

Job Satisfaction and its Contributing Factors in Female Faculty Members of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Faculty members, as significant human resources, can play a crucial role in enhancing output in different social establishments, including universities and educational systems, if they are satisfied with their job condition. Nowadays nearly half the members belong to female employees in different organizations such as universities and educational settings. The attitude of this number of employees, including female faculty members, is of special significance if the quality of work is to be enhanced in universities or other educational establishments. Bearing in mind this significance, the current study investigated job satisfaction among female faculty members of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBMU) in 2008, Tehran. The assumption was that the satisfaction level of faculty members from their job could significantly enhance the quality of education and clinical care at different colleges and teaching hospitals of the university. In line with this assumption, as a descriptive research, the study investigated job satisfaction among female faculty members at SBMU in 2008. Altogether a total of 116 subjects, selected randomly, were asked to complete the questionnaires. The Minnesota questionnaire and the Personal and Managerial questionnaire were used to measure the satisfaction level of the participants from their career. The researchers referred to different colleges and hospitals of SBMU to ask the participants to fill out the questionnaires. Then, following the data collection procedure and questionnaire analysis, the data were subjected to numerous statistical tests such as t-test, One-way ANOVA and Multiple comparisons tests. Job satisfaction among female faculty members at SBMU, according to the results, was low to some extent. The main factors accounting for a rather low satisfaction score were limited welfare facilities, low salaries and unpaid arrears, improper work environment and limited promotion opportunities.

Keywords: Job satisfaction; female faculty members; universities and hospitals

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are established to meet our social needs. They are expected to continue their services as long as they can fulfill such needs. In the present condition, with the rapid growth of technology and huge environmental changes, such organizations have to adapt themselves to these new conditions to continue efficiently providing social services. Adjustment to new conditions is an important requirement, and organizations should be flexible enough to encourage their members toward the acquisition of different occupational skills and abilities [1].

Previous researches on organizational psychology show the importance of identifying

and planning for key parameters in an organization in order to enhance work efficiency and the quality of output. A key parameter in any organization, including educational settings, which deserves special attention if the organization wants to maintain its efficiency, is the efficient use of its manpower or staff. The staff members, nonetheless, will not perform well unless they are satisfied with their jobs [2].

Universities are one of the most important organizations in a country, and are the center of education and research activities. In universities, the views and attitudes of faculty members are of special significance. Positive attitude toward their

work condition can result in greater job satisfaction which, in turn, will result in better performance. Job satisfaction, as an effective factor in enhancing the efficiency of faculty members, is a set of compatible or incompatible feelings by which employees assess their jobs. The greater the career satisfaction is, the better the job productivity would be. Nonetheless, positive attitude or job satisfaction is not achieved unless suitable job conditions and proper job facilities are provided for the working staff, particularly the faculty members of the universities [3- 4].

In an attempt to target the issues dealing with motivation and job satisfaction more specifically, Herzberg has postulated his two-factor motivation theory. In this theory, motivational issues are under the influence of psychological factors (which are inner-directed) and environmental factors (which are externally oriented). Issues such as success in job performance, reward, and encouragement primarily belong to inner-directed, psychological factors whereas issues like work environment, salary, bonuses, interpersonal relations, and job security are more externally oriented [5, 23].

By investigating satisfaction-related issues, we can make a distinction between factors that increase job satisfaction and those that decrease it. This information can help to modify and improve managerial condition to achieve employees' greater job satisfaction which, in turn, could result in a better job performance [6].

Satisfaction status among faculty members and its contributing factors have already been investigated in a number of universities and colleges in Iran [7-15]. According to the reported results, in most of the studies, issues like improper job conditions, limited job security, managerial problems, low salaries, promotion problems, and insufficient facilities have negatively influenced staff attitudes, resulting in job stress, career dissatisfaction, and low level of performance.

In a study in Yazd province, 83.26% of nurses were not satisfied with salaries and other facilities provided for them ($p=0.014$) [7]. In

another study, done in Kermanshah University of Medical sciences, job quality achieved the greatest satisfaction rate (average = 4.41; SD = 0.70) while satisfaction from facilities, including salary, obtained the minimum satisfaction score (average=2.13; SD=0.83) [8]. The faculty members in Medical University of Isfahan, nonetheless, were relatively satisfied with nature of their job, job security, managerial issues, salaries, and bonuses, although they were not satisfied with promotion opportunities and physical conditions of their jobs [9]. In a similar study at Rafsanjan Medical University, 81% of faculty members considered external factors as issues influencing job motivation. The factors, in order of importance, included salary, job security, job condition, job advancement, job achievement, and employees' appreciation, with the salary and job satisfaction being the most important factors in inducing job motivation [11].

A research on factors affecting faculty members' satisfaction from their career at Islamic Azad University in Iran identified a variety of issues as follows: large number of students attending classes, teaching staffs' difficulties in pursuing education for higher degrees, inadequate job support regulations, low salaries, and job bonuses, limited attention to promotion issues, editorial problems in getting research projects approved, low level of motivation among many students, and difficulties in transferring to other universities [13]. In Alzahra University, lack of sufficient time to get familiar with new research findings, lack of sufficient career promotion, lengthy meetings, and low payments accounted for faculty members' dissatisfaction. On the other hand, clear career demands and transparent career roles contributed to future job satisfaction [14].

In the Medical School of Tehran University of Medical Sciences, 47.4% of faculty members were not satisfied with their careers. There was a statistically significant relationship between faculty members' job satisfaction on the one hand and their sex, marital status, job position, education level, or employment status on the other. Promotion procedures, in this study, achieved the greatest dissatisfaction score while

relationship between colleagues scored the lowest dissatisfaction score [15].

A study in Yazd University, comparing satisfaction between faculty members performing sports activities and those avoiding such activities, showed that the latter were less satisfied with the managers than the former ($p=0.02$). The sports-active and the inactive groups, nonetheless, did not significantly differ in satisfaction scores. The satisfaction average was 3.6 (out of 5), with the nature of the job achieving the highest satisfaction score (i.e. 4.3 out of 5) and promotion opportunities the lowest (i.e. 3.0 out of 5) [16].

A satisfaction research involving male and female physicians in a neighboring country, Karachi training hospitals, Pakistan, also showed that 68% of physicians were not satisfied with their jobs. They had high levels of job stress as well. The scores they achieved failed to be satisfactory altogether, with salary, job security, and workload getting the lowest score. Compared with their male colleagues, female physicians were significantly less satisfied with workload, relations with colleagues, and job independence [17].

According to a meta-analytical study on satisfaction factors, unlike the studies indicated above, issues such as job stress, relation with colleagues, and job independence, rather than salary, formed the first three satisfaction-related factors for physicians and nurses working in America and Canada. Salary played a less significant role in determining physicians' satisfaction from their career. Instead, maintaining a balance between job demands and their personal life was of special significance [20].

According to a study on nurses' satisfaction from their job' in three hospitals in Los Angeles, issues such as the attention paid to the staff, appreciation of staff efforts, appropriate supervision, proper management of skills, and fulfillment of the needs of hospital wards formed the most important factors in achieving staff satisfaction [21]. Another study carried out in 12 training hospitals in South East of the USA

showed that the nurses were largely satisfied with job success and supervision issues and relation with their colleagues, but were not much satisfied with job bonuses, job security, managerial policies, and their job's link with personal life [24]. Another study, comparing physicians working in cities and those working in villages in Colombia, showed that those in the cities were more satisfied with their jobs than their colleagues in the villages. The results indicated the significance of the place of work in achieving job satisfaction [25].

A study investigating the relationship between sex and job satisfaction among faculty members of medical universities in the USA in 2008 reported a significant difference between male and female members ($p<0.001$). Altogether, 36% of faculty members referred to the location of their job as an important factor that could influence their activities at home or in their clinics, but the level of influence varied significantly for male and female physicians ($p<0.001$). Female members were less satisfied with salary and job bonuses than their male colleagues. In terms of promotional issues, female members were also less satisfied than their male colleagues ($p<0.001$). The study recommended that the university authorities should pay more attention to and sort out satisfaction differences between male and female members by, for example, adopting clear promotion policies which could help both sexes to become well aware of the criteria essential to promotion decisions [26].

As the studies summarized above clearly indicate, women nowadays have an inevitable role in undertaking both education and health responsibilities in universities and other educational systems. They cannot perform such responsibilities efficiently and effectively unless they are satisfied with their job. If so then it is important to identify factors that are essential to greater job satisfaction. Hence, in line with such realities, the current study is to identify factors that are closely related to career satisfaction of female faculty members at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. Proper attention

to such factors which, in Herzberg's theory [5], belong to one of inner-directed (psychological factors) or environmentally-oriented external factors, can enhance faculty members' satisfaction from their career, resulting in better job performances.

METHODS

Subjects: The subjects participating in this study, carried out in 2008, included female faculty members of SBMU. The subjects under study were selected randomly. A total of 116 participants were asked to complete a Managerial Skills Questionnaire. The questionnaires were taken to the subjects by research assistants who, as an attempt to respect participants' cooperation, first thanked them in person and then asked them to fill out the forms. The participants were highly cooperative in completing the questionnaires. Their satisfaction level was computed with points ranging from zero to 100. Moreover, effective factors in job satisfaction were determined. As a confirmatory measure to approve the validity of the questionnaires, a sample of the participants was asked to complete the Minnesota Questionnaire as well.

Tools: The Personnel and Management Questionnaire and Minnesota Questionnaire Job Satisfaction Questionnaire were used as the study's data collection tools. The former included 53 questions, each with five options (very much, much, middle, little, and very little), in Likert scale, but the latter was composed of 100 questions, each with four options (highly satisfied, rather satisfied, rather dissatisfied, and highly dissatisfied). The total satisfaction score ranged from zero to 100.

Minnesota Questionnaire was designed in Minnesota University in 1960 but still seems to be trustworthy. The validity of this questionnaire has already been investigated by different educational centers in Iran, while the number of items has also increased to a total of 100 questions. The Questionnaire measures staff members' satisfaction from their career in relation to numerous issues as follows: physical conditions of the job, relations among colleagues, relations between managers and the staff, qualitative, ordinal scale. It should be noted that because of some missing data, the number of

management issues, promotion opportunities, staff participation in decision making and planning policies, salaries and job bonuses, and level of justice in occupation rights. These issues have been formulated into different questions, each with four options in Likert scale. The questionnaire, with such issues forming its content, proves to be quite reliable in measuring staffs' attitude toward their job.

The Personnel and Management Questionnaire was composed of 53 items, each with five options in Likert scale. The questionnaire, with an acceptable validity, has also been used in numerous studies thus far [27-29]. To ensure of the accuracy of each individual item forming the content of the questionnaire, it was subjected to a piloting scheme, using subjects comparable to the target participants. Then, having the problem items modified, the questionnaire was once more subjected to further evaluation to identify its reliability. The coefficient figure, indicating relations among answers, in Cronbach's Alpha, was shown to be 0.891 and the test-retest coefficient was shown to be 0.78, which indicate great consistency and reliability of scores across the test items.

Data Analysis

The SPSS computing package, version 16, was used to analyze the data. A number of statistical tests were adopted to perform the computations as follow: Independent t-test, One-way ANOVA and Multiple comparisons tests.

RESULTS

Satisfaction variable for all the questions followed a qualitative, ordinal scale; nonetheless, if a number of questions belonged to a particular variable, all such questions could refer to as a single quantitative factor. As such, satisfaction scores for a sample of questions achieving the minimum rank of answers would be considered zero while satisfaction scores for questions achieving the maximum rank of answers would be scored 100. If a variable was limited to just a single question, it would be reported as a

participants in some tables might have been fewer than 116.

As a confirmatory measure to make sure of the validity of Personnel and Managerial Questionnaire, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was given to 55 faculty members to complete to find out whether they correlate significantly [18]. The results showed a high degree of correlation between the two questionnaires ($r=0.829$). Nonetheless, many faculty members complained about the large number of questions that they had to answer. Thus, bearing in mind the likelihood of participants' complaints about the diversity of questionnaires on the one hand and high level of correlation between the two questionnaires on the

2- Satisfaction scores according to the participants' employment condition

To investigate the relationship between level of satisfaction and employment situation, first the Kruskal Wallis Test was used, followed by multiple comparisons. The results revealed

other, the researchers decided to limit the data collection procedure to the Personnel and Managerial Questionnaire only. The satisfaction average and standard deviation for the Minnesota Questionnaire were 43.19 and 12.338 respectively.

All the results reported below belong to the Personnel and Managerial questionnaire:

1- The overall satisfaction score

A total of 116 subjects participated in this study. The overall satisfaction score for faculty members was 42.07, with a standard deviation of 11.

significant differences in job satisfaction between permanently employed group and two other groups ($p=0.01$, $\chi^2 = 8.821$). Nonetheless, there were no significant differences between the permanently employed and probationary staff.

Table 1: Overall satisfaction scores according to employment condition

Satisfaction scores			
Employment condition	Number	Average	SD
Permanently employed	101	42.31	10.31
Probationary staff	10	33.82	9.61
Staff under contract	5	53.77	16.46
Total	116	42.07	11.00

3- Satisfaction scores based on education levels

To measure the relationship between degree of satisfaction and level of education, the data were subjected to Kruskal Wallis Test and multiple comparisons successively. According to the results, there were significant differences in job

satisfaction between the Ph.D group and those with master degrees ($p=0.001$, $\chi^2 = 13.893$), but there were no significant differences between other education groups.

Table 2: Overall satisfaction scores based on education level

Satisfaction scores			
Education Level	Number	Average	SD
BS	5	42.39	12.53
MS	42	37.46	9.69
PHD	69	44.79	10.86
Total	116	42.07	11.00

4- satisfaction scores according to marital status

Independent t test showed that there was no significant difference between satisfaction level and marital status

Table 3: Overall satisfaction scores according to marital status

Satisfaction scores			
Marital Status	Number	Average	SD
Single	32	39.45	9.62
Married	84	43.07	11.38
Total	116	42.07	10.00

5- Satisfaction scores according to work shifts

Independent t test revealed no significant difference in satisfaction scores between one-shift and two-shift groups of staff.

Table 4: Overall satisfaction scores according to work shifts

Satisfaction scores			
Work Shifts	Number	Average	Standard deviation
One shift	93	41.66	11.41
Two shifts	21	43.46	9.58
Total	114	42.00	11.08

6-Overall job satisfaction scores according to location of work

Overall satisfaction averages for the Pharmacy College and Medical College were 35.84 and 51.35, in order. One-way ANOVA analysis was used to investigate the relationship between satisfaction score and place of work, and the results were statistically significant for some of the work places (P=0.002, F=3.75). Also, according to multiple comparison of Tukey,

satisfaction averages varied significantly across the Pharmacy and Medical Colleges but did not change statistically across other colleges.

7- Job satisfaction according to nature of work
80.17% of faculty members manifested satisfaction scores of average to high, depending on the nature of their work.

8- Job satisfaction according to relationship between colleagues

Satisfaction averages and standard deviations for

job relationship among colleagues were 50.79 and 20.49 respectively.

9- Job satisfaction in relation to promotion opportunities

53.45% of faculty members had average to high job satisfaction scores, depending on their promotion opportunities.

10- Relationship between satisfaction score and hours of work

Depending on the number of hours they had to work, 59.48% of faculty members achieved average to high satisfaction scores.

11- Relationship between job satisfaction and physical conditions of work

Faculty members' satisfaction scores for physical condition of work averaged 37.85, with standard deviation of 16.97.

12- Satisfaction scores according to job respect and job autonomy

Depending on the level of respect they enjoyed and degree of autonomy they had, 62.93% of faculty members achieved average to high satisfaction scores.

13- Satisfaction with salary and work conditions

Satisfaction average and standard deviation for salary and work condition were 45.26 and 14.78, respectively.

14- Satisfaction from facilities

Satisfaction from facilities amounted to 25.43, with standard deviation of 16.3.

15- Satisfaction from managerial issues

Satisfaction from managerial issues scored 50.30, with standard deviation of 16.48.

16- Job satisfaction in relation to some additional factors

According to satisfaction scores appearing in table 5 and comparisons made between satisfaction averages, welfare issues formed the greatest source of dissatisfaction among female faculty members, and the physical condition of work place formed the second important source of their dissatisfaction.

Table 5: Relationship between job satisfaction and issues like cooperation, salary, etc.

Cooperation	Physical conditions	Salary & job condition	Facilities	Managerial issues
50.79	37.85	45.26	25.43	50.30

DISCUSSION

A Personnel and Managerial Questionnaire was used to measure faculty members' satisfaction from their career, using a score range of zero to 100. The mean satisfaction score of the study was 42.32, with a standard deviation of 11.16, which was fewer than the mean scores reported for other educational settings such as Isfahan University of Medical Sciences and Colleges of Physical Education [9, 12]. The satisfaction score of the faculty members at Isfahan University was 65.09 (with a standard deviation of 14.93). The mean satisfaction score of Colleges of Physical Education was 3.49 out of 5 (or 68 out of 100). [9, 12, 15].

Besides, faculty members of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences were less satisfied than their colleagues at Medical College of Tehran University with satisfaction score of 56.5 and standard deviation of 16.69. There was no significant relationship between satisfaction level and age of the participants at the former

University, while the latter manifested a significant relationship between age and satisfaction level [15]. In Rafsanjan University, a similar link was observed as well [11]. Nonetheless, in many of the previous studies, there was no particular report on the relationship between age and satisfaction score of faculty members.

In terms of employment, there has been a meaningful link between probationary members on the one hand and permanently employed and short-term contracts on the other ($F=6.18$, $p=0.003$), but no such link between the latter groups. Type of hospital was also significantly related to nurses' satisfaction in Yazd province ($p=0.014$) [7].

Regarding satisfaction scores of managers, employees and faculty members of Physical Education Colleges of different universities nationwide, there were significant differences between Tehran Teacher Training University (average=3.25, SD=0.65), University of Tehran

(average=3.61, SD=0.59 and Mashhad University (average=3.66, SD= 0.59) [12].

As job satisfaction is affected by a number of factors which are not constant, satisfaction fluctuations across variations dimensions of a career is somehow natural. One of the aspects experiencing such fluctuations is promotion opportunities according to which 53.45% of faculty members had average to high satisfaction scores. Faculty members of Medical Universities of Isfahan and Yazd were not much satisfied with promotion opportunities [9, 16]. Also faculty members of Islamic Azad University were not happy with the opportunities they could use to continue their education toward a higher degree [13]. In the Medical Faculty of University of Tehran, lack of proper promotion regulations served as the most dissatisfying factor [15].

The nature of job achieved average to high satisfaction level among 80.17% of female faculty members under study. In many studies, carried out earlier, faculty members achieved the highest level of satisfaction from the nature of their job [8, 9, 16, 19, 22]. Job facilities played a significant role in causing job dissatisfaction. Physical environment, salary, and work condition were the next important factors causing dissatisfaction. In some universities, e.g. Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, low level of salary, insufficient facilities, and inadequate career promotion were the main factors causing dissatisfaction [8].

In Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, the teaching staff was rather satisfied with managerial issues, job security, salary, and bonuses, but rather dissatisfied with promotion opportunities and physical conditions of the job [9]. In Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences, salary, and job security were of special importance in enhancing job incentives [11]. In Islamic Azad and Alzahra universities, faculty members were dissatisfied with low salaries and limited job bonuses. [13, 14]

To sum up, according to the results, although female faculty members at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences were satisfied with nature of their job, their overall satisfaction score remained low. Factors such as inadequate facilities, low salaries, limited career bonuses, inappropriate physical conditions, and limited

promotion opportunities accounted for their low satisfaction record which has to be improved somehow. As such, university authorities are expected to pay more attention to factors that could enhance staff satisfaction from their careers if they are to achieve their targets more effectively as greater satisfaction could result in better job performance. Among the benefits of greater career satisfaction could be a more encouraging career environment, in which the staff and authorities could effectively move forward to promote the scientific status of their academic establishment.

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