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**Article**

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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Satisfaction with work-related achievements in Brunei public and private sector employees

Lawrence Mundia\*

**Abstract:** The present study assessed the prevalence of satisfaction with work-related achievements in a random sample 860 Brunei public and private sector employees representing both genders. Job satisfaction is important since it acts as a source of intrinsic motivation encouraging workers to be industrious and efficient. Job satisfaction among workers is likely to contribute to employee happiness, well-being, and retention. On the other hand, job dissatisfaction often leads to high likelihood risks of reducing staff morale, increasing resignations or worker-turnover, and decreased productivity. A quantitative field survey was used and data were analyzed by binary logistic regression. Male employees were more satisfied than female peers. In addition, workers in the Brunei-Muara district were also more satisfied than their counterparts in other districts. However, employees with children and low education were less likely to be satisfied with their work-related achievements compared to highly educated peers and those with no children. Further qualitative research was desired to provide more insights on the investigated problem.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lawrence Mundia teaches psychology, counseling, special/inclusive education, and teacher education in the Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education, University of Brunei Darussalam. He taught the same disciplines in Papua New Guinea, Swaziland and Zambia. The teaching areas are also his research interests and focus. Recent research has been conducted on criminality, child and adolescent mental health, students' coping strategies, mathematics achievement, and motivation and learning. The current study on worker job satisfaction in Brunei Darussalam is an extension of mental health research with a focus on adults and the demographic variables. More research is being planned on occupational health and wellbeing.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Work-related satisfaction is an important factor in the life of an employee. It determines to a great extent the worker's happiness and wellbeing. Workers who lack job satisfaction cannot be expected to be highly motivated, efficient, productive, and stay long in their job. Many factors (both intrinsic and extrinsic) contribute to creating and maintaining job satisfaction in workers. For intrinsic factors, previous research shows that internal motivation, personal interest, task value, self-efficacy for job performance, self-direction, perseverance, resilience, and persistence were some of the personality attributes related to job satisfaction. With regard to extrinsic factors, past studies found the salary, working conditions, co-worker interactions and relationships, employee-boss relations and interactions, pension or retirement benefit schemes, and worker development and progression to be among the many factors associated with job satisfaction. The present study differs from previous investigations in that it probed job satisfaction from the demographic factors point of view.

**Subjects:** Human resource development; Public administration; Personnel management; Ergonomics

**Keywords:** job satisfaction; work-related achievements; public sector; private sector; employees

## **1 Introduction, background and setting**

The Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, hereafter referred to as Brunei, is a small country in terms of land mass (5,765 Km<sup>2</sup>) and population (422,678 as of 2016 census) located on Borneo island in Southeast Asia. The people are multiethnic, although the majority are Malays followed by Chinese. The primary religion is Islam, with more than 75% of the population being adherents. Administratively, the country is divided into four districts named Brunei-Muara, Belait, Tutong and Temburong. Of these districts, the most populated, developed, and cosmopolitan is Brunei-Muara. The Brunei economy is currently still based largely on oil and gas exports, but there are feasible national plans and genuine efforts underway to diversify it (Department of Economic Planning and Development, 2015). Most of the people in Brunei work for the government (public sector). The private sector workforce (i.e. employees in companies and other non-governmental organizations) is still relatively small compared to the civil service but with a growing, vibrant trajectory. The present study assessed the relationship between selected sociodemographic variables and work-related satisfaction in both public and private sector employees with the goal of making recommendations regarding possible interventions. The findings may contribute new literature and knowledge regarding the Brunei labor force.

### **1.1. Theoretical framework**

Schaffer (1953) was perhaps the first to link job satisfaction to the satisfaction of personal needs. Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs clarified the personal needs in terms of external and internal motivations in learning contexts. These needs had implications in work situations. Since then, research has consistently showed that Maslow's theory of needs has practical relevance in occupational settings. Researchers have for a long time investigated the many possible cause of job satisfaction in workers (see Locke, 1976). Recently, researchers such as Čiarnienė and Vienažindienė (2009) proposed that there were two broad determinants of job satisfaction, namely external (organizational) factors (e.g. salary, supervisory and management processes, appraisals, promotion policies, supportive work environment; and internal (personal) factors (e.g. self-expression, educational qualifications, age, gender, race, or disability). Thus, the conceptual framework for the current study was guided by Maslow's needs theory as applied in Brunei work environments of both the public and private sectors. Job satisfaction is important in that it has several theoretical and managerial implications on workers. Many recent studies show that job satisfaction has positive effects on employee motivation and commitment (Alfayad & Arif, 2017; Eliyana & Muzakki, 2019; Zainuddin, 2017). In addition, job satisfaction is also said to have positive effects on employee performance (Hussin, 2011; Thiagaraj & Thangaswamy, 2017). The separate literature sections that follow below attempted to show why the sociodemographic attributes investigated in the present study were important in terms of Maslow's needs theory.

### **1.2. Descriptions of work-related job satisfaction**

There is no universally accepted definition of the terms job satisfaction, employee satisfaction or satisfaction with work-related achievements. Consequently, there is no general agreement about what each of these terms means. In the context of this study, these three terms are considered to be the same, and the author uses them interchangeably. Of the three terms, the most frequently occurring term in the literature is job satisfaction, but this study uses "satisfaction with work-related achievements". Aziri (2011) defined job satisfaction as a worker's sense of achievement and success on the job. Thus, job satisfaction partly refers to the affective orientations of an individual toward the work roles they occupy (Vroom, 1964). The three related terms (job satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and satisfaction with work-related achievements) could generally be used to describe how employees feel regarding their work and whether they are happy, contented

and fulfilling their desires and needs at work. Employee satisfaction can also be defined as employee reactions toward their work experiences (Gruneberg, 1979). This includes the emotional states or reactions of employees towards their work, the different aspects of the work, and the attitude towards the work (Wickramasinghe, 2009). Spector (1997) suggested that job satisfaction was an attitudinal variable that showed employees' attitudes toward their jobs and other aspects of their jobs. Expanding on this finding, Davis and Nestrom (1985) concluded that satisfaction with work-related achievements represented a combination of positive or negative feelings that workers had towards their work and was closely linked to their behaviors in the workplace. Overall, positive and favorable attitudes towards the job indicated job satisfaction, while negative and unfavorable attitudes towards the job indicated job dissatisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). Job satisfaction is measured through different factors, including the personal characteristics of the employees (see Carbrita & Perista, 2007; Newstrom, 2011; Spagnoli, Caetano, & Santos, 2012; Wallace, Haas, Hartel, & Abbott, 2010). This multi-dimensional view of employee satisfaction has been both conceptually and empirically established (Edwards, Bell, Arthur, & Decuir, 2008).

### **1.3. Factors contributing to job satisfaction and the importance of job satisfaction**

There are many different factors that influence employee satisfaction. Wickramasinghe (2009) classified several of them into three categories: intrinsic factors (e.g. personality or attitudes); extrinsic factors (e.g. compensation, rewards, promotions); and demographic factors (e.g. gender, ethnicity, rank, and years of service). In addition, the inadequate amount of praise delivered by supervisors, low salaries, and lack of promotional opportunities were associated with employee job dissatisfaction and burnout levels (Martin & Schinke, 1998). Of these factors, this study investigated only the sociodemographic factors. In general, the most studied aspects of job satisfaction include salary/pay, supervision, nature of tasks performed, peer support, and working conditions (Newstrom, 2011). Other related issues that are frequently probed include personal development and recognition, interpersonal communication, fringe benefits, security and supervision (Irving & Montes, 2009; Koonmee, Singhapakdi, Virakul, & Lee, 2010).

### **1.4. Demographic factors (Education, training, experience, gender, and age)**

There is empirical evidence that employees with higher educational qualifications in developed economies are more satisfied with their work, due to better working conditions and higher income (Gallie, 2007; Roos & Van Eeden, 2008), than those with lower levels of education (Gallie, 2007; Wallace et al., 2010). In less developed economies, the gap between those with and without secondary education inevitably relates to the level of employment (Wallace et al., 2010). According to Greenberg and Baron (1995), employees with many years of working experience reported higher satisfaction than their colleagues with less work experience. With regard to age, younger employees tended to change jobs more frequently than their older peers and are thus generally less committed and satisfied with their jobs (Roos & Van Eeden, 2008; Ziauddin, Jam, & Hijazi, 2010).

With respect to gender, research has produced mixed results. Several studies have observed that female employees are more satisfied with their jobs than men, although they endure poorer working conditions than men (Ziauddin et al., 2010). Other previous studies observed that women employees had higher rates of distress and dissatisfaction than men (Aneshensel, Frerichs, & Clark, 1981; Menaghan, 1989; Radloff, 1975). According to Roxburgh (1996), a combination of work and home roles create unique stressors for women. Rees (2003) stated that women have to balance their work and family responsibilities, which causes them to encounter and experience more job stress than men. By contrast, several researchers have identified higher levels of job satisfaction among men than among women (Carbrita & Perista, 2007).

### **1.5. Geographical placement and resource availability**

Geographical placement also plays a part in determining the job satisfaction of an employee. Geographical placement is the location where an employee works. The work could be located either in remote-rural area or in an urban-city area; both settings having an impact on employees' job satisfaction. A study conducted by Darmosubroto (1983) in Indonesia found that geographical

placement had the greatest influence on overall job satisfaction among workers. This researcher noted that workers in metropolitan urban areas expressed higher overall job satisfaction than those who worked in rural areas. In urban settings, tasks are much easier to accomplish because of the availability of resources and easier means of communication. Kumari and Pandey (2011) found that good communication in the workplace was another important factor for job satisfaction. Communication could be in terms of eye contact, facial expression, body language, or verbal communication. The two-way communication system utilized should be simple and understood by both employers and employees. Most public and private sector employees in Brunei are concentrated in Brunei-Muara district, the metropolitan area. Lack of equipment and supplies in the workplace often prevents workers from doing their jobs optimally, which lowers their job satisfaction (Hotchkiss, Banteyerga, & Tharaney, 2015). Employees need to have the necessary supplies, equipment, and resources to do a good job. Lack of supplies lowers the quality of services delivered and satisfaction felt by the employees (Hotchkiss et al., 2015).

### **1.6. Objectives of the study**

Employees who are dissatisfied with their work cannot be expected to be happy and highly productive. The purpose of this study was therefore to determine the relationship between selected demographic variables and satisfaction with work-related achievements in Brunei public and private sector employees. The findings may be helpful in informing further research that could promote employee job satisfaction.

## **2. Method**

The design, participants, instruments, procedures and data analysis techniques used in this study are briefly explained below.

### **2.1. Design**

A quantitative field survey was used to investigate the research problem. Using this approach, two trained research assistants went to various government Ministries and Departments as well as private companies to personally administer the research instruments. In this way, large amounts of the required empirical data were collected within a short time. Data collection could take much longer time using other forms of survey research (e.g. postal, online, telephone, and longitudinal).

### **2.2. Participants**

According to the Department of Economic Planning and Development (2015), there were 189,500 employed persons within the Brunei public sector in 2014 consisting of 108,500 males (57.3%) and 81,000 females (42.7%). Of these, 137,300 (72.5%) were local Brunei citizens for whom the current study was designed, and 52,200 (27.5%) were foreigners. The total number of workers in the private sector was not known at the time of conducting the present study. However, it was speculated that the public sector employed far more people than the private sector.

A list of Government Ministries and Departments located throughout Brunei was obtained from the Prime Minister's Office as a sampling frame for public employee participants. A separate list of companies operating in Brunei-Muara District (the metropolitan area with the largest population and most private companies in the country) was made by the researcher and used as a sampling frame for private sector employee participants.

Recruitment of the participants in both sectors was based on a 5-point inclusion/exclusion criteria for employees who met the following conditions: (1) persons of all genders, ethnicities, religions, and age; (2) full Brunei citizens and permanent residents; (3) employed in the public and private sectors; (4) voluntarily willing to participate in the study; and (5) respondents whose protocols were not heavily contaminated with common methods bias, CMB.

Using the simple random sampling technique, 822 participants were recruited for the study from the public sector throughout Brunei. However, only 38 persons were recruited from the private

sector due largely to potential participants' lack of interest to volunteer for the study. The two selections gave a composite sample of 860 labor force from both sectors of the Brunei economy (public and private). According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of population values and corresponding sample sizes, the selected sample was adequate to compute stable statistics for making decisions at  $p = 0.05$  or  $p = 0.01$ . The demographic composition and personal characteristics of the selected participants are presented in Table 1.

### 2.3. Common method bias

Common methods bias, CMB (also known as common methods variance, CMV) refers to a wide range of instrument-based measurement errors such as social desirability (impression management), telling lies, magnification of information, and faking good or bad associated with self-reports and described in detail by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003). One method of testing for CMB or CMV is to use Harman's approach which requires performing an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of all scale items measuring various latent variables and force them to load on one common factor. If the total variance of the obtained single factor is less than 50%, then CMB/CMV did not contaminate the data. Since the total variance of the extracted single factor was 43.186% and less than 50%, it can be assumed that CMB was not a major problem. Despite taking this precautionary action, some researchers such as Fuller, Simmering, Atinc, Atinc, and Babin (2016) believe that confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was a better way of detecting CMB than Harman's one-factor EFA test.

Besides checking for CMB, the scales used in collecting data for the present study did not have internally built-in mechanisms for detecting and addressing CMB. However, before entering data the researcher visually inspected all usable returns for possible presence of the following major types of CMB: central tendency error; extremity response bias (minimizing and exaggerating); and missing values or non-response bias. To control for these types of false consistency errors, protocols with 30% or more affected items were excluded from data analysis as was done in previous studies (see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012 for other control measures of CMB).

### 2.4. Instruments

The study used two instruments (a demographic questionnaire and a satisfaction with work-related achievements scale) both constructed by the researcher. The 16-item demographic questionnaire collected the participants' personal biographic information reported in Table 1. The 4-item satisfaction with work-related achievements scale was developed from a pool of 30 items compiled by the researcher from the literature review. Of the 30 items, two performed poorly, had low factor loadings ( $<0.400$ ) and were eliminated from further use. All the remaining 28 items were related to job satisfaction and analyzed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation and the Kaiser criterion of Eigen value  $\geq 1$  which divided them into three questionnaires presented in Table 2. The questionnaires were designed to measure employees' workplace basic values, such as self-regulation and self-direction; self-presentation; and satisfaction with work-related achievements. The naming of the factors or scales was largely based on content analyses of the item stems in the Brunei linguistic and cultural contexts, content analysis of the relevant literature, and the researcher's own personal conceptualization of satisfaction with work-related achievements in the Brunei work situations. Of the three questionnaires, this study used only the satisfaction with work-related achievements questionnaire.

All four items in the job satisfaction questionnaire were rated on 5-point Likert scales (e.g. 1 Completely unimportant; 2 Not important; 3. Not very important; 4 More or less important; 5 Very Important). An example of one instruction, one item, and one response format on this questionnaire are as follows: Instruction—Rate the following statement according to the way you feel; Item—To obtain recognition for the work you are doing; Response—Circle one number 1 2 3 4 5). All the items were phrased positively and did not require reverse scoring. Each participant's total scale score was the sum of all the item nominal values endorsed by the respondent.



**Table 1. Participants' demographic information (N = 860)**

Variable	Gender	Number (%)	Mean (SD)
Age	All	860 (100%)	37.690 (9.045)
	Females	613 (71.300%)	37.690 (9.262)
	Males	247(28.700%)	37.710 (8.516)
Race	<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Malay	810	94.200
	Chinese	25	2.900
	Others	22	2.600
	Missing	1	0.300
Religion	Muslim	837	97.300
	Non-Muslim	12	1.400
	No religion	10	1.200
	Missing	1	0.300
Citizenship	Brunei citizen	831	96.600
	Permanent resident	26	3.000
	Missing	3	0.400
Education	Low (Primary to Year 13)	362	42.100
	Middle (Post-secondary to diploma)	194	22.600
	High (Bachelor's degree to doctoral degree)	301	35.000
	Missing	3	0.300
Employer	Public sector (government)	822	95.600
	Private sector (non-government)	38	4.400
Marital status	Single (never married)	221	25.700
	Married	615	71.500
	Divorced (17)/widowed (7)	24	2.800
Do you have children?	Yes	571	66.400
	No	286	33.300
	Missing	3	0.300
District	Brunei-Muara	721	83.800
	Tutong	104	12.100
	Kuala Belait	20	2.300
	Temburong	10	1.200
	Missing	5	0.600
	Alone	27	3.100
	Parents	296	34.400
	In-laws	57	6.600
	Family members (siblings)	73	8.500
	Spouse and children	384	44.700
	Missing	23	2.700
Do you stay/live in your own house	Yes	502	58.400
	No	356	41.400
	Missing	2	0.200

(Continued)

Variable	Gender	Number (%)	Mean (SD)
Are you the chief wage earner in your household?	Yes	282	32.800
	No	561	65.200
	Missing	17	2.000

Evidence in Table 2 shows that the three scales had reasonable reliability. Furthermore, the scales had sufficient construct validity as revealed by the percentages of common variance explained. Moreover, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's chi-square test of sphericity (BTS  $\chi^2$ ) indicated that the performed EFA was satisfactory and suited the data. Low scorers on the satisfaction with work-related achievements scale were interpreted as dissatisfied employees.

Overall, the association between satisfaction with work-related achievements and self-regulation/self-direction was 0.369 ( $p < .01$ ) while with self-presentation it was 0.402 ( $p < .01$ ). These two low but significant correlation coefficients provided quantitative evidence of discriminant validity for the satisfaction with work-related achievements questionnaire. Satisfaction with work-related achievements was thus a conceptually distinct measure from the self-regulation/self-direction and self-presentation scales. However, the correlation between self-regulation/self-direction and self-presentation was (0.789). Based on this obtained correlation, self-regulation/self-direction and self-presentation were measures of the same conceptual domain and both had good convergent validity.

### 2.5. Data analysis

All the independent (sociodemographic) variables were categorical. The dependent variable, DV (satisfaction with work-related achievements) was dichotomized at the median to be categorical, as well. Dichotomizing the DV in the present study's context made sense since people who score high and low on psychological variables are often different in behavior. For example, individuals who score high on a mathematics test would be expected to have more knowledge and skills in mathematics and possess favorable attitudes towards the subject. The quantitative data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (hierarchical binary logistic regression analysis with backward elimination). To determine the importance of the findings, two-tailed tests of statistical significance at both  $p = 0.05$  and  $p = 0.01$  levels and tests of statistical power (such as effect sizes and model fit chi-square indices for binary logistic regression analyses) were used. All of the statistical analyses were performed on SPSS Version 22.

### 2.6. Procedures

This study was funded by the Brunei Research Council (BRC) in the Government of Brunei Darussalam through the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD), a state tertiary institution. Written permission and approval to conduct the study were obtained from the University of Brunei Darussalam Ethics Committee, as well as the Brunei Research Council Ethics Committee on behalf of the Government of Brunei Darussalam. In addition, ethical conditions and rights (e.g. anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, voluntary participation, protection from harm, and informed consent) for participating in the study were explained verbally in either English or Bahasa Melayu language to individual research participants prior to collecting the data. Verbal and written informed consent was subsequently secured from each research participant in either of the two languages at the time and place of collecting the data. Only persons who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study were recruited. Coercion and deception were not used when recruiting the participants. Names of government ministries, departments and companies that constituted the sampling framework are not revealed to conceal the identity of the participants. To guarantee anonymity and confidentiality, all the data were analyzed



**Table 2. Scale statistics, alpha reliability and construct validity (N = 860)**

EFA <sup>a</sup> Factor/ Scale Name	Items	Mean	SEM <sup>b</sup>	SD <sup>c</sup>	Median	Average CITTS <sup>d</sup>	Cronbach Alpha	% Variance Accounted	KMO <sup>e</sup>	BTS <sup>f</sup> $\chi^2$	df	Sig.
<b>Preferred basic values</b>	<b>30</b>											
Factor 1—Self-regulation and self-direction	17	70.180	0.358	10.485	72.000	0.638	0.948	31.492	0.958	14,744.970	435	<0.000
Factor 2—Self-presentation	7	24.240	0.155	4.555	25.000	0.609	0.853	19.715				
Factor 3—Satisfaction with work-related achievements	4	11.580	0.106	3.118	12.000	0.565	0.779	11.451				
Total variance	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	62.658				

<sup>a</sup>EFA = Exploratory factor analysis; <sup>b</sup>SEM = Standard error of the mean; <sup>c</sup>SD = Standard deviation; <sup>d</sup>CITTSr = Average Corrected Item-to-Scale correlation; <sup>e</sup>KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy; <sup>f</sup>BTS = Bartlett's test of sphericity

at the group level. Furthermore, all the study's research tools were written in simple English language requiring only Grade 7 or Year 7 level of education. To address and reduce any possible linguistic and cultural biases, parallel bilingual items were presented on the instruments in both English and Bahasa Melayu, the main and official language of Brunei spoken by the majority of the people. Above all, data collection occurred in the participants' work environments to increase and enhance the study's ecological validity.

### 3. Results

The major findings of the present study are presented and explained below according to the objective of the investigation.

#### *Relationship between sociodemographic variables and satisfaction with work-related achievements by logistic regression*

The binary logistic regression analysis required a binary dependent variable (DV) and 15 cases in each categorical independent variables (IVs). In this study, the continuous DV (satisfaction with work-related achievements) was dichotomized at the median score to make it binary and meet the assumptions of the bivariate logistic regression analysis. As explained above under the section for data analysis, dichotomizing the DV was sensible as high scorers on psychological assessment tests are often different from low scorers (e.g. on a test of creativity, or intelligence, or mathematics). Low scorers in the present study were coded one (1) while higher scorers were coded zero (0). The IVs were sociodemographic variables. The findings of the binary logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 3. In Step 1 (also known as Model 1), all the IVs were entered and regressed on the DV. SPSS (Version 22) iteratively processed the data in 12 steps. For purposes of data reduction and space conservation, only the first and last models are shown in Table 3 which shows the specific contribution of each categorical IV to satisfaction with work-related achievements. Step 1 (first model) was over-fitted and less efficient because it contained both the required and unwanted terms. The unnecessary IVs had relatively higher standard errors. In the subsequent models, SPSS hierarchically removed the irrelevant factors stepwise.

Though underspecified, Step 12 (last model) contained the best four and statistically significant predictors of satisfaction with work-related achievements that had lower standard errors after adjusting and dropping or eliminating the irrelevant terms. The suitable IVs were male gender, low education, having children in the family or household, and living in Brunei-Muara district. Male gender and living in Muara-Brunei district predicted satisfaction with work-related achievements positively, while low education and having children predicted it negatively. The binary logistic model accounted for approximately 4%-5% of the common variance between the IVs and DV in the first step and approximately 3%-4% in the last step. The model was also acceptable as illustrated by the nonsignificant  $\chi^2$  fit indices at the bottom of Table 3.

Compared to females (reference group,  $n = 613/71\%$ , see Table 1 for frequencies and percentages), males ( $n = 247/29\%$ ) were nearly 1.5 times more likely to be satisfied with work-related achievements ( $B = 0.368$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $AOR = 1.445$ ,  $95\% \text{ CI} = 1.059-1.971$ ). However, employees with low education were less likely to be satisfied with work-related achievements compared to those with high education ( $B = -0.381$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $AOR = 0.683$ ,  $95\% \text{ CI} = 0.496-0.941$ ). Similarly, workers with children were less likely to be satisfied with work-related achievements compared to those who had no children ( $B = -0.462$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $AOR = 0.630$ ,  $95\% \text{ CI} = 0.467-0.850$ ). On the other hand, employees who resided in Brunei-Muara district had the highest adjusted odds ratios and likelihood of being satisfied with work-related achievements compared to those who lived in Temburong ( $B = 0.543$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $AOR = 1.722$ ,  $95\% \text{ CI} = 1.241-2.388$ ).

### 4. Discussion

The major findings of the study are briefly explained below.

**Table 3. Relationships between sociodemographic variables and satisfaction with work-related achievements using binary logistic regression (N = 860)#**

Model/Variables	B	S.E.	Wald $\chi^2$	df	Sig.	AOR <sup>e</sup>	95% CI for AOR	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1								
Males	0.348	0.193	3.260	1	0.071	1.417	0.971	2.067
Private employer	-0.301	0.362	0.692	1	0.405	0.740	0.364	1.505
Educational level			6.877	2	0.032*			
Low education <sup>a</sup>	-0.446	0.170	6.875	1	0.009**	0.640	0.458	0.893
Middle education <sup>b</sup>	-0.211	0.193	1.190	1	0.275	0.810	0.555	1.183
Sought help from counsellors (Yes)	0.198	0.276	0.518	1	0.472	1.219	0.710	2.094
Sought help from family members (Yes)	-0.067	0.219	0.092	1	0.761	0.936	0.609	1.438
Sought help from prayer/religion (Yes)	0.084	0.175	0.233	1	0.629	1.088	0.772	1.533
Sought help from Bomo <sup>c</sup> (Yes)	-0.182	0.752	0.059	1	0.808	0.833	0.191	3.640
Sought help from friends (Yes)	-0.154	0.158	0.950	1	0.330	0.857	0.629	1.168
Sought help from online social networking (Yes)	-0.099	0.328	0.091	1	0.763	0.906	0.476	1.724
Sought help from Ustad <sup>d</sup> (1)	-0.036	0.195	0.034	1	0.854	0.965	0.658	1.413
Marital status			0.674	2	0.714			
Single	0.321	0.449	0.511	1	0.475	1.379	0.572	3.325
Married	0.325	0.403	0.653	1	0.419	1.384	0.629	3.047
Do you have children? (Yes)	-0.387	0.257	2.259	1	0.133	0.679	0.410	1.125
Who do you live with?			4.173	4	0.383			
Live alone	0.276	0.439	0.396	1	0.529	1.318	0.558	3.118
Live with parents	0.156	0.197	0.627	1	0.429	1.169	0.794	1.720
Live with in-laws	-0.073	0.295	0.062	1	0.804	0.929	0.521	1.657
Live with siblings	0.570	0.295	3.730	1	0.053	1.769	0.992	3.156
District			2.547	3	0.467			

(Continued)

**Table 3. (Continued)**

Model/Variables	B	S.E.	Wald $\chi^2$	df	Sig.	AOR <sup>e</sup>	95% CI for AOR	
							Lower	Upper
Brunei-Muara	0.173	0.463	0.140	1	0.708	1.189	0.480	2.945
Tutong	-0.171	0.485	0.124	1	0.725	0.843	0.326	2.179
Kuala Belait	0.057	0.669	0.007	1	0.933	1.058	0.285	3.924
Are you the chief wage earner in your household? (Yes)	0.072	0.182	0.156	1	0.693	1.075	0.752	1.536
Step 12								
Males	0.368	0.158	5.404	1	0.020*	1.445	1.059	1.971
Educational level			5.450	2	0.066			
Low education <sup>a</sup>	-0.381	0.163	5.443	1	0.020*	0.683	0.496	0.941
Middle education <sup>b</sup>	-0.184	0.191	0.938	1	0.333	0.832	0.572	1.208
Do you have children (Yes)	-0.462	0.153	9.140	1	0.003**	0.630	0.467	0.850
District			11.760	3	0.008**			
Brunei-Muara	0.543	0.167	10.598	1	0.001**	1.722	1.241	2.388
Tutong	0.171	0.243	0.493	1	0.482	1.186	0.737	1.910
Kuala Belait	0.445	0.484	0.845	1	0.358	1.561	0.604	4.032

Low education<sup>a</sup> = Primary school to General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A-Level)

Middle education<sup>b</sup> = Post-secondary to Higher National Diploma (HND)

Bomo<sup>c</sup> = traditional healer

Ustad<sup>d</sup> = religious teacher/preacher/leader e.g. Imam

AOR<sup>e</sup> = adjusted odds ratio

\*p < .05 (two-tailed)

\*\*p < .01 (two-tailed)

†Step 1: R Squares = 0.041 (Cox & Snell), 0.055 (Nagelkerke); Hosmer and Lemeshow  $\chi^2$  (df = 8) = 11.509, p = 0.174

‡Step 12: R Squares = 0.032 (Cox & Snell), 0.043 (Nagelkerke); Hosmer and Lemeshow  $\chi^2$  (df = 7) = 3.876, p = 0.794

#Dependent variable = Satisfaction with work-related achievements

#### **4.1. Males were more satisfied with their jobs than females**

To date, only a small number of studies have claimed that women employees were more satisfied with their jobs than their male counterparts (e.g. Ziauddin et al., 2010). In fact, most studies found that female workers were more distressed and dissatisfied with their jobs compared to male peers (Aneshensel et al., 1981; Menaghan, 1989; Radloff, 1975). Employed married women with children in particular have more challenges as they have to attend both to family and work roles (Rees, 2003; Roxburgh, 1996). In view of these and other factors, many studies report higher levels of job satisfaction in men than women (Carbrita & Perista, 2007). Similarly, in Brunei, men occupy most of the highly compensated jobs that require high levels of education and would thus be expected to be more satisfied with their employment positions than women.

#### **4.2. Low-educated workers were less satisfied than others**

This finding concurred with outcomes from previous research that found that employees with higher educational qualifications were more satisfied with their jobs due to better working conditions and higher income (see Gallie, 2007; Roos & Van Eeden, 2008). By contrast, workers with lower educational attainment were dissatisfied, as they held jobs with poor working conditions and low pay (Gallie, 2007; Wallace et al., 2010). According to Greenberg and Baron (1995), employees with many years of working experience reported higher satisfaction than their colleagues with less work experience, regardless of educational background.

#### **4.3. Workers with children were less satisfied than others**

In the absence of interviews, it is difficult to know why workers with children were less satisfied with their work-related achievements in this study. However, two speculative or suggestive reasons may be offered. First, one group of dissatisfied workers may be employed women with children. Compared to men, most women in Brunei still hold low-level jobs with salaries that are not sufficiently large to support families. As noted above, the world of work still favors males especially in developing countries (Aneshensel et al., 1981; Menaghan, 1989; Radloff, 1975; Rees, 2003; Roxburgh, 1996). Second, the other group of dissatisfied employees might be workers with low education who hold low paid jobs (Gallie, 2007; Wallace et al., 2010). Due to low income, such workers were often not able to adequately support their families and therefore dissatisfied with their work-related achievements.

#### **4.4. Employees living in Brunei-Muara district were more satisfied than others**

Most public and private sector workers in Brunei are located in Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital city, which is in Brunei-Muara district. Since this is the headquarters of the government ministries and companies, as well as the most developed district in the country, it would be expected that workers in this district have more resources to do their jobs. In addition, communication with upper management would be easier. Overall, workers in Brunei-Muara tend to be happier than those in the other three districts. Darnosubroto (1983) in Indonesia noted that workers in the metropolitan urban areas expressed higher overall job satisfaction than those who worked in rural areas. Lack of equipment and supplies in the workplace, especially the rural areas, lowers the workers' efficiency and job satisfaction (Hotchkiss et al., 2015).

### **5. Conclusions**

This study found that there were both satisfied and dissatisfied employees within the public and private sector labor forces in Brunei. Male employees and workers who live in Brunei-Muara district were satisfied, while workers with low education and employees with children were dissatisfied. Further qualitative research is recommended to identify the factors that lead to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction among these employees.

### **6. Limitations**

This study has three limitations. First, an interview component was needed to explore further the participants' responses to the quantitative survey items. Second, the number of private sector employees who participated was too small ( $n = 38$ ). Future research should address both of these

concerns. Third, although the study collected data on other variables such as age, ethnicity, religious affiliations, and citizenship, the categories for these were not included in the study beyond using them to describe the sample. Future studies should include these variables to gain more knowledge.

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