Purpose: This study tries to investigate the relationship between social skills of managers and job satisfaction of employees in the telecommunication sector. The literature suggests that there is a relationship between social skills and job performance of employees. With the high level of social skills in employees the greater the job performance and hence with greater job performance there is job satisfaction. But not much study is present related to the direct relationship of manager’s social skills and its impact on employee’s job satisfaction. This study tries to narrow this gap by establishing a direct link of social skills of managers in telecom sector and the impact of these skills on the job satisfaction of their subordinates.

Methodology: Primary data was collected from managers and employees through questionnaires and personal interview of a manager.

Results: The study identified that there is a weak but positive correlation between the social skills of managers and their subordinates in a telecom sector.

Practical implications: The examination of the impact of social skills of managers on employee job satisfaction can assist the senior management towards improving the relationships of management and employees, and contributing in business improvement.

Originality/Value: This study will contribute to the following: (1) it will describe how the social skills of managers impact the job satisfaction of their subordinates and (2) it will analyze what could be the reasons behind the low level of job satisfaction of employees.

Keywords – Social skills, Job satisfaction, Telecom Sector

INTRODUCTION

Social skills are also called people skills. The set of social skills include respect for others, mutual regard, commitment, openness, tolerance, empathy, negotiation, communication etc (Schuetz, 2011). At work, they play a very important role in an employee’s success besides the other job related knowledge. Among the managers, what distinguishes an excellent performer from other average or poor performers is competence in social skills. It can be said easily in these times of transition and globalization that requirements placed on managers need them to acquire social skills along with technical expertise.

Different studies have revealed that better social skills of managers/leaders/entrepreneurs lead to their business success. The reasons behind such success is that the socially skilled managers know how to communicate, how to negotiate and how to influence others to get their point of view through
large groups of people because having a good team and a product to sell is not enough. The managers should be able to impart their idea and vision; they should be able to persuade people to like the idea they present and product they motivate. Managers should be able to induce an environment of mutual understanding among their team to reach the common goals. Managers should have such effective social skills that he/she can form relationships with people around him, he/she should be able to develop good relationships with customers, suppliers, and be able to endeavor investors for his/her business or company thus leading towards business success because socially competent managers/entrepreneurs are able to get more funding and are able to develop strong network of relationships with the stakeholders therefore creating opportunities for the success of business (TalkDesk, 2013).

The term job satisfaction has been conceptualized in many ways. Job satisfaction focuses on all the feelings that an individual has about his/her job. It has been assumed that individuals who express high satisfaction in their jobs are likely to be more productive, have higher involvement and are less likely to resign than employees with less satisfaction.

In an effort for survival in today’s competitive market, the demand for employees with social skills is becoming high among companies. In addition, for managers, these skills become of prime importance as the managers are responsible for managing relationships among the team and play an important role in effective team performance because people would like to work with someone who is pleasant and supporting instead of someone who is intolerable.

There has been a drastic change and tremendous growth in the Pakistani telecom sector in the last decade, since then competition is high and intense in telecom sector as compared to organizations of other sectors. The telecom sector of Pakistan provides vast opportunities for employment. Expansion in telecom sector, introduction of new mobile companies and foreign investment has enabled the Pakistani telecom sector to offer direct jobs in telecom companies as well as indirect jobs in vendors, franchises, mobile manufacturers etc. Fresh graduates prefer telecom companies because of the better pay packages, but it has also been observed that in last few years, senior employees from different fields are joining telecom companies, the reason could be the difference in professional culture as telecom companies provide advancements and exposure to new technologies (Riaz & Ramay, 2010).

To cope up with the challenges faced every day in the dynamic settings of telecom sector; managers at telecom companies need the special kind of skills other than technical skills to deal with matters in everyday, sometimes they have to play the role of leader for their subordinates and sometimes they have to motivate employees to work hard. Other times require them to show empathy for their subordinates and manage conflicts as well. According to Hussami (2008) employees want supervisors/managers who are collaborative, communicate and develop bonds with subordinates (referred by Saeed et al., 2013). This leads one to think about the importance of people skills or social skills, because without these skills, a manager lacks behind in communicating, collaborating and motivating subordinates.

Different companies in telecommunication sector of Pakistan introduce innovative services. With the advancement in telecommunication sector and focus on fulfilling its customer’s expectations has allowed telecom companies to gain a huge subscriber database. These companies try to maintain the kind of systems which enable to develop the employees to their full potential. For that purpose performance management and reward systems are developed which underlies the business strategy. In telecom companies at the time of hiring an employee, the selection committees make sure that those persons are hired who have high level of people skills because so much importance is given to customers.
The purpose of this case study is to find out how proficient the managers at a telecom company are in managing their relationship with their subordinates. The study also focuses on understanding the link between the social skills of managers and job satisfaction of their subordinates. The research questions include: Why are the social skills important for managers? What is the effect of these social skills (of managers) on the job satisfaction of employees?

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Social skills are the behaviors; verbal and non-verbal which are used in order to communicate effectively with other people. They continuously change and develop throughout the life. Somebody using social skills to interact effectively with friends, family, co-workers, and strangers; is said to have social competence. In today’s world social skills plays a vital role towards a person’s development and at the end in an organization a collective team effort for the better performance of organization.

The managers with strong social skills are typically team players. Instead of focusing on their success first, they are more interested in development of others and for betterment of organization. They can manage disputes, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintaining relationships. They can facilitate and manage the relationships between a team for collective good of organization and form the basis for better emotional intelligence of team (Prati et al. 2003). Social interaction results in many advantages. It gives confidence and social acceptance. It can help managers in many ways. It can help do many things which cannot be completed alone, for example; getting support from team or completing a project (Pettry, 2006).

Present research exhibits that having social skill is an important factor in determining an individual’s success because it allows us to interact with each other. According to some researchers social skill is something that can be acquired with passage of time with training and practice. A study in the automobile industry of city Belgaum, India (Kulkarni et al. 2009) suggests that the presence of social skills in managers and employees is moderate to low and it is required that these skills should be developed for the purpose of higher productivity from employees. Lopes et al. (2006) support past studies that there is a relationship between social interaction at workplace and outside workplace and its impact on employee’s performance. Whitaker & McKinney integrated social skills into the relationship of job satisfaction and feedback seeking behavior of employees and said that managers relate the job satisfaction of employees with their feedback seeking behavior.

Entrepreneurs are financially more successful if they are socially competent (Baron & Markman, 2003). A study of entrepreneurs from different types of industries indicated that social competence was related to financial success no matter what type of business. In cosmetics industry the social competence does not have much significant role as compared to high tech industry where the social skills of entrepreneurs plays a very important role in financial success (Baron & Markman, 2003).

Job satisfaction is one of the most discussed topics in management research. Many factors should be taken in to account while determining job satisfaction of employees. It is difficult to judge that which factors are most important to each employee. Job satisfaction is personal and varies from employee to employee. Kabir (2011) studied job satisfaction in employees of pharmaceutical sector and the factors that affect the job satisfaction of these employees. He found that the most important factors affecting job satisfaction are fairness, promotion and pay. To overcome these factors he suggested that managers should pay attention to these factors and along with these factors employee relationships should be managed if they want to improve the business.
There are two types of job satisfaction based on the level of employees' feelings regarding their jobs. The first, and most studied, is global job satisfaction, which refers to employees' overall feelings about their jobs (e.g., "Overall, I love my job.") (Mueller & Kim 2008). The second is job facet satisfaction, which refers to feelings about specific aspects of job, such as salary, benefits, and the quality of relationships with one's co-workers (e.g., "Overall, I love my job, but my schedule is difficult to manage.") (Mueller & Kim, 2008).

A survey by Morgeson & Humphrey was conducted among 540 workers in a variety of jobs for measurement of job satisfaction. Authors expected to find that job satisfaction would be affected by nature of job, but it was revealed that social factors had more influence on job satisfaction (Meyers, 2007). Results from another study (Jessen, 2010) among practitioners and managers of Norway’s public sector illustrated that workers give high importance to recognition of their work. It was also revealed that leadership has great effect on job satisfaction of employees. The author suggested in the study that to increase job satisfaction among employees, leaders must ensure systems that would support the employees.

There are several false concepts that exist about job satisfaction. One such fallacy is that a happy employee is a productive employee (Syptak, Marsland, & Ulmer, 1999). It cannot be determined that a happy employee is productive. Another myth is that pay is the most important factor in job satisfaction. While it is fact that employees are more satisfied when they enjoy the environment around them. Thus the responsibility of creating a good environment to work in, falls on the leader or manager and for that purpose manager’s social skills are very necessary to be of high level, so that he/she is able to provide such an atmosphere at the workplace that workers are highly motivated to show results and are satisfied from their job.

Social skills are gaining high importance in today’s organizations as the positions in organizations are becoming more service oriented. Strong social skills are the key to effective communication and interpersonal interactions which leads to efficient job outcomes, and in turn job satisfaction for the employees.

Research suggests that to increase job satisfaction of employees, managers should continuously interact with them, provide the employees with responsibility and then let them use it so that the employees should have sense of accomplishment, managers should show respect and involve and engage the employees, exchange the ideas and value them, that instills a feeling of satisfaction in employees. Social interaction with employees on regular basis would give them confidence that they have value and together they can work on common goals for the better outcomes for benefit of organization.

Although the research suggests that there is a high value for social skills and its role in influencing job satisfaction for employees in today’s organizations, but little is known about the impact of social skills of manager on his/her subordinate’s job satisfaction. Especially in the telecom sector of Pakistan, which is perceived to be growing with leaps and bounds and is considered to contain a pool of employees who are highly qualified and join telecom companies on will, but still the telecom companies are facing high turnover rates. Researches indicate that supervisor support is a big factor in employee retention, and if supervisor/manager empathizes, communicate and motivate and shows greater support for his subordinates, employee retention tends to increase. This area i.e. social skills of managers and job satisfaction of employees has not been researched as it should be, keeping in mind this gap, I will provide some insight to the measurement of social skills of managers in a telecom company and how these skills are influencing the job satisfaction of their subordinates.
MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS AND JOB SATISFACTION

This case study was conducted among managers and employees of a telecom company in Pakistan. The main purpose of this case study was to find out the social skills deemed to be important in managers and to develop a relationship among social skills of managers and the effect of these social skills on the job satisfaction of the subordinates of managers.

The following hypotheses were developed for this study:

- **H1**: With an increase in the level of a manager’s social skills the job satisfaction level of his/her subordinates increases.
- **H2**: With an increase in the level of a manager’s social skills, job satisfaction level of his/her subordinates decreases.
- **H3**: There is no relation between a manager’s social skills and the job satisfaction level of his/her subordinates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A convenient sample of employees at a telecom company was used. Furthermore stratified random sampling was used to distribute questionnaires to four teams which included 4 employees in each team and the respective managers of those 4 teams. Total respondents were 20. These included 4 managers and 16 employees who returned filled up and usable questionnaires. Participants’ age ranged from 22 to 32 for employees, and work experience range was from 6 months to 6 years. While for managers, work experience was main principle factor to be considered, the work experience of managers ranged from 7 to 13 years.

A manager at a telecom company was approached through email and later on contacted on telephone and was requested to distribute the questionnaires. Through telephonic conversation, the manager was explained the idea behind the research, and questionnaires were sent to her via email. After the approval, the questionnaires were handed to managers and employees. The manager assured the participants that their responses were confidential, and no one would have access to their response data.

There were two survey questionnaires used in this case study. First one was for assessing managers’ social skills. The list of social skills was adopted from O*NET OnLine, which is a database that includes hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors and it is continuously updated by surveying a broad range of workers from different occupations. 7 social skills were listed in the survey and managers were requested to assess their peer managers’ skills on a 5-point likert type scale, ranging from 1=poor, 2=below average, 3=average, 4=above average, to 5=excellent.

Data about job satisfaction of employees was gathered using short form of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss et al., 1967). The MSQ has 20 items, and uses a 5 point likert-type scale for responses. The response scale ranges from 1=not satisfied, 2= somewhat satisfied, 3=neutral, 4=satisfied, to 5=very satisfied. The MSQ measures two factors of job satisfaction, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic factors measure the internal feelings of the employees about job duties, and extrinsic factors measure the feelings of employees about situational factors of the job which are
external, for example a question covers “my pay and the amount of work I do” (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009).

**RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

Overall profile of sample shows that it was a small size sample. There were 4 managers and 4 teams with 4-6 subordinates each. Managers from management/support side show drastic results, on a scale of 1-5, manager A scored lowest marks and manager B scored the highest marks, while the managers from technical side stood average on the social skills scale. There is no pattern in results which gives an idea that there might be other factors responsible for job satisfaction of subordinates other than social skills of managers. Characteristics of sample are summarized in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Description</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Manager A</th>
<th>Manager B</th>
<th>Manager C</th>
<th>Manager D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills (Avg.)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Span of Control</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Area</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Sample description of the social skills of managers**

It is expected from a manager that he would have high level of social skills as he has to interact with a lot of people and high level of interaction provides the opportunity for brushing up the social skills. But manager A’s social skill level indicates that there might be some other issues resulting in such a low level as the survey was a peer evaluation, for example difference in personalities, disagreements, or difference in opinions which leads to grudges.

Technical managers scored an average on rating scale (from 1-5). Reason because, there is an overall understanding that when an individual is hired for technical job the stress is more on finding higher technical skills in him/her rather than putting an influence on social skills, and with the passage of time the individual acquires and polish his/her social skills. Scores of both manager C and D are comparable because both are from technical departments hence function area is same.

The survey concludes that female manager possess high level of social skills, but as the sample size was small which included only one female manager, it is suggested that there is a need for further research to prove that females score higher in social skills. Therefore we cannot state strictly that females are better than males in possessing social skills.

There is not a definite pattern of the relationship between social skills profile and number of subordinates working under the managers due to the small size of sample. So it cannot be determined that number of subordinates has influence on social skills of managers reason because of the less difference in number of subordinates of the 4 managers.
Table 2: Social skills of managers and job satisfaction level of their subordinates/teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Average Social Skills Level of Managers</th>
<th>Average JS Level of Subordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team 1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation: 0.245 (p=0.692)

Table 2: Social skills of managers and job satisfaction level of their subordinates/teams

Results indicate that there is a weak but positive correlation (+0.24) between the social skills of managers and the job satisfaction of their subordinates/teams. From Figure 1, it can be examined that social skills of managers of team 2, 3 and 4 have a very trivial effect on the job satisfaction level of their subordinates. Hence, the hypothesis 1 is proved which states that “with an increase in the level of a manager’s social skills the job satisfaction level of his/her subordinates increases.” But with an exception of team 1, whose graph shows that social skills level of manager is 1.9 and job satisfaction level of subordinates is 3.7 (higher than job satisfaction level of team 3 and team 4). There could be a number of other dynamic factors responsible for this higher level of job satisfaction, for instance the interrelationships between the team could be strong, and the manager could be competent but weak in communicating with his subordinates.

After examining the job satisfaction levels of team 1, 3 and 4, apparently they are comparable and the difference lies in the social skills level of managers. The reason of comparative level of job satisfaction could be due to a number of reasons, for example being part of the same organization, the working conditions, overall satisfaction regarding job and interrelationships among team members. Whereas, the job satisfaction level of team 2 is highest as compared to other three teams, which maybe predicted out of the exceptional social skills of the team manager.

To justify the low correlation value, it can be observed that the job satisfaction level of four teams remain highly comparable despite the fluctuating social skills profiles of the four managers. This
may lead one to think that the former variable (job satisfaction) remains unaffected or very slightly affected by the second variable (social skills).

In order to further investigate the job satisfaction level in correspondence with traits like gender, years of experience, business/function area; it was observed that the sample of teams/subordinates consisted of predominant males with only one female. Thus the difference in job satisfaction level is not because of the gender difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Average JS Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 -24</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 27</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 – 30</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 33</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Job satisfaction level according to age

The lowest level of age for a subordinate in this survey was 22. The survey results demonstrated the highest job satisfaction level lies in the age range of 28 – 30. This result maybe, due to the reason that after 5-6 years of experience, an individual’s career has been built and keeping in view the trend in our society males are more career oriented, and they like to be settled in their careers. 31-33 is the age range which showed a slight dip in the job satisfaction level, given the reason even if an individual is settled in job/career, after few years he/she wants a change in career, a job rotation to increase interest in job or diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Average JS Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5 – 1.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 – 2.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 – 3.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 – 4.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 – 5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 – 6.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Job satisfaction level according to years of experience

It was observed in survey that the job satisfaction level increased up to the first few years of gaining experience and then showed decline. The cause of that decline could be due to the reason that with an increase in years of experience, an individual wants higher rank in job title, progression, or promotions etc. Lacking behind in these aspects can cause dissatisfaction among employees or lowering the satisfaction level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Area / Function</th>
<th>Average JS Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management/Support</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Job satisfaction level according to function/business area

The average job satisfaction level of subordinates belonging to management/support departments exceeds than the average job satisfaction level of subordinates from technical departments. Major reason can be the self-implementation of concepts of job satisfaction, which are known to the employees whose job tasks are related to the management functions. In comparison, the employees who
are attached with pure technical functions could have lesser job satisfaction level as they have tougher jobs, for example different types of field work, maintenance of complex machinery and repairing of equipment.

**CONCLUSION**

Results of the study expose that, there is a weak but positive correlation between the social skills of managers and job satisfaction of these managers’ subordinates. The overall results showed that the employees working in the departments whose work is related to management/support are more satisfied than the employees who are doing pure technical and field work. Difference in job satisfaction level maybe due to the nature of work, technical tasks require intense concentration and it is observed that most of the times employees from technical departments have to do late sittings to finish off the workload they are burdened with. Also, the employees who have to do field work on daily basis are less satisfied, that can happen because whatever the conditions maybe, or even in extreme climate they have to do field visits.

Further study during the survey results, when impact of social skills of the managers was linked with the job satisfaction level of subordinates, it was revealed that there was not a great deal of difference between the job satisfaction levels of all the subordinates, whether their manager possessed low level of social skills or stood an average on the scale of social skills. This finding suggests that sometimes manager may possess low level of social skills, but still can be competent and proficient in his/her field to manage a department successfully. And if he/she is leading his/her team with full competency his/her team members can be satisfied with the competence level and guidance of manager. Furthermore, it can also be concluded that even if manager possesses low level of social skills but his team or subordinates can show a high level of job satisfaction due to many reasons, for example; the subordinates could be highly satisfied due to the good working conditions, if subordinates are provided with good amount of resources to finish his/her tasks and not bothered they can be satisfied with their job. Secondly; there can be healthy interrelationships between the team members, the team members might be enjoying their friendly atmosphere at workplace and are not bothered even if their manager communicates with them or not. Moreover; an employee could be over-indulgent and consumed happily with his/her work that he/she does not care about interacting highly with manager or co-workers which could lead to the overall job satisfaction of the employees.

**LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH**

The survey is subjected to the bias of participants, so 100% accuracy of results cannot be determined. Due to budgetary and time constraint study could not be conducted on broad level in telecommunication sector of Pakistan, furthermore the sample size is small therefore it puts a limit to generalize the results and findings to apply on telecommunication sector as whole. In this survey, manager A’s unexpected deviant ratings distorted the whole data representation of case study whose explanation lies beyond the concern of the case study. The validity of results and findings are questionable so it paves the way to many researches to be conducted in the telecommunication sector of Pakistan in coming future. Finally, all the variables involved in the survey which are not studied at this point, provides a good opportunity for future researches, using these variables as main focus of the study.
REFERENCES


