Theoretical Framework Of The Factors Affecting University Academics' Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present a theoretical framework of the factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction, which is achieved by identifying the contributing factors. The main objective of the research was concluded in designing a theoretical framework based on the existing literature. The novelty of this paper is the use of a significant body of literature focused on the existing literature about the factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction, which was used to achieve the aim in designing the framework. The findings could assist in creating an awareness of the factors incorporated at tertiary institutions that contribute to university academics' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Satisfaction; Factors; Academics; University; Framework

INTRODUCTION

Universities are considered as the highest source of knowledge and as awareness production institutions, in addition to where manpower is trained in different fields of life (Khalid et al., 2012). In higher education, a positive and healthy climate is needed for university faculty job satisfaction. A positive climate can increase a university academics' satisfaction with their occupation through the inclusion of a variety of factors, such as healthy working conditions, relationships with colleagues, support of research and teaching, appropriate salary, promotion opportunities, etc. Furthermore, this also increases the overall productivity that the educational institute fosters (Noordin & Jusoff, 2009). Similarly, studies conducted by Santhapparaj and Alam (2005) and Baloch (2009) indicate that a positive climate at the university increases not only academic job satisfaction but also performance.

According to Davis (1981), satisfaction in a specific profession links with the employee when the features of the job and the desire to perform the work are matched to the employee. It is an attitude that is developed by an individual to the work and conditions of employment (Luthans, 1994). Çetinkanat (2000) highlights personal evaluation of occupational satisfaction, such as the position itself, attitude of the administrator or the results (pay, job security) of the employment. However, Jenaibi (2010) concludes that job satisfaction is an emotional state that can be evaluated by the workers' experiences or position and it is a state where an employee feels perfection in his/her work, value and worth of his/her work, and recognition.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

With a host of factors contributing to tertiary institution academics' job satisfaction, a significant body of literature was researched to design a framework indicating what all these factors are and how they affect job satisfaction levels.

According to Adeel et al. (2011), university academic job satisfaction levels are positively affected by the compensation or pay given to employees. Talat et al. (2012) indicate that low job satisfaction leads to higher

absenteeism (Vroom, 1964) and labour turnover rates (Clark et al., 1997). Amzat and Idris (2010) state that employees who receive low salaries usually cause serious upheavals, with regard to job satisfaction, across the world. According to Noordin and Jusoff (2009), salary, status, and age affect academic staff job satisfaction in Malaysian universities.

On the one hand, Ellickson and Longsdon (2001) reveal that in higher education, academic job satisfaction is affected by adequate equipment, required resources, training opportunities, and an equitable workload. Williams (1995) finds, on the other hand, that academic benefits strongly affect job satisfaction.

Studies by various researchers (Dinham & Scott, 1998 and 2000; Scott and Dinham, 2003; Scot et al., 2001; van den Berg, 2002; Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004) indicate one of the most important factors is that of salaries and it leads to low or high motivation and job satisfaction for academics in higher education. Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000b) identify salary as the predictor for employees' satisfaction. However, Miller (1980) also states that rewards for employees have an effect on job satisfaction and better performance (Saba, 2011).

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the important factors that affect university academics' job satisfaction?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to design a framework based on the factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction. This aim is achieved through the specific objective - to identify the factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study was conducted by Ghaffar et al. (2013) on 60 academic staff (lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors) and the findings indicate that security, promotion and co-workers are important factors for university academics' job satisfaction. Another study by Locke (1976) and Gracez (2006), cited in Ghaffar et al. (2013), indicates that job satisfaction is usually experienced by academics when they have proficiency, value, and recognition. Adeel et al. (2011) find a strong association between academic job satisfaction and promotion. Similarly, several studies have been conducted by many researchers, with the conclusion that there is a correlation between academic job satisfaction and several variables. These include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, working conditions, age, tenure, educational level, teaching experience, job activities, and gender (Aebi, 1972; Berns, 1989; Cano, 1990; Cano & Miller, 1992; Flowers & Pepple, 1988; Herzberg et al., 1959; Kotrlik & Malek, 1986; Morris, 1972; Tenney, 1985).

Findings from research done by Khalid et al. (2012) indicate that a positive and healthy university structure increases the university academics' job satisfaction. Furthermore, Khalid et al. (2012) also show that it not only increases job satisfaction but, at the same time, improves the learning environment as well as increases university productivity. However, their study concludes that private university academics are more satisfied in terms of pay, supervision, and promotional opportunities, compared to public universities, while public university academics are more satisfied in terms of co-workers' behaviour and job security.

A study by Sokoya (2000) finds that the set of job satisfaction predictors includes pay, work, promotion, supervision, environment, and co-workers. Another study by Decenzo and Robbins (1998) concludes that job satisfaction factors of any officers or any employees include pay, work, co-workers, and environment. Studies by DeVane and Sandy (2003) indicate that job satisfaction of employees or workers is measured in attitude to the job, relations with co-workers, supervision, company policy and support, promotion, and pay.

Results from Luthans (2005) show that pay, promotion, work, supervision and fellow workers are the main factors for the university academic, in terms of job satisfaction. Studies conducted by Testa (1999), Pearson and Seiler (1983), and Kline and Boyd (1991) reveal that job satisfaction includes compensation, opportunity for advancement, leadership style, work environment, organizational structure and climate. In Malaysia, Santhapparaj and Alam (2005) conducted a study and found that private university academics' job satisfaction include salary, promotion, fringe benefits, and working conditions.

In the United Kingdom (UK), a study was conducted by Oshagbemi (2003), which indicates that job rank level and occupational level are the factors that are usually considered as contributing to job satisfaction. Research conducted by Al-Rubaish et al. (2011) delivered a response rate of 72.9 percent and the results show that job satisfaction factors include authority, supervision, policies and facilities, the work itself, interpersonal relationships, commitment, salary and workload. Similarly, another study by Saygi et al. (2011) finds that job satisfaction factors are co-workers and working as a team, while sharing also rated as important. Studies from Saba and Zafar (2013) reveal that appropriate compensation, equivalent promotion opportunities, job security, suitable working conditions and the work itself have an impact on public and private university academics' job satisfaction in Pakistan.

Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000a) and Miller (1980) maintain that job satisfaction was highest among employees who received the most reward. Another study at a Massachusetts higher education institution, conducted by Grace and Khalsa (2003), concludes that professional development and salary package are the most important job satisfaction factors. However, the relationship behaviour of supervisory staff has an effect on academic job satisfaction (Graham & Messner, 1998). Furthermore, Bassett's (1994) study also indicates that supervisors can increase the employees' job satisfaction. Similarly, results from Ellickson and Longsdon (2001) conclude that promotional opportunities have a positive impact on the employees' job satisfaction. Research by Berta (2005) finds that positive relationships with fellow workers increase with the job satisfaction. Similar findings by Ting (1997) support the findings that relationships with co-workers are improved when employees experience job satisfaction.

According to Arnold and Feldman (1996:86-89), pay has a positive impact in determining job satisfaction. The study further reveals that promotion also influences job satisfaction, when compared to recognition, and achievement. Findings from research done by Baron and Greenberg (2003) indicate that when employees observe that their supervisors are fair, competent, and sincere, their level of job satisfaction increases. Results from a study done by Robbins (2002) indicate that the working environment increases employees' job satisfaction very positively. In a study by Danish and Usman (2010), it is concluded that rewards increase and decrease the satisfaction of employees.

Santhapparaj and Alam (2005) conducted a study in Malaysia on 173 academics of a private university. The results show that there is a relation between pay, promotion, fringe benefits, working conditions, support for research, support of teaching, and gender. Furthermore, they also indicate that pay, promotion, working conditions and support of research have a positive and significant effect on the university academics' job satisfaction. According to Oshagbemi (1997), Oshagbemi (1999), Oshagbemi (2000), Fields and Blum (1997), Mueller and Wallace (1996), and Klecker and Loadman (1999), an employee's job satisfaction usually depends on the individual's personal characteristics and characteristics of the job itself. However, age, gender, education status, hours of work, and the earning figure are the factors that affect university academics' job satisfaction.

Siddiqui and Saba (2013) show that job security affects university academics' job satisfaction while fringe benefits have a low affect. Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000a) identify that an employee's salary is a forecaster of job satisfaction. Furthermore, in his studies, Miller (1980) finds that employees who are better rewarded experience better job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The objective introduced in this paper is to identify the main factors that affect university academics' job satisfaction. The identification was drawn from existing literature and the results of this paper were drawn by compiling job satisfaction factors affecting university academics. A systematic literature review was done based on the following steps: formulation of the review question, devising the search strategy, application of the study selection criteria, study design, and the quality appraisal (Croucher et al., 2003).

Formulate The Review Question

Formulation of the review question was identified by means of a systematic review that provides the focus and boundaries and shapes all aspects of the review process - inclusion and exclusion criteria, the search strategy, amount of literature reviewed, the quality appraisal, and the synthesis of evidence (Wallace et al., 2005). The review question was guided by the following question: "What are the factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction?"

Devising The Search Strategy

The search strategy was comprehensive and related to the review question, including factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction, job satisfaction by university academics, etc.

Application Of Study Selection Criteria

Before research studies are entered into systematic review, they are subjected to two filters. The first filter comprises a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria, and only when the research is considered relevant and able to address the review question, is it taken through to the second filter (Wallace et al., 2005).

Study Design

This study includes empirical evidence from experimental or observational research, which includes qualitative research. The study also includes unpublished or published work (Wallace et al., 2005). In this article, only those studies directly associated with factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction were selected.

The Quality Appraisal Criteria

The research met all five necessary elements of quality appraisal criteria (Wallace et al., 2005; source: Croucher et al., 2003) for validity and trustworthy findings. Articles were selected which were significant, acceptable, reliable and empirically valid. Furthermore, each study had good research questions and theory, along with a model or theoretical framework.

The Results section developed from the existing literature and presented in Figure 1.

RESULTS

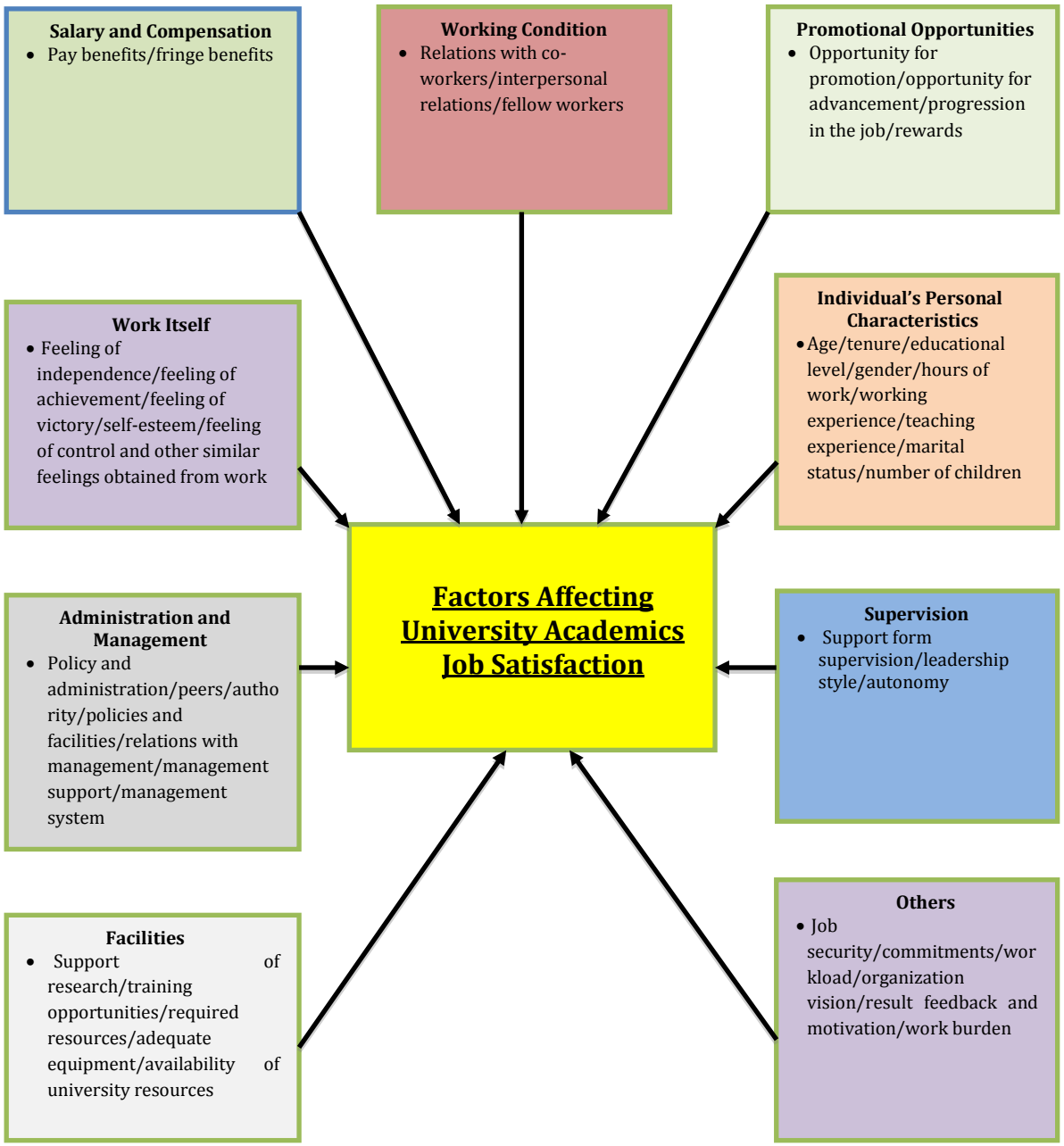

Figure 1: A Proposed Framework On Factors Affecting University Academics' Job Satisfaction

The above framework clearly shows that the following factors contribute to university academics' job satisfaction: salary and compensation (pay benefits/fringe benefits), working conditions (relations with co-workers/interpersonal relations/fellow workers), promotional opportunities (opportunity for promotion/opportunity for advancement/progression in the job/rewards), work itself (feeling of independence/feeling of achievement/feeling of victory/self-esteem/feeling of control and other similar feelings obtained from work), individual's personal characteristics (Age/tenure/educational level/gender/hours of work/working experience/teaching experience/marital status/number of children), administration and management (Policy and

administration/peers/authority/policies and facilities/relations with management/management support/management), supervision (Support form supervision/leadership style/autonomy), facilities (Support of research/training opportunities/required resources/adequate equipment/availability of university resources), and others (Job security/commitments/workload/organization vision/result feedback and motivation/work burden).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study identified all factors that affect university academics' job satisfaction. It also provided useful information for university academics, in terms of job satisfaction. The study furthermore set out a 'proposed framework based on factors affecting university academics job satisfaction, using the factors identified through various research studies, as a reference point. This includes Herzberg's (1966) Duality Theory of Job Satisfaction for the characteristics that include company policy and administration, relationship with supervisor, work environment, supervision, pay, relationships with peers, personal life, relationships with subordinates, status, security and so on. Regardless of which theory is followed, work itself, salary and compensation, job security, working conditions, promotional opportunities, supervision, administration and management, individual's personal characteristics, facilities, commitments, workloads, and others appear to be important factors to university academic job satisfaction and have been identified as the key factors affecting academic job satisfaction. In knowing what factors affect job satisfaction, it was possible to design a framework based on those needs.

Lastly, this study recommends that university academics should endeavour to know the factors that contribute to job satisfaction. This will help university academics to better understand and more easily achieve academic job satisfaction.

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