

Examining Faculty Workload as Antecedent of Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff of Higher Public Education in Kelantan, Malaysia

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of faculty workload on job satisfaction among academics in four public universities in Kelantan, Malaysia. Sample was randomly selected through systematic procedure and data was collected from 320 samples using self-administered questionnaires. The data was analyzed using descriptive analysis to describe the respondents' profile and using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the relationship between variables. The result indicated that there was negative significant relationship between daily faculty workload and job satisfaction. Organization should consider the amount of workload since reasonable daily load will determine the satisfaction of employees. High job satisfaction among employees will enhance organizational citizenship and loyalty.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, academic staff, faculty workload

1. Introduction

Employees' job satisfaction is crucial to be studied since it is considered as an important factor in improving organizations' performance and competitiveness. Job satisfaction can be an important indicator of how employees feel about their jobs and a predictor of work behaviors such as organizational citizenship, absenteeism and turnover. An understanding of the factors involved in job satisfaction is crucial to enhance the happiness of workers (Okpara J.O., Squillace M, Erundu E.A., 2005) as the main reason why they will remain working with the present organization.

Similarly, universities are entities established as the centre for imparting higher education. Universities in the modern world are expected to seek and cultivate new knowledge, provide the right kind of leadership and strive to promote equality and social justice. As Johnes and Taylor (1990) state, the goals of higher education are to provide in-depth knowledge, seek academic development, educate students, as well as to coordinate national development demands. In achieving the mission and goals of the university, enhancing job satisfaction among lecturers should be consistently a critical agenda.

In a similar vein, job satisfaction among academics is very important because it contributes to quality of teaching, high job commitment and pave a right direction in producing high quality students. Understanding academics' job satisfaction will help the institutions to find mechanism in order to retain academic talents, lower absenteeism and turnover rate, as well as attracting new best brain into the academic line.

2. Phenomenon of the Study

Most of the past researches on job satisfaction were less interest in examining academics as subject of the study. However, in recent years, a clear increase has been observed in the number of studies related to the job satisfaction among academics. One probable reason for this trend is the reality that higher education institutes are labour intensive sector and their budgets are predominantly devoted to personnel and their effectiveness is largely dependent on their employees (Kusku, 2003).

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Higher Education is responsible to initiate significant improvement in higher education system by establishing the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and the Malaysian Qualifications Framework. Today, there are 20 public Universities, 25 private universities and 435 private institutions of higher learning offering their services to the potential candidates from within as well as foreign countries. This make the role of academics or educators is vital in producing high quality graduates.

Lecturers or academicians have their own professional, occupational and personal interests in relation to their universities, including freedom to pursue excellence, the right to make decisions in relation to curriculum and research agenda. As Chen, S.H., Yang, C.C., Shiau, J.Y., & Wang, H.H (2006) stated, with educators being the employees of educational organizations, the satisfaction they gain from their work and working environment promotes education and research quality. This finding was supported by Smith (2007) who highlighted that the most satisfying jobs are mostly professions, especially those involving teaching, and

creative pursuits. Since a high job satisfaction lead to high quality lecturer and, is the cornerstone of successful educational system; this study is meant to examine the antecedent factors that influence job satisfaction of lecturers in order to achieve a high quality of teaching and learning in public universities. This article measures job satisfaction from the perspective of daily faculty workload among groups of academicians in selected public universities in Malaysia.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Evidences of the Past Research

According to many researchers (March & Simon 1958; Locke, 1968; Mobley, 1977) job satisfaction is a ground of many turnover theories. Turnover intention that paves the route to generate the turnover theories is understood as a direct consequence of employees' dissatisfaction about their jobs. Conversely, job satisfaction is "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences" (cf. Buchbinder et al., 2001).

In literature, there are many factors that affects employees' job satisfaction. Van Saane, N., Sluiter, J., Verbeek, J., and Frings-Dresen, M. 2003) as cited in Roelen C. et al (2008) identified eleven factors related to job satisfaction: work content (particularly variety in skills and complexity of a job), autonomy, growth/development (training or education), financial rewards, promotion (career advancement), supervision, communication, co-workers, meaningfulness, workload and work demands. Whereas Wilson, M., & Hongping, Z. (2010) studied the level of job satisfaction as the impact of a number of variables broadly based on Herzberg's two-factor theory such as faculty engagement, performance management, organisational change and general conditions of employment. While, Tsai, Y.(2011) studied the relationship between Organizational Culture, Leadership Behavior and Job Satisfaction. Another study done by Roelen, C., Koopmans, P., & Groothoff, J.,(2008) measured satisfaction against workload, work pace, task variety, working conditions, work times, salary, supervisor, colleagues, and work briefings.

The study of job satisfaction and performance of Government Employees in UAE by Ibrahim Mohamed E, Head, Al Sejini Sabri, Al Qassimi Omaina Abdul Aziz (2004) discovered that self-rated performance, position and nationality were significant factors affecting some job satisfaction facets (i.e., pay and benefits, professional development, and work environment). Employees will demonstrate pleasurable positive attitudes when they are satisfied with their job (Jain, Jabeen, Mishra & Gupta: 2007). Thus, high job satisfaction of employees will increase the productivity of an organization in turn will increase the organizational overall performance.

Factors affecting job satisfaction have been classified into two major categories (Spector, 1997). The first category, the job environment, includes factors such as how people are treated, the nature of job tasks, relations with coworkers, and rewards. The second category includes characteristics of the individual, personality, and experience (Spector, 1997). This

study measures faculty workload as morphology that influences job satisfaction from the first category.

3.2 Methodological Artifacts of the Study

Sampling Procedure: This study was conducted in four public universities in Kelantan namely University Science of Malaysia (USM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Malaya (UM) and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK). This study measured job satisfaction among fulltime lecturers who met criteria of having at least three years working experience in their current position. Samples were identified through list of faculty members for each institution from their websites. Then the selection process was done by means of systematic random procedure. Data has been collected from 320 respondents using a self-administered questionnaires. This sampling procedure allows equal chance for lecturers to be selected as samples of the study.

Instrumentation and Pilot Test: Research instrument used to measure faculty workload was developed by Zainuddin (2010). The questionnaire measure the variable using a ten point Likert scale ranging from 1(Strongly Disagree) to 10 (Strongly Agree). There were 11 items that strongly describe the characteristics of the variable with its reliability of 0.872.

Data Analysis: In this study, descriptive analysis was used to analyze data about profile of respondents and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to analyze the relationship between variables. Correlation coefficient (r) takes a range of between -1.000 to +1.000 that describes the relationship between two variables and Guilford Rules of Thumb was used as reference in interpreting the strength of the correlation.

4. The Influence of Daily Workload on Job Satisfaction

Having large piles of work in a given targeted timeline will result in employees becoming stressed out from their work as well as their organization. Teaching is an exciting task to be carried out with a high quality of teaching if a lecturer is capable in finishing a given workload well. Porter and Umbach (2000) and, Glazer and Henry (1994) discussed that faculty workload covers multi factors besides teaching hours e.g. committee involvement, research time, community service, administrative hours, student evaluation, course preparation etc. According to Chin, C., Yian, C.W.S and Yen, K.H. (2003) found that the lecturers had a total workload of between 43 to 46 hours per week. About 47 % of the respondents were involved in research activities and publication.

Workload is defined as demands assigned on the employee by the job (Spector, 1997). Excessive job demands can often lead to job dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout all of which can influence retention. Workload is often studied in two different ways. One way is qualitative workload, which refers to the difficulty of job tasks either physical or mental (Spector, 1997). One aspect of qualitative workload affecting academicians is time pressure. Working under intense time pressure has been shown to cause stress and job dissatisfaction (Visser, Smets, Oort, & de Haes, 2003) as well as burnout (Schmoldt et al., 1994). Aside from working under intense time pressure, other demanding aspects of academicians' work,

for instance addressing complex life threatening problems (Schmoldt et al., 1994), have been associated with burnout.

A second way to look at workload, quantitative workload, refers to the amount of work that an employee completes (Spector, 1997). In a study by Lemkau, Rafferty, & Gordon (1994) both seeing a greater number of hospitalized patients as well as the amount of hours worked per week were related to emotional exhaustion, a symptom of burnout. Mainous, Ramsbottom-Lucier, and Rich (1994) found that it was the employees' satisfaction with their workload as opposed to their absolute workload that was related to the retention of young rural primary care teachers. Likewise, Mainous et al. (2001) found a very strong association between employees' dissatisfaction with their workload and intent to leave (cf. Williams, 2001).

Don Houston, Luanna H. Meyer and Shelley Paewai (2006) discovered that staffs were moderately satisfied with the freedom to choose their own method of work, their level of responsibility, and the amount of variety in their job. Shahzad, K., Mumtaz, H., Hayat, K., and Khan, M. (2010) conducted a research to test the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship of compensation and workload with academic quality in the public educational institutions in Pakistan. They found a positive impact of faculty compensation and negative impact of faculty work load on the faculty satisfaction. This finding was supported by Amal Altaf and Mohammad Atif Awan (2011) who found that job overload has a negative impact on job satisfaction. The variable of workload and its relationship with job satisfaction also studied by Zainuddin et al.(2010) who confirmed a negative significant relationship between workload and job satisfaction among lecturers of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kelantan. Therefore this study proposes:

Ha: There is negative significant relationship between daily workload and job satisfaction.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

From the analysis there were 149 or 57.8 % female respondents. The highest frequency of respondents were from the age cohort of 31 to 40 years old accounted 126 or 48.8% out of 320 respondents. It was followed by the age of 41 to 50 years old that accounted 84 or 32.6% and the age of 51 and above which accounted 29 or 11.2%. The lowest frequency of respondents were from the age of 30 years old and below which accounted 19 or 7.4%. Based on the result, most of the respondents (78.7%) in this study were married. Majority of respondents (89.9%) were Malay, 6.6% Chinese and the rest were Indians. There were 26% of the respondents having a doctoral degree followed by masters about 70% and the remaining 4.7% were bachelor degree holders. Most respondents (41.9%) having teaching experience between 6 to 10 years and about 21.7% have 11 to 15 years, 11.2% had more than 16 years and only 8.6 % respondents had experience three years and below. The highest basic monthly salary is above RM5500 which accounted 89 or 34.5% and followed by RM3501 - RM4500 which accounted 88 or 34.1%. While, 49 or 19.0% of respondents had income range of RM4501 - RM5500 and 21 or 8.1% had their income range of RM2500 - RM3500.

5.2 The correlation between Daily Workload and Job Satisfaction

The objective of this study was to test the influence of daily workload on job satisfaction. Result from analysis indicated $r = -0.536$, $p = 0.000$ and according to Guildford Rule of Thumb, when $r = -0.536$, $p = 0.000$, it showed that there was moderately strong correlation between workers' daily workload and job satisfaction. This result provided clear evidence that there is an inverse significant correlation between faculty workload and job satisfaction. Therefore the hypothesis was supported. This finding is parallel with Zainuddin et al. (2010) who found a similar direction of negative significant relationship between workload and job satisfaction among lecturers. Lecturers who felt they had a good balance between work and their private life were more satisfied with their works. The university should realize the importance of work life balance and its adverse affect on job satisfaction.

6. Contribution of the Study

The findings of the research would definitely contribute to the body of knowledge regarding job satisfaction among lecturers in the public universities in Kelantan. Result from the study indicates that the higher the load the lower the satisfaction. This means that academicians will be more motivated if they are given with a reasonable workload. Part of their time should be allocated for another domain of their life. Organizations should create or enhance their working environment to be suited with physical and psychological needs of their workers in order to retain their best brains especially in higher education.

7. Conclusion

Job satisfaction as indicated by this study was influenced by daily workload. The inverse correlation between daily workload mirrors that employees are more satisfied when they are given lesser workload. Higher learning institutions should consider teaching workload among their academics as well as administrative and support staff of all categories in order to achieve a reasonable satisfaction in order to enhance employee loyalty and a promising organizational performance. It is believed that the findings of this study are useful to other researchers to study the job satisfaction among lecturers in higher education institutions by exploring other variables such as management style, working environment, organizational culture and other dimension of job characteristics. The organizations should take into account by considering reasonable daily workload in order to enhance employees' satisfaction and loyalty.

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