Employees Satisfaction in Different Industries: An Exploratory Review of the Literature

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Abstract: Employee satisfaction has always been a key factor in the function of firms and organizations across the world, because of its effects on employee turnover and customer satisfaction. Developments in Web 4.0 have allowed the emergence of online employee reviews being posted on social networking sites. These could be leveraged by companies to understand the voice of their workers, thereby decreasing employee dissatisfaction. To understand the reasons for dissatisfaction across multiple industries, we examined the employee review literature, which included 12 research papers and over 3.5 million cumulative reviews across multiple employee review websites. These reviews spanned numerous businesses, such as Insurance, Delivery service, and Telecommunications industry, while including studies from other countries like South Korea, India, and Austria. After reviewing these studies, numerous interesting findings surfaced. As employment satisfaction evolves and begins to have different needs than before, new leading topics for satisfaction have emerged. We observed that topics, such as Work environment and Work-life balance are significant factors across most industries.

Key-Words: employee review analysis, online employee reviews, meta-analysis, cross-sector study exploratory review, work-life balance and work environment

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1 Background

Employee dissatisfaction could increase the turnover rates among employees [1] and can reduce their contributions to their work [2]. Turnover intention is the measure of the likelihood of an employee leaving their position or the chance that the firm decides to remove the employee from the position. Employee satisfaction and turnover intentions have a strong relationship. Turnover intention is not only directly impacted by job dissatisfaction [3] but is the most vital sign of turnover [4]. Moreover, turnover can have harmful and beneficial effects on an organization, such as higher costs for leaving staff members, leading to unfavorable effects on the remaining staff [5]. Therefore, it is imperative to reduce turnover intentions and dissatisfaction.

There are a variety of causes of employee dissatisfaction which range from compensation to experience on the job. The six main categories that were generated through this study are areas of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, with firms that perform poorly in those areas having higher rates of employee dissatisfaction and vice versa. Work stress has direct and indirect consequences that can cause problems in work, employers, and the environment, such as employee dissatisfaction [6]. On the other hand, job satisfaction has many components, but some essential ones include feelings about compensation, coworker relationships, and supervision [7, 8]. Job Satisfaction has a direct relationship with the topics mentioned above, so when a firm performs poorly in those metrics, employees become dissatisfied. These newfound factors, along with previously researched elements, are only increasing employee dissatisfaction at an astronomical rate. A Right Management study in 2012 states that 65% of employees were dissatisfied with their jobs. A worldwide Mercer study found that 56% of 30,000 workers want to quit their jobs. This proves a worrying trend of increasing employee dissatisfaction, resulting in damaging effects on organizations.

When an organization can perform positively in a variety of factors that lead to employee satisfaction, there are many other benefits for not only for the employees but the firms as well. Job performance has a direct relationship with job satisfaction. This is an important discovery because it suggests that firms can initiate actions in favor of improving job performance while also improving job satisfaction [9]. Additionally, increasing employee satisfaction
also decreases employee turnover. There is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment [10] with those that are satisfied with their job more likely to stay committed to their firms, reducing employee turnover. The strategy of organizational members responds to the overall job satisfaction [11]; this creates a positive pattern, with the organization performing its duties properly, employees are more likely to commit and be happier with their job, leading to improved performance. Management does not have to pay high costs for replacing the departing employees if turnover is limited. After the departure of employees, the remaining staff’s productivity is eventually affected [12]. When turnover is limited by higher employee satisfaction, employees can stay committed to the jobs they enjoy while firms save their resources from replacing their staff which prevents the issues discussed by Riley, 2008.

As we review the 12 papers from 2010 to 2020, across various industries such as the aforementioned industries along with the Hospitality and Tourism industry, we can find more trends in the data, reasons for employee satisfaction, and the impacts of these trends and satisfaction on organizations in the current world.

In this paper, we perform an exploratory review of the literature on online employee reviews in service sectors. The meta-analysis conducted in this study consists of articles in numerous domains, such as logistics, telecommunication, insurance, hospitality and tourism sectors. We propose several managerial implications based on the exploratory analysis, which can be leveraged by these industries to improve their services.

2 Methodology

Articles reviewed for this paper were selected because of the industries exemplified, countries represented, and employer review platforms used. Employee reviews weren’t just limited to popular US platforms such as Indeed but included others such as Kununu from Germany to avoid possible biases of certain platforms. The diversity of countries such as South Korea, India, and other countries also allowed for a wider breadth of understanding of these trends in a context that wasn’t limited to the West or the US specifically. While a general outlook is important to find overlying trends, the articles also focused on specific industries such as the service and medical industries to help account for the differing job demands from these different fields. The job landscape for these and other industries is changing, especially during the past few years which is why the literature that was primarily used came from 2020. The diversity of the papers that were selected allows for a holistic examination of the literature, which is key in understanding trends that apply to a general field like job satisfaction. The purpose of this study wasn’t to emphasize quantitative findings and point towards the biggest reason for dissatisfaction but to qualitatively examine the trends that arose from quantitative findings already mentioned in the articles selected. This means finding the biggest trends in the satisfaction of an employee, not finding the single most or least important factor in satisfaction.

Each of the papers that were included in the study quantified the number of reviews that were used for the findings, including a total of 3,251,525 reviews. Beyond that, the authors also broke down these articles using Latent Dirichlet Allocation, and Bigram modelling, among a variety of other methods to analyze the words used in each of the reviews and group them in a negative or positive context to categorize the reviews as positive, negative, or neutral. The authors examined each study’s data section to find key terms and topics. Once that was accomplished, all the terms of every study were organized into 6 categories that were generated by the author of this study. These topics were picked because they combined the data into overarching principles. The most important aspect were the overarching topics more than the popularity of each of the topics. The popularity of each topic is open to change depending on the sample size. If we added more studies, Topic X could gain more popularity than Topic Y. That’s why the focus isn’t to target the biggest indicator but a set of them. Each of the articles mentioned how numerous phrases and key words consistently were mentioned across the sample. For example, Compensation contained terms such as salary, wages, and compensation throughout the articles. This happened with all the 6 main umbrella terms (Compensation, Benefits, Work-Life, Work Environment, Learning and Career Development, and Job Security). Those that didn’t fit into these topics were placed in a section labelled “Other,” because they didn’t have enough terms to justify another section. After selecting the overarching areas, observations were made based on the studies and the six topics that arose.
3 Description of Data

Table 1. CATEGORIES OF REVIEWED PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jung and Suh (2019)</td>
<td>No Specific Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sainju (2020)</td>
<td>No Specific Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koncar and Helic (2020)</td>
<td>No Specific Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddiqui (2010)</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajendrai (2020)</td>
<td>Delivery Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinha et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittiprolu et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Hotel Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashive et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Pharmacy, IT, Retail, FMCG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moniz and de Jong (2014)</td>
<td>No Specific Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacka-Badura (2020)</td>
<td>No Specific Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symitsi et al. (2020)</td>
<td>No Specific Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamolamprosa et al. (2019)</td>
<td>Hospitality and Tourism Industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 consolidates all of the source articles and their focus on certain industries. The purpose is to make sure that the certain industries aren’t overrepresented in the data. While there were industries that weren’t included specifically in the data sample, they were mostly included in the general studies (no specific industry articles).

Table 2. DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEE REVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number of Reviews (neutral reviews are in parentheses)</th>
<th>Number of Positive Reviews</th>
<th>Number of Negative Reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sainju (2020)</td>
<td>66,612</td>
<td>33,624</td>
<td>32,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koncar and Helic (2020)</td>
<td>2,200,000</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddiqui (2010) [16]</td>
<td>12,225 (1,045)</td>
<td>3242</td>
<td>7938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajendrai (2020) [17]</td>
<td>27,378 (6,921)</td>
<td>15,932</td>
<td>4,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinha et al. (2020) [18]</td>
<td>20,086 (4,339)</td>
<td>13,157</td>
<td>2,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittiprolu et al. (2020)</td>
<td>2,751 (593)</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>1003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashive et al. (2020) [20]</td>
<td>1093 (501)</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moniz and de Jong (2014)</td>
<td>41,227</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacka-Badura (2020) [22]</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symitsi et al. (2020) [23]</td>
<td>349,550</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamolamprosa et al. (2019)</td>
<td>297,933</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 gathered all of the total reviews (3,251,525) that were mentioned throughout all of the articles. The purpose of the table was to understand which articles had a bigger representation in the findings, which articles such as Koncar and Helic (2020) had. The methods used in all of these studies include Latent Dirichlet Allocation, Domination Analysis, Correspondence Analysis, Sentiment Analysis, Importance Analysis, K-means algorithm, Structural Topic Modeling, Document Topic Distribution Matrix, Topic Term Distribution matrix, empirical analysis, logistic regression, text extraction, trigram modeling, SWOT, root cause analysis techniques, online review extraction, topic identification, text mining, topic modeling, preprocessing, Ngram analysis, and probabilistic topic modeling.

Table 3. DISTRIBUTION OF TOPICS

This table will be attached to the appendix of the journal because of the size of the table but it is the division of the topics present in all the studies and how they were divided into the six overarching categories.

4 Results

After examining the employee review literature from various industries such as telecommunications and hospitality, and those ranked on the Fortune 500 list, six main categories emerged from the topics generated by the research studies. These were compensation, benefits, work-life, work environment, learning and career development, and job security. Each study used different methods of analysis such as, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), bigram and trigram analysis, among a variety of others, to find positive and negative topics.

4.1 Topics

After analyzing the key terms that arose from the different papers, the key terms were grouped into six main categories. Each of these categories are listed below along with observations relating to them.

4.1.1 Work Environment

Work Environment is first in terms of the volume of topics found, with 50 topics from the research papers from both negative and positive, being dedicated to this area. The work environment is simply the conditions of the workplace, including both the physical and non-physical aspects. The physical conditions can include the location of the workplace and overall welfare or hygiene. However, the non-physical aspects can arise in a variety of ways, such as politics in the office, culture, competitiveness, and poor management, which shows the wide variety of terms under this category. These specific words are observed in the research studies multiple times, showing that the work environment is not only about physical benefits such as breaks, which were also mentioned, but about the culture and management that were also at the job. The work environment was more of a negative topic, with 28 topics leaning negatively compared to the 22 that were positive. This reflects how even though the work environment is a leading factor in terms of affecting employee satisfaction, it is still an area in which firms and
organizations perform exceptionally poorly according to the sample.

4.1.2 Work-Life
Work-life is observed to be the second most popular category, with a total of 26 topics. Work-life is a general term that encompasses smaller areas such as work-life balance with other essential workplace characteristics, such as stress levels and workload. This category’s topics largely revolved around working hours and the flexibility for these hours, which are strongly associated with work-life balance. Work-life was a positive topic overall, with 15 of the topics being positive compared to 11 negative topics. Work-life balance is a key issue because high working hours can lead to stress, which can cause various effects such as employee dissatisfaction and turnover. A key aspect of turnover is retaining employees. While high signing bonuses, salaries, and benefits, may pull in employees, they aren’t always the best for retaining employees. Emphasizing a good balance for employees and a positive employee-work relationship creates a sustainable path for both firms and employees.

4.1.3 Learning and Career Development
Learning and Career Development is ranked 3rd by the number of topics. This category does include a variety of topics and does seem general but can be condensed to the idea of whether this job provides the opportunity to progress or learn more. This can include participation in other professional organizations, programs to fund further education, and other policies to improve the skills of an employee. This category includes topics such as training, career progression, development opportunities, along with others that follow the same premise. Out of the research study sample, on average, all the firms included performed well in this category, with nine positive topics identified and seven negative topics identified. Learning and Career Development aren’t just helpful for employees (through increased experience and development of skills) but are helpful for firms too because they provide a higher skilled workforce.

4.1.4 Benefits
Benefits had a total of 18 topics relating to it, making it the fourth most popular category. Benefits can mean a variety of things but can be defined as a reward provided by a firm that is not a part of salary or wages. This topic area was predominantly made up of topics such as employee perks, healthcare, insurance, and vacation, among other terms, with 12 topics coming from positive feedback and five including negative feedback. While the presence of benefits is important for employees, it is crucial that firms don’t try to make up for the negative work environment by providing good benefits in their place. As mentioned before, benefits and salary may bring prospective employees into the job, but they aren’t the most crucial thing for retention. It is important to prioritize other areas such as work-life and work environment in coordination with benefits to boost employee satisfaction.

4.1.5 Compensation
Compensation can be defined as the payment given to the employee in return for their work. The topics that were found included phrases such as decent and low pay, salary, and compensation with not much difference in the terms. Overall, compensation also performed marginally better with five positive topics compared to four negative topics. Despite the smaller topic size, as mentioned above, the millions of reviews back the results regardless of the lower topic numbers. But the biggest takeaway for compensation in these studies is that it is not as popular as expected according to the sample size. Compensation is highly touted as a key reason for employee turnover but the rise of other topic areas, such as in this study, show that compensation isn’t the sole reason for people to stay at their occupation. The overall understanding is that employee satisfaction isn’t fixed by a singular approach that follows a singular topic area but one that improves the employee experience.

4.1.6 Job Security
Job security is the least mentioned category and included topics such as layoffs, promotions, and job security. This is the state of when a job is secure from dismissal or removal. Topics that are within the branch of job security were all reported with no positive feedback. There were five topics, out of which four were negative. This does have a smaller number of topics compared to the other topic areas, but as shown in the introduction, lower topic numbers do not mean a small sample size. While the sample size showed alarming negative feedback, that doesn’t necessarily mean that the entirety of the current workforce has poor job security. However, it does signal that job security is very much lacking in the sample size and needs to have higher priority.

4.1.7 Other
This category includes all the topics that were not able to fit into the categories already listed or topics that were simply titled “other”. This section included other broad topics that included characteristics of
more than one category, such as functional/rational benefits and emotion/psychological benefits, which would not fit into any single category. Terms such as technology and brand value did not fit well with the other categories, so they were also included. An “other” category would typically mean a wider variety of terms to properly gauge whether there was more positive or negative feedback, because even though there were six negative and positive topics, the addition of other topic areas could have a large amount of negative or positive feedback which shows the unreliability of seeing how firms fared in this specific “other” category.

4.2 Trends
While the main premise of this study was to find the reasons and categories for employee satisfaction and turnover, the examination of multiple papers in Employee Review Literature has also shown other important trends in different industries and countries.

4.2.1 Hospitality
In both Chittiprolu et al., 2020 and Stamolampros et al., 2019, which are about the Indian hotel industry and the Tourism industry in the US, respectively, both shared similar topics (these topics were some of the popular ones, however, this means the similarities can not only be attributed to the tourism and hotel industry similarity but can also be because of the popularity of the topics) [19, 24]. Chittiprolu et al., 2020 did not have many topics and subtopics relative to the other studies, but all of them were identified in Stamolampros et al., 2019, such as poor work-life balance, low salary & incentives, office politics & management issues, Job security. Limited career opportunities which matched with these topics in the negative column for the hospitality and tourism industry; work/life balance, employee turnover (one of the subtopics includes salary and also relates to job security), leadership/communication and management turnover, and career opportunities. The similarities are not only limited to the negatives but also the positives. The positive topics identified by Chittiprolu et al., 2020 include work environment, learning and career opportunities, flexibility, and work-life balance. Each of these topics has a similar counterpart in Stamolampros et al. (2019), such as working environment, career opportunities, scheduling flexibility & work-life balance. The other positive topic identified by Chittiprolu et al. (2020) was HR policies, which was not explicitly listed in the positives for Stamolampros et al. (2019). However, the similarities between the two industries are still there and can support how topics causing employee satisfaction are similar in the hospitality industry across different countries. This is important because, as the next section will also emphasize, there may be similarities between different industries and the benefit in identifying those similarities is utilizing similar strategies to address the similar flaws in each industry. Specificity is important to fix specific issues for firms in these industries but by understanding what works in a similar industry, policies can be imposed in other industries too.

4.2.2 Delivery Services Industry
Both Rajendran (2020) and Sinha et al. (2020), which relate to the delivery services industry and the telecommunications industry, respectively, have very similar topics [17, 18]. The positive topics highlighted for the delivery services industry include coworkers, benefits, work-life, and other events. This is very similar to the positive topics identified for the telecommunications industry, such as colleagues and work culture. Each of the terms in one of the industries has a similar topic in the other such as coworkers and colleagues, and work-life & work culture, which reflects the experience at the job. Both industries also have related negative topics. Rajendran (2020) highlighted management, workplace, job security, benefits, and work culture. Sinha et al. (2020) has similar negative topics regarding management, work environment (combines both workplace and work culture), miscellaneous (no job security was one of the main issues listed in miscellaneous). There was not a specific negative topic in Sinha et al. (2020) about benefits, but the multiple other similarities shown in both the negative and positive areas show that the topics for employee dissatisfaction and satisfaction are similar in both the delivery and telecommunications industries. Both industries are different in a variety of factors such as technology but are both forms of delivery, whether it’s in terms of online information or through physical delivery. The similarity in the topics presented show that policies aimed to target both industries may share similarities because of the focus on work life balance and other shared negative characteristics. When observing the similarities, it shows that similar solutions may be utilized too.

4.2.3 Comparing Different Parts of the World
Most of the studies were not limited to a single industry or multiple and encompass all industries found in the employee reviews. However, one of the studies that were used in this paper studied reviews
in South Korea [13]. Compared to the other studies that did not focus on a certain industry, the results were remarkably similar. With both positive and negative topics in the South Korean study, Vacation, Organizational Cultures, Work Intensity & Efficiency, Working Hour, Self-Development, Organizational Politics, General Welfare, Salary, Human Resource, all fit into the categories of compensation, benefits, work-life, work environment, learning and career opportunities. The topics identified in Jung and Suh (2019) did not fit into the general categories but also corresponded to the specific topics identified in the other studies, such as Sainju (2020) that also highlighted issues like decent pay, which related to the first study’s topic of salary [14]. Another international study used was Koncar and Helic, 2020, which was based in Austria. This study outlined its topics beforehand and found how employee reviews related to them instead of generating them from the reviews themselves [15]. The topics were general (employee benefits, employee positions, employment status), but they still share similarities with three of the six general categories generated from all 12 papers, such as Benefits, Learning and Career Opportunities, and Job Security. Kashive et al. (2020) used an employee review website, Glassdoor, and analyzed over 1 thousand reviews to find the major themes or Employee Value Propositions (EVP) [20]. These were also general, but the keywords show that the topics are very similar to those of the United States also. Based on the common terms in the topics, interest value and work-life are like the general topic of Work-life. Another example is how development value and management value are like Learning & Career Opportunities and Work Environment, respectively. The following example is from Symitsi et al. (2020) based in the United Kingdom. The topics generated in this study all fit into the general categories while also being very similar to other studies’ specific topics too [23]. Similar topics include compensation benefits, career progression, work environment, work-life balance, and others which were all important issues in studies that were based in the United States. This comparison shows the similarity between multiple countries from different regions of the world and supports the idea that reasons for employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction in multiple industries are very similar, even if in different countries. When examining across the board, there are numerous similarities across different countries when it comes to employee satisfaction. But these similarities usually fall under the six main categories provided above. This further supports the strength of the categories mentioned above when it comes to reliability across different contexts, specifically geographically. This is valuable to understand because it allows countries to understand how other countries are dealing with employee satisfaction and utilizing similar tactics themselves. There are gaps between employee satisfaction in different countries that are caused by fundamentally different surroundings such as laws and norms. However, understanding that countries aren’t completely different in this field allows for similar policies to fix worker shortages across different countries.

5 Discussion
The COVID-19 pandemic has had numerous impacts on society, perhaps one of the strongest issues has been the unemployment rates. Staffing shortages have struck big corporations and small businesses alike which makes employee satisfaction of the utmost importance for firms across the world. With unemployment benefits and stimulus checks being provided for the general working population, it becomes even more important for firms to provide worthwhile and competitive offers for their prospective employees. To further the knowledge on employee satisfaction, there must be more studies that not only examine satisfaction post-pandemic but the solutions that can be utilized. While general issues such as work-life balance and compensation have been constant topics for decades, new topics such as remote work require new attention and different solutions. The pandemic brought unprecedented problems so there must be innovative and new solutions. The landscape for working has changed with more and more people wanting different perks post-pandemic, which is why the job market hasn’t quickly returned to its previous state. This doesn’t mean that previous research on the field is obsolete because it is timeless concepts such as work environment in a new form. Working from home is just an adjustment to the environment so these new trends aren’t completely different from the decades of research already held. But adjustments to these problems are necessary. The future of this field relies on substantiating and understanding the causes and solutions for post-pandemic turnover while using trends in the past decade to help solidify these new trends.

6 Conclusion
This study is pushing further into the latest trends in job satisfaction but what will be more important is examining what's prioritized for employee’s post-
pandemic, not just in the last decade. While this exploratory review has explored consistent trends across the past decade, it is a very high priority that firms figure out new and appealing benefits and options for their employees to build back their businesses. Perhaps options such as remote work will become more popular promises for workers who enjoyed the option during the lockdown. This methodology’s strengths lie in its diversity and the breadth of its sample, by including the industries such as Telecommunications, Delivery, Hotel, among others. It also takes a qualitative approach that aims to understand and relay the concepts that are represent in statistical findings. Using technology allows for the discovery of important details but qualitative analysis such as this study are key for the solutions to the problems that need to be solved. Policies for job security and compensation among other topic areas aren’t just supported by the numbers but understanding the important trends and issues behind those numbers. By placing the emphasis on personal understanding of the statistics, understanding of the trends can be used for proper implementation of policies but the limitations arise in the depth of the sample. While studying multiple sectors is crucial and so is finding cross-industrial trends, an increasingly thorough analysis is important for understanding how firms in specific sectors can combat their specific issues. No sample size is perfect but a deeper one with more reviews in specific industries would allow for more confidence and strength in the findings. The methodology compiled the terms using human judgement (the author grouped the terms) instead of computer-generated software has advantages such as qualitative analysis that can be utilized to understand trends and use them to come up with solutions to the problems that employee satisfaction face. While the samples varied, certain studies made up a vast number of the reviews (Koncar and Helic) which can also lead to bias in favor of their study. Improvements to these limitations can be more employee review studies that allow for singular studies to have less influence. To truly advance and enhance the turnover rates, firms need to place more emphasis on improving the qualities at the job, such as the six overarching categories mentioned above. A proper policy wouldn’t pick and choose one or two of these areas but combine proper advancements in as many of these areas as possible to create a proper environment for workers. The current worker shortage has shown the value of workers at all levels and utilizing these 6 main categories will be vital in retaining future workers.

References:


