

# **The Effects of Interpersonal Relationship on Employees' Job Satisfaction: The Case of Education Department, Hawassa City Administration**

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to investigate effects of interpersonal relationship on employees' job satisfaction. The participants were 61 coworkers and supervisors in Education department of Hawassa City Administration. Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis for the overall sample was conducted to scrutinize the trends of the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The finding of the study reveals that good friendly environment at work place play important role for employees' interpersonal relationship and interpersonal relationship had a strong positive direct effect on job satisfaction. Thus, it is recommended that management intervention may be instrumental in promoting friendships at work, employees need to get along well with their fellow workers for a positive ambience in workplace and also for healthy interpersonal relationship.*

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## **I. Background**

One of the factors rendering human beings unique is interpersonal relationship that they co-exist. Through co-existence, they make relationship as the way of using resources with the aim of attaining utility or power. Interpersonal relationship is referred to as a strong association existing among people who work together in the same organization. According to Guide (2015) employees who work together should share a special unity for them to do their level best in an organization. Vokic & Heranaus (2005) reinforce that the merit of living and working together result in outstanding ultimate achievement and success. Most people working together with other people have the opportunity of developing desired benefits and thereby are effective through cooperating with others.

In a working environment interpersonal relationship plays a paramount role in developing and stimulating trust and positive feelings and images among workers. Thus, the relationship between supervisor and subordinate or among co-workers should be strengthened and stepped up for this situation brings about job satisfaction (Mustapha, 2013). Besides allowing the workers to enhance their social bond with regards to their job, the situation will foster job satisfaction and develop a sense of teamwork. The team work relationship and spirit may lead to the benefit of the organization in its entirety. Part of the employees' satisfaction with social interaction offered them satisfaction and reasonable amount of time aimed at socializing themselves (e.g., one lunch during breaks, between customers, etc.). This will in turn opens up an opportunity for them to develop a sense of belonging among co-workers and teamwork.

The relationship between leaders and subordinates can result in higher performance and satisfaction of the workers. Gaur & Ebrahimi (2013) assert that health relationships can manifest themselves in various types of exchanges between heads and the subordinates. A welcoming exchange, which may involve behaviors like, discussing work related problems, involvement in the decision making process, availability of the leader at any time when required. Workplace interpersonal relationship enhances workers' job satisfaction. With reference to Siburian (2013), job satisfaction is the individual's attitude towards his/her work that describes a feeling satisfied. Job satisfaction is closely connected with a sense of justice, which is a function that describes the extent to which fairness is received by a person in performing a job. Among many attitudes, job satisfaction is one factor which influences human behavior and there are various factors that influence job satisfaction. These are the work itself, achievement and recognition, reward structure, responsibility, advancement, salary, work conditions, supervisors, co-workers, management policy (Martha 2015).

Having a reasonable interpersonal relationship at your workplace can realize the development of mutual understanding with other workers and the management. This will help to build better teamwork, which will be guided by better understanding among the workers. Positive relationship among the employees at work

place will bring about productivity and less conflicts and issues to handle. Fair interpersonal relationship at workplace provides a conducive climate for employees to work in. Employees will feel comfortable with getting to work and thus attaining goals in such an environment. On top of this, better understanding among the employees will minimize the imminent conflict likely to exist between them. A good interpersonal relationship among the workers will be propitious and likely to promote the morale and commitment of the employees and encourage them to perform quality work.

Dugguh & Dennis,(2014) described in their study that interpersonal relationship is one factor influencing job satisfaction. In addition, they suggest reasonable time should be given for socializing employees. This situation will help to develop a sense of teamwork on one hand and, will avoid unnecessary behavior at work place on the other. Morrison (2004) indicates that there has been empirical evidence which proves the effect of co-workers' relationship on Job satisfaction. He also indicates that there is a favorable relationship and a direct impact of interpersonal relationship on the satisfaction of workers.

In Ethiopia there has been a culture of giving value to interpersonal relationship between people in every walks of life and this life style has become a part of working area too, which has been believed to have positive effect on helping people against stress and other psychosocial problems. Some changes concomitant to the fastest growth and development in the country have become the dictating factors in interpersonal relationship at work places which in return can influence job satisfaction of employees positively as well as negatively. Prior to realizing successful organization, developing successful employees will facilitate the need for becoming productive.

Even if there is an increasing number of employment rates in government organization in Ethiopia, studies on the issue of interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction of employees are insufficient. Hence, this study will assess the effect of interpersonal relationships on job satisfaction of employees. Despite a variety of potential merits of work place friendship, not much attention has been paid to the issue of work place relationship. It is true that in Ethiopia less attention given to the interpersonal relationship between coworkers and supervisors employee seems to have an effect on the job satisfaction of employees which in return affects performance and productivity of the organizations as afore mentioned by various scholars. Because of the points mentioned above the following research questions were posed for this study

1. To find out the association between interpersonal relationship of employees and their job satisfaction.
2. To see any difference between the perception of supervisory level employees and other employees on interpersonal relationship in the study area.
3. To identify major determinants job satisfaction in relation to interpersonal relationships in an organization.

## **II. Methods and materials**

The study employed correlation design using quantitative research. The participants of the study were 61 employees working in the education department of the City Administration. Due to small population size the researcher used all 61 participants as a sample. For data collection the researcher adapted questionnaire that contains four sets of questions developed by Vokic& Hernaus (2004) and measure interpersonal relation aspects. To asses job satisfaction of employees, Job Satisfaction Index(JSI) measure which was developed by Schriesheim and Tsue (1980) was used. It consists of six dimensions/components that form and index which determines overall job satisfaction. The items are the work, supervision, co-workers, pay, promotion opportunities, and the job in general.

### **Background Characteristics of Sample Respondents**

Majority 40(87.9%) of the respondents were males while, only 21(34.4%) were females. Among the total respondents majorities 46(75.4%) were bachelor degree holders, 4(6.6%) were college diploma holders, 2(3.3%) were certificate holders and the rest 9(14.8%) were masters' degree graduates. The educational background of the respondents showed the study was inclusive of all the targeted respondents at each level with different educational background. That would give a chance of all the parties to reflect their view point impacts of interpersonal relationship on job satisfaction.

Regarding respondents position in their office described 36(59%) were experts, followed by 12(19.7%) supervisors and process owners, 5(8.2%) financial and accounting workers, 3(4.9%) top leaders and the rest 8(13.1%) were involved in other positions. From this it can be implied that majority of the respondents worked as experts in various sections of the organizations under investigation. Generally, Song and Olshfski (2008) proposed that demographic and socioeconomic factors like family ties, class, ethnic background, race, gender, age, education, experience, interests, and the geography has an impact on social relationships between individuals in general and interpersonal relationship in work place in particular

**Organizational experiences of interpersonal relationship**

Positive interpersonal relationships at work have an impact on both organizational and individual variables and it can improve individual employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, job commitment, engagement and perceived organizational support (Morrison, 2009 and Murrell, & Thatcher, 2010).

**Table 1: Organizational experience on interpersonal relationship**

Interpersonal relationship	Mean	SD
The organization system values the interpersonal relationship between employees	3.77	0.84
The organization has its own conflict management system	3.57	1.02
The organization has mechanisms to keep healthy interpersonal relationship between employees	3.44	1.00
The organization has mechanisms to keep good traditional interpersonal relationship system	3.31	1.11
The organization facilitate the opportunity to employees to socialize	3.49	0.85
The organization have fixed schedule of staff get together programs	2.67	1.15
The organization's administration encourages social committees at work place	3.19	0.99
The organization recognizes employees for keeping good interpersonal relationship at work place	3.16	1.11

Generally, Table 1 illustrates that the average value of respondents' response on organizational experience on interpersonal relationship was fall between ranges of 3.16-3.77. From this we infer that as respondents believed that organization system values the interpersonal relationship between employees, the organization has its own conflict management system, mechanisms to keep healthy interpersonal relationship between employees, to keep good traditional interpersonal relationship system, and facilitate the opportunity to employees to socialize, organization's administration encourages social committees at work place and the organization recognizes employees for keeping good interpersonal relationship at work place contributes interpersonal relation in their work place. Therefore, the result shows that respondents almost agreed that the organizations they are working in have good experience on appreciating interpersonal relationships at work place.

Interpersonal relationships at workplace serve as a critical factor in the development and maintenance of trust and positive feelings among workers. The relationship between supervisor and subordinate or among co-workers needs to be enhanced since it influences job satisfaction. Waskiewicz, (1999) indicates that the effect of interpersonal relationship at workplace such as a good treatment received from a supervisor was significantly important for intrinsic, extrinsic, and general job satisfaction and was the strongest explanatory variable for extrinsic job satisfaction. It is also consistent with the study of Lin & Lin (2011), that coworkers' relationship has positive effect on job satisfaction. When leader-member relationship and coworkers' interactions are better, the level of job satisfaction will be higher.

**Job satisfaction in an organization**

Work is one of the most important aspects in people's lives in today's highly competitive corporate environment. Since people spend about most of their working hours at work, employee job satisfaction gains more importance in their working lives. Therefore, job satisfaction plays a vital role for efficient working environment. In accordance with identification of influencing factors of job satisfaction are essential for improving the well-being of a large part of our society (Schneider and Vaught, 1993).

**Table 2: Job satisfaction among employees**

No	Job satisfaction	Mean	SD
1	I am satisfied with my salary	2.59	1.00
2	I am satisfied with the administrative support in my organization	3.13	0.99
3	I have enough working materials available to do my job	3.42	0.99
4	I am satisfied with the promotion policy of the organization	2.85	0.87
5	My organizations administration fairly evaluates my work	3.18	0.88
6	The work, the salary and the promotion policy has an effect my stay in the organization	3.34	1.07
7	I am satisfied with the relationships I have with my coworker	4.01	0.74
8	Overall I am satisfied with my job	3.44	0.82

Accordingly, Table 2 reveals that enough working materials available to do their job, they were satisfied with the promotion policy of the organization, salary and promotion policy has an effect on their stay in the organization, satisfaction with their coworker and overall satisfaction with their job were the most decisive variables that influence respondents job satisfaction in the study area since their mean value is above the average mean value of job satisfaction elements(3.24).

Studies show that satisfied employees are thought to be more productive. (Henderson and Tulloch 2008, Dieleman, Cuong, Martineau 2003; Haq & Hafeez 2009). Additionally, appraisal, non-monetary incentives, recognition of good work, appreciation of senior staff and other rewards have a positive impact on the workers (Henderson and Tulloch 2008; Dieleman, Cuong, Martineau 2003; Haq & Hafeez 2009).

**Effects of interpersonal relationship on job satisfaction**

Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis for the overall sample was conducted to scrutinize the trends of the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ) for the overall sample and the corresponding unstandardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ) parameter estimates for the subsamples of coworkers and supervisors for Maximum Likelihood Method (MLM) and Bollen Stine Bootstrap Method (BSBM) are depicted in table 3 below.

**Table 3:** Effects of interpersonal relationship on employees job satisfaction

Variables		Effect	Samples		
Dependent	Independent		Overall	Coworkers	Supervisors
Job satisfaction	Participation on social group	Direct	.38***(.38***)	.63***(.63***)	.58***(.58***)
		Indirect	-	-	-
		Total	.38***(.38***)	.63***(.63***)	.58***(.58***)
	Trust colleagues by expressing personal life	Direct	.12***(.12***)	.01(.01)	-.05***(-.05***)
		Indirect	.06***(.16***)	.02*** (.01***)	.02***(.13***)
		Total	-.11***(-.12***)	.03*(.02*)	-.03(-.02)
	Improves approaches	Direct	-.17***(-.17***)	-.03(-.03)	.04**(.04**)
		Indirect	.06***(.16***)	.03*(.01*)	.02**(.02**)
		Total	-.11***(-.12***)	-.00***(-.02)	.06(.06***)
	Manage Conflict situation with colleagues	Direct	.11***(.11***)	.04***(.04***)	.03**(.03**)
		Indirect	-	-	-
		Total	.11***(.11***)	.04***(.04***)	.03**(.03**)

Note: \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* denote that the effect is significant at  $p < .001$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $p < .05$  respectively.

As the data indicated employee who participate on social groups were found to have significantly higher job satisfaction when compared to their counterparts who do not participate on social groups. However, contrary to expectation, job satisfaction had a weak negative direct effect on improving approaches ( $\beta = -.17$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This is consistent with studies made by Dotan (2007), reveals that interpersonal relationship gradually develops with good team participation with other members. On the other hand, these relationships may deteriorate when a person leaves the group and stops being in touch. More specifically, employees who trust their colleagues by expressing personal life were found to have significant higher job satisfaction when compared to their counterparts. Also managing conflict situation had a significant and positive direct effect ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ) on job satisfaction, suggesting that employees with higher interpersonal relation had higher job satisfaction (Table 3). Studies also indicate that conflict arises at workplace when employees find it difficult to reach a mutually acceptable solution and fight over petty issues.

A multi group SEM analysis (i.e., one analysis which indicates two different groups, that is, coworkers and supervisors) also conducted to assess whether or not the effects of the predictor variables on criterion variables varied for workers and supervisors. In this case, the bootstrapped unstandardized coefficient estimates, which are useful for comparing the magnitude and significance of the effects of a given parameter across different groups (Garson, 2009), were used. As it can be observed from Table 3 job satisfaction had a strong positive direct effect on the participation on social groups of both coworkers ( $\beta = .63$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and supervisors ( $\beta = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ ), such that both coworkers and supervisors who rated the participation on social groups had significantly higher job satisfaction than their counterparts. Although the effect is weak, job satisfaction had a significant and positive direct effect on trust colleagues by expressing personal life of coworkers ( $\beta = .01$ ,  $p < .05$ ), indicating that the coworkers who perceived on trust colleagues by expressing personal life had significantly higher job satisfaction when compared to their counterparts.

**Relationship between interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction**

Since all variables are categorical, the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable was investigated using Pearson product –moment correlation coefficient. According to Field (2005), correlation coefficient should not go beyond 0.8 to avoid Multicollinearity. In this research, the highest correlation coefficient is 0.69, thereby implying that there was no multicollinearity problem in this research, since the value is less than 0.8.

**Table 4:** Correlations between interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction

Variables		Interpersonal relationship	Job satisfaction	
Pearson	Interpersonal relationship	Correlation Coef.	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	
	Job satisfaction	Correlation Coef.	.511**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	60	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the Pearson's correlation test shown in the table 4, there was a high positive correlation between interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction: [r (60) = .511, P= <0.05]. So, it implied that interpersonal relationship was highly correlated with respondent's job satisfaction. The result is consistent with studies made by Dotan (2007) that suggested when employees have trustful friends at work; they can get help or advice from their friend coworkers and, therefore, gain feelings of security, comfort, and satisfaction with their job at work. Also (Hamilton, 2007) agree that employees in friendship tend to engage in altruistic behaviors by providing co-workers with help, guide, advice, feedback, recommendation, or information on various work-related matters. Similarly, studies have demonstrated that good interpersonal relationship at work can improve individual employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, job commitment, engagement and perceived organizational support (Morrison, 2009).

**Difference between the perception of supervisory level employees and other employees on interpersonal relationship**

**Table 5:** Independent Sample t-test for differences in perception of supervisors and coworkers on interpersonal relationship

Dependent variable	Position	N	Mean	S.D.	S.E.	t	Sig.
Perception on interpersonal relationship	Supervisors	9	3.99	0.61	0.09	.022	.881
	Co workers	44	4.09	0.55	0.18		

As revealed on table 5 above, no difference was observed between respondent position in their work place and their perception on their interpersonal relationship. An independent t-test showed no statistical difference between supervisors and coworkers perception: [t (63) = .022, P > 0.05]. This indicates that both supervisors and coworkers have similar perception on their interpersonal relationship. But, coworkers have better perception than supervisors.

Consistent with this result Saidon (2012) pointed out that the effect of supervisor relations was significant for intrinsic, extrinsic, and general job satisfaction and was the strongest explanatory variable for extrinsic job satisfaction.

**Determinants of job satisfaction in relation with interpersonal relation**

The multiple regression analysis was conducted using the hierarchical regression method. It is conducted to investigate the influence of independent variable on the dependent variable and identify the relative significant influence. In examining the factors that could determine job satisfaction in the study area, the researcher used a regression analysis to test the effect of eight independent (explanatory) variables on the dependent(explained) variable i.e. job satisfaction.

**Table 6:** Testing the model through ANOVA (Goodness of fit statistic)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	34.691	11	3.855	10.291	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	31.836	49	.375		
Total	66.526	60			

a. **Dependent Variable:** job satisfaction

a. **Predictors:** (Constant) good understanding each other, empathy, trust, working environment and work load, communication, respect, honesty and behavior of co workers

Table 6 summarizes the information about the variation of the dependent variable explained by the existing model used for this study and the residual that indicates the variation of the dependent variable that are not captured by the model. It is observed that the independent variables give a significant effect on the dependent variable, where F-value is 10.291 with a p-value of less than 0.05 (i.e. p<0.000) indicating that, over all, the model used for the study is significantly good enough in explaining the variation on the dependent

variable. To ensure the statistical adequacy of the model, the goodness of fit can also be measured by the square of the correlation coefficient also called R<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 7:** Goodness of fit through R Square

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.678 <sup>a</sup>	.819	.721	.62887

a. **Predictors:**(Constant), good understanding each other, empathy, trust, working environment and work load, communication, respect, honesty and behavior of co workers

Both R<sup>2</sup> and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> measure the fitness of the model i.e. they measure the proportion of the variation in dependent variable explained by the model. But since adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is the modification for the limitation of R<sup>2</sup> the value of the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is considered to measure the fitness of the model. Thus, as it is shown on table 7, the value of adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is 0.721, indicating that, the independent variables in the model are explaining 72.1% variation on the dependent variables. Thus, we can understand that the model of the study is providing a good fit to the data. This outcome empirically indicates that the independent variables in this study are the major determinants of job satisfaction among employees in the study area.

Table 7 below shows the results of the regression model. The result reveals that, with the empathy, trust and honesty were insignificant. Whereas, there exists a significant relationship between independent variables such as good understanding each other, working environment and work load, communication, respect and behavior of coworkers and dependent variable, i.e. employees job satisfaction.

**Table 8:** Regression analysis on determinants of employees' job satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand. Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	SE	Beta		
<b>(Constant)</b>	<b>3.698</b>	<b>.540</b>		<b>14.407</b>	<b>.000</b>
Good understanding of each other	.048	.103	.497	6.180	.000***
Working environment and work load	.073	.069	.035	.454	.041**
Communication	.042	.058	.346	.060	.022**
Empathy	.093	.063	.060	6.180	.546
Respect others	.018	.400	.231	3.231	.011***
Honesty	.073	.069	.035	.454	.089
Behavior of coworkers	.011	.721	.122	.071	.002**
Trust	.083	.091	.902	3.110	.113

As shown in the above table 8, of the total of eight explanatory variables tested in this study, good understanding of each other (p-value = 0.000), working environment and work load (p-value=0.041), communication(p-value=0.022), respect others(p-value=0.011) and behaviors of coworkers(p-value=0.002) were statistically significant at 5 percent or lower. In this study, there is insignificant positive relationship between empathy, trust and honesty and employee job satisfaction with a regression p-value of 0.546, 0.089 and 0.113.

### III. Conclusion

From the current research findings it can be concluded interpersonal relationship had a significant effects on job satisfaction of both coworkers and supervisors that regardless of the employee position in an organization, interpersonal relationship had a strong positive direct effect on job satisfaction. That means interpersonal relationship of employees within their organization can matter their job satisfaction. It was also found that there is no significant difference between respondent position in their work place and their perception on their interpersonal relationship. Thus, mechanisms should be prepared in order to minimize employees' dissatisfaction and the management needs to ensure that employees have healthy interpersonal relationship at work in order to prevent the feeling of dissatisfaction at their work place. In addition, the management is expected to provide an environment, which encourages good interpersonal relations among staffs by understanding its effect on job satisfaction of all staffs i.e. supervisory level staffs as well as other employees in their organization.

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