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Job Motivation and Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in Higher Education

Abstract

Education is the most important organization of a nation; it plays a significant role in the development of any country. Universities create and cultivate knowledge for the sake of building a modern world. The academic staff is the key resource within higher education institutions. A positive and healthy university structure results in increased academic staff's job satisfaction and better job motivation. According to this, the main purpose of this research was to investigate the possible relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff. The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and Job Motivation Questionnaire (JMQ) were administered to a sample of 100 (50 males and 50 females) university employees. The results indicated that the academic staff was highly motivated with their job. At the same time the results showed that academicians were more satisfied with their salary, co-workers, promotion, operating procedures and supervision, but dissatisfied with fringe benefits, contingent rewards, nature of work and communication. This research offers practical suggestions to the educational institutions and human resource managers on how to pay, promote, retain and maintain equity in the universities.

Keywords: job motivation, job satisfaction, public university, academic staff, management

Introduction

Academic staff plays a vital role in determining the success of the vision and mission of a university. This is supported by Bentley et al. (2013) who agree that a high quality academic staff is the source of successful education system. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to job satisfaction of the teaching staff. A positive and healthy university structure results in increased academic staff's job set. A healthy university environment will not only increase the job satisfaction of academic staff, but it will at the same time improve the learning environment and increase the productivity of the university.

Machado-Taylor et al. (2010) found that job satisfaction and motivation among academic staff play an important role in contributing to positive outcomes in the quality of the institutions and the students' learning. This is true, because the success of a university relies on the academic workforce. Khalid et al. (2012) believe that universities are known as the highest source of knowledge where the future workforce is trained to become experts in various fields.

The performance of academic staff as teachers and researchers determines much of the quality of the students' satisfaction and has an impact on students' learning and thus contributes to the higher education institutions of society. Thus, the satisfaction and motivation of the academic staff assume importance.

Definition of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon, because it is related to various causal factors such as personal, social, cultural, environmental and financial factors. The nature of job satisfaction is an important factor in deciding the level of job satisfaction of employees.

Job satisfaction is an individual's emotional response to his or her current job condition. It is a pleasurable emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one's job; an effective reaction from one's jobs as an attitude towards one's job. Job satisfaction has been defined as a perceived relationship between what one wants from his/her job and what one perceives it as offering. Job satisfaction is the collection of feelings and beliefs that employees have about their jobs. In fact employee's general attitude towards his or her job could equally be regarded as job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is multidimensional with both intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. The former include ability, achievement, advancement, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, social service, social status and working conditions. The latter involve authority, policies and practices, recognition, responsibility, security and variety (Wang & Lee, 2009).

The researchers have written a set of predictors for job satisfaction, which include pay, work, promotion, supervision, environment and co-workers (Sequoya, 2000). A majority of researchers' measure job satisfaction on the basis of employees or workers are: attitude to the job, relation with co-workers, supervision, company policy and support, promotion and pay (Signage & Short, 2006).

Role of job satisfaction among academic staff

Universities are considered the highest source of knowledge and awareness production institutions which train the subject in different fields of life. Academic staff is comprised of staff members with the primary assignment to instruct research or participate in public server. They are key resources to the success of any educational programmers. So satisfaction among academics is essential for the success of high educational institutions. It shall be a priority for every employer to keep employees satisfied in their careers. Bentley et al. (2013) indicate that a healthy climate at university increases not only the job satisfaction among academicians, but it also increases the academicians' performance. Nordic (2009) added that a healthy atmosphere in a faculty can be affected by many factors such as healthy working conditions, relationships with colleagues, support in research and teaching, appropriate salary, promotion, opportunities, etc.

Azeri (2011) explained that job satisfaction is a condition of positive and negative feelings of academic staff toward their job and show different reactions at work environment. Also, job satisfaction has been defined as a main factor among university employees that causes various organizational behaviors and changes the staff mood at work (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012). In fact, the job satisfaction can be a combination of facets where each of them can cause satisfaction of low or high levels. These factors included organization vision, management system, motivation, pay, benefits and co-workers' behavior. The study of Lufthansa (2005) suggests that

pay, promotion, work, supervision and fellow workers are the main determinants of the job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction as a vital factor should be determined in each organization and the existence of this positive feeling is very different among academic staff. However, providing the real way for improving and monitoring this factor, as one of the main organizational policies, should be considered by universities.

Definition of job motivation

Motivation, a Latin word “mover” means to move. Motivation is the inner drive that pushes individuals to act or perform. Specific theories may purpose varying set of factors influencing motivation (Harder, 2008), but many researchers agree that motivation is the psychological process that leads to behavior and this process cannot be directly measured or observed (Locke & Lethem, 2004). Colquitt (2009) explained that, “motivation is critical consideration, because job performance is function of two factors: motivation and ability”.

Pinter (1998) defines job motivation as the set of internal and external forces that initiate job-related behavior and determine its form, direction, intensity and duration. In other words, job motivation can be explained as the process of stimulating an individual or a group of people to activities aimed at achieving the goals of the organizations. It is an integral component of employee engagement.

Role of job motivation on job satisfaction

Tan & Wahid (2011) maintain the motivation’s aim with regard to job satisfaction, which is to make framework available to understand factors that affect job satisfaction, as well as the manner in which those aspects affect individuals’ quality of work life. The implied role of job satisfaction has been represented by many job motivation theories that have additionally, attempted to clarify both job satisfaction and its influence.

The level of individual’s job satisfaction is affected by intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors, the quality of supervision, social relationships within the working group, and the degree to which the individual succeeds or fails in their work (Daft, 2005). In the case with academic staff both intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect their satisfaction. Further studies suggest that teachers put more emphasis on intrinsic satisfaction (Place, 1997), but other studies suggest a mix findings of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfiers are the best predictors of teachers’ job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987; Bentley, 2013). Their intrinsic satisfaction comes from teaching activities and responsibility, while, extrinsic factors have been associated with academic staff’s satisfaction, including salary, perceived support from supervisors and co-workers, and availability of university resource, among others. Researchers concluded that motivated and satisfied academicians are more likely to show up for work, have higher levels of performance and will stay with their education organization (Daft, 2005). At the same time they show better level of motivation and better work ability.

According to these findings, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the level of job motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff in the Republic of Macedonia.

Research methods

To investigate the impact of motivation, pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work and communication on job satisfaction of academicians in the Republic of Macedonia, the following research methodology was employed in this paper.

Sample

The sample for this study comprised 100 full-time academic staff including assistants, assistant professors, associate professors and full professors. All employees are aged between 28 to 60 years. The mean age of the employees was calculated as 42.50 (SD=7.24). Among the participants, 50% (N=50) were female and 50% (N=50) were male. The mean number of years teaching experience of participants was 8.6 years. In academic rank category 30% (N=30) were assistants, 30% (N=30) assistant professors, 30% (N=30) associate professors and 10% (N=10) full professors. The data were collected from the public university in Skopje. The research was conducted from September to November 2016.

Questionnaire

Job satisfaction for measuring is applied scale for job satisfaction assessment (Job Satisfaction Survey-JSS) by Paul Specter (Specter, 1985). The Job Satisfaction Survey is a 36 item, nine facet scales to assess employees' attitudes about the job and aspects of the job. The nine facets are: Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Benefits, Contingent Rewards (performance based rewards), Operating Procedures (required rules and procedures), Nature of Work, Co-workers and Communication. It is a six-point linker type scale (disagree very much, disagree moderately, disagree slightly, agree slightly, agree moderately, agree very much). Items are written in both directions, so about half must be reverse scored. The total score ranges from 36 to 216, with high scores indicating greater level of job satisfaction. In this study Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistence was 0.86.

For the assessment of job motivation we used Job Motivation Questionnaire (JMQ) with 20 items from the scale which are linker type. The total score ranges from 20 to 100, with high scores indicating greater level of job motivation. Internal consistency of the scale expressed through Cronbach's alpha coefficient $\alpha=0.76$.

Data procedure and data analysis

The questionnaire sets were distributed to the participants and collected in their offices on a self-reported basis. All participants were asked to indicate their age, gender and length of work experience. They were also requested to read the directives stated on the questionnaire carefully before endorsing their response. All the responses were completely anonymous.

For hypothesis testing statistical package SPSS 20.0 for Windows package program was applied. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Pearson correlation and one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were done to find the p value and statistical differences among groups. In this study, the significance levels were accepted as .01 or .05.

Results

The results indicated that the academic staff was motivated and satisfied with their professional work. In fact there was a negative relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction among assistants ($r=.228$, $p>.01$); but positive relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction among assistant professors ($r=.018$, $p<.05$), associate professors ($r=.544$, $p<.01$) and full professors ($r=.094$, $p<.05$).

Also in this study we investigated the level of staff satisfaction on their job. Analysis revealed the mean scores for each of the nine items/determinants of academic staff job satisfaction. On a six-point scale, the mean score for pay is 13.24($SD=0.84$), promotion is 12.23($SD=0.64$), supervision is 14.45($SD=0.85$), benefits is 8.45($SD=0.64$), contingent rewards is 8.56($SD=0.54$), operating procedures is 12.85($SD=0.81$), co-workers is 14.22($SD=0.92$), nature of work is 10.22($SD=0.82$) and communication is 8.65($SD=0.48$). The results indicated that academic staff was highly satisfied on each of the five satisfaction factors-pay, promotion, operating procedures, supervision and relationship with co-workers. However, the results showed that staff was not satisfied on the remaining four job satisfaction factor-benefits, contingent rewards, nature of work and communication.

At the same time the results indicated that assistants were very satisfied with the pay ($r=.459$, $p<.05$), promotion ($r=.371$, $p<.05$) and co-workers ($r=.365$, $p<.05$); assistant professors with pay ($r=.432$, $p<.01$), promotion ($r=.375$, $p<.05$) and supervision ($r=.362$, $p<.01$), while associate professors and full professors with supervision ($r=.182$, $r<.01$), operating procedures ($r=.112$, $p<.05$) and nature of work ($r=.423$, $p<.05$).

The results showed that there was not a significant mean difference in the levels of job motivation and job satisfaction experienced by male and female employees. We found that there was a positive correlation between pay and female employees ($F_{44, 1}=3.798$, $sig=.058$, $p<.05$). At the same time there was positive relationship between supervision and male employees ($F_{44, 1}=.809$, $sig=0.62$, $p<.05$).

Discussion

The study investigated the level of staff motivation in an academic setting and found that staff was very well motivated, except for the assistants. Our finding is very similar with earlier findings. Akfopure et al. (2006), for example, found that employees of agribusiness were highly motivated on their jobs. The consistencies in the result suggest that staff motivation in public organizations is prioritized by the employees leading to mutual gains to both parties: job satisfaction to employees and high productivity to organization.

The results of this study indicated that job motivation has direct effect to the job satisfaction. The job motivation can affect job satisfaction of academic staff either directly or indirectly. Therefore, based on these results it can be argued that one way to improve job satisfaction is to increase the motivation at work. The study found that job motivation has positive direct effect on job satisfaction of academic staff.

From the study we could also see that pay, promotion, supervision, operating procedures and relationships with fellow workers are the main determinants of the job satisfaction. It's similar with the other research studies. For example, at the study

by Saga, Talon & Tekogul (2011) amongst postdoctoral researchers it is found that pay and promotion associate with job satisfaction. A number of authors are in opinion that having friendly and supportive colleagues can contribute to increased job satisfaction (Embay & Bagger, 2013; Vlosky & Aguilar, 2009). Bassett (1994) maintains that supervisions bringing the humanistic part to the job contribute towards increasing the employee's level of job satisfaction.

There are different factors that influence the job satisfaction at universities and it is very noticeable that the university managers tend to control those factors. Job satisfaction is one of the main factors that relates to staff's performance and increases the level of their activities and attendance in the workplace. The existence of satisfaction among the academic staff leads to long term careers at the same university and to increased productivity in the workplace.

Conclusion

Many studies tend to focus on job motivation and job satisfaction of academic staff. This is important because many human resources, both in and outside the university environment, know that when employees are happy with their life and work, they tend to be more motivated and productive (Berta, 2005).

Academic staff satisfaction is highly recognized through the performance of students at university. When an organization manages to increase employees' job satisfaction, it does not only benefit the employees, but also the organization as a whole. Job satisfaction leads to a work productive workforce and more organizational success. Those who enjoy their work are believed to have a high quality of work life, while those who are unhappy are those whose needs are otherwise not fulfilled and who are believed to have low quality of life. It is very important, because the academicians have many various responsibilities. They are expected to educate students, communicate and collaborate with them, develop their own skills and knowledge. Many times they meet problematic students of various ages or difficult. These interactions require communication, problem solving and conflict managing skills. So it is obvious that academic staff differ from typical employees in various ways.

The principle role of the universities is recognizing the needs and the desires of academic staff based on various working situations and meeting those needs according to the organization's policies. In reality, the universities should have adequate consciousness and knowledge for preparing and developing appropriate atmosphere among academic staff and realizing their tendencies and needs from workplace. All of these education organizations need to provide appropriate facilities for their staff.

The findings reported in this study make a valuable contribution to the awareness of understanding the concept of job satisfaction and the effect of the motivation on job satisfaction. However, additional research is needed for further investigation of the potential relationship and effects that these variables and other variables have on job satisfaction. That means that different cultures with their own values, religion, and socioeconomic status may have an impact on research findings. At the same time the study should be replicated using a much longer sample that would be selected more broadly from both public and private universities in the Republic of Macedonia.

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