

Job Satisfaction of Academic Staffs at a Higher Educational Institution: A Case Study of UiTM, Campus Sungai Petani

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the academic staffs' job satisfaction in a higher educational institution, namely UiTM (Universiti Teknologi MARA), campus Sungai Petani. Survey was conducted using instrument Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and few demographic variables to measure the academic staffs job satisfaction. The findings shown that majority of the academic staffs were highly satisfied with three aspects of job, which are job in general, present job, and present pay. About half of them indicated highly satisfied with co-workers and supervision. Conversely, only a small portion of them highly satisfied with the opportunities for promotion. The result of this study shown that in general, academic staffs were highly satisfied with their job, except the opportunities for promotion. In this aspect, in order to motivate them, top management should reviewed the promotional system in the organization based on academic merit and contribution where the academic staffs that have excellent job performance will be rewarded and promoted accordingly. The promotional structure, system and process should be clearly communicated and understood by all the academic staffs.

Introduction

Job satisfaction is a widely researched topic. It was estimated that in 1976, about 3,350 articles or dissertations were written on the topic, and in 1992, it was estimated that more than 5,000 such research studies were carried out (Tang, Talpade, Fall 1999). However, very few research studies have been carried out in the area of job satisfaction particularly in UiTM campus Sungai Petani. Therefore, this study was undertaken to examine the level of job satisfaction and facets of job satisfaction among academic staff in UiTM, campus Sungai Petani. By attempting to address this specific problem of higher education, this study could positively contribute toward the overall improvement of the university. It is therefore important that university be aware of factors that may contribute to recruit and retain academic staff of the highest possible caliber relative to the performance of their functions.

Literature Review

The concept of job satisfaction evolves from motivational theory (Douglas, 1992). There have not been any standardized definitions on job satisfaction. Among the theories that have been frequently employed to explain job satisfaction are Maslow's need hierarchy theory, Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, and Adam's equity theory. Studies have shown that factors determining and affecting job satisfaction include aspects such as mentally challenging work, good co-worker and superior relationship, supervisor leadership style, pay and opportunities for promotion (Locke, 1976; Savery, 1996; Graham and Messner, 1998). Some employees might perceive the mentally challenging chores as being personally involved and it is important they get feedback regarding their performance. The perception and feedback could affect the level of employee's job satisfaction.

However, for employees who only prefer moderate or lower level of challenges in their work, their job satisfaction will be greatly reduced if they were asked to shoulder extra burden. Interpersonal relationship of the co-worker and superior could also affect the job satisfaction in the workplace.

Employee who has a good interpersonal relationship with his / her co-worker and superior may have higher level of job satisfaction, especially when teamwork is emphasized by the organization. However, research conducted by Tang and Medha's (1999) has shown that there were significant differences between males and females as males tend to have higher job satisfaction in term of payment than females, and on the other hand, females tend to have higher job satisfaction with their co-workers than the males. The leadership style of the principal can bring about a higher level of teacher job satisfaction (Ding, 1992). Douglas (1992) suggested that that the team or participatory leadership style may contribute as a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Oshagbemi (2001) stated that the supervision of workers can be an important organizational task, which may affect the job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of employees.

Pay or salary can be one of the factors influencing job satisfaction. Graham and Messner (1998) found that the American Midwestern principals are less satisfied with their pay. Oshagbemi (1997) run a research on the job satisfaction profiles of United Kingdom university teacher also found that in overall, pay was one of the least rated items contributing to the teachers' job satisfaction. However, due to individual differences, not everyone shares the same desire for equality in pay. The preferences for the difference in pay are especially true in the case of reaction to overtime where research has shown that some employees are eager to earn extra pay through working overtime whereas others will actively avoid overtime if possible (Johns and Saks, 2001).

Ample opportunities for promotion can also be an important contributor to job satisfaction because of a number of valued signals about a person's self-worth (Johns and Saks, 2001). These signals include materials (pay rise) and social nature (recognition within the organization, empowerment, etc.). On the other hand, cultural and individual differences may influence the employee's perception towards the fairness of the promotional system in an organization.

Research Methodology

Population

The total population in this study only consisted of 70 academic staffs. A questionnaire survey was conducted in February 2002. The total population consisted of 76 academic staff of UiTM campus Sungai Petani. However, new appointed academic staff (length of service less than 1 month) and those who are persuaing Ph.D programme were excluded from this study. The response rate of the respondent was at 85.71 per cent.

Instrumentation

The survey was conducted using demographic data and Job Descriptive Index. The demographic information variables include gender, age, marital status, birthplace, number of years taught in academic line, number of years taught in UiTM, higher degree earned by academic staff, how do academic staff view their social status in

society and lastly the interest to become an administrator. Job Descriptive Index (JDI) is one of the most popular measures of job satisfaction, developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969). JDI was used to measure the academic staff job satisfaction and six facets of job satisfaction, including work on present job, supervision, present pay, opportunities for promotion, co-workers (people) and job in general (JIG). The Job in General (JIG) scale included in this instrument was reflected by the individual's general feelings toward their jobs. This scale was able to provide an overall evaluation of job satisfaction as a whole. The rating was conducted on a 3-point scale of yes (Y), no (N) or cannot decide (?) for those positive items and negative items. The reliability coefficients for the 6 facets of job (Alpha) = .7348

Data Analysis

The results were analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 11.5. The statistical procedures employed in this studies are the descriptive analysis and frequencies distribution.

Result and Discussion

Table 1 indicates the frequency distribution of responses demographic extracted from the questionnaires. This study indicated that the distribution of respondents' gender was equal in number. Out of 60 respondents, 95 per cent of the respondents were below 45 of age. This group of young academic staff could contribute positively to the future advancement of the University. Above half of the respondents were from the northern region (Kedah, Penang, Perak and Perlis), and this study implies that a majority of them may prefer to serve this campus permanently.

Finding also indicated that 67.8 per cent of the respondents have taught less than 10 years in the academic line and another 59.3 per cent of the respondents have taught less than 5 years in UiTM. This result may imply that most of the respondents lacked the teaching experience or being involved in academic research. Hence, numerous training programmes on research and teaching skill are deemed necessary for this group of respondents to develop their competency in teaching and research. Although result indicated that 76.7 per cent of the respondents have obtained master's degree, however, none of the academic staff in the campus have doctoral degree. Probably this implies that initiatives have to be taken to encourage the academic staff to further their studies till doctoral level. In the aspect of hows the respondents viewed their social status, 62.7 per cent of the respondents viewed their status as upper-middle and high in the society. This might be one of the reasons why they are attracted to this institution as lecturers. Result also denoted that only 22 per cent of the respondents have indicated high and very high interest to become administrator. The possible attribute could be due to the inflexible working hours or the large amount of paperwork encountered by administrators.

Table 1: Respondents Characteristics

Respondents Characteristics (n=60)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender			
Male	29	48.3	48.3
Female	31	51.7	100.0

Age			
26 – 35 years	30	50.0	50.0
36 – 45 years	27	45.0	95.0
46 and above	3	5.0	100.0
Marital Status			
Single	7	11.7	11.7
Married	53	88.3	100.0
Birthplace			
Northern Region	38	63.3	63.3
Other States	22	36.7	100.0
Number of Years Taught in Academic Line			
First Year	4	6.7	6.8
1 – 5	21	35.0	42.4
6 – 10	15	25.0	67.8
11 – 15	11	18.3	86.4
16 – 20	4	6.7	93.2
20 and above	4	6.7	100.0
Missing	1	1.7	
Number of Years Taught in UiTM			
First Year	15	25.0	25.4
1 – 5	20	33.3	59.3
6 – 10	11	18.3	78.0
11 – 15	11	18.3	96.6
16 – 20	2	3.3	100.0
Missing	1	1.7	
Higher Degree Earned			
Bachelor's / Professional	14	23.3	23.3
Master's Degree	46	76.7	100.0
Lecturer's view of Social Status in Society			
High	8	13.3	13.6
Upper – Middle	29	48.3	62.7
Middle	21	35.0	98.3
Lower Middle	1	1.7	100.0
Missing	1	1.7	
Interest to Become an Administrator			
Very High Interest	6	10.0	10.2
High Interest	7	11.7	22.0
Moderate Interest	31	51.7	74.6

Low Interest	12	20.0	94.9
Very Low Interest	3	5.0	100.0
Missing	1	1.7	

Job Satisfaction

With regards to job satisfaction, the finding will be presented according to the facets of job satisfaction, namely Job in General, Present Job, Present Pay, Co-worker, supervision, and opportunities for promotion, as showed in Table 2. In the aspects of job in general, 90 per cent (n=54) of the respondents were highly satisfied with the job in general, 6.7 per cent (n=4) indicated that they were moderately satisfied and only 3.3 per cent (n=2) were gauged as having low satisfaction with the job in general.

It is interesting to note that a majority or 80 per cent (n=48) of the respondents were highly satisfied with the present job while only 8.3 per cent (n=5) of the academic staff were moderately satisfied and 11.7 per cent (n=7) of the respondents were lowly satisfied. These might be due to the reasons that lecturers perceived their present job as in the upper middle to high status in the society. This could also be probably due to the job security that they enjoyed as compared to their counter parts in the private sector especially during the economy down turn.

A big portion of the respondents (70 per cent) were highly satisfied with their present pay, another 18.3 per cent (n=11) of the respondents were moderately satisfied, and 11.7 per cent (n=7) were classified as lowly satisfied. One of the explanations for this phenomenon was the increment on basic pay for all the UiTM academic staff after it had upgraded from the status of an Institute to the status of a University.

One third of the respondents indicated that they were moderately satisfied and lowly satisfied with their co-workers, whereby 16.7 per cent (n=10) as lowly satisfied and moderately satisfied was at 16.7 per cent. For the criterion of highly satisfied with their co-worker, a 66.7 per cent (n=40) was recorded. This may be due to the relatively low of staff; therefore it was easier to build up good relationship among the co-workers.

Half of the respondents (50 per cent) were highly satisfied with the supervision at the workplace, while another remaining 50 per cent (n=30) demonstrated moderate and low satisfaction, whereby 31.7 per cent (n=19) with low satisfaction and 18.3 per cent (n=11) with moderate satisfaction towards supervision. The reason for this situation may be due to the nature of the lecturer's job as interaction between the supervisor (or coordinator) and subordinates (academic staffs) is relatively low.

In the criterion for opportunities for promotion, 51.7 per cent (n=31) showed preference for low satisfaction. Whereas 30 per cent (n=18) of them were highly satisfied with the opportunities for promotion and the remaining 18.3 per cent (n=11) were moderately satisfied. This may due to the strict requirements for promotion.

Table 2: Level of Job Satisfaction of the Respondents

Job Satisfaction Facets	Highly Satisfied		Moderately Satisfied		Lowly Satisfied	
	N	Per cent	n	Per cent	n	Per cent
Job in General	54	90.0	4	6.7	2	3.3
Present Job	48	80.0	5	8.3	7	11.7
Present Pay	42	70.0	11	18.3	7	11.7
Coworker	40	66.7	10	16.7	10	16.7
Supervision	30	50.0	11	18.3	19	31.7
Opportunities for Promotion	18	30.0	11	18.3	31	51.7

Recommendations and Conclusion

The results of the study showed that in general, the majority academic staffs were highly satisfied with their job, except the opportunities for promotion. Hence, in order to motivate the academic staffs in the aspect of opportunities for promotion, top management should reviewed the promotional system in the organization based on academic merit and contribution where the academic staffs that have excellent job performance will be rewarded and promoted accordingly. The promotional structure, system and process should be clearly communicated and understood by all the academic staffs.

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