

EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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Abstract

The primary objective of the present paper is to analyze and compare the level of Job satisfaction of academic and administrative employees working in different higher education institutions. The Job satisfaction of employees is measured using Spector's (1994) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). JSS is a 36 item, nine facet scale to assess employee attitudes about the job and aspects of the job. The satisfaction levels of the academic and administrative on different facets of their jobs are compared using Independent samples test. Among the two groups of employees surveyed in the present study, administrative staff reported comparatively higher satisfaction with their jobs as compared to the academic staff.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, higher education, administrative employees, academicians.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions being labour intensive in nature owe their efficacy and effectiveness 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. Quality academic staff is 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. Administrative staff provides the support system which helps the academic staff to perform their academic functions in a desired manner. Together academic and administrative staff form the back bone of any educational institution. The performance and efforts of these two groups of employees will determine the success or failure of an educational institution. For an employee to be effective & efficient, the first and foremost requirement is the whether the employee is satisfied with the job or not. Therefore, for a higher educational institution to be effective and productive, the job satisfaction of academic staff and administrative staff is very critical.

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

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been focused on determining the level of job satisfaction of administrative employees in higher education. Additionally, although multiple research studies have been conducted on job satisfaction of academicians, very few have attempted to compare the level of satisfaction of academic and administrative employees, 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.

Comparing the Job satisfaction of Academic and Administrative employees

Küskü (2003) explored the differences in job satisfaction levels of academic and administrative staff (Turkey) on 8 different dimensions of job satisfaction and concluded that the satisfaction levels of academic staff was higher on dimensions like professional satisfaction and colleague competition level satisfaction but was lower on dimensions like salary satisfaction and work environment satisfaction, when compared to the satisfaction levels of administrative staff. The dimension of satisfaction with which employees were most dissatisfied was reported to be the salary.

The evaluation and comparison of job satisfaction levels of academic and administrative employees on the same basis does not seem to be very rational as the characteristics of the job done and the

expectations of the institution from academic and administrative employees are extremely different. However, employees can be successful in their own jobs only if they can make the work environment more productive with the help of other employees who work in the same organization with different jobs and by giving support to the various jobs done. The internal customer concept emphasized by total quality management also concentrates on the extent and importance of the effect that people who work in the same environment but do different jobs have, one on another. Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to explore the differences in satisfaction dimensions between the academic and administrative employees in higher education institutions.

Objectives of the Present Study

The study has been undertaken with following specific objectives:

- ✓ To evaluate and understand the level of job satisfaction of academic and administrative members of the sample universities.
- ✓ To compare the level of job satisfaction of academic and administrative staff of the sample universities

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 for the academic members sample included professors, associate professors and assistant professors of the three Universities mentioned above. The elements for the administrative members sample included employees from the rank of assistant registrar and above

A total of 150 questionnaires were administered to the potential respondents chosen from 3 sample Universities (50 questionnaires in each University), out of which 123 usable responses were received, for a final response rate of 82 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 .91, indicating a good internal consistency.

Results & Discussions

Respondent Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the sample faculty and administrative members was obtained on the basis of gender and experience with the institution. The classification on the basis of gender, and experience with the institution of academic and administrative employees is given in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively.

Table 1: Academic Staff Sample (Gender and Experience wise) (N=63)

Name of the University	Gender		Experience with the Institution (in years)		
	Male	Female	≤ 10	11 to 20	>20
University of Kashmir	12	11	8	7	8
Central University, Kashmir	11	9	9	6	5
Islamic University of Science and Technology	12	8	9	4	7
Total	35	28	26	17	20

Table 2: Administrative Staff Sample (Gender and Experience wise) (N=60)

Name of the University	Gender		Experience with the Institution (in years)		
	Male	Female	≤ 10	11 to 20	>20
University of Kashmir	17	3	5	7	8
Central University, Kashmir	18	2	3	6	11
Islamic University of Science and Technology	19	1	4	7	9
Total	54	6	12	20	28

Job Satisfaction Analysis: Sub-scale wise and Cumulative

The perception of the staff of the three sample universities regarding the overall Job satisfaction and its nine facets is provided in Table 3. An overall mean score = 4.18 (% of mean score = 69.72 %) indicates that the employees of the sample universities are fairly satisfied with their jobs. The standard deviation of 0.411 also supports that the result is reasonably trustworthy. Further, all the nine job facets that have been utilized to measure the of job satisfaction of employees in the current study, have reported a mean score of above 4, indicating satisfaction of sample employees with all the nine facets of their jobs. Mean scores of 4 or more represents satisfaction with the job and its various facets, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction with the job. Mean scores between 3 and 4 represents ambivalence among the employees regarding their jobs (Spector, 1994).

Table 3: Perception of employees regarding Job satisfaction (N=123)

Construct	Mean Score*	Standard Deviation	% of mean score
1. Pay	4.11	0.453	68.50
2. Promotion	4.15	0.352	69.17
3. Supervision	4.25	0.364	70.83
4. Fringe Benefits	4.07	0.51	67.83
5. Contingent Rewards	4.09	0.347	68.17
6. Operating Conditions	4.21	0.482	70.17
7. Co-workers	4.44	0.439	74.00
8. Nature of Work	4.32	0.318	72.00
9. Communication	4.01	0.43	66.83
Overall Job Satisfaction	4.18	0.411	69.72

*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).

Among the nine job facets, the academic and the administrative staff of the sample universities under study, appear to be most satisfied with the *Co-Workers* facet (mean score= 4.44; % of mean score=74.00%) of their job, whereas the *Communication* (mean score= 4.01; % of mean score= 66.83) facet reported the lowest satisfaction. The standard deviation figures reveal that the results are very much reliable in a sense that the responses of the sample employees on different variables do not depict much variability.

From a comparative viewpoint, the administrative staff (mean score=4.19) has reported a slightly higher overall satisfaction with respect to their jobs in the sample universities as compared to the academic staff (mean score=4.16). Further, on all the nine facets of job satisfaction measured in the present study, the administrative staff has reported slightly higher mean scores than the academic staff of the sample universities, indicating that the administrative staff is slightly more satisfied than the academic staff.

Table 4: Comparison of employee perception regarding Job Satisfaction

Construct	Mean Score**		Total Mean Score	Z Value*
	Academic staff (N=63)	Administrative Staff (N=60)		
1. Pay	4.07	4.15	4.11	.43 ^{ns}
2. Promotion	4.13	4.17	4.15	.22 ^{ns}
3. Supervision	4.23	4.26	4.25	.19 ^{ns}
4. Fringe Benefits	4.05	4.09	4.07	.24 ^{ns}
5. Contingent Rewards	4.04	4.14	4.09	.50 ^{ns}
6. Operating Conditions	4.19	4.22	4.21	.16 ^{ns}
7. Co-workers	4.42	4.45	4.44	.17 ^{ns}
8. Nature of Work	4.29	4.35	4.32	.34 ^{ns}
9. Communication	4.00	4.02	4.01	.10 ^{ns}
Overall Job Satisfaction	4.16	4.19	4.18	.16^{ns}

*p<.05; ns = not significant; **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).

However, the results of z test, administered to ascertain whether the difference in the mean scores reported by the academic and administrative staff with respect to the overall Job satisfaction, is statistically significant or merely an outcome of chance factor, indicated that the difference in the mean scores is statistically insignificant (z value = .16; $p > .05$), indicating that there is no difference in the satisfaction levels of the academic and administrative staff with respect to their jobs (Table 4).

A comparison among the three universities under study shows that the employees of *Central University, Kashmir* have reported the highest satisfaction (mean score=4.22) with their jobs whereas the employees of *University of Kashmir* reported the least satisfaction (mean score=4.15) with respect to their jobs (Table 5).

Table 5: University wise comparison of employee perception with respect to Job Satisfaction (N=123)

Construct	Mean Score			Total Mean Score	ANOVA	Sig*
	Central university, Kashmir	Islamic university of science & technology	University of Kashmir			
1. Pay	4.15	4.10	4.07	4.11	1.914	.149 ^{ns}
2. Promotion	4.19	4.12	4.09	4.15	1.211	.810 ^{ns}
3. Supervision	4.32	4.27	4.24	4.25	1.149	.861 ^{ns}
4. Fringe Benefits	4.11	4.05	4.09	4.07	1.417	.221 ^{ns}
5. Contingent Rewards	4.11	4.14	4.02	4.09	0.858	.854 ^{ns}
6. Operating Conditions	4.25	4.13	4.18	4.21	1.771	.463 ^{ns}
7. Co-workers	4.45	4.52	4.41	4.43	1.517	.271 ^{ns}
8. Nature of Work	4.39	4.31	4.27	4.32	1.117	.328 ^{ns}
9. Communication	4.03	4.01	4.02	4.01	0.221	.979 ^{ns}
Job Satisfaction	4.22	4.18	4.15	4.18	1.117	.368^{ns}

A *one way Anovatest* was employed to examine whether the differences in the mean scores reported by the employees with respect to Job satisfaction, of the three respondent universities are statistically significant or not. The results revealed that the difference is merely an outcome of chance factor and the difference is statistically insignificant (F value =1.117; sig=.368), indicating that the job satisfaction of the academic and administrative employees across the three sample universities is more or less at the same level (Table 5).

CONCLUSIONS

The descriptive analysis of the data revealed that the employees of the sample universities are fairly satisfied (mean score = 4.18; % of mean score = 69.72 %) with their respective jobs. 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). Further, the reported mean score of above 4 on all the

nine facets of Job namely, Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Fringe Benefits, Contingent Rewards (performance based rewards), Operating Procedures (required rules and procedures), Coworkers, Nature of Work, and Communication, studied in the present study indicates that employees of the sample universities are fairly satisfied with all the different facets of their jobs. The respondent employees reported highest satisfaction with the *co-workers* facet of their job (mean score=4.44), whereas the employees seemed to be relatively less satisfied with the *communication* (mean score=4.01) facet of their jobs. Among the two groups of employees surveyed in the present study, administrative staff reported comparatively higher satisfaction (mean score= 4.19) with their jobs as compared to the academic staff (mean score= 4.16). A comparative data analysis between the three sample higher education institutions under study revealed that the employees of *Central university, Kashmir* reported the highest satisfaction (mean score=4.22) with their jobs whereas the employees of *Kashmir University* reported the least satisfaction (mean score=4.15) with respect to their jobs.

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