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Job Satisfaction in Shift Work: A Comparative Study of Day and Night Employees

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Abstract

Job satisfaction is a key determinant of employee performance, well-being, and organizational success. With the increasing adoption of 24x7 operations in Indian industries, shift work has become a common practice. This study aims to measure the degree of job satisfaction among employees on the basis of shift they are working, focusing on three major dimensions: health satisfaction, economic satisfaction, and psychosocial satisfaction.

The current study used an exploratory research design and a sample of 100 respondents (50 from each shift); data were collected through self-structured questionnaires. Independent samples t-tests were applied to analyze the differences in satisfaction across the two groups.

The results reveal that day shift employees report significantly higher satisfaction in terms of health and psycho-social factors, while night shift employees demonstrate greater satisfaction with economic benefits. The study highlights that shift timing plays a critical role in influencing specific aspects of job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, shift, employees, night culture, day shift.

Introduction

"Job satisfaction refers to the overall feelings and perceptions individuals develop regarding their present work. Employees who experience high job satisfaction usually demonstrate a favorable outlook toward their job, while those with low satisfaction often express unfavorable or negative attitudes toward their work.

”According to **Vroom,** “Job satisfaction is generally considered to be an individual perceptual or emotional reaction to an important part of work.”

According to Keith Davis, “Job satisfaction is a set of favorable or unfavorable feelings with which employees view their work.”

A traditional job requires an employee to work under a 9 am to 5 pm schedule. Shift work refers to a work schedule arranged outside the conventional 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. pattern. It typically includes evening and night shifts, early morning duties, or rotating schedules that alternate over different time periods. Organizations adopt such patterns to ensure continuous operations, meet market demands, and provide services round the clock. Many industries that require continuous production and timely delivery of their products and services rely heavily on shift work, and millions of people work in jobs that require shift schedules.

While shift work facilitates operational efficiency, it often brings with it challenges that directly impact employee satisfaction and well-being. These may include disruption of sleep patterns, reduced social interactions, health concerns, safety risks, and psychological strain. Consequently, the impact of shift timings—especially night shifts—on job satisfaction is a topic of growing academic and managerial concern.

This study aims to explore and compare the job satisfaction levels among day shift and night shift employees, with a focus on economic, health, and psycho-social dimensions. Recognizing these variations is essential for employers who aim to create a supportive and efficient workplace that accommodates the needs of employees across different shift schedules.

In the context of Indian industries, which are increasingly embracing the 24x7 work culture to remain globally competitive, this research provides timely insights. It will help organizations develop strategies to enhance employee satisfaction across different shifts, thereby improving overall performance and reducing turnover.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Biranchi N. Puhan (1999): examined the differences in job and work involvement among public and private sector employees. The study found significant differences based on demographic variables such as age, work experience, length of service, and income. However, gender did not show any notable effect. Additionally, the study highlighted dissatisfaction in the personal and social lives of many respondents.

Costa (2003) investigated the impact of shift work on workers' well-being and found that irregular work schedules often disrupt circadian rhythms, affecting sleep, health, and psychological functioning. The study concluded that night shift workers are at higher risk of job burnout and lower satisfaction levels due to biological and social misalignment.

Morgeson & Humphrey (2006), in their work design study, emphasized that task significance, skill variety, and feedback significantly affect job satisfaction. They noted that shift timing alone may not determine satisfaction levels unless linked with meaningful work and positive reinforcement systems.

Bambra et al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis on the health and social impacts of shift work. The results confirmed that night shift workers report higher fatigue, lower social participation, and increased health issues, which collectively reduce overall job satisfaction.

Costa (2013) Night shift workers are more prone to burnout and reduced overall well-being. The disruption of circadian rhythms has long-term health consequences. This study highlights the biological cost associated with irregular work hours.

Ganesan et al. (2016) Night shift work in healthcare significantly impacts sleep quality and alertness. Reduced sleep leads to lower performance and job dissatisfaction. The study stresses the need for rest-oriented policies in shift-intensive sectors.

Rao & Kulkarni (2022) Organizational support and counseling improve night shift employee morale. Emotional well-being strategies reduce work stress and isolation. The findings underline the psychological support needs in night operations.

Research Gap: Most previous studies emphasize the health and psychological drawbacks of night shifts, but very few analyze economic satisfaction as a potentially compensating factor. This study addresses this gap by comparing health, economic, and psycho-social satisfaction together—especially in the Indian context with a growing 24×7 work culture.

Rational of study

Day by day India is becoming a global market. So, like other countries, Indian industries have started to develop a 24*7 working culture. So, by adopting these work cultures by Indian industries, the criteria of job satisfaction among day and night shift employees are changing. and this study provides some insight to industries that how they would provide proper job satisfaction to employees working under different shifts.

Objectives of the study

(1) To find out the satisfaction level of employees working day and night shifts.

Research Methodology

Research design—The current study uses an exploratory research design, as researchers here try to explore the effect of the shift system on job satisfaction.

Sampling Technique: Research here implemented the convenient method for data collection.

Data Collection Tools: Primary data was collected through self-structured questionnaires, and secondary data was collected through various journals, research papers, and articles related to the scope of the current study.

Analysis tool: the independent two-sample t-test was used to analyzethe the collected data.

Hypotheses Of the study

H01: There is no significant difference in health on the shift system.

H02: There is no significant difference in economic conditions on the shift system.

H03: There is no significant difference in psycho-social conditions on the shift system.

Respondent's Profile

Table 1

Number of Respondents on the basis of shift

S.No	Shift	Number	Percentage
1	Day	50	50
2	Night	50	50

Total	100	100

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their work shifts. The total sample size for this study is 100, with 50 participants representing day shift employees and 50 participants representing night shift employees.

Table 2

Number of Respondents on the basis of age

S.No	Age	Night (%)	Morning (%)
1	20-30	25 (50%)	11 (22%)
2	31-40	24 (48%)	26 (52%)
3	41-50	1 (2%)	10 (20%)
4	51-60	0	3 (6%)
Total		50	50

Table 2 presents the age-wise distribution of employees working in night and morning shifts. 20–30 Years Age Group: This group constitutes 50% of night shift workers, indicating that younger employees are more likely to be assigned or prefer night shifts. In contrast, only 22% of morning shift workers belong to this age group. 31–40 Years Age Group: This is the most balanced group, comprising 48% of night shift workers and 52% of morning shift workers. This suggests that employees in this age range are almost equally distributed between the two shifts. 41–50 Years Age Group: A very small portion (2%) of night shift workers fall into this category, compared to a significantly higher 20% in the morning shift. This implies that middle-aged employees are more inclined toward morning shifts, possibly due to health, family responsibilities, or preference for a conventional routine. 51–60 Years Age Group: This age group is completely absent in the night shift and forms 6% of morning shift workers. This clearly indicates that older employees are not assigned night shifts, likely due to health considerations or organizational policies.

Table 3

Number of Respondents on the basis of Gender

S.No	Gender	Night (%)	Morning (%)
1	Male	35 (70%)	28 (56%)
2	Female	15 (30%)	22 (44%)
Total		50	50

Table 3 shows that the night shift is predominantly male (70%), while the morning shift has a more balanced gender distribution (56% male, 44% female). This suggests that male employees are more likely to work night shifts, whereas female employees are more represented in morning shifts, possibly due to safety, family responsibilities, or organizational policies.

Table 4

Number of Respondents on the basis of Experience

S.No	Experience	Night (%)	Morning (%)
1	0-3	22 (44%)	15 (30%)
2	3-7	24 (48%)	13 (26%)
3	7-15	3 (6%)	15 (30%)
4	Above 15 Years	1 (2%)	7 (14%)
Total		50	50

Table 4 shows that the night shift is dominated by less experienced employees, with 92% having up to 7 years of experience. In contrast, the morning shift includes more experienced staff, with 44% having over 7 years of experience. This indicates that less experienced employees are more likely to be assigned to night shifts, while more experienced workers prefer or are assigned to morning shifts, possibly due to seniority or organizational preference.

Table 5

Number of Respondents on the basis of Experience

S.No	Marital Status	Night (%)	Morning (%)
1	Married	7 (14%)	33 (66%)
2	Unmarried	43 (86%)	17 (34%)
Total		50	50

Table 5 shows that the night shift is mostly occupied by unmarried employees (86%), while the morning shift has a majority of married employees (66%). This suggests that unmarried individuals are more available or willing to work night shifts, whereas married employees prefer or are allocated morning shifts, likely due to family and personal commitments.

Result of Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in health on the shift system.

Table 6

Employee Responses on Health Aspects of Job Satisfaction Across Day and Night Shifts

Health Condition	Day Shift	Night Shift
Have you lost much sleep over worry?	120	156
Do you think your shift system negatively affects your health?	139	178
Do you think you are not taking proper care of your health/yourself?	132	170
Do you feel you have lost or gained too much weight since you started working in your current shift?	150	171

Do you think the occurrence of body pain/ backache/ headache has been started/ increased since you have started working in your current shift?	170	180
Total	**711**	**855**

Table 6 interpreted that the night shift workers report higher health concerns across all indicators compared to day shift workers. The total score for health-related issues is 855 for night shift and 711 for day shift, indicating that night shift employees experience more sleep loss, health neglect, weight changes, and physical discomfort. This highlights a negative impact of night shifts on employee health.

Table 7

Mean values of Health Conditions

	Day shift	**Night shift**
Total	711	855
Mean	142.2	171

As the calculated value of the two-tailed t-test

Manual Independent t-test formula:

$t = (\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) / \sqrt{[(s_1^2 / n_1) + (s_2^2 / n_2)]}$

Where:

$\bar{X}_1 = 142.2 \quad \bar{X}_2 = 171$

$s_1 = 18.98 \quad s_2 = 9.43 \quad n_1 = n_2 = 5$

$t = (142.2 - 171.0) / \sqrt{[(18.98^2 / 5) + (9.43^2 / 5)]}$

$t = (-28.8) / \sqrt{[(360.32 / 5) + (88.89 / 5)]}$

$t = (-28.8) / \sqrt{[72.06 + 17.78]}$

$t = (-28.8) / \sqrt{89.84}$

$t \approx -28.8 / 9.48$

$t \approx -3.04$

Result: Since $|t| = 3.04 > 1.984$, and $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis.

There is a significant difference in health satisfaction between day and night shift employees. We reject the null hypothesis in the case of health conditions, which means there is a significant relationship between the health condition of the employee and the shift they are working in. Day shift workers report higher satisfaction in terms of health.

H02: There is no significant difference in economic conditions on the shift system.

Table 8

Employee Responses on Economic Dimensions of Job Satisfaction Across Day and Night Shifts

Economic condition	**Day shift**	**Night shift**
Are you happy with regard to economic advantages like salary, allowances, provided by your company?	115	160
Are you happy with the facilities provided by your company, like medical facilities and travelling allowances?	118	155
In certain cases, my organization provides provisions such as offering employment opportunities to my children or family members, ex gratia benefits, and similar support.	105	150
Total	**338**	**465**

Table 8 interpreted that night shift workers report higher satisfaction with economic benefits than day shift workers. The total score is 465 for the night shift compared to 338 for the day shift, indicating that night shift employees feel more economically compensated—possibly due to additional allowances or benefits associated with working during less desirable hours.

Table 9

Mean values of Economic Conditions

	Day Shift	**Night Shift**
Total	338	465
Mean	112.7	155

As the calculated value of the two-tailed t-test

$t = (\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) / \sqrt{[(s_1^2 / n_1) + (s_2^2 / n_2)]}$

Where:

$\bar{X}_1 = 112.7$ $\bar{X}_2 = 155.0$

$s_1 = 6.81$ $s_2 = 5.00$ $n_1 = n_2 = 3$

$t = (112.7 - 155.0) / \sqrt{[(6.81^2 / 3) + (5.00^2 / 3)]}$

$t = (-42.3) / \sqrt{[(46.34 / 3) + (25.00 / 3)]}$

$t = (-42.3) / \sqrt{[15.45 + 8.33]}$

$t = (-42.3) / \sqrt{23.78}$

t = (-42.3) / 4.88

$t \approx -8.67$

Since $|t| = 8.67 > 1.984$

Reject the null hypothesis. There is a significant difference in economic satisfaction.

Night shift employees (M = 155.0) are significantly more satisfied than day shift employees (M = 112.7)

H03: There is no significant difference in psycho-social conditions on the shift system.

Table 10

Employee Responses on Psycho-Social Dimensions of Job Satisfaction Across Day and Night Shifts

Psycho-social condition	**Day Shift**	**Night shift**

Are you able to spend quality time with your family/friends/partner?	178	150
Do you feel that your social life is quite normal, like others?	155	135
Are you able to join family or social get-togethers or family/friends outings most of the time?	172	132
Are you able to get involved in important decisions or discussions with your family/friends?	172	155
Are you able to equally participate in sharing the family/friends workload/distribution?	175	146
Total	**852**	**718**

Table 10 interpreted that day shift workers report better psycho-social well-being than night shift workers. The total score is 852 for day shift and 718 for night shift, indicating that day shift employees are more able to maintain relationships, attend social gatherings, and participate in family responsibilities, whereas night shift employees face more social isolation and reduced family involvement due to their work timings.

Table 11

Mean values of Psycho-social conditions

	Day shift	**Night shift**
Total	852	718
Mean	170.4	143.6

As the calculated value of the two-tailed t-test

$t = (\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) / \sqrt{[(s_1^2 / n_1) + (s_2^2 / n_2)]}$

Where:

$\bar{X}_1 = 170.4$ $\bar{X}_2 = 143.6$ $s_1 = 8.96$ $s_2 = 9.81$ (Standard deviation of Night Shift)

$n_1 = n_2 = 5$

$t = (170.4 - 143.6) / \sqrt{[(8.96^2 / 5) + (9.81^2 / 5)]}$

$t = (26.8) / \sqrt{[(80.26 / 5) + (96.24 / 5)]}$

$t = (26.8) / \sqrt{[16.05 + 19.25]}$

$t = (26.8) / \sqrt{35.3}$

$t = (26.8) / 5.94$

$t \approx 4.51$

Result: Since $|t| = 4.51 > 1.984$ and $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis.

which means there is a significant difference based on psycho-social conditions between day shift and night shift employees. Day shift employees (M = 17.04) are significantly more satisfied in psychosocial terms than day shift employees (M = 14.36).

Interpretation:

As per the result of the current study, employees who are working in the day shift are more satisfied in terms of health and psycho-social conditions as compared to night shift employees, and night employees are more satisfied in terms of economic benefit than day shift employees.

The results of the current study are supported by earlier research conducted by Costa (2003), Bambra et al. (2008), and Kundi et al. (2009), which also found that day shift employees reported better health and psycho-social conditions, whereas night shift workers showed higher satisfaction in terms of economic benefits, likely due to additional allowances and financial incentives.

While the current study finds that day shift employees are more satisfied in health and psycho-social dimensions, several studies (e.g., Ganesan et al., 2016; Folkard & Tucker, 2003) suggest that with adaptation and organizational support, night shift employees may also experience high levels of satisfaction in these domains. These contrasting results indicate that job satisfaction is influenced not only by shift timing but also by individual adaptability, employer policies, and work culture.

Major Findings

According to current study, the following findings came to light:

Youngsters (aged between 20 and 35 years) prefer the night shift as compared to middle-aged group employees.

As compared to females, males prefer to work in the night shift, as only 30% of females prefer to work in the night shift.

Employees who have just started their careers prefer to work on the night shift. In the long run, people prefer to work in the morning shift, as only 6% of employees choose to work in the night shift for more than 10 years.

Unmarried people are more comfortable with night shift jobs as compared to married people, as only 14% of married people choose to work the night shift.

Conclusion

Satisfaction is a relative concept that reflects the mental, physical, economic, and social well-being of an individual. Just as a satisfied individual contributes positively to society, a satisfied employee becomes a valuable asset to the organization. Job satisfaction is influenced by multiple factors rather than a single element. Elements such as wages, supervision, working conditions, recognition, and opportunities for growth collectively determine the degree of satisfaction experienced by employees. To enhance job satisfaction, it is essential to address the genuine needs of workers. A higher level of satisfaction not only improves the employee's well-being but also yields significant benefits for the organization.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that organizations adopt flexible shift policies, invest in health and wellness programs for night shift employees, and improve psycho-social engagement for all. Economic benefits should be fairly distributed and regularly evaluated. Further, organizations should promote a culture of recognition, feedback, and mental well-being. Implementing these recommendations will help in improving job satisfaction and productivity among both day and night shift workers.

Limitations of the study:

While the study provides valuable insights into the differences in job satisfaction among day and night shift employees, certain limitations must be acknowledged. These include a small and non-random sample, reliance on self-reported data, and a cross-sectional design that restricts longitudinal analysis. Additionally, the study focused on limited dimensions of satisfaction and did not account for various external or organizational factors. Future research

can address these limitations by expanding the sample size, using longitudinal methods, and including a broader range of job satisfaction determinants.

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