

**FACTORS AFFECTED JOB SATISFACTION OF GEN-Y AT
ELECTRICITY GENERATING AUTHORITY OF THAILAND
(EGAT)**



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thematic paper is to identify factors affected job satisfaction of Generation Y at Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). The interview was conducted as a tool for collecting data. 10 respondents were selected by a purposive, non-probability method. The findings from the study shown that, the top 5 factors affected job satisfaction of Gen-Y at EGAT are 1) career path and advancement, 2) team work and colleagues, 3) Work Life Balance (WLB), 4) work environment and condition, and 5) feedback-support and individual respect. This paper contributes some practical implications based on the findings from the study.

KEY WORDS: Job Satisfaction / Generation-Y / Millennial / Gen-Y / EGAT

21 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In order to be a successful marketer, customers' insight is very important for creating the proper marketing plan to serve them exactly what they need. In an organization, the way for being a good HR manager is the same. The needs of employees who are determined as internal customers of the organization are crucial as same as those in marketing field.

However, under the only one HR policy without any differences for generation employees could not be effective as it was in the past. As the millennial generation, also commonly known as Gen-Y and includes births from 1982 – 2000 (Gilbert, 2011), is widely considered to be the next big generation in the workforce, an organization is facing two or more generations working together in the work place. Understanding Gen-Y's needs is important for organizations to create proper management policies for new needs and expectations.

Generation-Y have grown up in the time that technology using is widespread. As they are called as the "Linked Generation", they expect the workplace that allows them to be close to family and friends. They are interested in learning and self-improvement with more positive childhood experiences lead to values of optimism, confidence, honesty, achievement, sociability, and morality (Blythe, Baumann, Zeytinoglu, Denton, Akhtar-Danesh, Davies, Kolotylo & Camille, 2008). They want to be meaningful, they seek to contribute to a greater purpose. A balanced work-life is important to them which can be supported by flexible working arrangements. Perceived as high maintenance employees (Hira, 2007), they are typically motivated by a desire to enhance professional skills for improving personal marketability. They tend to be excellent multi-taskers who thrive on immediate feedback (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008).

Gen-Y or millennial, called digital natives, expect colleagues and managers to catch up, and use, cutting edge technology. They are used to working in teams and

expect supervision and task structure more and also look for management without hierarchy. They tend to move on if not challenged and supported by work environment (Dixon, Mercado, & Knowles, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors affected job satisfaction of Gen-Y in a selected state enterprise, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). Therefore, appropriate strategies can be created and taken to motivate those Gen-Y in the workplace.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction simply describes how people feel about their jobs, like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) which can be a reflection of a good treatment and an indicator of emotional well-being (Tanjeen, 2013). There are several factors that influence a person's level of job satisfaction such as the level of pay and benefits, the perceived fairness of the promotion system, the quality of working conditions, leadership and management style, social relationships, job characteristics (the variety of tasks involved, job's interesting and challenging, and the clarity of job description), corporate culture, and employee involvement. Table 1 summaries the results of previous studies that have determined factors influence job satisfaction of Gen-Y.

Table 2.1 The review for literature on the factors influence job satisfaction of Gen-Y

Authors	Methodology & Samples	Findings
Kunaviktikul, Nuntasupawat, Srisuphan, and Booth (2000)	The sample was 354 professional nurses employed in four regional hospitals in Thailand.	Job satisfaction is affected by pay, managing performance, opportunities for promotion, co-workers and job characteristics.
Westerman and Yamamura (2007)	This study used survey methodology to examine generational and gender differences amongst the work environment preferences of 234 accountants in accounting firms.	The crucial of goal orientation and system work environment fit for younger generation employees on satisfaction and intention to remain.

Table 2.1 The review for literature on the factors influence job satisfaction of Gen-Y (cont.)

Authors	Methodology & Samples	Findings
Robert Half International (2008)	The survey was conducted in the second quarter of 2007 by an independent research firm. It includes a total of 1,007 web interviews of people 21 - 28 years old who are employed full-time or part-time and have college degrees or are currently attending college.	The top of the important factors relating to job opportunities are salary, benefits and opportunities for professional growth and advancement.
Brown, Carter, Collins, Gallerson, Giffin, Greer, Griffith, Johnson, and Richardson (2009)	Using a web-based survey, 575 respondents representing 76 schools in the US.	Traditional benefits, salary and health insurance ranked most important among Millennials' job considerations.
Maxwell, Ogden, and Broadbridge (2010)	The survey questions, derived from the literature review, with 122 respondents with work experience mainly in the UK hospitality industry.	Gen-Y are determined as demanding employees. They focus on success and achievement upward promotion in their career, enjoy challenging work, clarity and equality in career progression, and work- life balance (WLB).
Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010)	Data were obtained from a national survey of 23,413 millennial undergraduate	The most importance on individualistic aspects of a job. They had expectations of their first job;

Table 2.1 The review for literature on the factors influence job satisfaction of Gen-Y (cont.)

Authors	Methodology & Samples	Findings
	university students from across Canada, using various multivariate techniques.	salary, rapid advancement, the development of new skills, and a good WLB.
Gilbert (2011)	Using both quantitative analyses; survey data from over 3,500 millennial and baby boomer respondents in six companies, as well as 10 qualitative interviews.	Drivers and threats of engagement are career opportunities; corporate social responsibility; employee health and well-being; employer reputation; learning and development; managing performance; senior leadership, and WLB.
Hassan, Ibrahim, and Lim (2011)	This study was based on a sample survey of 182 third year undergraduate students in Human Resource Development Program, by completing a voluntary self administered questionnaire.	The three WLB policies that Gen-Y prefer are flexible working arrangement, pregnancy and leave related. The policies preferences were significantly different by highest education, current CGPA and age. Thus HRD practitioners should consider Gen-Y WLB policies preference to attract and retain them in organization.
Na-Nan and Pukkeeree (2013)	The researchers used a questionnaire with 5-level rating scales of 310 new university graduated in Thailand.	The job characteristics had direct effects on work adjustment and job satisfaction.

An examination of the table 1 indicated that the factors involved Gen-Y career preference are **traditional benefits which are salary, health insurance and employee well-being** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Robert Half International, 2008; Brown et al., 2009; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000), **career advancement** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Robert Half International, 2008; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000), **challenging and development of new skills** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010), **a good work-life balance** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Hassan et al., 2011), **goal orientation and work environment** (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007), **performance management and career progression clarity** (Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000), **corporate social responsibility (CSR), employer reputation and leadership style** (Gilbert, 2011), **co-workers** (Kunaviktikul et al., 2000) **and job characteristics** (Na-Nan & Pukkeeree, 2013; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000).

The previous studies about factors influencing job satisfaction of Gen-Y mostly based on various work industries in many countries such as university (educational industry) in Canada (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010) and the US (Brown et al., 2009), and hospitality industry in the UK (Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010). In Thailand, however, there are some research focusing on job satisfaction but not specific in Generation Y employees who work for state enterprises (Na-Nan & Pukkeeree, 2013; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000).

According to the purpose of this study, identifying the factors influencing EGAT's Gen-Y job satisfaction could help the organization provide more understanding about Gen-Y preferences, and then translate that knowledge into action by creating a productive work environment based on those findings which results to the benefits for both employers and employees.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In an attempt to explore the factors that affect Gen-Y's job satisfaction in EGAT, a qualitative approach was used as a research module. Data for the study were collected by the in-depth interview which is an optimal way for collecting data on individuals' personal background, perspectives, attitudes, and experiences. A purposive sampling technique was used: the guiding principle was to assemble a sample that represented as fully as possible the factors involved job satisfaction for Gen-Y.

3.2 Population & Sample

Among 4,262 of EGAT's millennial (those born between 1982 and 2000), 10 participants were chosen by non-probability method, using a purposive sample. A purposive sample can be very useful for situations that need to reach a targeted sample quickly and proportionality of sampling is not the primary concern. It can help to get the opinions of the target population, but still likely to overweight subgroups in the population that are more readily accessible (Trochim, 2006).

For this study, the 10 interviewees were purposively selected from different work fields, including domestic - international procurement officers, scientist, engineer, economist, and lawyer. They were college graduated employed full-time with less than five years experience in EGAT.

3.3 Research Instrument

A semi-structured interviewing, best used when there is only one chance to interview someone (Bernard, 1998), was used in order to collect data. The use of open-ended questions gives interviewees the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed choices. Moreover, the answers got from open-ended questions are combined together with attitude answer and emotional response which could help the interviewer gathers a lot of information, dig down into their insight, and be able to ask in-depth follow-up the questions and probes.

Even semi-structured interview needs to have some structure, but the structure should be flexible. An interview guide is used as an instrument for providing lists of key questions and topics that need to be covered during the interview. The interview questions guideline based on the preceding reviews were asked as follow;

Question 1: Describe your demographic information including; age (year of birth), educational background, and working experiences.

Question 2: What are the factors affecting your personal job satisfaction?

3.4 Data Analysis

The open-ended questions were grouped into two issues which are demographic information (age, educational background, work experience) and factors that influenced job satisfaction of the interviewees. In order to analyze interviewed data, content analysis method was applied in this study. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), there is definition of content analysis that the research methodology for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. This applied to help explain the factors that occurred from the interviews. Content analysis allowed the researcher to distinguish themes or patterns that emerged from the interviews (Gasper, 1990).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section will discuss the findings based on the analysis done on the data collected from respondents. This study focuses on the factors influencing Gen-Y job satisfaction in the selected Thailand's state enterprise, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). The results then will try to accomplish the objective of the study. All participants, including 4 females, and 6 males, born between 1982 and 2000 (known as Gen-Y), have at least a bachelor's degree graduation, and work in difference fields which are 2 procurement officers, a business planner, an economist, a scientist, a lawyer, and 4 engineers. Consequence of the interview presented in the table below (Table 2).

Table 4.1 Interview consequence of factors involved Gen-Y job satisfaction (n = 10)

Respondents' details	Gender	Work field	Factors affected personal job satisfaction
Resp#1 (1984) Domestic procurement officer	Female	Administrative	- Career path - work-life balance (WLB) - Individual development - Compensation and benefits
Resp#2 (1987) International procurement officer	Female	Administrative	- WLB - Flexible work environment - Supportive work environment
Resp#3 (1985) Business planner	Male	Administrative	- Clarity of job description - Fairness - Transparent of promotion, compensation and KPI.

**Table 4.1 Interview consequence of factors involved Gen-Y job satisfaction
(n = 10) (cont.)**

Respondents' details	Gender	Work field	Factors affected personal job satisfaction
Resp#4 (1986) Economist	Female	Administrative	- Preference job - Career growth - Good colleagues - WLB - Work condition
Resp#5 (1988) Scientist	Female	Scientific	- Feedback and support from boss - Opinions acceptance - Working in team
Resp#6 (1986) Electrical engineer	Male	Engineer	- Benefits - Responsibility - Good teamwork - Training and development offered
Resp#7 (1987) Mechanical engineer	Male	Engineer	- Ideas acceptance - Teamwork - Supported work condition
Resp#8 (1984) Electrical engineer	Male	Engineer	- WLB - Challenge of works - Reputation of organization - Self improvement - Learning new work skills
Resp#9 (1987) Lawyer	Male	Social Scientific	- Compensation - Colleagues
Resp#10 (1986) Mechanical engineer	Male	Engineer	- Opportunities for self improving - Teamwork - WLB

After grouping and rearranging the consequences answers from the interview, Table 3 reveals that top five factors those mentioned in the interview including;

1. Career path, self-improvement, and training courses provided

According to the interview, factors related with an individual development including; career path, self-improvement, and training courses provided, are the most influential factors affecting job satisfaction of Gen-Y. Six out of ten participants explained that they would be satisfied if the firm encourages them to acquire more advanced skills such as providing training courses for particular important skills related to the position and responsibility and also training courses for general self-improvement.

The previous study revealed that a smaller but growing group of millennial with less than 5 years experience are eager to learn and develop (Gillbert, 2011) which is compatible with the current study. Some of interviewees, they are first jobbers who just graduated and have started working here as the first place. Everything seems to be new and they want to learn more in order to develop their specialization.

For example, there is one of participants, a scientist; her job is to collect water from water resources near by the power plants in order to analyze if the water quality is fine for the community. She explained that.-

“Not only the scientist’s skill I needed but also the communication and negotiation skills acquired for maintaining and building a good relationship between EGAT and local people.” – Resp#5 Scientist (1988)

Many respondents said that knowledge gotten from the training courses provided by EGAT can be used for improving and developing skills which enhances professional skill and also career advancement in the future.

2. Teamwork and colleague

Same as the first mentioned factor, Six out of ten interviewees described that their job satisfaction is definitely affected by co-workers and working style. The reason is that, working as a team creates more fun working environment and also encourages team members to share both responsibility and knowledge.

According to Hayes (2005, p. 172), teamwork theorists believe that if teams work well, have a common goal, are autonomous in their decision-making, and have responsibility and support, teamwork becomes a valuable experience for the workers involved. *‘Working in a team empowers people and helps them develop autonomy, which is a source of profound job satisfaction and reduces stress.’*

In order to emphasize on this teamwork theory, the previous research also found that co-worker is one of factors that affects to personal job satisfaction (Kunaviktikul et al., 2000).

From the interviews, two engineers agreed that collaborative working style could generate benefits for both, the organization and staff, more than working alone which seems to be a conservative style of working.

“When problems occurred, knowledge sharing among team members is used in order to generate the best solution for solving problems. Even the situation went wrong, everyone in team would be appreciated to take responsibility for that. Moreover, working together creates fun and learning work environment leads to happiness in the workplace.” – Resp#6 Electrical engineer (1986)

3. Work-life balance (WLB)

Work-life balance (WLB) is another factor that involved Gen-Y job satisfaction. A half of respondents defined WLB as an important factor for their happiness in working life. In compare with the previous studies, there was also a conclusion about WLB factor. Even these Gen-Y employees, who are career oriented, are willing to work hard at the early stages in their career progress, however, WLB still be an important factor for them as a way of a good-life quality. (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Hassan et al., 2011),

From the interview, most of respondents who paid attention to their WLB are female. They explained that good life balance is about aspects of a personal life including family, friends, and work. One of participants, who used to work as a sales person of a private company, explained more in details;

“Too much emphasis on work has an effect on feeling and emotion which are loneliness and frustration, while not enough concentrate on work leads to the

feeling inside that it needs more efforts to get work done.” – Resp#1 Domestic procurement officer (1984)

After that she realized how important of the balance between work-life and personal-life is and that also affects the level of job satisfaction.

Table 4.2 Factors involved Gen-Y job satisfaction mentioned (n = 10)

Factor influenced Gen-Y job satisfaction	Mention (times)
1. Career path, Self-improvement, and Training course provided	6
2. Teamwork and Colleague	6
3. Work-life balance (WLB)	5
4. Working environment and Working condition (Physical)	4
5. Feedback-Support, Decision making authority, and Respect for authority	4
6. Benefits and Compensation	3
7. Clarity of internal policy	3
8. Preference job	1
9. Challenging	1
10. Reputation of the organization	1

4. Physical environmental working and condition

The findings of this research shown that, almost a half of interviewees regarded physical environmental working and condition as one of those factors involve job satisfaction of Gen-Y. They gave some ideas about preferences of work environment;

“An optimum workplace must provide proper supportive equipments.” – Resp#7 Mechanical engineer (1987)

“Workstations should be proper designed to fit to human body.” – Resp#5 Scientist (1988)

“Workplace layout must be simple, convenient, well organized, attractive, reliable, and safe.” – Resp#9 Lawyer (1987)

However, this factor was not mentioned in the previous studies as much as it was in this research. Westerman and Yamamura (2007) indicated that the importance of goal orientation and system work environment fit for younger generation workers on satisfaction and intention to remain.

5. Feedback and support, decision making authority, and respect for authority

“I feel so good and want to improve myself to be better and better after the department’s project was done by applying the approach gotten from subordinates’ ideas including mine.” – Resp#7 Mechanical engineer (1987)

The above quote was explained in detail by one of participants, about the last top five factors affecting job satisfaction of Gen-Y which are self-performance and authority.

From the previous exploration, Millennial are well educated, skilled in technology, very self-confident, able to multi-task, and have plenty of energy and they also have high expectations for themselves which results in an interesting in feedback on their performances, whether positive or negative, and it needs to be clear and specific to be effective said in the previous reviews (Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000).

In this study, not only an immediately feedback that the respondents have mentioned, but also trust and respect their ability. Four participants explained more that they would be very proud of themselves being a part of the achievement, especially when their comments were used as a solution.

According to the previous research, it has been indicated that there are many factors involved Gen-Y job satisfaction including; **traditional benefits** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Robert Half International, 2008; Brown et al., 2009; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000), **career advancement** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Robert Half International, 2008; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000), **challenging and development of new skills** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010), **a good work-life balance** (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Hassan et al., 2011), **goal orientation and work environment** (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007), **performance management and**

career progression clarity (Gilbert, 2011; Maxwell, Ogden & Broadbridge, 2010; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000), **corporate social responsibility (CSR)**, **employer reputation and leadership style** (Gilbert, 2011), **co-workers** (Kunaviktikul et al., 2000) **and job characteristics** (Na-Nan & Pukkeeree, 2013; Kunaviktikul et al., 2000).

However, there are some differences between the findings of current study and those from the previous as follow;

Firstly, the findings from the previous studies presented only a few consequences about the factor **involved physical working environment and condition**. While this factor was identified as the top five factors influenced Gen-Y job satisfaction of the current study.

According to the previous studies, most of those were conducted in the developed countries such as Canada, the US and UK, where healthy workplace issues have been concerned with high priority. This is because the consequences of healthy workplaces involve all workers' health and well-being, firm outcomes, and also societal outcomes (Kelloway and Day 2005; Lowe 2003). In those countries, physical work environment which is identified as the first and the second level of needs of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, was fulfilled by the states' regulations. Therefore, this factor was overlooked in term of job satisfaction factors. While in Thailand, it is contrary. This could be the reason for this difference between the finding from current study and the previous one.

Another contrast is that, the factor related corporate social responsibility (CSR) was not mention in this study at all, while there was mentioned many time by the participants of the past studies.

According to Eua-anant, Ayuwat, and Promphakping (2011), in Thailand, CSR has been introduced for a long time, but in not fully understanding and implementing way. Therefore, the popular CSR activities they usually do are money donation and volunteer for communities which were defined as unrelated factors affect job satisfaction. In order to promote CSR activities, educational institutes are the main in charge to give knowledge for the understanding of CSR in the right way.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Practical Implications

According to today workforce, the Millennials are a growing segment that already exceeds Baby Boomers, the previous largest generation of all organizations in Thailand, including Electricity Generation Authority of Thailand (EGAT). This is a tough situation for Human Resource Departments (HRD) to create policies that help increase the drivers and reduce the threats in order to provide benefits of EGAT. The study findings suggest that EGAT should attempt to create Human Resource plans based on factors reflected job satisfaction of Gen-Y and also their characteristics as follow;

1. Provide training and developing programs

The Millennials pay the most attention to career advancement and also individual development. Because most of Gen-Y are well educated, good at technological skill, able to multi-task, and very self-confident, self improvement is very important for them. As a result, EGAT should provide them the training course programs based on individual performance. HRD, then, must keep the individual record of employees and use it to determine proper advancement program for each level of performance. Clear advancement or promotion path is preferred.

2. Provide the performance management process

Because Gen-Y focus on the career advancement, feedback on their performance is very important. They want to know immediately how good they have done. Creating checklist of the feedback topics is a recommendation in order to be well-prepared. The effective feedback should be clear and specific, whether positive or negative; it needed to be communicated in a way that leaves no space for misunderstanding. After they already received their feedback, explanations and

directions should be provided transparently. For example, they must be informed what they already did well, or what needed to be changed. And the most important element of good feedback is reasonable explanation.

3. Create proper working environment and condition

The proper working environment and condition includes both biological and physical way. In terms of physical work surrounding, Gen-Y prefer workplace to be clean, safe, and work-supportive layout. Special equipments should be suitable to the particular task in order to support their productivities. For working atmosphere, Gen-Y prefer working in team because it allows them to share new knowledge and also create fun environment of working. This also creates a collegial and team-oriented culture for EGAT.

Another recommendation for creating an attractive working condition is that, EGAT should develop policies that encourage the Millennials to be able to manage their work and life efficiently. Work Life Balance (WLB) is one of factors influenced happiness of Gen-Y working condition. They are willing to work hard as long as they are allowed to live their life in their own way.

5.2 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings and contributions of this paper are based on several limitations as follow;

1. The limitation about number of respondents for the interview

Number of respondents for this study was improper comparing with whole of the target population which is 10 out of 4,262 employees of EGAT (born from 1982 – 2000), less than 1%. The selected participants may not be representative of all EGAT's Gen-Y.

In order to ensure the representativeness, proportionate stratified sampling could be used as a technique. The participants of each subgroup are randomly chosen in a proportion of the entire population. For example, engineers are considered as an

important position for EGAT. So, the numbers of engineers will be more than the numbers of administrative officers which is reflected to the proportions between those two groups of participants.

2. The limitation about research instrument

In order to identify the factors affected job satisfaction of EGAT's Millennials, data collection should be done together with more than only one method. The use of qualitative together with quantitative approach could help to provide more reliable results for the future research. Qualitative technique provides deep and clear findings, but it is not convenience for a huge number of participants. So, quantitative approach is useful. After the insight answers were collect from focus-group, then, using those insights to create questionnaires. Because the target populations (Gen-Y) are defined as "Linked Generation", digital channels are useful. Online questionnaires can be contributed via EGAT website. The record of employee information of HRD is useful in order to selected particular respondents who are identified as the target. Also, data collection and data analysis can be easily done by using statistic program.

3. The limitation about target population

This study was conducted in the selected organizational with a sample of Gen-Y employees at EGAT, which is considered as a limited population context. So, the results of this research cannot be generalized to neither others state enterprises nor public companies in the Thai context. Instead of that, using a sample of the broader population for future research could help achieve higher levels of generalizability.

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