

Comparative Study on Self-Employment and Job Satisfaction of Architects in the Indian Construction Industry.

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ABSTRACT : *The Indian Construction industry has been characterized as a complex and critical one due to mixed nature of rules and regulations. Particularly in Architectural profession, where one-third are self-employed experiences greater job satisfaction, more autonomy and creativity and also more work to life conflict along with greater turnover intentions. Self-employment has been linked to many of the ingrained problems suffered by the sector, including lack of investment in skills training, poorly integrated human resource policies and poor treatment of workers. Here it reports on two phases of data collection namely a questionnaire of architects and semi-structured interviewers with practicing architects. The questionnaire explores issues of job satisfaction, affective well-being, job demands and decision latitude, work-life balance and turn-over intentions. The result reveals that self-employed architects appear to experience greater job satisfaction, greater turn-over intentions and greater work to life conflict .The semi-structured interviews revealed that self-employment enabled architects to express their creativity and autonomy which are key drivers for entry into the profession. These findings show that the relationship between employment status and job satisfaction is complex. Further research is needed with larger samples to fully understand the impact and consequences for self-employed workers and the sectors.*

KEYWORDS : *Architects, job satisfaction, construction industry, organizational psychology, stress, work-life balance.*

I. INTRODUCTION:

In general, construction industry particularly in India has multiple tasks and more complex work nature. The labour force survey, undertaken in India as per World Bank reports that the majority of practicing architects are self-employed, but exact number is unknown. Evidence from the general working population suggests that those who are self-employed having greater job satisfaction than those who are engaged in direct employment (Bradley and Roberts, 2004) self-employment enables the individuals to exercise greater control over their work (Hughes, 2003) and greater job satisfaction because of increased autonomy the absence of hierarchy and the opportunity to control working hours (Anderson, 2008). In other sense, self-employment may also be harmful to the individual in terms of poor job security (D'Souza 2003). Self-employed individuals experience greater stress due to job insecurity, which may negatively impact their work life balance causing stress amongst family members. Literature shows that architects are an integral part of the building process (Salisbury, 1998) it's probable that they are exposed to similar stressors as those working in other areas of the sectors such as, high work load long working hours job insecurity poor professional worth and poor work-life balance (Sutherland and Davidson, 1993; Lingard and Sublet, 2002; Haynes and Love, 2004). In addition architects may experience additional stressors, namely lack of opportunity to use creative skills (Blau, 1984) responsibility for tasks beyond the ability of the individual, unsupportive practice managers and dissatisfaction over career prospects (Cox and Hamilton, 1998). Self-employment may enable individuals to exercise greater control over their working lives, allow for greater use of creative skills and reduce stresses associated with practice management, which results in greater job satisfaction. The relationship between self-employment and occupational stress is more complex and this study explores the experiences of self-employed architects, reasons for this career choice through discussion and questionnaire in this paper.

The research contents will address the following

- [1] Self-employed architects will report greater job satisfaction than employed in terms of autonomy and creative opportunity.
- [2] Self-employed architects will have greater concern towards job security
- [3] Self-employed architects will report greater work-life balance than employed architects.

II. METHOD:

This study approaches various methods of self-competition questionnaire with semi-structured interviews. Mixed methods results with more advantages to the researcher, namely a greater understand of lived realities which can be too complex to be understood through one method of data collection (Mason, 2006).

Questionnaire and Sampling:

To determine various levels of job satisfaction and stress related issues experienced by architects a self-completion questionnaire was used. In Table 1 details of the data collected by the questionnaire and the reliability of each measure are tabulated, where co-efficient alpha (α) determines the internal reliability (Salkind, 2004). Administering a questionnaire enables a large amount of standardized information to be collected, thereby increasing internal validity and reducing bias (Coolican, 1999). Various groups are interviewed to do quantitative analysis of comparative study. Demographic analysis of comparative study. Demographic information was also collected. This instrument explores five measures of occupational stress namely job satisfaction, affective well-being, work-life balance, job demands and control and turnover intentions. A pilot study has been conducted with approximately 250 architects who are in the field for ten years. In addition to this, comparative special interested groups reviewed the questionnaire. The detailed questionnaire was distributed to 400 architects working in different areas around five metropolitan cities in India (Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai). Contacts of architects were found using the websites of Council Of Architects (COA), and Indian Institute of Architects (IIA) who have achieved chartered status. Interview questions were developed from the extent literature and from the questionnaire which had highlighted areas of interest. Topics covered in the interviews included reasons for choosing the architectural profession, future career plans, issues relating to self-employment practice management, job satisfaction and work-Life balance. Interviews were analyzed using a 'Template Analysis' technique which has been widely used in similar researches (Daniels Harris and Briner, 2002). This allows for textual data to be thematically organized and analyzed according to a set of codes development a priori (King, 2004). Like grounded theory, template analysis makes use of codes to order textual data. For this research, the interview schedule was used as the initial template, but salient issues were incorporated into the template during the course of analysis (Sang, KJC, Dainty, A R Jand Ison, S G, 2008)

Table 1: Data collected by the questionnaire

Purpose/Aim	Measurement	Reliability Co-Efficient
Job Satisfaction	To measure levels of job-Satisfaction	$\alpha = 0.921$
Affective well-being	To measure frequency of positive and negative affect	Affective well-being $\alpha = 0.885$ Non-Affective Wellbeing $\alpha = 0.901$
Work-Life conflict	To measure different levels of work-life conflict	$\alpha = 0.867$
Job demands and autonomy	To measure decision latitude scale based on job demands	$\alpha = 0.760$
Turnover intentions	To measure the desires to leave current job (or) to leave the profession	$\alpha = 0.840$

For job satisfaction measurements, 7 points Likert Scale (Extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied) with 15 items are used and results tabulated (Warr et al 1979). To test the affective well-being, frequency of experiencing positive and negative affect (e.g.: tense, calm, depressed) in the past one month both in work and outside of work are measured (Warr, 1987). To measure levels of work-life conflict 7 Item Likert Scale based existing tools is used (Small and Riley, 1990 and Bacharach et al., 1991). To measure the job demand levels and autonomy, latitude scales are used (Karasek, 1979). 4 items scale rating agreement (strongly agree to strongly disagree) with items relating to desires to leave current job and to leave the profession coefficient (α) is calculated and tabulated.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Questionnaire Sample Characteristics

From the practicing architects, out of 400 a total of 120 questionnaire were returned 108 of which were fully answered and completed. This response rate is comparable to similar ones (Mc Dermott et al., 2007). This sample consisted of 23 Males 25 Females with age of range between 25 to 65 with a mean age of 35 to 40 years ($SD = 2.262$). The majority of respondents had achieved chartered architect status (68%), and a further 28% were registered with COA and IIA. The number of years of experience ranged from one year to more than 45 years, with a mean of 9.2 years ($SD = 10.02$) with full-time practice. Job Satisfaction, job demand and decision latitude and affective well-being. For the given items in the questionnaire on job satisfaction scale form a

descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of respondents were satisfied with their work. Minor portion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with different issues namely, the lower pay scale, organizational issues, and practice management, recognition of work, job security and industrial relations. One third expressed concern over their skills and opportunities issues and on fourth was dissatisfied with the variety of work nature involved. A comparison of mean values revealed that the self-employed architects expressed greater job satisfaction with more freedom and responsibility which supports the first research proposition the findings are supported by the interview data. This proves that self-employed architects use their full range of skills, to gain greater recognition for their work and to express their creativity.

Table 2: Comparison between employed and self-employed architects

Item	Mean Self-Employed	Mean(Employed)	T	Significance(2 tailed)
Mean Job Satisfaction	6.12	5.28	2.681	0.041
Decision Authority	3.21	3.79	1.120	0.000
Freedom To Work	6.27	4.18	3.895	0.000
Job Security	3.39	4.28	-1.281	0.012
Amount of Responsibility	6.27	5.20	5.105	0.060
Method of working and hours send	8.23	5.10	3.210	0.029
Turn over intentions	3.25	3.18	2.518	0.014

As Table 2 shows, self-employed architects expressed greater concerns over their job security a finding which was also verified during the interviews. The interviews revealed that being self-employed could be stressful due to concerns over securing and getting paid to work , in addition to carrying out the work. Both Hundley (2001) and D’Souza et al (2003) assert that self-employed individuals are at increased risk of occupational stress and adverse health outcomes due to high job insecurity. Warr (1990) considers job security to be essential for occupational well-being. Concern over this area may account for the higher turnover intentions and poorer job related affective well-being of self-employed respondents, although further work would be needed to test this statement work life conflict and turnover intention. Majority of respondents reported that work made them too tired (59%), about one third felt that negatively affected with their social life (27%). Only 16% reported life to work conflict. Work life imbalance has been identified as a source of stress for those working in the construction professions (Lingard and Francis, 2006) and it is the same for the architects. Approximately one fourth of the respondents revealed that they consider leaving both their jobs and profession as well and actively searching for an alternative occupation. These findings indicate that issues relating to work life balance and occupational turn over are of concern to an important proportion of the sample for study.

Limitations of study: This study is limited due to the small sample size. Demographic of the architectural profession is not considered as a majority. Further research would consider other impacts of both self-employed and employed architects compared to other professionals.

IV. CONCLUSION:

This study presented proves that self-employed may lead to greater job satisfaction with greater autonomy but greater stress due to job insecurity. The data concerned here indicates that the role of self-employment in job satisfaction of architects is complex. Self-employment also indicates greater work life conflict.

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