



HRM & Job Satisfaction: Case of Uzbekistan

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Abstract

Uzbekistan is paying great attention to the improvement of the human resource management system, where employee job satisfaction is playing a significant role. This paper to a certain degree seeks to fulfill the tasks defined in the decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, namely: decree No. UP-4947 "On the strategy of actions for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan», dated 7 February, 2017 (UP 4947, 2017); and No.UP-5843 "On measures to radically improve personnel policy and the system of state civil service in the Republic of Uzbekistan» dated 3 October, 2019 (UP-5843, 2019).

The main objective of this paper is to study the job satisfaction factors among academic staff in a University, located in Uzbekistan, Tashkent. Online survey was used to collect data from the respondents. In conclusion, the survey results will be presented along with the findings and recommendations.

Keywords Uzbekistan, Job satisfaction, academic staff, university.

Introduction

The first international university in Uzbekistan was opened in 2002 (Westminster International University in Tashkent, 2020) where the medium of instruction was in English. To date, since 2002, there is a total of eighteen (18) international universities in Uzbekistan, out of which eleven (11) of them opened in the past 1-3 years. The eighteen (18) universities include:

- Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT);
- Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS Tashkent);
- Turin Polytechnic University in Tashkent city;
- INHA University in Tashkent;
- Russian Economic University named after G.V. Plekhanov;
- University of Oil and Gas named after Gubkin;
- Lomonosov Moscow State University;
- Amity University Tashkent;
- British Management University in Tashkent;
- Webster University in Tashkent;
- Yeodju Technical Institute in Tashkent;
- Bucheon University in Tashkent;
- National research technological university Мисис Branch;
- MGIMO, Tashkent Branch;
- Collegium Humanum. Branch of Warsaw University of Management;
- Joint Belarusian-Uzbek Intersectoral Institute of applied technical qualifications;
- Russian State Pedagogical University named after A.I. Herzena;
- Russian State Institute of Cinematography named after S.A. Gerasimov (GoldenPages, 2021).

It can be seen that the growth and launch of new international universities in country is very rapid. The thirty million population of Uzbekistan is relatively young, with the median age of 30.1 years old and youth dependency ratio of 43.4 percent (Indexmundi, 2020), where 16.63 percent of population are aged between 15 and 24 years. This, in turn, increases the demand for education. Along this, standards are also increasing; students are demanding for the better-quality education. International universities are competing for the students and thus, quality of the educational services they provide is very crucial. It is a well-known fact, that the quality of academics is the key ingredient of the successful university system (Bentley et al, 2013). Variety of marketing and

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brand awareness activities are dedicated by various international universities to position themselves as reputable high-quality education providers in the market. However, while universities are focusing on the customer (i.e. students) and their attraction and satisfaction, they often neglect to pay attention to their internal customers – their employees. In other words, with the increasing competition within the education industry, and increasing demand for the international degrees offered by the international universities in the country, it is important to strengthen the HRM system within universities via first understanding and studying the job satisfaction level of university staff members.

Some academic staff can teach in one or more universities, while some universities do not allow their academic staff to work in another university and this, in its turn, creates hindrances for both employees and universities. Meanwhile, academic staff have many options to choose from in the market due to the increased demand for academics and increased number of new international universities launched in the country, and that in turn, leads to the increased staff turnover within the universities. Academic staff members leave their current place for various reasons, which may vary from advancement opportunities, relationships with management, inadequate policies and practices to compensation. To date, there is very limited research within job satisfaction found among university academic staff members in Uzbekistan, despite the increased interest in this topic abroad (Toker, 2011). Thus, this paper is going to focus on finding out the job satisfaction factors of academics in University X and whether there is any relationship with the demographic variables.

Literature Review

According to Locke (1969), job satisfaction is a “...pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one’s job values.” (p.1304). Spector (1997) defines job satisfaction as the extent to which an employee likes or dislikes the job. For past decades, various researches have been formulating various theories with regards to understanding of the nature of job satisfaction which include well known Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory; Adam’s Equity theory; Vroom’s Need and Fulfillment Theory; Lawler’s Discrepancy Theory; Locke’s Value-Percept Theory; Weitz; Staw and Ross’ Dispositional Approach; Lofquist and Dawis’ Work Adjustment Theory.

Job satisfaction in education

To retain best academics, it is important to maintain their job satisfaction level (Sarika, 2014), as staff retention is crucial factor for remaining in the market and being competitive (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2013).

Job satisfaction within an education industry has a wide variety of research interest across the globe. Ceyhun and Ozaydin, (2009:49 cited in Çolakoğlu and Atabay 2014), found that factors affecting job satisfaction could be grouped into three factors such as internal, external and personal:

- *Internal factors* are all factors related to the job itself (skill diversity, implications of the job etc). Once these factors are fulfilled an employee will have a higher job satisfaction, higher performance and lower absenteeism and turnover.
- *External factors* are all factors that include compensation, working conditions, advancement opportunities, relationship with supervisor and co-workers, creativity, safety, culture and organizational structure which are determined by the company policies and practices. These factors, will also ensure higher levels of job satisfaction.
- *Personal factors* are all factors that include demographic profile of employees such as gender, age, education level and etc. along with the personality, knowledge and skills of employees.

The study of 1,210 university teachers in China, revealed an average job satisfaction score among teachers with variables such as organizational support, age, and compensation being strongly associated with the job satisfaction (Pan et al., 2015). According to Macutay (2020), in a study of the teachers at the Isabela State University in Philippines, there was a confirmed positive relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. Social status, social service and ability utilization were ranked the highest and compensation, supervision (technical), and supervision (human relations) were ranked the lowest job satisfaction factors by academics in turkey (Toker 2011). Study of Lithuanian distance education teachers revealed that teachers were mostly dissatisfied with compensation, working conditions, supervision – technical, responsibility, recognition, achievement and supervision (human relationships) (Liekis et al., 2020). Positive relationship between training and development and job satisfaction were found in India among 360 faculty members (Paposa and Kumar, 2019). Study of 423 university teachers in Sri Lanka revealed significant difference between job satisfaction and compensation, and also found no

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significant differences between job satisfaction and demographic variables such as tenure, gender, age, education attainment, marital status (Amarasena et al., 2015). Among the job satisfaction factors that teachers in a university in China (Beijing) were least satisfied with were found to be financial rewards, workload and stress level, working conditions, relations with supervisor, co-workers respect, and advancement opportunities (Munyengabe et al., 2017). Among factors that affected job satisfaction of teachers who left the University in Kazakhstan were support, low salary and big workload (Syzdykbayeva, 2020).

In a study of academics in Turkey, marital status and gender were not found to be related to job satisfaction, however, demographic variables such as age and tenure were related to the job satisfaction (Toker 2011). In Saudi Arabia, gender had no impact on job satisfaction among academics (Kuwaiti, et al., 2020). There were no gender differences found among the university staff members at the Gezira University in Sudan (Rmadan and Kassahun, 2021). Women academic law lecturers had lower job satisfaction than male counterparts in a study of 1,300 academics in Texas, USA (Zurbrugg and Miner, 2016). In Portugal, study of academics found that female academics values supports, relationship with co-workers, and prestige, while male academics, valued teaching and research environment and opportunities for development that contributed to their job satisfaction (Machado-Taylor et al, 2014).

The review of the literature and theoretical frameworks of job satisfaction, the following research questions shall be explored in this paper:

RQ 1: What job satisfaction factors are university academic staff members satisfied with the most and the least?

RQ 2: Is there a relationship between job satisfaction and demographic variables of the university academic staff members?

Methodology

Participants

This sample comprised of seventy-eight (78) full-time academic staff members working at the University X. All academic staff members were aged between 23 and 69 years with the mean age

of 37 years. Big portion of the respondents (44.9%) were aged between 30-39 years; 26.9% of the respondents were aged between 40 and 49; 19.2% of the respondents were between age 20 and 29; 6.4% of the respondents were aged between 50 and 59; and 2.6% of the respondents were aged between 60 and 69. Which indicates that majority of the academics working at University X are relatively young. With regards to the marital status of respondents; 75.6% of the respondents were married, 24.4% were single. Concerning the tenure of the respondents; the mean tenure was equal to 8 years. 39.7% of the respondents have a tenure of 1-4 years as an academic; 25.6% of the respondents have a tenure of 5-8 years as an academic; 12.8% of the respondents have a tenure of 9-12 years as an academic; 7.7% worked between 13 and 16 years; and more than 21 years as an academic. Only 6.4% worked between 17 and 20 years as an academic. There were more male respondents (66.7%) than female respondents (33.3%).

Demographic profile of the respondents is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

<i>Category</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	26	33.3
Male	52	66.7
<i>Age</i>		
20-29	15	19.2
30-39	35	44.9
40-49	21	26.9
50-59	5	6.4
60-69	2	2.6
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	59	75.6
Single	19	24.4

Tenure in present company (in years)

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1-4 years	31	39.7
5-8 years	20	25.6
9-12 years	10	12.8
13-16 years	6	7.7
17-20 years	5	6.4
21 and more	6	7.7

Measures

The short-form MSQ (Weiss *et al.*, 1967) was sent to all employees online with a SurveyMonkey link available in three (3) languages (Uzbek, Russian and English). The survey was carried out in summer 2020. The short-form MSQ was comprised of 20 questions which corresponded to 20 job satisfaction factors such as: ability utilization, activity, advancement, achievement, authority, independence, creativity, responsibility, moral values, social service, security, social status, policies and practices, variety, compensation, recognition, supervision-human relations, supervision-technical, co-workers and working conditions. Five-point Likert scale was used in the MSQ with the following coding: 1-not satisfied; 2-only slightly satisfied; 3-satisfied; 4-very satisfied; 5-extremely satisfied. There were two sections of the questionnaire, first section included MSQ questions related to 20 facets, while second section included the demographic questions such as gender, age, marital status, and tenure. Job satisfaction mean scores were sorted in a descending order and presented in a table to demonstrate the factors that academics were most and least satisfied with. Multiple linear regression was used to evaluate the impact of age, marital status, gender and tenure on job satisfaction of academics. Analysis were performed in SPSS software programme.

Multiple linear regression model:

$$\text{General Satisfaction} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Age} + \beta_2 * \text{Gender} + \beta_3 * \text{Tenure} + \beta_4 * \text{Marital Status} + \varepsilon$$

Dependent variable: General satisfaction – mean score of MSQ 20 facets

Independent variables:

Age – age of respondents

Gender – dummy variable, 1=male; 0 female.

Marital status – dummy variable, 1=single; 0=otherwise

Tenure – the number of years working as academic staff member

β_i - partial regression coefficients

ε - error with a mean value of 0, normally distributed with a constant variance.

Results

Results of the average job satisfaction scores are shown in Table 2 below. Based on the findings, academic staff members rated social service (3.53); ability utilization (3.27); and creativity (3.24) as the top three job satisfaction factors. While policies and practices (2.63); compensation (2.68); and supervision technical (relationship with supervisor) (2.68); recognition (2.73); and advancement (2.74) were among the factors that were rated the lowest. Although it is interesting to note, that eleven of the twenty (20) factors received a mean score of below three, indicating a lower satisfaction level with the particular factors, which should be a signal to the University's management.

Table 2. Job Satisfaction Factors Findings

FACTOR	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
SOCIAL SERVICE	78	3.53	0.908
ABILITY UTILIZATION	78	3.27	1.077
CREATIVITY	78	3.24	1.009
SECURITY	78	3.15	0.927
AUTHORITY	78	3.14	0.922
SOCIAL STATUS	78	3.13	0.931
RESPONSIBILITY	78	3.05	0.979
INDEPENDENCE	78	3.03	0.852
WORKING CONDITIONS	78	3.01	1.026

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ACHIEVEMENT	78	2.99	1.000
SUPERVISION-HUMAN RELATIONS (RELATIONSHIP WITH TOP MANAGEMENT)	78	2.92	1.114
ACTIVITY	78	2.91	0.825
MORAL VALUES	78	2.87	1.155
CO-WORKERS	78	2.86	0.977
VARIETY	78	2.86	1.113
ADVANCEMENT	78	2.74	1.037
RECOGNITION	78	2.73	1.002
COMPENSATION	78	2.68	1.111
SUPERVISION-TECHNICAL (RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPERVISOR)	78	2.68	1.099
POLICIES AND PRACTICES	78	2.63	0.982

Results of the multiple linear regression showed no statistical significance between General Satisfaction (20 factors) and demographic variables such as gender, marital status, age, and tenure (Refer to Table 3 below).

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Results

	Coefficients	Std. Error	Sig.
Gender	-0.160	0.162	0.325
Marital Status	-0.080	0.172	0.645
Age	0.016	0.012	0.169
Tenure	-0.003	0.015	0.856
a. Dependent Variable: General Satisfaction			

Results of the regression analysis between the compensation and demographic variables indicated a significant negative correlation between gender and compensation satisfaction. Males were less satisfied with their compensation than females (significant at 5%, $p=0.050$). R square indicated a 10.5%, and ANOVA regression was significant at 10% ($p=0.083$). (Refer to the Table 4 below).

Table 4. Linear Regression Results for Compensation and Gender

	Coefficients	Standard Error	Sig.
Gender	-0.543	0.273	0.050*
Marital Status	-0.304	0.290	0.298
Age	0.018	0.020	0.367
Tenure	-0.001	0.024	0.971
a. Dependent Variable: COMPENSATION			

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to study the job satisfaction factors among academic staff in the University X, located in Uzbekistan, Tashkent. There were two research questions posed, such as: *RQ 1: What job satisfaction factors are university academic staff members satisfied with the most and the least?* and *RQ 2: Is there a relationship between job satisfaction and demographic variables of the university academic staff members?*

The answer to research question 1 revealed that three (3) factors received highest satisfaction mean score among the academic staff members, namely: social service (3.53); ability utilization (3.27); and creativity (3.24). Social service received highest score in the study of university teachers by Toker (2011), which is an excellent indicator that shows that academic staff members like their job because of an opportunity to help and/or assist others (i.e. students); creativity and ability utilization being ranked the highest confirm that academics like the job that they do.

Five factors received the lowest mean satisfaction scores among academic staff members, such as: policies and practices (2.63); compensation (2.68); and supervision technical (relationship with supervisor) (2.68); recognition (2.73); and advancement (2.74). These findings, partially, are in line with the findings of the Lithuanian distance education teachers which revealed that teachers were mostly dissatisfied with compensation, supervision (technical), recognition, achievement, working conditions and supervision (human relationships) (Liekis et al., 2020). Study of Munyengabe et al., (2017) also confirmed that teachers were least satisfied with the relations with supervisor, advancement opportunities and financial rewards. According to Toker (2011),

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compensation was rated the lowest among university teachers in Turkey. Study of Syzdykbayeva (2020) also confirmed that teachers in Kazakhstan were not satisfied with the compensation. Study of secondary school teachers in Pakistan, also confirmed this paper findings, that teachers were least satisfied with policies and practices, compensation and supervision (technical – relationship with supervisor) (Suleman and Hussain, 2018).

Based on the findings, it is evident that academic staff members in University X, are least satisfied with the way the university's policies and practices are put into practice; their compensation; the relationship with their supervisor; recognition and advancement opportunities. This is a signal to the top management and HRM department to review the policies and procedures related to the staff promotion, recognition and compensation as there might be a link where staff could feel they were treated unfairly.

The answer to research question 2 revealed no statistically significant relationship between the average job satisfaction level of academic staff members and demographic variables such as age, tenure, gender and marital status. The findings are in line with the study of Amarasena et al., (2015) which revealed no significant differences between job satisfaction and demographic variables such as tenure, gender, age, marital status among university teachers in Sri Lanka. Toker (2011) also found no relationship between marital status, gender and job satisfaction among university teachers. Rmadan and Kassahun (2021), Kuwaiti et al., (2020), Kroupis et al., (2016), and Chapagain (2021) also confirmed no impact of gender on job satisfaction among teachers. Findings also revealed a significant negative relationship between gender and job satisfaction, according to which, male academic staff members were less satisfied with their compensation compared to female academic staff members. This finding to a certain degree, is in line with the Clark's (1997) paradox of contented female workers whose satisfaction was higher despite receipt of low salary compared to male counterparts.

This paper to a certain degree seeks to fulfill the tasks defined in the decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, namely: decree No. UP-4947 "On the strategy of actions for the further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan», dated 7 February, 2017 (UP4947,2017); and No.UP-5843 "On measures to radically improve personnel policy and the system of state civil service in the Republic of Uzbekistan» dated 3 October, 2019 (UP5843, 2019) as it helps to understand the job satisfaction factors and raise the importance of measuring job satisfaction among employees by the Human Resource Management departments in Uzbekistan.

Limitations and recommendations

Limitations of this study are attributed to the self-reporting nature of the MSQ questionnaire by the respondents. The collected responses were collected from a relatively small sample during summer vacation period which resulted in a lower response rate. The findings cannot be generalized to a broader spectrum of companies as it was the case of the one university located in Uzbekistan.

Therefore, it is recommended to measure job satisfaction among academic staff members preferably at the beginning and at the end of academic year to receive a more objective data. It would be interesting to measure job satisfaction among academic staff members across various universities in Uzbekistan in future. It is recommended to study job satisfaction and job performance, turnover intention of academic staff members in future studies.

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