ensuring high quality care. Factors defining a poor work environment are: (1) lack of opportunities, (2) workload, (3) workplace violence, (4) empowerment and (5) lack of incentives; while all were satisfied with coordination and awareness regarding safety measures at work place.

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## Address for Correspondence:

**Imrana Aziz**, Dow University of Health Sciences, Karachi-Pakistan.

**Email:** zulfikar.gorar@gmail.com