

# Impact of Employee Participation on Job Satisfaction in Nepalese Commercial Banks

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**Abstract:** *This article attempts to examine the relationship between employee participation and job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks for which four Nepalese commercial banks — two each from government and private sectors— were selected as the sample. Based on primary data the study adopted a questionnaire survey on 200 employees from the assistant to manager levels of the sample organizations and it received response from altogether 146 respondents (73 percent). Based on explanatory research design, the study showed that there is positive relationship between employee participation and job satisfaction in Nepalese banks. The findings reveal that employee participation is an important determinant of job satisfaction. Increased employee participation makes a positive effect on job satisfaction of Nepalese banking employees.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Among the several facets of organizational effectiveness, employee job satisfaction is also a considerably significant aspect of effectiveness. With the growing concern placed on human aspect of the management, satisfaction perceived by the human capital who contributes to the attainment of organizational goal has been looked upon importantly. Commonly assessed dimensions of job satisfaction include satisfaction with pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work, communication and participation (Spector, 1985).

Job satisfaction is an employee's general attitude toward the job. Job satisfaction is generally recognized as a multifaceted construct that includes employee feelings about a variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic job elements. It encompasses specific aspects of satisfaction related to pay, benefits, promotion,

work conditions, supervision, organizational practices and relationships with co-workers (Misener et.al, 1996).

Job satisfaction is a person's evaluation of his or her job and environment of the job. Employee job satisfaction considers the both context as well as content factors job satisfaction (McShane, 2004). It is the feeling about the job or the facets of the job (Spector, 1997).

Employees' participation refers to the direct involvement of individuals in decisions relating to their immediate work organization and to indirect involvement in decision making, through representatives in an organization (Agrawal, 2005). And, participative management is a management technique in which employees are given a voice in determining what they are to do, how they are to do it, and how they are to be appraised. It is a democratic philosophy that respects all members of an organization (Pant, 2009). The concept of employees' participation in management indicates an attempt on the part of an employer to build employees into a team which work towards the realization of a common objective. It is a mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation which encourages them to contribute to goals and share responsibilities in them.

Therefore, it can be said that employee participation is the process of employee involvement in the decision making process of the organization. It is the democratic process where employees or employees representative are asked to share their opinions and ideas for the effectiveness of the organization. Employee participation in organizational activities brings recognition, sense of belongingness, self respect and acceptance in employees.

Job satisfaction is the people general attitude towards job. Different intrinsic and extrinsic job elements can influence the level of job satisfaction. Pay, benefits, work environment, relation with managers and peers, participation, communication and fair treatment in organization are the common factors which influence the job satisfaction of employees. It is widely believed that employee participation can be the factor to enhance the employee job satisfaction in workplace.

The economic liberalization and privatization policy adopted by the Nepalese government since mid 1980s from 190s had more commercial banks in Nepal. Amid the competitive business environment, it became researchable to look into how these banks are practicing human resource management for their employee job satisfaction and what is the impact of employee participation on their job satisfaction. Nepalese banking sector has to retain and attract the qualified human resources to achieve the success and goals. Job satisfaction is very crucial for the retention and attraction of the competent people in the organization. The job satisfaction of employees in relation to employee participation practices in this sector is the main issue of this study. Employee participation is important to ensure that their competencies are fully utilized. Likewise, employee participation is a critical factor in engaging and keeping employees in the organization to improve employee job satisfaction and retention.

Employees value effective communication and participation from their management. This study is an attempt to explore the impact of employee participation practices on job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This article addresses the issue related to the relationship between employees' participation and job satisfaction. The primary objective of this study is to examine the explaining capacity of the employee participation practices in variation to job satisfaction in the Nepalese banking sector.

Most of the studies show that relationship between the employee participation and job satisfaction is positive. Sinha (1972) argues that the job satisfaction is basically related to human needs and their fulfillment through work. It is generated by individual's perception of how well his job on the whole is satisfying to his various needs. Hoppock (1935) who had introduced job satisfaction empirically by reviewing all the studies before 1933 found that job satisfaction is the combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances which promotes to enhance employees job satisfaction.

Many research findings showed that job satisfaction is influenced by job situation, demographic and personal characteristics of the workers. It is suggested that compensation, working conditions, job security, group structure, supervision, interest in job, aspirations, personal attributes etc are also correlated with job satisfaction (Adhikari 2005). However, no significant association between demographic variables and job satisfaction has also been observed in the findings of studies conducted by Srivastava (1978). Luthans and Thomas (1989; cited in Adhikari; 2005) found that workers who are 30 years of age or above have an overall higher job satisfaction than for those below 30 years. It also suggested that the employees who have worked for more than 5 years are more satisfied than the employees with less than 5 years of experience.

Oshagbemi (2000) research investigated the effects of gender on the job satisfaction. A questionnaire including several demographic variables such as gender, rank and age was administered in the study. The results supported that gender does not affect the job satisfaction of university teachers directly. But female teachers at higher ranks such as senior lecturers, readers and professors, were more satisfied with their jobs than male academics of comparable ranks. This study revealed that although gender is not by itself related to overall job satisfaction, it is related to other job satisfaction factors such as pay, physical conditions and working facilities.

The relationships between job satisfaction and gender have been examined by many research studies. However, some studies have found women are more satisfied than men. But some studies found men are more satisfied than women. However, most of researches in this area suggested no significant differences between the genders in relation to job satisfaction (Oshagbemi, 2000).

According to Monge, et al (1992), the participative management is the way some organizations have involved employees in the process of improving organizational

performance. Lawler (1986) conceptualized the employees' participation in four critical factors as information sharing, training, decision making, and rewards. Pfeffer (1994) argues that organizational performance can be increased by adopting 'best work practices.' According to Pfeffer the employee participation is one of the widely recognized best practices to increase organizational performance. Heller (2003, cited in Richardson et al., 2010) defines participation as taking part in an activity, and power distribution, which has influence over the activity, further arguing that there is a positive link between participation, job satisfaction and higher productivity. Richardson et al, (2010) research findings supported the Heller statement that there is indication of the sharing of power in the workplace and employees' participation on work-related issues to enhance the job satisfaction and productivity.

"Participatory management has to be introduced in organizations where power is shared, everyone is given an opportunity to participate, work is conducted by consensus and multidisciplinary teams are utilized to implement processes. All this demands a change in corporate culture, in which everyone must adopt the new principles and values, particularly senior managers" (Bhatti and Qureshi, 2007; p.55).

The productivity of the organization can be improved by striving for the shared goals of employees and managers. The communication can be improved, the morale and employees job satisfaction can be increased by participating employee into decision making, organizational goals and strategy formulation, establishing policies and procedures, and determining compensation and benefits (Bhatti and Qureshi, 2007).

Bhatti and Qureshi (2007) research study supported that the employees participation has the positive impact on job satisfaction, employee productivity and employee commitment. Employees' participation in decision making has a positive and significant impact on the job satisfaction of the employees indicating that an employee's participation in decision making can help to enhance the better employees' performance. The correlation and regression analysis in this study indicated that the employees' participation can significantly explain the variation in employees' job satisfaction, commitment and productivity.

Employee Participation is generally defined as a process in which different hierarchical employees share their ideas and opinions to influence the decision making, setting strategy and goals. The involvement of managers and their subordinates in communication, information processing, decision making and problem solving activities are balanced by the employees' participative approach (Wagner, 1994).

According to Bhatti and Qureshi, (2007), Coch and French are considered as the pioneers in studying the effects of employee participation in organizations and employee outcomes. They developed the productivity and efficiency rationalization that supported the employees' participation and involvement in decision-making has the direct link and positive relation to the job satisfaction and productivity as the organizational outcomes.

Similarly, the relationship between job satisfaction and participation in management as studied by Lischeron and Wall (1975) found causal relationship between participation

and job satisfaction. It revealed that participation management style enhances high level job satisfaction which has great influence on employees' attitudes towards job.

Studies have found that participation in decision making results not only in grater job satisfaction but also in higher productivity. Participation often reduces conflict and stress, and encourages employees towards goal achievements and employees are ready to accept the change through participative management (Cole, et al., 1993). Similarly Pearson (1991) found that the self actualization needs of employees are satisfied by employees' participation in decision-making which results in high employees' motivation, satisfaction and job performance. Similarly, Cooke (1992) focused participation of employees and its positive impact on organizational outcomes such as organization performance, employees' job satisfaction and productivity.

In addition, Ladd and Marshall (2004) study on employees participation in decision making from a cross section employees in the public, private and local government sectors found that the employees participation in decision making contributed effective performance and greater gains in the workplace but did not contribute to increase job satisfaction. Yammarino and Naughton (1992) as cited in Ladd and Marshall (2004)) found that employees' participation in decision making created shared perceptions which positively influenced job satisfaction and employees outcomes. The participatory decision making process improved productivity as well as job satisfaction.

Likewise, Kim (2002) research study found that the participative management and employees' participation in strategic planning process are positively associated with high level of job satisfaction. Study also revealed that employees' participation with effective supervisory communication can enhance the high level employee job satisfaction. Employees' participative in decision making has a significant positive effect on performance feedback, task significance, and career development support and satisfaction.

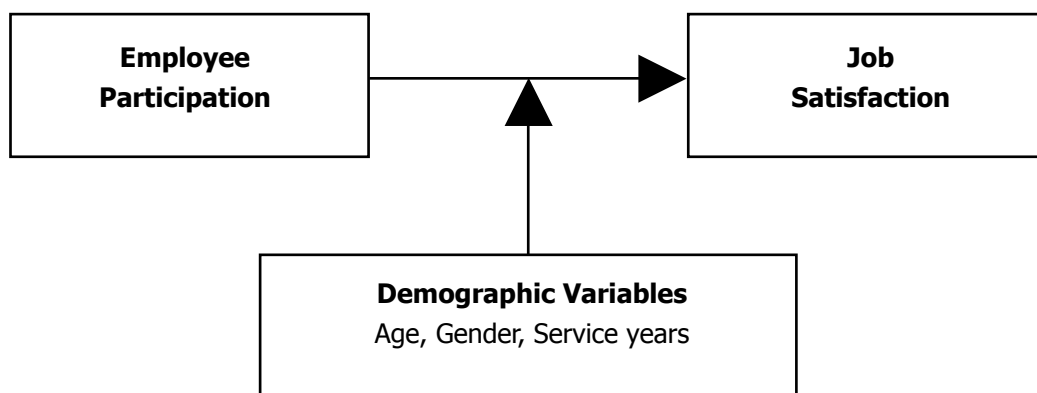
Similarly, Rotenberry and Moberg (2007) research study on impact of job involvement on performance revealed that higher levels of job involvement are positively associated with increased performance and organizational citizenship behavior. The research supported that encouraging greater job involvement have the positively influence on employees work related performance, outcomes and behaviors. Participative management is the collective and shared decision making in which activities such as job enrichment, job redesign, suggestion system and feedback from employees are incorporated (Drehmer et al., 2000). Similarly, Locke and Schweiger (1979; as cited in Drehmer et al., 2000) research study on participative management suggested that participation increase the individual job satisfaction level. Likewise, Wright and Kim (2004) research study found that Many research findings supported that employee participation has positive effect on job satisfaction (Cooke, 1992; Kim, 2002; Rotenberry and Moberg ,2007; Bhatti and Qureshi 2007).

From the above discussion it is clear that the study of relationship between the employee participation and job satisfaction has become of great interest to practitioners as well as to scholars. However, participation practices are supposed to vary from

organization to organization resulting in varying degree and nature of job satisfaction and organization performance. The employee participation, communication and labour-management and their effects on workplace productivity and competitiveness encouraged many countries considering participatory employment practices as a way to improve their productivity, performance and thus competitiveness. The evidence suggests that increased in employee participation encourages positive changes in employees' behaviour and performance which helps to enhance job satisfaction and commitment both directly and indirectly (Mitchell ,1973; Locke and Schweiger, 1979; Wright and Kim,2004; Richardson et al, 2010).

In this study, job satisfaction has been conceptualized as the outcome of the employees' participation practices. Employees' participation and job satisfaction have been conceptualized to have cause and effect relationships.

Besides the participation, demographic variables such as age, gender, and job experience have also been considered for the purpose of the study, as the explanatory variables.



**Fig :** Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework

This study examines the relationship of employee participation with job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks. The influence of age, gender and service years of employees are also taken as the intervening explanatory variables of the job satisfaction in Nepalese commercial banks.

Based on conceptual framework and a thorough review of relevant literature on job satisfaction and employee participation, the study brings the first hypothesis which focuses on the direct positive interrelation between employee participation and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: Employees participation has positive effect on job satisfaction.

The demographic variables such as age, gender, and service years of employees were also considered as the intervening variables of the job satisfaction in the conceptual framework of this study. Many research studies found that job satisfaction is influenced

by demographic and personal characteristics of the employees (Adhikari, 2005). Research found that the age and service years are positively related to job satisfaction (Luthans and Thomas, 1989). Based on the literature and the conceptual framework the second hypothesis is derived as there is positive relationship between the age and service years of employees to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Age and service years are positively related to job satisfaction.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The research designs adopted for the purposes of the study was explanatory. For this study all the employees of the commercial banks of Nepal were considered as population and two hundred employees of four commercial banks were considered as the samples for the study. Two state-owned commercial banks were selected as samples which are under the restructuring programme of the central bank of Nepal. Two private commercial banks which have long service history were also considered as sample banks. The banks having minimum 100 employees are selected as sample organization. Since primary data were obtained through questionnaire administration, sample respondents were selected from the different departments of the banks with help of the Human Resource Department. Convenient sample technique was applied to collect the data. The respondents considered were from assistant to managerial levels of the different departments. The sample banks were taken from government and private sector. With the point of view of ownership patron, Nepalese banks are classified as government and private banks. Government banks are those which have major government shares in the equity structure. There are two commercial banks having major government shares. They are Nepal Bank limited (NBL) and Rastriya Banijaya Bank (RBB) which were taken as sample banks for this study. Private Banks are those where government investment is not involved as equity. From the private sector Bank of Kathmandu (BOK) and Nepal Investment Bank limited (NIBL) were taken as sample banks.

Basically primary data were used for the study and they were collected mainly from questionnaires survey. To ensure full coverage of potential respondents, questionnaires were distributed with the help of the HR department of the concerned organization. This ensured that all employees from different departments in the organization were covered. It included: assistance, officer and managers of the organizations. The questionnaires were distributed to 200 employees of the under study banks. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was distributed in June 2010. The questionnaire was distributed with the help of HR department to get responses from heterogeneous employee group of the under study banks.

The items of employee participation section of the questionnaire were selected from questionnaire developed by Kersley et.al (2006) "Workplace Employment Relations Survey." The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) based on Weis et al (1967) was used to determine the level of employee satisfaction. The survey questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents for each sample area, government banks and private

banks. Total 146 usable questionnaires were obtained with 73 percent response rate. The structured questionnaires were distributed. All data was collected anonymously. The close ended questionnaire with the five scales (Likert scales) were prepared to explain the effect of employees participation on job satisfaction in the under study organizations. The questionnaires were formulated to cover the variables of the study. Correlation and regression analysis were used in the study to test the relationships between the depended and the independent variables of the study.

#### *Reliability Test*

Coefficient alpha method was used for the reliability test of the data. All the 59 items of employee participation and job satisfaction dimensions were tested by Cronbach's alpha for the reliability and consistency of the data. The coefficient of reliability was found 0.76 which is enough to accept the questionnaire.

### **IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### *Relationship Between Employee Participation and Job Satisfaction*

Correlation matrix is computed to assess the extent or degree of relationship in between the research variables. To test the relationship between the variables of the study the average of all the employee participation variables statement of the questionnaire and the average of the job satisfaction statement variables of the questionnaire were derived for the correlation analysis. Table 1.1 correlation matrix shows the interrelationship among the variables of employee participation and job satisfaction and demographic variables and job satisfaction.

Table 1.1 : Correlation Matrix

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Service year</b>	<b>Communication &amp; Participation</b>	<b>Job Satisfaction</b>
Employee Participation	.135	-.082	.096	1	
Job Satisfaction	-.027	-.131	-.053	.485(**)	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From Table 1.1, it is clear that the employees' participation is positively correlated with the job satisfaction. The job satisfaction has positive relation ( $r=0.485$ ,  $\alpha > 0.01$ ) with employees participation which is statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. The correlation between job satisfaction and age, gender and service year are negatively correlated and seems not sufficiently correlated. The correlations between these variables are no statistically significant at the .01 and .05 levels of significance. Furthermore, the study examines the relationship of job satisfaction with employee participation and demographic variables of the study using linear regression analysis.



Table 1.2 : Relationship of Job Satisfaction with Employee Participation and Demographic variables (age, gender and service years)

Model	Intercept	Regression Coefficients of				R Square	SEE	F
		Employee participation	Age	Gender	Service years			
1	4.052 (10.904*)		-0.006 (-0.429)	-0.117 (-1.789)	-0.001 (-0.032)	0.028	0.306	1.354
2	1.489 (3.002*)	0.733 (6.815*)	-0.016 (-1.220)	-0.122 (-2.147**)	0.009 (0.457)	0.269	0.267	12.952*

Dependent variable: Job satisfaction

Figures in parentheses are t-values

\* Significant at 0.01 level.

\*\* Significant at 0.05 level.

Gender coded as 0=male and 1=female

**Source:** Survey, 2010

Table 1.2 presents the results of multiple regression models, in which job satisfaction is the explained variable, the explanatory variable of which are demographic variables such as age, gender, and service years, and the employee participation.

The regression model 1 with regard to the analysis of the influence on job satisfaction, the demographic explanatory variables explain only 2.8 percent variation in employee job satisfaction. The model is not statistically significant at 5 percent level of significance and it reveals that demographic variables (age, gender, and service years) are unable to explain the variance significantly in employees' job satisfaction (R Square= 0.028). The *t*-statistics also shows that insignificant explaining capability of demographic variables to employees' job satisfaction. None of the demographic variables regression coefficient is significant. The coefficient of age, gender, and service years are negative.

The results of regression model 2 reveal that 26.9 percent variation is explained by the explanatory variables collectively as indicated by the R square value of 0.269 which is significant with the 'F' value of 12.952. The model is statistically significant at 1 percent level of significance and it reveals that employees communication and participation is able to explain the variance in employees' job satisfaction. Regression results show that employee participation separately can explain the variation in job satisfaction by 24 percent.

The statistically significant *t*-statistics also shows that significant explaining capability of employee participation to employees' job satisfaction. The coefficient of employee participation is found 0.733 meaning that employee participation is positively related to job satisfaction as per prior theoretical expectation. The regression model is noteworthy and significant. By observing the two regression models 1 and 2 in table 1.2, Employee participation seems more dominate to others. This indicates that employee participation is more powerful explanatory variables of job satisfaction.

In model 2, the coefficients of age and gender are negative which indicates that the age and gender are not positively related to job satisfaction but the coefficient of age is statistically insignificant at 5 percent level of significance. However the coefficient of gender is statistically significant at 5 percent level of significance. It indicates that female (as data coded 0= male and 1= female) perceived the low level job satisfaction than male. The regression coefficient of the service years is positive but statistically insignificant at 5 percent level of significance.

Interestingly, the negative insignificant coefficient of gender in model 1 is found significant in model 2 when it came together with employee participation. Similarly, the negative insignificant coefficient of service years of model 1 is found positive in model 2 with employee participation. This changing sign of coefficient of gender and service years means that the variables are not so important to explain the job satisfaction when the relation of job satisfaction is observed with employee participation.

### *Testing Hypothesis*

According to hypotheses 1 (H1), employee communication and participation has positive effect on job satisfaction. H1 was supported significantly ( $\beta = 0.733$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) when the relation of job satisfaction was tested collectively with explanatory variables.

As seen in first regression model, all the demographic variables are not seemed important variables having predicting power to job satisfaction. In regression model 2, the coefficient of service years is positive but insignificant ( $\beta = 0.009$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Likewise the coefficient of age is negative and insignificant ( $\beta = -0.016$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). H2 is not supported by the model 1 and 2. Therefore hypothesis 2 (H2) is rejected in this study.

The results indicate that there is strong positive relationship between employee participation practices and job satisfaction in Nepalese banking sector. The statistically significant results show the significant explaining capability of employee participation to employee job satisfaction. Results also indicate that there is no statistically significant influence of demographic variables on job satisfaction level in the commercial banks of Nepal.

## **V. DISCUSSIONS**

At a general level, results generated by this study are largely consistent with results obtained in studies of employee participation and job satisfaction relationship conducted by researchers in other countries. The result is consistent with the study of Bhatti and Qureshi, (2007) which has supported the employee participation has explaining capacity of employees' job satisfaction. The current study's findings are supported by the study of Kim (2002) that suggested participative management and employees' participation in strategic planning process are positively associated with high level of job satisfaction. The result of this study is indicating that the employees' participation is also an important dimension for improving and enhancing the employees' job satisfaction level. This result is also supported by the research finding of others research studies (Cooke, 1992; Cole,

et al., 1993; Ladd and Marshall, 2004; Wright and Kim, 2004; Rotenberry and Moberg, 2007). Regarding the influence of demographic variables the study is consistent with the Oshagbemi (2000) study finding suggesting there is no significant difference between the genders in relation to job satisfaction. It seems consistence with Srivastava (1978) findings indicated that there is no significant association between demographic variables and job satisfaction. However, the findings of this research are not consistent with the Luthans and Thomas (1989) findings indicted that the age and service years of employees have the positive relation to job satisfaction level.

### *Implications and Limitations*

The findings of this study indicate that dimensions of employees' communication and participation are related to employees' job satisfaction. The study expects that the result of the study will have several beneficial applications, particularly in human resource management issues such as employee participation and job satisfaction. The level of increasing the employee participation practices can improve employees' job satisfaction levels.

There are some methodological limitations in this study. It used only primary data collected from small size of respondent only from Kathmandu Valley only. Similarly, it used a non-probability sampling technique. This study is based on the perception of the employees that may vary over time.

In conclusion this study indicated a positive relationship between the employees' participation and job satisfaction in Nepalese banking sector. But the demographic variables such as gender, age and service years have no significant correlation with the job satisfaction dimensions. However, the negative significant coefficient of gender in the regression model indicates that the female perceived low level job satisfaction. The results state that the employee participation is the one of the explaining variables of the employee job satisfaction in Nepalese banks.

The study is restricted to the banking sector of Nepal, including only four commercial banks. Covering other sectors such as manufacturing, educational and hospitality sectors and using probability sampling technique to analyze and generalize the impact of employee participation on job satisfaction in Nepal could make future studies comprehensive.

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