

An Empirical Evaluation of Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in Higher Education

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Abstract

The efficacy and effectiveness of any nation's education system largely rests on the shoulders of its teachers. The influence that a teacher exerts on the students entrusted to his care, forms the core of their education. The absence of an effective teacher can render the best curriculum any educational institution ineffective. For any employee to be effective, the first and foremost requirement is the job satisfaction of that employee. Dissatisfaction among staff is dangerous in any profession; it is suicidal if it occurs in teaching profession. If factors responsible for dissatisfaction can be differentiated, attempts can be made either to change those conditions or to reduce their intensity so as to increase the holding power of the profession. The present study takes into account internal and external factors to find out the level of job satisfaction and to see the effect of demographic factors such as age and gender on the job satisfaction of academicians of three universities of Kashmir region.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, higher education, gender, age, academicians.

Introduction

Higher education institutions, like any other labour intensive organization, owe their success largely to the effort and contribution of their employees. Employees working in higher education institutions can be mainly divided into two groups: academic staff, who are responsible for the academic activities of the institution and administrative staff, who are responsible for supporting the academic activities. Academic staff is the pivot around which all the educational programs, such as curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, evaluation, etc., rotate. Effective and efficient academic staff/teachers are required in the classroom because even the most perfect syllabus is rendered inefficacious in the absence of a good teacher & results in an unproductive educational institution. For a teacher to be effective & efficient, the first and foremost requirement is the job satisfaction of the teacher. Therefore, for a higher educational institution to be effective and productive, the job satisfaction of teachers is very important.

Job satisfaction is a pivotal and critical determinant of job performance, manpower retention and employee well-being. Research has proven that employees with high job satisfaction exhibit high energy, pleasurable engagement and enthusiasm and employees with dissatisfaction show distress, unpleasant engagement and nervousness (Heller et al., 2002). It, therefore, becomes imperative for every Organization to strive to maintain a satisfied workforce, especially for the higher education institutions which are highly labor intensive, since their effectiveness is predominantly dependent on their employees.

In spite of the fact that there are a number of studies on job satisfaction, very few research studies have been focused on the job satisfaction of academic staff/teachers in higher education, especially in developing countries. This study, therefore, is an attempt to fill the gap in this field and provide a new perspective to the findings of previous studies on the subject of job satisfaction in higher education.

Literature Review

Job satisfaction is an important attribute that enables an employee to perform to his/her full potential. Job satisfaction is linked to improved performance and productivity where as job dissatisfaction is linked to absenteeism and excessive turnover. Multiple researchers have put forward different definitions of job satisfaction. However, one of the most widely used definitions in organizational research is that of Locke (1976), who defines job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences". Job satisfaction is employee attitude ,including pay ,promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work, and communication" according to Spector (1985). Smith et al. (1969) described in their "job description index" that working condition, co-workers, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and work itself are some factors that affect the job satisfaction intensity of the teachers. Siddique et al. (2002) indicated that salaries, fringe benefits, security of service, chance of promotion and social status are some factors that have relationship with the job satisfaction of the teachers. Some of them have significant while other have insignificant relation with the dependent variable that is job satisfaction. Telman and Unsal (2004) recognized that the factors affecting job satisfaction into internal, external and personal. Internal factors include characteristics related to the basic nature of work. External factors are the conditions such as physical work, promotion conditions, relationships with superiors and co-workers, creativity, job security, organizational structure and culture. Personal factors include factors such as demographic characteristics (gender, age, length of service, educational level etc.), personality traits and incentive, knowledge and skills. Santhapparaj and Alam (2005), in their research with faculty from three private universities in Malaysia, found that pay, promotion, working condition and support of research have positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. According to Noordin and Jusoff (2009) the behaviour of the academic staff is affected by the working environment that must be safe and healthy, career progression, administration support, salary, work teams, peers and the job itself.

On the basis of the stated studies, following conceptual framework is achieved and utilized for the study:

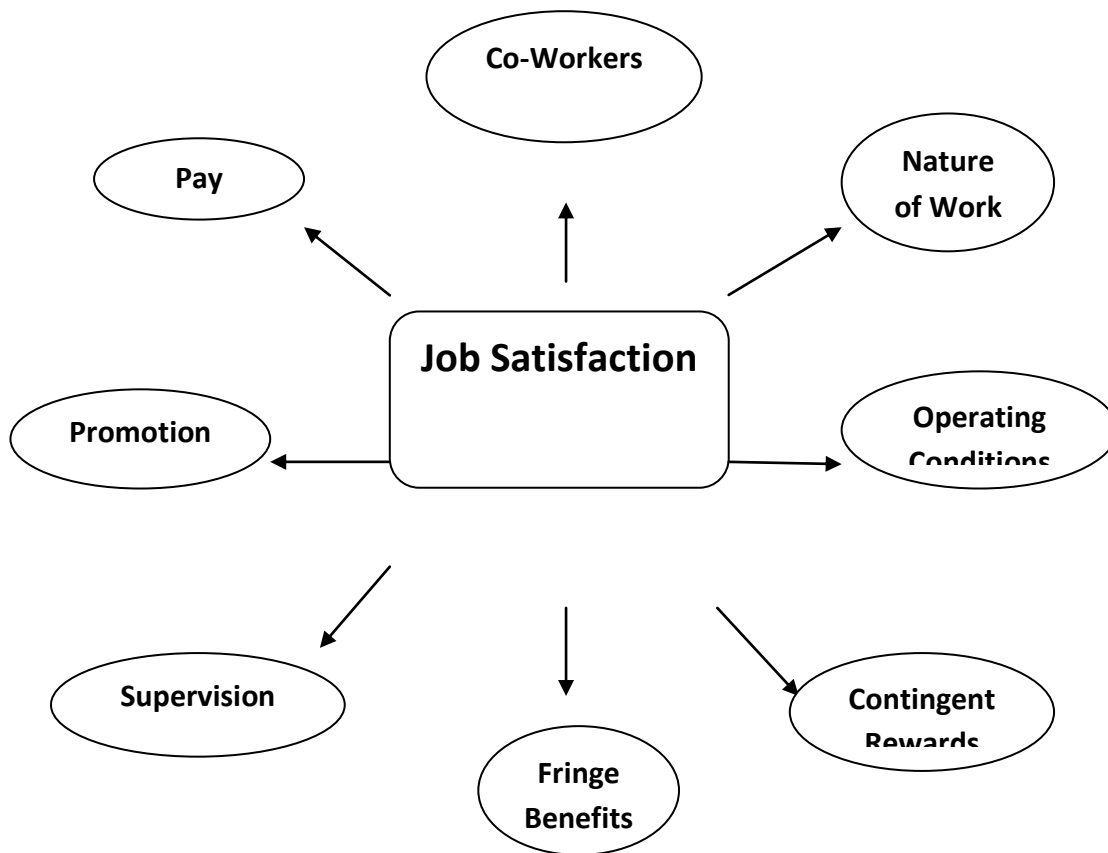


Figure 1: Variables of Job Satisfaction

Furthermore, various studies have been carried out to understand the relationship between demographic factors and job satisfaction of academicians.

Gender & Job satisfaction

Santhapparaj and Alam (2005) stated that female academic staff in private universities in Malaysia was more satisfied than their counterpart in all facets being studied including working environment and pay. Ahmadi and Keshavarzi (2012) who studied the Islamic Azad University (Iran) faculty members' views of the effective factors in job satisfaction found that female

teachers are more satisfied with their job compared to men. However, in contrast, Sabharwal and Corley (2009) found that female faculty members expressed lower levels of satisfaction when compared with male faculty members. Moreover, Okpara et. al. (2005) revealed that gender differences exist in the levels of job satisfaction of Tietjen university teachers. The study showed that female teachers hold negative perceptions about their pay, supervision and promotion, thus producing a low level of overall job satisfaction, while their male counterparts hold favorable opinions about pay, promotion policies and supervision and thus indicating high level of job satisfaction.

Age and Job satisfaction

According to a survey conducted, Job satisfaction among academic staff in Malaysian public university is affected by various factors and age seemed to have a significant impact on the respondents' level of job satisfaction (Fauziah Noordin and Kamaruzaman Jusoff, 2009). The study indicated that the academic staffs in the Associate Professor group who were more than 44 years old enjoyed a significantly higher level of job satisfaction than their Senior Lecturer counterparts who were within the 31-44 age groups. Okpara (2004), states that overall job satisfaction was lower for academicians below the age of 35 and increased progressively around the age of 55 years and above. Further in a study conducted by Jyoti and Sharma (2009), on the job satisfaction of university teachers in Jammu, whereby, after the initial years, the level of job satisfaction increases and remains almost constant till 45 years and then it decreases during 46-50 years, after that it again starts increasing and is maximum during 56-60 years. This study highlighted that the job satisfaction is the least during the age of 20-25 years and maximum during 56-60 years. According to Baruch's (2004), older employees are more likely to have proven themselves already and have enjoyed their job's benefits, so they do not care much for competition and changing things but on the other hand, younger employees' satisfaction can be predicted by the opportunities for personal growth they are given and the prevailing enthusiasm as they still have a long way to go before they retire and they care both for what they are currently doing and for what is to come. In contrast, studies by Pook et.al.

(2003) and Sarker et.al. (2003) have reported that age of an employee is unrelated to Job satisfaction.

In light of the above stated studies, this study attempts to examine the level of job satisfaction among academicians by taking into account internal and external factors, to find out which dimension affects the job satisfaction of university teachers the most and to see the effect of demographic factors such as age and gender on the job satisfaction of academicians.

Objectives of the Present Study

The study has been undertaken with following specific objectives:

- ✓ To evaluate and understand the level of job satisfaction of faculty members of the sample universities.
- ✓ To examine the effect of demographic factors (age & gender) on the level of job satisfaction of the academicians.

Research Design & Methodology

The sample

The sample of the study consisted of the respondents from three universities of Kashmir region i.e., University of Kashmir, Central University of Kashmir and Islamic university of Science & Technology. The above mentioned universities were purposively selected as they include a state university, a central university and a public university. The elements included professors, associate professors and assistant professors of the three Universities mentioned above.

A total of 105 questionnaires were administered to the potential respondents chosen from 3 sample Universities (35 questionnaires in each University), out of which 83 usable responses were received, for a final response rate of 79.04 percent.

Data Collection Tool

For data collection, Paul E. Spector's (1994) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) was used. JSS is a 36 item, nine facet scale to assess employee attitudes about the job and aspects of the job. Each facet is assessed with four items, and a total score is computed from all items. A summated rating scale format is used, with six choices per item ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Items are written in both directions (positive and negative), so about half must be reverse scored. The nine facets are Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Fringe Benefits, Contingent Rewards (performance based rewards), Operating Procedures (required rules and procedures), Coworkers, Nature of Work, and Communication.

For the 4-item sub-scales, as well as the 36-item total score, a mean item response (after reverse scoring the negatively-worded items) of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction. Mean scores between 3 and 4 represent ambivalence.

Reliability

Coefficient alpha of the questionnaire used was computed to be .9, indicating a good internal consistency.

Results & Discussions

Respondent Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' age and gender. Out of the total 83 respondents, 43 were male (51.80%) and 40 were female (48.19%). The respondents belonged to three age groups, viz, 29-38 (N=18), 39-48(N=37) and 48 and above (N=28).

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	43	51.80
Female	40	48.19
Age group (years)	Frequency	Percent
29-38	18	21.68
39-48	37	44.57
48 and above	28	33.73

As is evident from the data above, the gender distribution of the respondents is a little higher for males. Further, the majority of respondents are in the age group ranging from 39 years and above.

Job Satisfaction Analysis: Sub-scale wise and Cumulative

Mean scores of nine facets of job satisfaction are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Job satisfaction Analysis.

S.no	Sub-scale	Item Numbers	Mean* (N=83)	S.D
1	Pay	1,10,19,28	3.94	.75
2	Promotion	2,11,20,33	2.75	.95
3	Supervision	3,12,21,30	4.75	.86
4	Fringe Benefits	4,13,22,29	2.5	.91
5	Contingent Rewards	5,14,23,32	2.75	1.75
6	Operating Conditions	6,15,24,31	2.87	1.10
7	Co-workers	7,16,25,34	5.12	.47
8	Nature of Work	8,17,27,35	4.75	.86
9	Communication	9,18,26,36	3.62	1.43
10	Overall Job Satisfaction	1-36	3.66	1.35

**Mean scores of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction. Mean scores between 3 and 4 are ambivalence (Spector, 1994).*

The results from the Table 2 indicate that that the mean score of overall Job satisfaction is 3.66, with a standard deviation=1.35. This shows that there are mixed feelings or ambivalence towards the overall Job satisfaction. Further, it is evident that out of the nine facets of the Job, academic members of sample universities expressed highest satisfaction with Coworkers (Mean=5.12, S.D=.47), subsequently followed by Nature of work (Mean=4.75, S.D=.86) and Supervision (Mean=4.75, S.D=.86). Job facets towards which the respondents expressed highest dissatisfaction include Fringe Benefits (Mean=2.5, S.D=.91), closely followed by Promotion (Mean 2.75, S.D=.95), Contingent Rewards (Mean 2.75, S.D=1.75) and Operating Conditions (mean=2.87, S.D=1.10). Respondents have expressed ambivalence towards Job facets like Communication and Pay.

Gender and Job Satisfaction

Group wise mean scores are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Analysis of Gender and Job Satisfaction.

S.no	Sub-scale	Item Numbers	Mean* (N=83)	Group wise Mean	
				Female (N=40)	Male (N=43)
1	Pay	1,10,19,28	3.94	3.37	4.5
2	Promotion	2,11,20,33	2.75	2.25	3.25
3	Supervision	3,12,21,30	4.75	5.25	4.25
4	Fringe Benefits	4,13,22,29	2.5	3.5	1.5
5	Contingent Rewards	5,14,23,32	2.75	3.5	2
6	Operating Conditions	6,15,24,31	2.87	3.25	2.5
7	Co-workers	7,16,25,34	5.12	6	4.25
8	Nature of Work	8,17,27,35	4.75	4.5	5
9	Communication	9,18,26,36	3.62	4.75	2.5
10	Overall Job Satisfaction	1-36	3.66	4.01	3.32

**Mean scores of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction. Mean scores between 3 and 4 are ambivalence (Spector, 1994).*

Mean score of 4.01 for the female academic members of the sample universities indicate that they are satisfied with their overall Job. However, a Mean score of 3.32 for the male academic members indicate their ambivalence towards the overall job. It, therefore, can be said that female academic members/respondents have a higher level of overall Job satisfaction than their male counterparts. Further, the findings of the Table 3 indicate that the male academic members have reported higher mean scores than their female counterparts, in case of three job facets namely Pay, Promotion and Nature of Work, which is in agreement with past research a study.

Age and Job Satisfaction

In order to evaluate the influence of age of the academicians on Job satisfaction, data was analyzed using one way ANOVA and the summary is presented in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4: Age and Job satisfaction analysis.

Age group (years)	Frequency	Mean* Score (Overall job satisfaction)	S.D
29-38	18	3.32	1.63
39-48	37	3.86	1.86
48 and above	28	4.01	1.75

**Mean scores of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction. Mean scores between 3 and 4 are ambivalence (Spector, 1994).*

As is evident from the data above, age group 48 & above has the highest mean score (M=4.01), indicating satisfaction towards the overall job. However, mean scores of remaining two age groups i.e., 29-38 & 39-48 lie between 3 & 4, depicting the ambivalence or mixed feelings of the respondents towards overall job.

Table 5: One way ANNOVA test.

Source	SS	Df	Ms	F	P*
Between group	5.512	2	2.756	.873	.421
Within group	252.400	80	3.155		
Total	257.912	82			

*Statistically significant as $P < 0.05$.

Since P value is greater than .05, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the three age groups.

Conclusions

The general results of this research indicate that the academicians of the sample universities have mixed feelings towards their overall job. This is a very unsatisfactory scenario considering the fact that a satisfied teacher plays a pivotal role in developing the future generations and rendering the higher education sector efficacious and productive. Therefore, attempts need to be made by the administration of the sample universities to amend the situation and take care of the internal and external factors that influence the level of job satisfaction. The findings of the study showed that female academic members were generally more satisfied with their job, than male faculty members. However, male academic members reported higher mean scores than their female counterparts, in case of three job facets namely pay, promotion and nature of work. Further, the study indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between age groups for the overall job satisfaction.

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