PERCEPTION OF WORKING CONDITION AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG LAGOS-BASED JOURNALISTS

By
Jimi Kayode & Raheemah Adeniran
School of Journalism, Adebola Adegunwa School of Communication,
Lagos Stale University, Lagos.
jimikayode@gmail.com; aderaheemah@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

Using survey research method, the study examined journalists' perception of their working conditions. A two-page questionnaire was designed and used as the research instrument. The population of study included all journalists who are employed by media organisations based in Lagos, and are also practising in the state A total of 150 copies of questionnaire, using stratified sampling, were distributed to journalists in Lagos out of which 101 copies were returned. The study is premised on two theories; the equity theory and the discrepancy theory.

Findings of the study show that Lagos-based journalists are not satisfied with their jobs and that the highest motivating factors for most of the journalists are the flexible working hours; the opportunity the profession affords them to travel and meet people, and also their love for the profession; the study show that most dissatisfying factors for most journalists in Lagos is the salaries which most of them considered to be inadequate, the long working hours their job demands of them, and also the poor working condition which majority of them agree is not conducive. Subsequently, there may be an urgent need to look into the plight of journalists in Lagos and the country as a whole.

Key Words: Job Satisfaction, Journalists, Stratified Sampling, Motivating Factors, Perception, and Work Condition.

Introduction

No one today doubts that journalism and journalists are indispensable. Journalism and the media have been celebrated as the fourth estate of the realm, due to their level of importance within the society. But journalists and the media have also been reviled, criticised, condemned, censured, hated, jailed, maimed, abused, denigrated, and sometimes killed.

The conditions under which the journalists work, and their earnings, have not been standardised. Depending on the country, the region, state or the media house, salaries of journalists vary from what could be described as being impressive to being ridiculous and humiliating. Nigeria happens to be among the countries with the roughest deal, so much that Ray Ekpu, a veteran journalist, referred to journalism in Nigeria as "an endangered profession". (Dare and Uyo, 1996). Problems of the Nigerian journalists then were from within the media houses and out in the society. The study thus investigated whether this situation has changed and what the nature of the change is, or to whether no change has occurred, and why.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been described as a person's evaluation of his or her job and work context. "It is an appraisal of the perceived job characteristics and emotional experiences at work". (Locke, 1969; Barret, 1988). Locke (1969) noted that job satisfaction is a collection of attitudes about specific facets of the job. According to him, an employee can be satisfied with some elements of the job while simultaneously dissatisfied with others. He noted that "overall job satisfaction is a combination of the person's feelings toward the different facets of job satisfaction".

Pollard (1995) and Carlopio and Gardner (1995), identified *income, prestige, a feeling of accomplishment, autonomy, a sense of being challenged by the job, opportunities to be creative, congenial or friendly co-workers, the feeling that one is making a contribution, fair rewards (pay and benefits), promotion opportunities,* and *job security* among factors contributing to job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is an important index that determines the success or failure of organisations, companies, businesses and all professions. Aina (2002), noted that relating working condition with job satisfaction has become topical issues among motivation and management theorists over the years, in every country and in all profession.

Theoretical Framework

The study is premised on two theories; the equity theory and the discrepancy theory. The equity theory was propounded by Stacy Adams in 1965. McShane and Von Glinow (2003) described the equity theory as a "process motivation theory that explains how people develop perceptions of fairness in the distribution and exchange of resources". According to its proponent; the Equity Theory is premised on two basic assumptions which are as follows:

- Individuals evaluate the social relationship they have with others as much as they will evaluate an economic transaction in the market. In this case, a relationship is seen as an exchange,
- Individuals compare their own situations with the situations of others to determine whether an exchange was fair or not.

Based on this proposition, the study thus examined journalists' perception of their working conditions compared to other professions.

The discrepancy theory explains job satisfaction in terms of the gap between what a person expects to receive and what is actually received. The theory posits that job satisfaction or dissatisfaction results from a comparison of the amount the employee expects to receive and the perceived amount received. This theory comes from the work of Edwin A. Locke, an American professor of psychology, who is regarded as a pioneer in goal-setting theory and job satisfaction in industrial-organizational psychology. His 1976 chapter on job satisfaction continues to be one of the most highly-cited pieces of work in the field. (McShane and Von Glinow 2003).

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of job satisfaction among Lagos-based journalists?
2. What factors contribute to job satisfaction among Lagos-based journalists?
3. What factors contribute to job dissatisfaction among Lagos-based journalists?

Methodology

The survey research method was adopted for the study. A two-page questionnaire was designed and used as the research instrument and distributed to journalists in Lagos. The population of study included all journalists who arc employed by media organisations based in Lagos, and are also practising in the state. Hence, other journalists of such organisations who report from other states of the federation are excluded from the study. Similarly, journalists practicing in Lagos, but are employed by media organisations situated outside the state were also excluded from the study.

The stratified sampling method was adopted for the study. In Stratified sampling method, the population is grouped into some definite characteristics called strata. The required sample is then selected from each stratum based on the proportion of the stratum's share to the total population (Asika, 1991).

In selecting the sampled journalists for the study, the media industry was divided into two, the print media and the broadcast media. Bach of the sectors was then categorised into zone based on the preponderance of media establishments within each zone. The Print media was divided into two; the organisations located within Oshodi/Apapa axis, and those within Ikeja axis.

Two print media organisations were then selected from each region. The Guardian and The Nation newspapers were sampled from the Oshodi / Apapa axis, while Tell magazine and The Punch newspapers were sampled among print media organisations within Ikeja axis. While the Guardian was selected to represent a national newspaper, The Nation was perceived as a regional newspaper.

The broadcast media was equally categorised into two, those within Ikeja axis, and Lagos lsland/ Mainland axis. Since broadcast media organisations in the state are not as much as print media organisations, only one organisation was sampled from each of the categorised area. Hence, Radio Nigeria, government-owned and Murhi International Television (MiTV), privately-owned, were sampled from the broadcast category. Having selected the media organisations, the questionnaire was administered to selected journalists within those organisations based on snow-ball sampling technique. A total of 150 copies of the questionnaires were distributed out of which 101 were returned.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Level of satisfaction of Lagos Journalists with their job

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Very Satisfied	4	4
Satisfied	61	61
Unsatisfied	31	31
Very Unsatisfied	4	4
Total	**100**	**100**

Table l above shows the degree of satisfaction Lagos-based journalists have towards journalism profession. Majority of the respondents, who accounted for over 60 percent, said they are *satisfied* with their job. About one-third of respondents (31 %) said they are *unsatisfied* with the job. Four percent of the respondents said they are *satisfied* with their job, while another four percent said they are *very unsatisfied.*

Based on the data above, one may be tempted to conclude that majority of the respondents are satisfied with their jobs. McShane and Von Glinow (2000) however cautioned against making such generalisation. According to the duo, many dissatisfied employees are reluctant to reveal their feeling in such a single direct question as, 'How Satisfied are you with your job?' This, they said, would mean the employees admitting that they made a poor job decision and are not enjoying life.

Table 2: Motivating factors for Lagos based Journalists

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Salary	7	7.1
Flexible working hours	35	35.7
Allowance	4	4.1
Training	11	11.2
Love of the job	12	12.2
Travelling and meeting people	13	13.3
Nothing	6	6.1
Others	10	10.2
Total	**98**	**100**

Table 2 above highlights some of the factors that motivate journalists. The highest motivating factor for majority of the respondents (36 %) is the *flexible working hours* they enjoy as practicing journalists. The next motivating factor for the sampled journalists (13%) is the opportunity the profession affords them to *travel and meet people* followed by their *love for the job.* About six percent(6.1%) of the responding journalists however said *nothing* motivates them in the job, while only seven percent are motivated by their respective *salaries.*

The findings above show that financial gratification is not really the major priority for most journalists. This is because the highest motivating factors for the sampled journalists had no relationship with financial gratification, but rather the opportunities the job provides.

Table 3: What Lagos Journalists Dislike About the Job

	Frequency	Percentage
Salary	35	31.8
Long working hours	28	25.5
Allowance	1	0.9
Lack of Training	16	14.5
Lack of Promotion	17	15.5
All of the above	6	5.5
Others	7	6.4
Total	**110**	**100**

Table 3 above shows some of the things journalists dislike about their job. Some of the respondents chose more than one options, hence the 110 responses generated. The available data showed that most of the respondents (about 32%) identified their *salaries* as what they disliked most about the profession. The second most disliked thing among the responding journalists was their *long working hours* which accounted for about a quarter of the total respondents. Some of the respondents identified more than one option in the category as things they dislike most about the profession; with some saying they disliked all the five options identified in the study.

The data presented above further buttressed the popular belief that journalists are not well paid in Nigeria. A high percentage of the respondents also expressed displeasure over the long working hours they have to put into their jobs.

Table 4: Possibility of Lagos Journalists quitti-ng their job

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	46.5
No	29	28.7
Undecided	25	24.8
Total	**101**	**100**

Table four shows the possibility of journalists quitting their job. About 47 percent of respondents express the possibility of quitting their job, while some 29 percent said there is no possibility of quitting their job. Almost 25 percent of the respondents were however undecided.

The high percentage of respondents willing to quit their jobs contrasts with findings presented in Table 1 where 65 percent of the respondents expressed satisfaction for their jobs. The scenario confirms the submission of McShane and Von Glinow (2000) that employees who are not really satisfied with their jobs are likely to say they are simply because they feel they should say they are satisfied.

Table 5: Conditions that can make Lagos Journalists quit their Job

	Frequency	Percentage
Threat to life	18	16.4
Job Insecurity	26	23.6
Prolong working hours	10	9.1
Poor working condition	29	26.4
Poor remuneration	27	24.5
Total	**110**	**100**

Table 5 shows condition under which journalists can quit their job. Over 26 percent of respondents said they can quit the job based on *poor working condition.* About 25 percent (24.5%) of respondents chose *poor remuneration* while a slightly lesser percentage or about 24 percent (23.6%) chose *fob insecurity* as condition under which they can quit their job. Over 16 percent (16.4%) would quit *on threat to life* while only nine percent (9.1 %) would consider quitting the job based on *prolong working hours* which the job demands. The high percentage of respondents likely to quit the jobs based on poor working condition and poor remuneration confirms ffcngings presented in Table 3 above in which the responding journalists chose salary, Jong working hours, lack of training and promotion as their most disliked aspects of the profession.

Table 6: Lagos Journalists perception of their working condition

	Frequency	Percentage
Very conducive	4	4.0
Conducive	37	36.6
Not conducive	49	48.5
Not very conducive	11	10.9
Total	101	100

Table 6 above shows how journalists perceive their working conditions in their various organisations. About half of the respondents (48.5%) said their working condition is *not conducive* while about 37 percent (36.6%) however said their working condition is *conducive.* Some 11 percent (10.9%) described their working condition as *not very conducive* while four percent said their working condition is *very conducive.*

Table 7: Lagos Journalists' perception of their remuneration package

	Frequency	Percentage
Very adequate	0	0
Adequate	6	6
Inadequate	70	70
Grossly inadequate	24	24
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 7 above shows the perception of journalists of their remuneration package. Seventy percent of the respondents said their remuneration package is *inadequate* while another 24 percent said it is *grossly inadequate.* Only six percent said their remuneration is *adequate* while none of the respondents considered their remuneration package to be *very adequate.* This invariably means that the responding journalists perceive their remuneration to be unfair compared to those in other professions, thus confirming their dissatisfaction with their jobs.

Table 8: Lagos Journalists description of their working condition

	Frequency	Percentage
Good	5	5
Very good	1	1
Fair	45	45
Poor	35	35
Very poor	14	14
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 8 above shows the description of their working condition by the responding journalists. Forty-five percent of the respondents described their working condition as *fair,* while thirty-five percent described theirs as *poor.* Five percent of the respondents described their working condition as *good* while only one percent of the respondents said their working condition is *very good.* Fourteen percent of them said their working condition is *very poor.* The respondents' perceptions of their working conditions are, thus, very unimpressive as only six percent of them consider their working conditions to be good. This is another confirmation of job dissatisfaction among Lagos-based journalists.

Table 9: How equipped are Lagos based Journalists

	Frequency	Percentage
Well equipped	3	3
Equipped	20	20
Fairly equipped	62	62
Not equipped	15	15
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 9 above shows how equipped Lagos journalists are with necessary tools needed to carry out their responsibilities. Majority of the respondents, representing 62 percent, said they are only *fairly equipped* for the job. Twenty percent said they are *equipped* for the job, 15 percent said they are *not equipped,* while only three percent said they are *well equipped* for the job.

Table 10: Lagos Journalists' perception of their remuneration

	Frequency	Percentage
Highly remunerated	1	1
Fairly remunerated	53	53
Poorly remunerated	46	46
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 10 above shows how the responding journalists perceived the remuneration they get from their employers. Majority of respondents, representing 53 percent said they are *fairly remunerated,* while 46 percent said they are *poorly remunerated.* Only one percent of the respondents said he/she is *highly remunerated.*

The data above shows that 99 percent of respondents said they not highly remunerated for their jobs. This further confirms the findings presented in Table 7 above where respondents said their remuneration packages are inadequate.

Table 11: Lagos Journalists' working relationships with fellow co-workers

	Frequency	Percentage
Formal	7	7
Cordial	92	92
Informal	1	1
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 11 shows the responding journalists' description of their working relationship with colleagues at work. Majority of respondents, representing 92 percent, described their relationship as *cordial,* seven percent said the relationship is *formal,* while only one percent said they have *informal* working relationship with fellow co-workers. This imply that majority of the respondents have good working relationship with their co-workers. A good relationship with co-workers could be a motivating factor for some employee and could make him/her unwilling to quit the job irrespective of other dissatisfying elements. A good working relationship among employees could be an effective platform for building teamwork within an organisation. Here is what an employee, Connie Dowell, Dean of Information Services and Librarian at Connecticut College in New London, said about her job: "To be honest, I love my job because of the people I work with". She described her co-workers as "wonderful staff who work together incredibly well" (McShane and Von Glinow, 2003; Bramlet-Solomon, 1992).

Table 12: Lagos Journalists' working relationships with superiors

	Frequency	Percentage
Master-servant	5	5
Formal	40	40
Cordial	54	54
Informal	1	1
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 12 above shows the working relationships responding journalists have with their superiors. Fifty-four percent of respondents described their working relationship with their superiors as *cordial,* while 40 percent said theirs is *formal.* Five percent of respondents said they have *master-servant* relationship with their superiors while one percent said it is *informal.*

This shows that most of the respondents also have good working relationship with their superiors at work. Such relationships can further enhance job satisfaction among employees because they are likely to feel appreciated for their contribution towards the success of the organisation.

Table 13: Lagos Journalists' level of satisfaction with their company's policy and Administration

	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	2	2
Fairly satisfied	43	43
Indifferent	21	21
Not satisfied	25	25
Not very satisfied	9	9
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 13 shows the level of satisfaction of the responding journalists with their company's policy and administration. Majority of the respondents, representing about 43 percent, said they are *fairly satisfied* with their company's policy and administration. Twenty-five percent said they are *not satisfied* while twenty-one are *indifferent* about their respective company's policy and administration. Only two percent are *highly satisfied* with the policy while nine percent are *not very satisfied.* A high percentage of the respondents seem satisfied with their companies' policies. This is another factor that can contribute to job satisfaction thus allowing the journalists to continue working for their respective media organisations.

Table 14: Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	65	65
Female	35	35
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 14 shows the gender of respondents sampled for the study. Majority of the respondents were *male journalists,* representing 65 percent, while 35 percent were *female journalists.* This could imply that journalism is still a male driven profession. The percentage of female journalists who accounts for over one-third of the respondents is however still encouraging, and shows that women are catching up in journalism practice.

Table 15: Age range of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	30	30
31-40	57	57
41-50	13	13
5 1 and above	0	0
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 15 shows the age range of the responding journalists. Majority of the journalists sampled in the study, representing 57 percent were between the ages of *3l years to 40 years.* Thirty percent were aged between *21 years and 30 years,* while 13 percent were aged between *41 years to 50 years.* None of the responding journalists was *above 51 years of age.* This shows that majority of the respondents are still in their very active years and can therefore be expected to express very viable submissions and expectation about chosen career.

Table 16: Marital Status of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Single	42	42
Married	52	52
Divorced	5	5
Widowed	1	1
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 16 shows the marital status of the respondents. Majority of the responding journalists were *married,* accounting for 52 percent. Forty-two percent of the respondents were *single,* five percent were *divorced* and one percent w*idowed.*

Table 17: Years of Journalistic working experience of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
1 - 5 years	38	38
6- 10 years	34	34
11-15 years	17	17
16 -20 years	9	9
21 and above	2	2
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 17 shows the years of experience the responding journalists have put into practicing journalism profession. The highest percentage of the respondents in the study, representing 38 percent, are still very young in the profession having spent just between *one to five years* in practice. This was followed by those who have practiced for *six to 10 years* who accounted for 34 percent of respondents. Seventeen percent have spent between *11 to 15 years;* nine percent have spent *16 to 20 years;* while only two percent of respondents have practiced the profession for *over 21 years.* This invariably means that most of the respondents are still relatively new in the journalism profession and unfortunately may not be fully aware of the demands and intricacies of the profession.

Table 18: Educational Qualification of Respondents

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Diploma	19	19
HND/B. Sc/B.A	58	58
PGD/M Sc	23	23
Ph.D	0	0
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 18 shows the educational qualification of the respondents in the study. Majority of the respondents, representing 58 percent, are First Degree holders with either a polytechnic degree or university degree. It was followed by those with Post-Graduate Diploma and Masters Degree who accounted for 23 percent of the respondents. Those with ordinary Diploma accounted for 19 percent of the respondents while none had a Doctorate Degree.

The high percentage of graduates shows that journalism has come of age in the country. It is no longer a profession reserved for school drop-outs or people with low educational and professional training, as was the case in the early years of the profession.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings will focus on answering the three research questions of the study.

Research Question 1: ***What is the nature of job satisfaction among Lagos-based journalists?***

Findings from the study show that Lagos-based journalists are not satisfied with their jobs. Even though majority of the respondents expressed satisfaction when asked if they are satisfied with their jobs or not, their subsequent responses on other questions proved otherwise. For instance, a large percentage expressed readiness to quit their jobs due to a number of factors such as poor working condition. Majority of the respondents also considered their remuneration package as inadequate. Similarly, only two percent of the respondents said they are highly satisfied with their organisations' policies and administration.

These findings agree with the postulations of McShane and Von Glinow (2003) that employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs tend to say they are satisfied whenever they are asked, simply because they feel they should say so. They noted that a strong indication that overall satisfaction ratings are usually inflated is that people typically report much lower satisfaction level for specific aspects of the job.

The findings of the study are also similar to findings of a national survey in the United States on job satisfaction. Over 80 percent of respondents in the study expressed overall satisfaction with their jobs even though they expressed much lower satisfaction levels for specific aspects of the job. For instance, only 54 percent of the respondents believed they are paid fairly, 46 percent said their respective companies promote fairly, and 41 percent believe that senior management truly cares about them (McShane and Von Glinow 2003; Bergen and weaver, 1988). Majority of the US respondents also expressed high satisfaction with their co-workers, which is also confirmed by findings of the study.

Findings of the study confirmed the propositions of the two theories that form the theoretical framework for the study. The findings proved that the responding journalists' dissatisfaction with their jobs is based on their evaluation of what they expect to receive and the actual amount or value they eventually receive for the services they render. Subsequently, the journalists, based on findings of the study are believed to be dissatisfied with their jobs because they perceive their working condition to be lower than what they feel they should get.

Research Questions 2: ***What factors contribute to job satisfaction among Lagos-based journalists?***

Findings of the study show that the highest motivating factors for most of the journalists are the flexible working hours; the opportunity the profession affords them to travel and meet people, and also their love for the profession. Irrespective of their dissatisfaction with their jobs, most of the journalists still find solace in the rare opportunities journalism practice provides and are willing to continue with the profession because of their love for it.

In selecting these motivating factors, the responding journalists might have evaluated these opportunities which are not common to other professions, as posited by the discrepancy and equity theories. They evaluated their working conditions and chose the factors identified above considering the fact that those in other professions do not enjoy such privileges.

Research Questions ***3:*** ***What factors contribute to job dissatisfaction among Lagos-based journalists?***

Findings of the study show that most dissatisfying factors for most journalists in Lagos is the salaries which most of them considered to be inadequate, the long working hours their job demands of them, and also the poor working condition which majority of them agree is not conducive.

Conclusion

Journalists in any country have a role to play" in promoting development of the country. They are expected to serve as the eye and the ear of the people. They are to work and always act in the public's interest. They must however be motivated and also have some degree of job satisfaction for them to judiciously practice the profession. If journalists are not committed to the profession, and their remuneration package is not able to meet their immediate needs, then they may likely compromise on the ethics and tenets of the profession, just to make ends meet.

Invariably, the public is going to be the worst affected as they are likely to be fed with half-truths and subjective reports. Corruption is also likely to thrive within such a society.

The study examined the level of satisfaction among Lagos-based journalists. The findings of the study show that journalists in Lagos, and perhaps other parts of the country, are not satisfied with their jobs. When compared to other professions, most of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their earnings and the conditions in which they work.

Subsequently, there is an urgent need to look into the plight of journalists in the country. This is because journalists are the ones entrusted with public trust. If they must practice the profession without fear or favour, they must be adequately motivated. It is only by doing so that journalists can feel satisfied and fulfilled in embarking on such a "noble" public service to humanity.

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