

The Impact of Underemployment on Employee's Attitude (A Quantitative Study on District Peshawar)

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Abstract

Underemployment is a widely witnessed phenomenon in the world we live in today. The problem lies in the fact that cause of underemployment cannot be eliminated without identifying the areas where underemployment is high. Only after one has identified the level of underemployment, one can take initiatives to eliminate it from workspace or do something to convert this skill into real value for the company. This research therefore focuses on understanding and identifying levels of underemployment and linking it with job attitude of employees in order to conclude that aftermath of underemployment as a highly negative trait that can create inefficiencies in the company. The significance of this research is high as no specific concerns are raised usually in our country regarding the problem of underemployment. The research is based on quantitative research methods because the same is used when numerical confirmation is done for variables that exist in the literature; which is why the nature of study is deductive as it tries to deduce that relationship between the two variables using quantitative tools. The population of this research includes people who are underemployed at their jobs. There is no boundary of gender, race, religion, ethnicity however the targeted age group is the working class which ranges from 20 years to 40 years. The sampling technique used for this research was snowball whereas the sample size is limited to 100 respondents due to time constraints. Correlation and regression analysis was done on the primary data that was collected from the respondents through survey questionnaire. The results suggest that there is a strong and negative relationship between underemployment and job attitude. Furthermore, it is concluded that decreasing underemployment would increase job attitudes, behaviour and performance since underemployment is having a negative relationship and variation towards job attitudes. Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that companies conduct identification studies on their own in their organizations in order to identify the levels of underemployment within the company. Only after one has identified the problem, one can eliminate it.

Key Words: Underemployment, Job Attitude, Behaviour, Performance.

1. Introduction

Underemployment is a widely witnessed phenomenon in the world we live in today. Be it emerging markets or the developed countries; underemployment is widely seen in many countries regardless of social, political or macro environmental factors. Harper (1974) defined subcategories of underemployment which include underemployment when an employee is overeducated and job serves as a mismatch to his skills, when an employee doesn't make adequate amount of money with the required skills and efforts, and when he is involved in a job that has low hours. A mismatch therefore often leads to ineffective and inefficient work which ultimately gets the employer at risk of not generating enough value at the price he is paying. Many a times it is also witnessed that underemployment leads to zero improvement or motivation of the employees; the literature on the topic also suggests that underemployment has effects that are not evident through number but through behaviours and attitudes.

1.1 Research Problem

The problem lies in the fact that cause of underemployment cannot be eliminated without identifying the areas where underemployment is high. Only after one has identified the level of underemployment, one can take initiatives to eliminate it from workspace or do something to convert this skill into real value for the company. In a country like Pakistan, where unemployment is high, people tend to take jobs that are available; a few days without a job are the biggest crisis situation many families face today. Which leads to employees taking jobs at a higher frequency; many industries, like the textile manufacturing, have high employee turnover rates. Not much of a focus has been put into the biggest resource of a company: human. This research therefore focuses on understanding and identifying levels of underemployment and linking it with job attitude of employees in order to conclude that aftermath of underemployment as a highly negative trait that can create inefficiencies in the company.

1.2 Research Objectives

The aim of this research is to identify the relationship between underemployment and job attitude; therefore it has the following objectives to achieve:

- To identify the existence of a relationship between underemployment and job attitude and whether it is negative or positive.
- To confirm the existence of a relationship between underemployment and job attitude and whether it is weak moderate or strong.
- To identify if underemployment has the tendency to cause variations in job attitudes.

1.3 Research Questions

- If a relationship exists between underemployment and job attitude, is it negative or positive?
- If a relationship exists between underemployment and job attitude, is it weak, moderate or strong in nature?
- What is the amount of variation that underemployment causes in job attitudes of employees?

1.4 Significance of Research

The significance of this research is high as no specific concerns are raised usually in our country regarding the problem of underemployment. Many researches in foreign countries have been done which prove a negative relationship between the two variables. Therefore, it is imperative to aware our country members on the aftermath of underemployment so that employers are cautious while employing individuals and also the attitudes, behaviours and performance of employees are not jeopardized.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Underemployment

In the line of the researches conducted, previous researches have been more considerate on the consequences of unemployment according to Dooley (2003), but consequently the field widened and researchers made inroads to work on the topic of inadequate employment and advanced to other possible categories. In the pursuit, Hauser (1974) was able to develop a frame work defining the concepts of sub employed to underemployed. Hauser pointed out that people from among the population sometimes even stop looking for jobs as they find the available job opportunities to be non-motivating or being an opportunity less desired. He defined subcategories of underemployment which include underemployment when an employee is overeducated and job serves as a mismatch to his skills, when an employee doesn't make adequate amount of money with the required skills and efforts, and when he is involved in a job that has low hours. Later researches in the field by Feldman (1996) and Prause (2000), made it evident that further sub-categories would be important to understand the consequences and resulted into categories such as the employees that are temporary, contingent, have wages that are inadequate to the skill set and others that don't have required tools to achieve efficiency in the work they do. Further these categories can be interlinked and a single employee can be influenced by a number of categories individually such as if one is a temporary worker, neither he would get a good salary as compared to a permanent employee and the contract would also be inferior to the one that permanent employees have.

Similarly defining underemployment remains an ending tale, as according to Friedland (2003), each researcher carries his own definition of underemployment and can have as many explanations as the researchers are. According to Feldman (1996) and his work in the field, underemployment has been explained differently across the disciplines but the concept behind each definition refers to a job that pays inadequate in any way to the employee whether it being motivation or the monetary rewards drawn by the job. There are three main concepts in the underemployment that are well-known and have received attention across the board in Organizational sciences. The first concept in underemployment is based on the level of hierarchy an employee is on in his position in a new organization. According to Buss (1983) and Ferman (1981), when an employee loses his permanent job, he often gets to work in temporary jobs or jobs that are lower in hierarchy in different organization which would serve as an underemployment for the individual.

The second most important concept is based on the wage an employee makes in the new organization. According to Zvonkovic (1988), underemployment in case of lower wages includes a job that results into 20% reduced earnings from the previous employment. This has also been reflected in the previous researches in the times when the economy faces downturn and could result into a reduction of almost 30% and would serve as a source of underemployment (Elder, 1974).

The third concept is based on the utilization of one's skills and knowledge at work. According to Feather (1986) and his work on the students leaving schools, they end up in a job that don't fully utilizes their skills and knowledge, whereas Feldman (1995) also states the same in his research on the college graduates. As such the concept of underemployment doesn't receive consensus on a single definition and the researches have increased the scope of defining the underemployment. The results of the researches have also not been consistent in their findings and show a diversified set of results while defining the consequences of the underemployment.

2.3 Job Attitude and Behaviour

Generally the research work done in this field has anticipated the underemployment to be the cause of hostile behaviour and negative energies at work which can be summed up as a poor attitude and influence satisfaction at job, commitment to the organization, motivation, involvement in the activities done and also on his personal life and health and ultimately can result into being absent or having turnover intention. On the other half, others have supported the view that a job fit can result into converse outcomes than in underemployment such as a positive attitude and better performance along with good psychological health resulting into better physical health (Maynard, Joseph, 2006). Previous studies have been quite extensive defining job attitudes with reference to satisfaction and commitment at work, involvement in the tasks and supporting the organization in general.

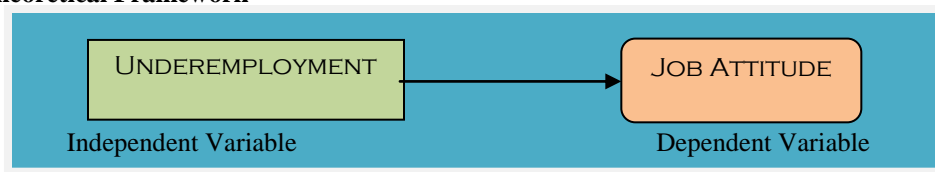
According to Rousseau (1998), the employees perceive the employers to positively respond to the efforts and performance and to provide them job security in return of their achievements during their tenure but in the case of downsizing, an organization not only lays off employees but reduces monetary rewards resulting into a situation of underemployment. Respectively, when overeducated people fill those positions, they are less likely to have a positive attitude and don't expect much from the new employer. According to Johnson (2000), the overqualified people face dissatisfaction and the work doesn't challenge or motivate them. Certainly if the consequences are controlled and the overqualified person is monitored for the performance at work, he would rather match the performance standards required but would express his dissatisfaction with alternative behaviours (Hulin, 2008). Consequently, if the employee couldn't bring parity by reduction in the efforts, he would rather express imparity by not volunteering or filling in for another employee, and would withdraw from work.

Job satisfaction has also been discussed to be affected by the researchers in the case of underemployment. According to a definition by Spector (1997), the way an employee evaluates his job and other activities is defined as job satisfaction and certainly the employee reacts according to what he perceives about his job and the activities he performs. According to the literature, job satisfaction has a negative relationship in the case when an employee perceives himself to be underemployed (Feldman, 2002). The job satisfaction has a direct relationship with the perception of being underemployed as one considers the outcome of the job inferior and this becomes a direct cause of the feeling of dissatisfaction with the job (Maynard, 2006).

One other consequence of underemployment is intention of an employee to leave the job and find a new one. These are considered as turnover intentions and may win over the underemployed individual (Maynard, 2006). According to Turnley (1995), there is a negative relationship between the intention of an employee to leave and over qualification. Over qualified individuals frequently look for jobs in order to fully capitalize on their abilities and skills which would rather not repay in the circumstances of underemployment, conversely to a non-underemployed worker. This eventually results into lower self-esteem with other controlling factors removal or being unchanged, making the employee prone to develop leaving intentions with discomfort he feels in his job.

Additionally, underemployment shows a negative relationship with the self-esteem as has been confirmed by the previous researches, while factors are being controlled, such as job satisfaction (Dooley, 1997). This also simplifies their turnover decision being a product of the lower self-esteem of an employee and the urge to find a better opportunity rather attending to their present duties and job description at the current firm. Conversely, according to Feldman and his work in the field, turnover intention has less to do with over qualification or an employee being underemployed as the result has not been quite significant in the researches done previously, and the relationship still remains as a hypothesis without any significant evidence to prove. Whereas, the research work of Maynard (2006) and Kengatharan (2011) shows empirical evidence to prove the negative relationship among the two and the consequences to be justified. According to Burris (1983), the underemployed individuals rather wait for not more than a year to assess their state of being underemployed to improve and rather give up early and continue in their pursuit to find a better match. Once the workers are laid off from their previous jobs, the urge to find the replacement and a contingent route if faced by the same situation, strengthens, resulting into an unending effort even after being re-employed on an underemployed job (Feldman, 1995). Recent studies indicate that MBA graduates who felt manipulated and having to lose their psychological contract, don't settle for more than two years in a new organization and don't even serve notice periods in many instances.

2.4 Theoretical Framework



The above theoretical framework has been drawn based on the review of literature that has been done throughout this chapter. So the independent variable of the current research is underemployment while the dependent variable is job attitude.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research is based on quantitative research methods because the same is used when numerical confirmation is done for variables that exist in the literature; which is why the nature of study is deductive as it tries to deduce that relationship between the two variables using quantitative tools. The research focuses on gathering data using quantitative tool: Survey Questionnaire. Additionally, the usage of a single instrument for data collection makes it a 'mono-method' research. The instrument, survey questionnaire, was self-administered using the defined components in the literature. For underemployment: low work hours, overeducated, over-skilled and lower hierarchy level. For job attitude: performance, turnover intention, commitment, motivation, involvement and supporting the organization.

3.2 Population

The population of this research includes people who are underemployed at their jobs. There is no boundary of gender, race, religion, ethnicity however the targeted age group is the working class which ranges from 20 years to 40 years. People over the age of 40 are excluded from the population because their job attitudes have been found varying in the literature due to many reasons other than underemployment.

3.3 Sampling

The sampling technique used for this research was snowball. Identification of people was done initially who were underemployed after which, using the snowball technique, many other respondents were identified. Due to time constraints, the sample size was limited to 100 respondents and district Peshawar only therefore the scope of this research would be limited to generalizing it for a population that has similar demographic & geographic profile.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection was done using both primary and secondary tools. Secondary data was mainly used to deduce results of different researchers on the topic under consideration. Moreover, the primary data was collected using the quantitative tool of survey questionnaire. The results of primary data and secondary data were then discussed and compared to see the similarities and differences in both so that conclusions and recommendations can be drawn effectively and efficiently.

3.5Hypothesis

The following hypotheses would be tested to answer the research questions:

H₁: There is significant correlation between underemployment and job attitude

H₂: Underemployment causes significant variations in job attitude

H₃: Underemployment has significant impact on job attitude

4 Data Analysis & Results

This chapter specifically covers the statistical data analysis and results of the same for the primary data that was collected from the respondents. Initially, respondent profile would be viewed based on the demographic analysis. Secondly, correlation analysis is conducted to confirm that the relationship between the two variables under consideration exists. Thirdly, regression analysis is conducted which suggests that underemployment causes variations in levels of job attitude of the employees. Finally, a discussion is done in this chapter to compare the findings of this research with the ones in the literature in order to identify the similarities that exist among the two.

4.1Demographic Analysis

Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20-25	39	39.0	39.0	39.0
26-30	47	47.0	47.0	86.0
31-35	11	11.0	11.0	97.0
36-40	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.1 Age

Table 4.1.1 reflects age groups of respondents. 39% of the respondents belong to the age group 20-25 years old, 47% of the respondents belong to the age group 26-30 years old, 11% of the respondents belong to the age group 31-35 years old, and, only 3% of the respondents belong to the age group 36-40 years old.

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	62	62.0	62.0	62.0
Female	38	38.0	38.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.2Gender

Table 4.1.2 reflects gender of respondents. 62% of the respondents were male and 38% of the respondents were female.

Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Bachelors	11	11.0	11.0	11.0
Masters	57	57.0	57.0	68.0
ACCA	22	22.0	22.0	90.0
PhD	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.3Qualification

Table 4.1.4 reflects qualification of respondents. 11% of the respondents have completed their Bachelors, majority of them (57%) have done their Masters, 22% have done ACCA and 10% have completed their PhD.

Years of Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-5 years	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	6-10 years	53	53.0	53.0	95.0
	11-15 years	4	4.0	4.0	99.0
	16-20 years	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.4 Years of Experience

Table 4.1.4 reflects years of experience of respondents. 42% of the respondents have experience in the same field between 0 to 5 years; 53% of the respondents have experience in the same field between 6 to 10 years; 4% of the respondents have experience in the same field between 11 to 15 years; finally, only 1% of the respondents have experience in the same field between 16 to 20 years

Compensation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 50k	33	33.0	33.0	33.0
	50k - 100k	50	50.0	50.0	83.0
	100k - 150k	15	15.0	15.0	98.0
	150k+	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.5 Compensation

Table 4.1.5 reflects the compensation of the respondents. 33% of the respondents earn less than PKR 50,000; 50% of the employees earn between PKR 50,000 and PKR 100,000; 15% of the respondents earn between PKR 100,000 and PKR 150,000; finally, only 2% of the respondents earn more than PKR 150,000. All the values are on per month basis.

Performance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
	3.00	43	43.0	43.0	69.0
	4.00	25	25.0	25.0	94.0
	Highest	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.6 Performance

Table 4.1.6 reflects the answer to the question which asked the respondents to rate their performance on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 was the highest. Only 6% of the respondents rated their performance at highest; majority of the respondents (69%) rated their performance to be 3 or below.

Earning Less

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	79	79.0	79.0	79.0
	No	21	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.7 Earning Less

Table 4.1.7 reflects the answer to the question which inquired the respondents if they believe somewhere someone would be getting more paid for the task that they are performing. 79% of the respondents agreed with the question that yes people would be getting more compensation for the work that they are doing; however 21% of the respondents disagreed with the question.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlations

		Underemployment	Job_Attitude
Underemployment	Pearson Correlation	1	-.677**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Job_Attitude	Pearson Correlation	-.677**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2.1 Correlation Analysis

H₁: There is significant correlation between underemployment and job attitude

The above hypothesis is accepted because table 4.2.1 suggests that the relationship between underemployment and job attitude is significant as the value of significance is 0.00 which is less than the maximum acceptable value of 0.05. The relationship is negative as suggested by the negative value of 0.677; it can be deduced that the relationship is strong, negative and significant.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.677 ^a	.459	.453	.31280

a. Predictors: (Constant), Underemployment

Table 4.3.1 Model Summary

Table 4.3.1 suggests that underemployment causes 45.3% of the variations in job attitude; this is deduced from the adjusted R square value of 0.453. 54.7% of the variations are unexplained by this model.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.129	1	8.129	83.080	.000 ^b
	Residual	9.589	98	.098		
	Total	17.718	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Job_Attitude

b. Predictors: (Constant), Underemployment

Table 4.3.2 ANOVA

H₂: Underemployment causes significant variations in job attitude

The above hypothesis is accepted as table 4.3.2 suggests that value of significance to be 0.00 which is below the value of 0.05 (maximum acceptable value of significance).

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.275	.251		17.046	.000
Underemployment	-.571	.063	-.677	-9.115	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job_Attitude

Table 4.3.3 Coefficients – Regression Analysis

H₃: Underemployment has significant impact on job attitude

The above hypothesis is accepted because table 4.3.3 suggests that the relationship between underemployment and job attitude is significant as the value of significance is 0.00 which is less than the maximum acceptable value of 0.05. The negative value of 0.571 helps deduce that if the value of underemployment is increased by 1 then job attitude would decrease by 0.571; in other words, the relationship, between the two variables, is inversely proportional.

4.4 Discussion

The objective and aim of this research was to answer the following research questions:

- If a relationship exists between underemployment and job attitude, is it negative or positive?
 - If a relationship exists between underemployment and job attitude, is it weak, moderate or strong in nature?
 - What is the amount of variation that underemployment causes in job attitudes of employees?
- Data analysis helps in answer each of these three questions; the answers of each are as follows:
- A relationship exists between underemployment and job attitude and it is negative.
 - A relationship exists between underemployment and job attitude and it is strong in nature.
 - 45.3% is the amount of variation that underemployment causes in job attitudes of employees.

The results of this research are consistent with those from the literature; as can be seen in the following citations of researches:

- According to Buss (1983) and Ferman (1981), when an employee loses his permanent job, he often gets to work in temporary jobs or jobs that are lower in hierarchy in different organization which would serve as an underemployment for the individual.
- According to Zvonkovic (1988), underemployment in case of lower wages includes a job that results into 20% reduced earnings from the previous employment.
- According to Morrow (1991), underemployment causes dissatisfaction and results in poor performance.
- According to Feldman (1995), the underemployed workers don't feel that going out of their way to work for the organization would bring them any fortune or good but rather they are concerned about routine tasks and duties.
- According to Bills (1992), the over qualified individuals are less acceptable in civilized cultures where the reason defined is based on the fact that these individuals are not challenged at work, a source of de-motivation and reduced commitment to work. This has also been stated by Watt (2010), using primary evidence based research, defining a direct relation of ineffective utilization of manpower resulting into dissatisfaction of the human resource and leading to boredom.
- According to Johnson (2000), the overqualified people face dissatisfaction and the work doesn't challenge or motivate them.
- According to the literature, job satisfaction has a negative relationship in the case when an employee perceives himself to be underemployed (Feldman, 2002). The job satisfaction has a direct relationship with the perception of being underemployed as one considers the outcome of the job inferior and this becomes a direct cause of the feeling of dissatisfaction with the job (Maynard, 2006).
- According to Turnley (1995), there is a negative relationship between the intention of an employee to leave and over qualification.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations**5.1 Findings & Conclusions**

The findings of this research are as follows:

- There is a significant, negative and strong relationship between underemployment and job attitude.
- Due to this existing relationship, there is a lot of variations that underemployment causes in levels of job attitude therefore it is concluded that underemployment levels need to be reduced in order to impede the negative effects it has on job attitude.

5.2 Recommendations

Due to underemployment many factors are affected like the motivation, commitment, and support for organization, involvement and performance of employees. It is therefore recommended that companies conduct thorough analysis of their workforce in order to

identify cases of underemployment. Only when the companies will identify this problem they would be able to eliminate it. The benefits are not quantifiable however the change would be visible when underemployment is eliminated.

5.3 Areas of Further Studies

Researchers in the future could focus on each of the different variable in underemployment and job satisfaction and recommend ways on controlling each of those variables so that a win-win situation is created. Moreover, researchers may look for other variable that are caused to decrease due to high levels of underemployment. Similarly, researchers can look towards variables that cause variation in job attitudes. In a nutshell, the Pakistani market is short of studies that relate to human development and index; any such studies that will help local organizations, in utilizing the human resources in the best way possible, are highly recommended.

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