

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction of Employees: The Case of a Public Sector

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Abstract



This study aims to investigate and highlight the factors significant in cultivating satisfaction regarding jobs among the employees of a leading public sector university in Islamabad (termed PSU henceforth). For this purpose salary, stress /burnout, and relationship with supervisors have been taken as key factors to gauge the contentment level of employees and how they can be motivated to complete their tasks effectively and efficiently. Based on quantitative research methods, the data was primarily collected through a self-administered adapted survey questionnaire. The target population included teachers of the Social Science Department of PSU. Stratified sampling was done randomly to collect data from seven departments of the faculty of Social Sciences. Fifty questionnaires were distributed among these seven Social Science departments. SPSS and Cronbach's alpha was used to analyze the data while the latter was utilized to infer the results too. The findings of the current study provide valuable insight into the factors that lead to job satisfaction. Moreover, results show a positive influence on job satisfaction concerning higher management. Regarding stress, the findings reveal that employees were somewhat not happy with the work stress and the same results were deduced for salary. The results postulate salary, stress, and relationship with higher management as intertwined and as having a significant impact on job satisfaction. This article may benefit society and organizations in creating awareness about the importance of productive employees. The research suggests that a satisfied employee is motivated to achieve the organizational goals and objectives, thus, contributes positively to the productivity of the organization.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Organization, Salary, Stress/Burnout, Higher Management.

Introduction

Job satisfaction is contingent upon multiple and intertwined mental, physiological, and natural circumstances that bring about a man to explicitly affirm the magnitude of his contentment. Job satisfaction has many dimensions and its nature is complex as it differs from person to person. It is at the disposal of the employee how they perceive and feel about their job. A happy and contented person can show more commitment, loyalty, and engagement to the organization. On the other hand, if a person is dissatisfied with his/her job it will lead to a lack of loyalty, low turnover, and absenteeism, etc., which then would be unprofitable to the organization (Aziri, 2011).

The 21st century is an era where organizations face complex and variety of challenges due to the rapid changes in the environment. In face of such intertwined complexities, managers give considerable importance to the issue of sustainability of the employees in any organization. However, to provide quality and to maintain the standard in a well-functioning organization is a difficult task. Efficient, active, committed and loyal employees are inevitable for better performance and increased productivity. Therefore, to enhance customer satisfaction, the satisfactory level of employees plays a vital role. A gratified employee is considered a productive employee.

Spector (1997) defines job satisfaction in terms of the level of compassion people have for their jobs and their different aspects.

The education sector has a great impact in boosting the economic development of a country. Due to the competitive advancement and environmental change, it has also become mandatory to aim for increased efficiency among the employees in the education sector.

Abraham Maslow (1954, 1987) describes the five-level hierarchy of human needs ranging from physiological needs, safety, belongingness and love, esteem to self-actualization. Drawing upon

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Maslow's theory, job satisfaction is directed by some researchers from the perspective of need fulfillment (Kuhlen, 1963; Worf, 1970; Conrad et al., 1985; Parvin, 2011).

Job satisfaction is acquired when a person's expectations coincide with what he gets. An employee is happy when he/she is rewarded and appreciated for his work. There are two kinds of rewards, intrinsic rewards, and extrinsic rewards. The rewards that satisfy an employee's inner self, such as work conditions, workload, rapport with the supervisors and co-workers and recognition, etc can be termed as intrinsic rewards. While extrinsic rewards are visible and tangible like pay raises, promotions, benefits, bonuses, etc.

Clark (1997) stressed the fact that if the workers are unsatisfied with the work assigned to them, it is due to the reason that they are not sure of their working rules and regulations, their rights, or maybe the higher management is not taking them into confidence in making the decisions about the company. It leads to the isolation of the workers to the point of them not feeling inclusive and a part of the organization. Resultantly, they do not own the organization also. He further stressed that organizations cannot afford employees' dissatisfaction and their subsequent leaving (the job) as it will cost them more. Hiring new employees and training them to fit in the organizational environment from the scratch is always a costly process. It is thus suitable for the organizations to have flexibility in their work environment so the employees feel valued and their morale remains high. As a result, they continue to work with high spirits and inclusively feel a part of the organization.

As mentioned earlier, many psychological, physical, and environmental factors influence job satisfaction. It draws attention to the fact that although job satisfaction is influenced by external factors it has also its connections to the inner self, as to how a person feels about his job. (Aziri, 2011). The input of several positive factors is necessary to get output in the form of job satisfaction. It is significant to comprehend that many internal and external factors influence a person's perception. The positive and negative behavior towards a job depicts job satisfaction. It is the way how an organization responds to the desires and needs of an employee that will affect job satisfaction (Dizgah, Chegini, & Bisokhan, 2012).

To identify factors affecting the job satisfaction of academic employees at the university level some findings have been taken into consideration. The findings of a pharmaceutical company suggest that work conditions, pay, and promotion are the important factors affecting pharmaceutical company employee's satisfaction. This research has been through a comprehensive diagnosis and it deduced that overall job satisfaction is positive in pharmaceutical employees (Parvin & Kabir, 2011).

Moreover, Akter suggested that the work environment, salary, security of a job, and stress also have a great impact on the female workers' job contentment level in the garment factories. The author concluded that individual factors age and designation did not have an impact on the job satisfaction of workers in the garment factories (Akter, 2017).

Another study investigated the motivation level of employees in the tourism industry. Significant positive results were found about salary and supervision but age did not prove to be a moderator between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The findings of this study gave an insight to the organization on how to make a productive workforce (Yew, 2007) Therefore, employee satisfaction plays a key role in making an organization competitive and fruitful. However, this satisfaction level is hampered by many factors. Among these factors relationship with higher management plays a vital role in bringing satisfaction among employees.

One of the studies gauged the influence of pay and promotion on job satisfaction in higher education institutions. The findings concluded that pay had a significant influence on job satisfaction but promotion had less impact on job satisfaction. The extent of a working relationship between employees and the higher management or immediate boss is instrumental in the good fate of an organization. Employees will come up with new and more creative ideas when they feel that their opinions are welcomed and their feedback is of utmost importance (Malik, 2012).

Higher management has to be available at the time of need of employees. It is the quality of good higher management to create an environment where employees are free to express their creativity. Additionally, communication among colleagues is appreciated for the overall benefit of the organization. It suggests that effective supervision results in high morale of employees and while on the other hand poor communication among the employees and higher management will lead to low morale and dissatisfaction.

Hence, effective communication between higher management and employees is necessary for job satisfaction. If the employees are comfortable with their supervisor, they will share their innovative and unique ideas and will also feel more responsible towards their job. On the other hand, if an employee feels hesitant interacting with their immediate boss, the constrained environment will not incite innovative ideas and will rather hinder the achievement of the organizational aims. It is pertinent that the higher management is readily available at the time of need and accept the employee's capabilities and positively direct them. It is suggested that higher management should create such a working environment to enhance the capabilities and potentials of employees to improve their productivity (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

Occupational stress and burnout is another factor which may lead to dissatisfaction among employees. Stress causes emotional and physical exhaustion of employees and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. (Lee, 1996) Teaching as an occupation is one of the most stressful professions when it comes to long working hours, meeting the demands of higher management, dealing with the administration, and addressing the students' issues and concerns as well as interpersonal conflicts. Prolonged work stress leads to negative physical and mental health and leads to higher burnout. Stress is induced when employee's issues pile up and remain unresolved. When a person is emotionally unstable and feels exhausted, physically fatigued, depersonalized, and feels low in accomplishing work-related tasks, it reduces job performance. Therefore, it leads to absenteeism, delayed work, and an urge to quit. It is the responsibility of the management to train employees to cope with stress, anger, and conflict and time management to prevent burnout. (Sharma et al., 2014).

Another most important factor which is valuable in boosting up the morale of employees is the fair amount of remuneration being paid to them. A good and attractive salary package is supposed to be an important tool to retain employees. It seems to be one of the principal motivating factors in fostering job satisfaction. Abraham Maslow (1954, 1987) and Frederick Herzberg (1959) noticed that employee's basic needs are satisfied even if a fair amount of pay is given to them for their work. Their theory suggests that inadequate salary will result in frustration and produce de-motivated employees. They emphasize that the basic safety and security needs are fulfilled only when there is financial stability (Sharma et al., 2014; Yew, 2007). Adams equity theory (1965) argues that a fair amount of pay should be given to employees so they feel their input has some worth. It also contends that an employee feels demotivated with the job as well as the employer in case the wage is presumed as lower than the work done. It is thus derived that a healthy balance between the employee input and output is needed to run a healthy organization (Gatewood, Taylor, & Ferrell, 1995).

Keeping in mind all these factors, the purpose of this research is to know about the factors that affect the satisfaction level of an employee in PSU. It specifically focuses on the nature of the relationship with higher management, the effect of occupation burnout, and appropriate salary on the satisfaction level of employees will be examined.

Objectives of the Study

To assess the level of satisfaction among the employees of the Social Sciences departments of PSU concerning stress, salary, and relationship with higher management.

Research Question

What are the factors that influence and affect the job satisfaction of employees? What is the level of job satisfaction of employees of the Social Science Department of PSU?

Methodology

The target population included lecturers of PSU from seven different Social Sciences Departments. Stratified sampling was done randomly to select individual respondents from the entire population of PSU. Quantitative data analysis was done. The data was analyzed on SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). While Cronbach's alpha has been calculated to analyze the internal consistency and reliability. 50 questionnaires were randomly distributed among lecturers of seven Social Sciences Departments. While 25% of respondents have been taken from each department. 52% (26) respondents were female and 48% (24) were male respondents. The collected data was analyzed to measure the satisfaction level of employees in PSU. A five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used to design the questionnaire. It has been denoted by 1=SD, 2=D, 3=uncertain, 4=A, 5=SA. The questionnaire had three sections each part covering the variables. Each section focuses on information about the variables and their effect on the job satisfaction level content validity. Sample statements related to each of the variables are as follows:

Salary: I am given a fair amount of money for the work I do; My organization makes me feel worthless when I look at my pay scale; I feel there is a great chance for a regular salary increase; I am content with the compensation I get and it matches my duties; I receive good pay when I compare it to the other educational organizations

Occupational Stress: The environment and relationships at work are always tense; Intensive work exhausts me greatly; I am usually awake at night thinking about problems related to work; I often wonder whether the stress I take is even worth it; I often am compelled to take assignments home with me because of lack of time.

Relationship with higher management: My senior/boss is always respectful towards my views and ideas; my senior/boss encourages me to work collaboratively; my senior/boss gives me constructive feedback on my work; my senior/boss creates and ensures an atmosphere of teamwork; my senior/boss values me and my work.

After collecting the necessary data personally by visiting the employees and filling out the questionnaire, the data was then tabulated and analyzed descriptively.

Findings

To address the questions raised in this paper, several operations were performed to summarize the collected data and conclude the results. The findings highlighted the level of job satisfaction among the employees of PSU. The employees of the PSU survey questionnaire are the frequencies that show that how many times various categories of certain factors occur. The percentage and cumulative percentage were calculated. The statistical data will be presented in such a manner to give an idea of how good the scales are and how well the coding and tabulation of the data have been done. The reliability result for salary was 0.635 which comes under acceptability, for occupational stress was 0.878 which is good reliability, for relation with higher management was 0.920 which depicts excellent reliability. The results are concluded in frequencies and percentages.

On salary

A general overview of salary was investigated on a Lickert scale. Employees were asked about the level of satisfaction regarding remuneration for their work on a scale where 1. Stands for Extremely Dissatisfied 2. Dissatisfied, 3. Neutral 4. Satisfied and 5. Extremely Satisfied. When we look at the level of salary, 23 out of 50 respondents are neutral.14 respondents are satisfied while 11 respondents fall under the category dissatisfied. The mean score is 3.05. One can conclude that salary has a great impact on the level of job satisfaction. The number of employees who are satisfied with their salary package is 15 in total, much lesser than those who are either neutral or dissatisfied. When probed it was realized that the perception regarding salary is reckoned on several levels. On one level, monetary value is evaluated against social value and respectability. Some of the respondents argued that the compromise on salary is made because of the respectability of the profession, which is derived from association with the university. Lesser salary but a better social status. On another level, the salary is perceived as much better when compared with other professions, especially, entrepreneurship where there is a possibility of either earning extensive surplus or not earning even the bare minimum. The third key argument was the ability to survive and meet ends, even if this meant an extremely calculated budget. Despite these arguments, a common complaint against insufficient and inadequate salary package with a hope that this is realized by higher management resonated across the majority of the interviews.

Table 1: Salary Assessment

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1.00 | 1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| 2.00 | 11 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 24.0 |
| 3.00 | 23 | 46.0 | 46.0 | 70.0 |
| 4.00 | 14 | 28.0 | 28.0 | 98.0 |
| 5.00 | 1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

On Occupational Stress

Similarly, employees were inquired to get an overview of their experience vis-à-vis occupational stress. Using the same Likert scale as for salary respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the amount of work they are required to do within their work hours? The results for occupational stress shows that 20 respondents out of 50 were dissatisfied. 16 respondents were neutral and 7 respondents were satisfied. The mean score is 2.62. It can be said that occupational stress is a matter of concern for the employees. When questioned about the types of stress experienced; the most common regards the lack of time given the nature of their job. One of the faculty members explained that while an hour's lecture requires quite a few hours of searching relevant and appropriate study material, reading, and preparation; however, the latter never gets recognized as real work. It is only the time when the lecture is delivered that gets counted. Another added that evaluation of students' assignments, research work, etc. necessitate several hours of investment. Most of the time it is not possible to complete the tasks during official hours. Hence, they bring their work home. Female faculty members complained against the double work that they are faced with during their off-hours. They are responsible for meeting the family's needs and can spare time only when they get free from their domestic chores. This adds to their work burden.

Table 2: Occupational Stress Assessment

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1.00 | 5 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| 2.00 | 20 | 40.0 | 40.0 | 50.0 |
| 3.00 | 16 | 32.0 | 32.0 | 82.0 |
| 4.00 | 7 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 96.0 |
| 5.00 | 2 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

On Relationship with Higher Management

In the relationship with higher management, 18 respondents were satisfied. 15 respondents were neutral. The mean score shows that the relationship with higher management also has a great influence on job satisfaction. The number of satisfied people (24) with the role and behavior of the higher management is more than half the number of those who are either dissatisfied (8) or extremely dissatisfied (3). This leads to hypothesize that of the three factors, relationship with higher management scores better. On probe, it was revealed that the nature of the job is such that each person is mostly occupied with their work sitting in their (usually independent) offices. This includes preparing lectures, supervision of students, writing research papers, etc. Running a department requires teamwork. Most of the decisions concerning work, for instance, teaching course allocation and assignment of student's research supervision are taken during official meetings. Notwithstanding, the difference of opinions, the matters concerning such allocation are comparatively fairly resolved. However, the management, as argued by some, is not making an effort in other areas concerning employees, say, for instance, salary.

Table 3: Assessment of Relationship with Higher Management

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1.00 | 3 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| 2.00 | 8 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 22.0 |
| 3.00 | 15 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 52.0 |
| 4.00 | 18 | 36.0 | 36.0 | 88.0 |
| 5.00 | 6 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The statistical tool used is frequency tables and percentages. Data obtained through surveys for this research was analyzed on SPSS.

Conclusion

This study aimed to gauge the level of job satisfaction about salary, occupational stress, and relationship with higher management. The results of the study depict a positive level of satisfaction of employees concerning their job. Out of the three factors, relationship with higher management has a

deep impact on employees. It reflects that the higher management takes the opinions of the employees and value their employee's points of view. Building a healthy relationship with employees enhances the quality of communication between employees. This has also been established by previous studies discussed earlier. If the employees are satisfied, their productivity will enhance and it will turn out to be beneficial for the organization. When we see the results of stress, the level of satisfaction is somewhat towards the negative side. One-third of the respondents were satisfied, rest of the population were either dissatisfied or ambivalent i-e, neither unhappy nor happy. Employees may be stressed due to many reasons, like fear of top management, no training to accomplish the given task, job security, etc. It is thus recommended to create such a working environment so that employees fulfill their work with pleasure and feel a sense of belongingness. Team spirit should be enhanced to lower the stressful environment. Management should discuss the matters with employees that prove to be a hurdle in accomplishing the tasks to reduce the stress related to the task. When we look at the results of salary we gauge that most of the employees are neither satisfied nor unhappy. It is thus suggested to increase the salary according to the performance of the employee. There should be a fair and transparent system regarding salary. Salary and benefits should be balanced according to the market standards. The vital elements of an organization are fairness and openness in their policies and procedures if they want to inspire success and to be structurally sound. It varies from organization to organization to adapt the human resource management strategies to meet its objectives.

Significance of the study

The purpose and scope of this study are of wide interest to both the employees and the higher management. In exploring the employee's level of job satisfaction concerning their work, it reveals what factors matter the most and to what extent. The impact of factors on job contentment helped gauge the value of every component of job satisfaction for a better understanding of how and to what level an employee is satisfied with his job. It also brought to light the factors that get neglected; factors that help motivate the employees in managing their jobs effectively and efficiently. This study helps deconstruct the cause of dissatisfaction among the employees.

Delimitations of the Study

Due to the limited time and resources, the research is narrowed down and conducted only in one university. Another delimitation is that it considers only seven departments of Social Sciences of PSU. The total strength of employees in these departments is 185. Based on the total population, 25% of each department has been taken as the sample size. For future researchers, it is recommended to take more respondents to view the relationship between the factors that affect job satisfaction. This survey may be affected by the biases of the respondents thus will affect 100 percent accuracy.

Recommendations

The number of respondents was less due to time constraints. Future research may include more respondents and increase the sample size. Future researchers can compare public and private universities and include more variables in the study. For instance, job security could be an interesting variable and a comparative study between the contractual and permanent employees comprehend the concerns of employees. Moreover, a mixed-method approach will provide an equal focus on qualitative methods of data collection will provide in-depth data.

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