

Job Satisfaction of Women Lawyers in Myanmar

Dr. Elizabeth Furio Perez, River Samon Institute of Management Myanmar

Pwint War War Soe, UCSI Myanmar

ABSTRACT

This study used the descriptive method of research with impact of job satisfaction of women lawyers in Myanmar. The instruments used were validated questionnaires. When the questionnaires were accomplished and retrieved, the data collected were processed, analyzed and interpreted as to the stated problems of the study. The statistical treatments used were frequency, Pearson correlation and regression test and analysis of one variable. Interview was conducted to women advocate lawyers and higher-grade pleader lawyers to determine job satisfaction

Findings revealed that as to profile, majority of the women lawyers are in age between 31 and 40, and twenty five percent of the of the respondents have 1 to 3 years of court experience. Forty seven percent of the sample population earns from USD600 (or MMK900,000) and above. The study also shows that gender issues in work environment has no significant impact in the job satisfaction of women lawyers.

Keywords: *job satisfaction, women lawyers, work-life balance, gender specific issue, motivation*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Elizabeth Furio Perez holds a degree in Doctor of Business Administration and is currently holding the position as Academic Head in the Faculty of Business of River Samon Institute of Management, Visiting Professor of Myanmar Metropolitan College and Academic Consultant for Myanmar International Business Academy and Swiss Business School.

Pwint War War Soe, is an Associate Administrative Officer at International Commission of Jurists in Myanmar. She works with women lawyers in different states and divisions, and various programs of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

1. INTRODUCTION

In Myanmar society, a person whose professional job is law, has a good reputation, dignified and a very respected. Therefore, lawyers whether a man or woman should be very pleased to carry out their job very well and very satisfied. Two decades before year 2000 in Myanmar, there were very few women lawyers and less opportunities to get a professional lawyering career. According to the nature of society in Myanmar, some gender bias in the career were impacted at different levels; first, the number of women lawyers, second, the interest of women advocates and finally, the Judiciary or law firms, and the BAR Council the lack of higher positions that women lawyers occupy (Kannan, 2013). As a woman lawyer, it is difficult to get a chance to be a professional lawyer because of the mindset of people that women lack the ability in this kind of profession.

Myanmar is not exempted from the global issues that female lawyer is being compared to a male lawyer. Nowadays, there is an increasing number of women choosing the legal profession, however, inequality in the position with men is still existing despite similar experience and background.

Women lawyers come from different walks of life, but they share common motivations, beliefs, and a dedication to the growth of the female lawyer in the social, economic and political sphere. They believe in joining forces to lead social transformation in their communities, so that women and men will be seen to be of equal worth and value. When they share their interests and experiences, they become more powerful collective that can effectively encourage social transformations. Building connections means sharing, building trust and learning from each other, and finding ways to engage, collaborate and support all of their efforts to encourage growth the legal sphere for women.

In Myanmar, women lawyers work as consultants, advocates at government law institutions, such as Justice Court from over 300 Township Courts, District Courts, High Courts and Supreme Court and private organizations. When a woman chooses her career as a lawyer it is very interesting to know whether she is satisfied with her job or not. Is it possible to be successful and satisfied in a law firm or institution?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender bias in the career is reflected at various levels: First, in the percentage of female lawyers' population; Second, in the attrition charge of female advocates, and finally, in the lack of excessive positions that female attorneys occupy be it in the bar, in consultancy companies or in the judiciary.

According to a 2009 report by the National Association of Women Lawyers, women are grossly underrepresented in guidance roles in the legal profession. Despite their tremendous presence in the profession, and their numerical gains, they are yet to gain equivalent increase in strength and opportunities. Women now include more than a quarter of the legal career and about half of all law students, however their numerical gains have not yielded equal opportunity with the opposite gender so as to increase in strength and opportunities. Within the legal departments tremendous different gender exists concerning contemporary role and salary. Gender inequalities persist throughout hiring, promotions, legal education, remuneration, and other expert possibilities in law. (Kannan, 2013)

In the olden days, men were considered as bread winner and women were considered as home makers, but today everything has changed. Both men and women have equal responsibility in work and family. Legal profession assumed character of keenly competitive trade in which professional efficiency stands second, the women lawyers find it difficult to coordinate the professional work. Although sex wise distribution of different categories by legal professionals in India clearly indicates a complete male dominance at all levels records a gradual increase of women's entry as lawyers at bar council and this is to be welcomed. A woman cannot be as daring and outgoing as a man.(Jayasudha N. S. and Prof. Ramegowda A, 2017)

Job satisfaction has been definitive in several different ways and a definitive designation for the term is unlikely to materialize. A simple or general way to define career satisfaction therefore, is as an attitudinal variable. Job satisfaction of an employee depends on his or her working conditions. Nowadays the labor conditions get deteriorated due to globalization. Income is the central measure of well-being of individuals and families, and for most of the people, salary (wages) is the measure of well-being provides information on the distribution of working conditions. (Jayasudha N. S. and Prof. Ramegowda A, 2017)

While it can be stated that balancing their work and family is a task for female in all professions given that the burden of the responsibilities of their family always falls on the woman, what

makes it particularly difficult is the fact that the legal system is engineered from the view of men. A necessary new discovery of a study is that female legal professionals frequently select an exit approach when confronted with the dilemma of selecting between family and work obligations. Women lawyers leave their jobs more frequently than men, due to the fact that female lawyers have more responsibilities in their families. (Jayasudha N. S. and Prof. Ramegowda A, 2017)

Some women lawyers in Myanmar have been facing some difficulties in their lives between their professional work and family affairs. For Single people, there is no specific duty for their family. Their parents are usually supportive of their career as a woman lawyer. For, some married women lawyers' balance of work and family issues arise. For instance, their husband asks multiple demands at home. When they have kids, they have no time to take much needed care for their children's educational affairs.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 (Appendix 1) illustrates the factors (input variables) that affect the Job satisfaction of women lawyer in Myanmar, such as, Gender Specific Issues, Job Responsibilities and Motivation and Work Life Balance.

The process involved in this study were the data gathering, analysis and interpretation. The input variables and processes concerned in the conceptual framework contributed to the recommended output of the study- HR policies on recruitment, assignment and remuneration.

Figure 2 (Appendix 2), job satisfaction indicates the extent of employees positive or negative feelings towards their job with assigned task. Using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation and Hygiene Factors, the researcher classified the women lawyers job satisfaction as "Dissatisfaction", "Satisfaction" and "No satisfaction". The hygiene factors include *pay, company policies and administrative polices, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, status, interpersonal relations, job security*. Motivational factors include *recognition, sense of achievement, promotional opportunities and growth, responsibility, meaningfulness of the work*.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

This study was participated by 168 women lawyers worked as advocate lawyers and higher grade pleader in local and international law firms, companies, INGOs and CSOs.

Descriptive method was used to identify the level of job satisfaction of women lawyers based on the Hygiene and Motivational Factors, and so with job satisfaction and the different intervening variables such as gender specific issues, job responsibilities and motivation and work life balance.

The women lawyers who participated in the survey and interview were the lawyers whose age ranged between 21 and 60 years old, have six months and above lawyering experience, have judicial knowledge in law institution, NGOs, International Commission of Jurists, Justice Base, legal aids organizations and local law firms.

Personal data sheet was used to assess the manger's profile. While, the validated researcher-made instruments were used to identify the demographic features of participants, conduct of career, approaches towards job responsibility and motivation, view of social prospects of woman lawyer based gender issue, concerns towards well-being and environment and social life balance of women.

4.1 Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were used in this study:

- a. Frequency and Percentage Distribution is a measure standardizing by calculating the profile of the respondents according to educational attainment, marital status, age group, occupation and earning.

- b. Mean and Standard Deviation is a type of measurement for central tendency, which is similar to the arithmetic mean, except that each value has a specific significance or 'weight' aside from its real value. The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the scores of jobs satisfaction, job responsibilities and motivation and work life balance.

c. Pearson Correlation Test was used to determine the relationship between variables, such as, work life balance and job satisfaction, gender issues and job satisfaction, job responsibility and job satisfaction.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Profile of Women Lawyers

The study results indicate that 141 or 84% of the respondents have bachelor degree and only 27 or 16% has Post graduate studies. Most of the respondents are single with the score of 95 or 57%, and 43% or 73 are married.

With the age group, the results show that 119 or 71% of the respondents belong to 31-41 bracket, 45 or 27% are of 21-30 years old and only 2.4% belongs to 41-50 bracket.

The findings also show that 145 or 86% of the respondents are practicing lawyer, 17 or 10% are legal advisers, and 6 or 4% legal consultants.

Majority of the women lawyers earn USD600 with the score of 24%, 22% earn USD466 and 6.5% earns USD333.

Out of 168 respondents, 49 or 29% has 7-9 years' court experience, followed by 1-3 years with 42%, 4-6 years with 41% and above 9 years with 21%.

As to role or position in the firm majority of these women lawyers are Advocates with 54% score, followed by higher-grade pleader with 34%, legal adviser with 8% score.

During the *Chamber Sessions*, 45% of woman lawyers feel that the Chamber Master does not teach them everything that they are supposed to learn, while 43% said that they get motivated in the Chamber sessions. Only 9% said that they do excessive work with little pay and 2% feels that there is gender disadvantage in the session.

In terms of *Priority between Family and Job*, 124 out of 168 respondents said that they are Flexible, or depends on situation, while 36 lawyers said they prioritize their job. Only 8 respondents said they prioritize family over job. A woman lawyer said that in some difficult

times, they have to meet the victims in the police lock-up and prison, which is challenging for them because in Myanmar it is not suitable for women to go to police station after office hours. But, when needed for work, they could not avoid. A study supporting this finding stated that a necessary new discovery of a study is that female legal professionals frequently select an exit approach when confronted with the dilemma of selecting between family and work obligations. Women lawyers leave their jobs more frequently than men, due to the fact that female lawyers have more responsibilities in their families. (Jayasudha N. S. and Prof. Ramegowda A, 2017)

Whether the success of women lawyer's career is measured in terms of *Dignity, Fame or Earning*, the results show that 158 or 94% of the lawyers said that Dignity measures their success, 6 or 4% said it is Fame and 4 or 2% said that their success is measured by Earnings.

As to Level of Confidence of clients in dealing with woman lawyer, the result depicted the following: 72% of the clients are fully confident with the woman lawyer, 25% are Less Confident and only 3% is Not Confident with the woman lawyer to handle their cases. This finding support the study made by (Snyder, 2015), which revealed that to foster positive relationship women lawyers use their hearts with the clients.

5.2 Job Satisfaction of Women Lawyers

5.2.1 The Job Satisfaction in term of *Job impression group*, got an overall mean of 3.81 and standard deviation of .600. This group described the perception of women lawyers whether they are proud of their profession and obtain impressive reputation in serving the court and administration for justice.

5.2.2 The *Income group* got an overall mean of 3.45 and standard deviation of .647. This group described the satisfaction of women lawyers in terms of receiving above average level of income or adequate earning and ability to support the family financially.

5.2.3 The *Social life group* scored 4.17 mean and .517 standard deviation. This group defined the choice of this profession because of the social status, fiduciary duties, community services and family influence.

5.2.4 In terms of *Work Life Balance of non-married women lawyers group* with overall mean of 4.17 and .369 standard deviation, while married women lawyers scored 3.66 mean and .566 standard deviation.

5.2.5 In the case of *Motivation* to measure job satisfaction, the respondents scored mean of 3.73 with .670 standard deviation. Though the mean depicts that women lawyers are motivated with the challenges and responsibilities they are facing, they admit that the nature of work is stressful. They chose the lawyering career because of the social status.

5.3 Gender Specific Issues

In terms of Work Set-up, the average mean obtained is 2.79 with .655 standard deviation. This group described that there are more Men Lawyers than Women Lawyers at work site, the chamber masters are mostly men lawyers. The mean also defined the issues on judicial gender discrimination in trial court and at workplace. This supports the findings of (Kannan, 2013) that says that gender inequalities persist throughout hiring, promotions, legal education, remuneration, and other expert possibilities in law.

On issues on Work Environment, the obtained mean of 2.83 assessed the following: "I always look for women lawyer as partner", " I sometimes face misunderstanding with men lawyer", and "Every woman lawyer has met harassment period during chamber period

With regards to confidence on dealing with clients, 72% of the respondents said they are fully confident, 25% are less confident and 2.4% are not at all confident. This finding is contrary to the study conducted that says that although sex wise distribution of different categories by legal professionals in India clearly indicates a complete male dominance at all levels records a gradual increase of women's entry as lawyers at bar council and this is to be welcomed because a woman cannot be as daring and outgoing as a man. (Jayasudha N. S. and Prof. Ramegowda A, 2017)

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made:

6.1 Majority of the women lawyers do not have post graduate degree, single, fall under the age bracket between 31 and 40, practicing lawyers (with court appearance), earns 900,000Myanmar Kyats or USD600. Also, most of them have 7-9 court experience and playing the role as Advocates in the firm.

Women lawyers do not receive proper guidance from the Chamber Master during the Chamber Session, though there is not gender disadvantage in the session;

Women lawyers in general are Flexible, thus, prioritize Family or Job depending on the urgency of need;

Dignity over Fame and Earnings is the measure of success in their careers for women lawyers;

Women lawyers do not experience gender disadvantage in terms of Client's Confidence in handling their cases.

6.2.1 Women lawyers are proud of their profession and enjoy the good reputation in their court service and administration of justice.

6.2.2 Women lawyers are satisfied in their job because they are able to support their family financially

6.2.3 The respondents are satisfied with their job because they cannot only help clients but, they can also reach out to the community by sharing their legal knowledge

6.2.4 Single women lawyers are satisfied with work life balance because their family are understanding and supportive of their career, while married women lawyers need to always adjust or balance between family and work.

6.2.5 Majority of the respondents are fully confident in dealing cases with their clients.

7. Chamber masters are mostly men lawyers.

8. Some woman lawyer met harassment during chamber period.

9. The women lawyers are generally satisfied with their job and the challenges of the work are motivating factors, but, they admit that the nature of work itself is stressful.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above Conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

7.1 The results show that women lawyers involved in this study are satisfied in terms of:

- a) work assignment;
- b) reputation;
- c) confidence at work;
- d) enough money to support their family; and
- e) work life balance for single women lawyers

However, there are still some areas that need to emphasize to increase the job satisfaction of women lawyers. For one, salary scheme for women lawyers (or lawyers in general) in Myanmar should be improved or standardized at least to be at par with the international salary scale. With increased salary, these lawyers may be able to finance their further studies for specialization while supporting their family financially as well.

7.2 While single women lawyers are more flexible and more satisfied with work-life balance, the married women struggle between family and work. Thus, it is recommended that flexibility as to time, work assignment and location be designed by the law firms and government. This structure will be beneficial not only for married women lawyers but, also for married men lawyers.

7.3 Women lawyers should be encouraged to participate in the chamber more actively for better positioning, such as, chairwomanship

7.3 To address the issue of work stress, it is recommended that the companies should incorporate stress management in their human resources program, such as, team building activities, socialization, family outing with the company. Likewise, establishing fitness program like yoga, Zumba or putting up a small gym will help the lawyers to distress from stressful work cases or activities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 (Table 1) Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Profile of Women Lawyer

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent
Graduate	141	83.9
Post Graduate	27	16.1
Total	168	100.0
Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	73	43.5
Single	95	56.5
Total	168	100.0
Age Group	Frequency	Percent
21-30	45	26.8
31-40	119	70.8
41-50	4	2.4
Total	168	100.0
Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Practicing Lawyer	145	86.3%
Legal Adviser	17	10.1%
Legal Consultant	6	3.6
Total	168	100.0
Earning	Frequency	Percent
MMK 300001-500000	11	6.5
MMK 500001-700000	37	22.0
MMK 700001-900000	41	24.4
MMK 900000 Above	79	47.0
Total	168	100.0

Years of Court Experience	Frequency	Percent
1-3 Years	42	25.0
4-6 Years	41	24.4
7-9 Years	49	29.2

Above 9 years	36	21.4
Total	168	100.0
Role in the Firm	Frequency	Percent
Higher-Grade Pleader	57	33.9
Advocate	90	53.6
Legal Adviser	13	7.7
Others	8	4.8
Total	168	100.0

Chamber Sessions	Frequency	Percent
Fully Motivated	73	43.5
Overworked, underpaid	41	24.4
Gender disadvantage	3	1.8
Lack of guidance	76	45.2
Total	168	100.0
Priority Between Job and Family	Frequency	Percent
Family	8	4.8
Job	36	21.4
Flexible	124	73.8
Total	168	100.0
Measure of Career Success	Frequency	Percent
Dignity	158	94
Fame	6	36
Earnings	49	29.2
Above 9 years	4	2.4
Total	168	100.0
Role in the Firm	Frequency	Percent
Higher-Grade Pleader	57	33.9
Advocate	90	53.6
Legal Adviser	13	7.7
Others	8	4.8

Total	168	100.0
Level of Confidence to Woman Lawyer	Frequency	Percent
Full Confidence	121	72
Less Confidence	42	25
No Confidence	5	3
Total	168	100.0
Role in the Firm	Frequency	Percent
Higher-Grade Pleader	57	33.9
Advocate	90	53.6
Legal Adviser	13	7.7
Others	8	4.8
Total	168	100.0
Years of Court Experience	Frequency	Percent
1-3 Years	42	25.0
4-6 Years	41	24.4
7-9 Years	49	29.2
Above 9 years	36	21.4
Total	168	100.0

Appendix 2 (Table 2) Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction according to Job Impression, Income, Social Life, Work Life Balance and Motivation

Work life Balance - Married	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I always adjust with my family life and works.	168	3.89	.669
I place more priority on my work duty than my social activities.	168	3.67	.762
Sometime I face some difficulties rather than man lawyer.	168	3.41	.981
Overall Mean		3.66	.566

Job Impression		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Proud of law profession, impressive reputation and obligation to serve the court and administration of justice.		168	3.95	.650
Expectations of the choice of lawyer profession.		168	3.83	.900
People admire on a Lawyer.		168	3.66	.795
Overall Mean			3.81	.600
Income		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lawyers' income is on average level.		168	3.48	.781
Not concerned with enough or not earning.		168	3.24	.865
Can support to family financially		168	3.63	.831
Overall Mean			3.45	.647
Social Life		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Chose lawyering as a career because of the social dignity status.		168	3.97	.563
Fiduciary duties to client		168	4.05	.511
Lawyer can help not only the client but also community by sharing legal knowledge.		168	4.33	.521
Knowledge transfer to family and community		168	4.33 4.17	.473 .517
Work life Balance – Single				
Spend more time at work more than married lawyers		168	3.23	1.059
More relaxed than married lawyers.		168	3.42	.925
Family is supportive of career.		168	3.93	.870
Overall Mean			4.17	.369

Motivation		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Conveys and undertake judicial ethics.		168	3.82	.801
Faces challenges and takes responsibility with diligence.		168	3.76	.744
Work is stressful at times		168	3.77	.707
Socially dignified career		168	3.46	.895

Career is impressive	168	3.43	1.006
For security of family from any legal difficulties	168	4.04	.784
Advocate Lawyer is a big achievement for a woman	168	3.83	.909
Overall Mean		3.73	.670

Appendix 3 (Table 3) Frequency and Percentage of Gender Specific Issues according to Work Set-up and Work Environment, Confidence

Gender Specific Issues - Work Situation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
There are more men lawyers than women at workplace.	168	2.82	.893
Chamber Master are mostly men	168	3.13	.886
Woman lawyer experiences judicial’ gender discrimination in trial court.	168	2.58	.944
Woman lawyer experiences discrimination at work place.	168	2.63	.994
Overall Mean		2.79	.655
Gender Specific Issues - Working Environment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I always look for women lawyers as my partner.	168	2.74	.930
I sometimes face misunderstanding with men lawyers.	168	2.86	.972
Every woman lawyer experienced harassment during chamber period.	168	2.88	.884
Overall Mean		2.83	.663

Gender Specific Issues - Confidence	Frequency	Percent
Fully confident in dealing with clients.	121	72.0
Less confident in dealing with clients.	42	25.0
Not confident.	4	2.4
Others	1	.6
Total	168	100.0

Appendix 4 (Table 4) Pearson Correlation

			Gender Issue		Motivation	Work life Balance		Job Satisfaction
			Work Setting	Working Environment		Marriage	Non-Marriage	
Gender Issue	Work Situation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .000 168	.414** .000 168	.360** .000 168	.436** .000 168	.117 .000 168	.075 .000 168
	Working Environment	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.414** .000 168	1 .000 168	.335** .000 168	.315** .000 168	.150 .000 168	.036 .000 168
Motivation		Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.360** .000 168	.335** .000 168	1 .000 168	.596** .000 168	.426** .000 168	.608** .000 168
Work life Balance	Married	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.436** .000 168	.315** .000 168	.596** .000 168	1 .000 168	.395** .000 168	.247** .000 168
	Single	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.117 .000 168	.150 .000 168	.426** .000 168	.395** .000 168	1 .000 168	.332** .000 168

Job Satisfaction	Pearson						
	Correlatio	.075	.036**	.608**	.247**	.332**	1
	n Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	(2- tailed)	168	168	168	168	168	168
	N						

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