



REVIEW ARTICLE

DO EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, ACADEMIC RANK AND ONE'S POSITION PREDICT JOB SATISFACTION IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN UGANDA?

***Umar Saleh Baba and Dr. Kayindu Vincent**

Kampala International University, Uganda

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 10th October, 2017
Received in revised form
16th November, 2017
Accepted 27th December, 2017
Published online 30th January, 2018

Keywords:

Job Satisfaction,
Academic Official,
Educational Qualifications,
Academic Rank.

ABSTRACT

This paper presents part of the findings of the study carried out in 13 private universities in Uganda among the academic officials, namely Principals of Colleges, Directors of institutes, Deans of faculties, their deputies or assistants and heads of department. The study used a descriptive survey design which involved quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data was analysed using the Analysis of Variance because of the categorical nature of the variables. Results from 296 respondents who were chosen to participate in the study using universal and purposive sampling, revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic officials' educational qualifications and their job satisfaction (sig .001); there is a significant relationship between academic officials' rank and their job satisfaction (sig .005); and there is no significant relationship between academic officials' position and their job satisfaction (sig .220).

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INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction describes how contented an individual is with his or her job (Mcshane and Glinow, 2003). Maicibi (2003) goes further and states that job satisfaction is a result of a combination of circumstances that cause an employee to feel happy with his or her job. It is a pleasurable positive emotional state in an employee, which results from job experience. Although job satisfaction is usually affected by two sets of factors namely, motivators and extrinsic factors or hygiene factors, this study considered only extrinsic or hygiene factors. Extrinsic factors are the factors which relate to the context of the job for example company policy and administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, job security, personal life, and status. Such factors are also called dissatisfiers. This is because, if they exist in a workplace in adequate quantity and quality, they prevent any job dissatisfaction in the workers. Their absence or inadequacy causes dissatisfaction on the other hand (Maicibi, 2003). The current study addressed five extrinsic factors namely: policies, salary, job security, working conditions and status. Empirical studies have revealed that the determinants of job satisfaction are many. For example, a study was carried out by Professor Frederick Herzberg of the University of Utah in 1966 on 200 accountants and engineers, on the factors that lead to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction.

The findings included achievement, recognition, the nature of the work itself, responsibility and advancement; while the other factors that could not bring job satisfaction but can, when present, prevent job dissatisfaction, included the organization policy and administration, supervision, salary (pay), interpersonal relations and working conditions (Maicibi, 2003). Similarly, in a research carried out in 1989 by Knight, the factors accounting for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction included: respect of co-workers, personal freedom, learning something new, helping other people, challenging job, being approached for advice, respect of people in one's field, being well trained, being liked by the co-workers, influencing events, working conditions, being offered increasing responsibility, completing a project, being part of a team, meeting people through work, influencing people, working as an individual, starting a project, solving a human relations problem, security, being praised, status in the organization, being promoted, solving a technical problem, setting up a new system, making money, exercising power, and social status (Barry and Rhonda, 2002). Research has revealed that sometimes job satisfaction does not differ much from country to country. For instance, Boyer et al., in 1994 conducted a study that explored among others, sources of satisfaction and frustration among professors in 14 countries, namely, Australia, Brazil, Chile, USA, UK, Germany, Israel, Hong Kong, The Netherlands, Korea, Japan, Russia, Sweden and Mexico. The results of the research showed that professors reported a high sense of satisfaction with their intellectual lives as well as their relationships with

Corresponding author: Umar Saleh Baba,
Kampala International University, Uganda.

colleagues; the opportunity to pursue their own ideas; job security; and their general working environment (Ssesanga, 2003). These findings however appear contradictory to the findings of the study which was conducted in the middle of the year 2000 by the Gallup Organisation on job satisfaction from 39 countries. Taking a sample of 9300 employees, the findings revealed major differences in employee satisfaction around the world. For example, among the countries under study, Denmark had the highest satisfied employees, yet Hungary had the least satisfied employees. The researcher however considers the sample to be too small to be representative of the employees in such countries, as some of the countries like China, India, and the USA have millions of employees. Besides, the studies were not carried out in Uganda, thus the current study. Other studies have revealed that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction affect other aspects in the organization such as performance. For instance Cabigano studied the influence of personal background, educational background and social status on job satisfaction and job performance of the nursing staff of the Philippine Heart Centre for Asia in 1978-1980. The results revealed that job performance was significantly dependent on job satisfaction. In addition, factors like civil status, educational attainment and living accommodations were found to be strong predictors of job satisfaction (Sumil, 1999). The implications of these findings seem to be that if workers experience job satisfaction, they can perform better.

These findings however differ from the findings of the study which was carried out in Uganda by Mwebuga (2010) which revealed that there was a negative correlation between motivation and commitment. The difference between Mwebuga (2010)'s study and that of Sumil (1999) could be attributed to various factors such as different geographical scopes, respondents of the study and the methods of data analysis. None of these studies however used academic officials as the population. Relatedly, Chion and Jiunn-Cherng (2004)'s study found out that job satisfaction had significant relations not only to motivators but also to hygiene factors. Many researches have revealed that job dissatisfaction is usually bad to both the organization and to the employees. Workers should thus be given an opportunity to discuss their problems with management. Thus, as several authors have stated, the formalized opportunities to state complaints about a work situation are referred to as voicing. It provides employees an active, constructive outlet for their work frustrations (Noe, Hollenbeck, Barry and Rigit, 1997).

This is important to reduce job dissatisfaction which is detrimental to the organization. Such negative impacts include among other things, job withdrawal. Job withdrawal is a set of behaviors that dissatisfied individuals enact to avoid the work. Such behavior includes behavioral change, physical job withdrawal, psychological job withdrawal, and health problems (Jennifer and Jones, 1999). McShane and Glinow (2003) observe that satisfied employees are less likely to quit their jobs, be absent or late for work, steal from their employer or engage in acts of violence. They however opined that there are at times a weak or negligible relationship between job satisfaction and task performance partly because general attitudes like job satisfaction do not predict specific behaviours very well; instead they affect different people in different ways. Studies have revealed the significance of sound policies in organizations. For example, Salipate and Bouwen in 1990's study on people with grievances in organizations in Belgium and USA found out that company policies were among the

causes of employee grievances (Lewis and Saunders, 2003). The fact that the study revealed that haphazardly made and implemented policies need to be avoided if conflicts are to be avoided is relevant. Although this research was not carried in the universities of Uganda, its findings look similar to the findings of a study which was carried out in Uganda by Mulindwa (1998). He explored job satisfaction among academic and administrative staff in technical education institutions in Uganda, a case of Uganda Polytechnique Kyambogo and technical colleges. The findings were that, institutional administrative policies and the levels of remuneration significantly affected job satisfaction. Although Mulindwa (1998)'s study, like the current study were both carried out in Uganda, the study of Mulindwa was carried out in a public institution, not a private one. Besides, there is a temporal gap the current study filled, leave alone the fact that Uganda Polytechnique Kyambogo where the study was carried out does no longer exist. It was merged with other institutions at Kyambogo to form Kyambogo University in the year 2002.

Sound and properly implemented policies are usually advantageous to the organization or society in general. Historically, Joshua ben Gamala, a high priest of the Jews for example, instituted a policy of compulsory public elementary education, whereby each synagogue, town and province had to support a school, otherwise it would be excommunicated. Because of this, the Jews have preserved their exclusive identity, existence, habits, manners and faith through education, despite being possessed and persecuted for over 1800 years (Sifuna and Otiende, 1994). In a related vein, in Uganda, a basic policy framework targeting disadvantaged children and groups of people aged between 6-18 years led to the Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education (COPE), Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) and Basic Education for Urban Poor Areas (BEUPA). This has helped to reduce illiteracy among women and the disadvantaged groups (Ahimbisibwe and Eremu, 2003). This seems to imply that sound policies are helpful to society.

Statement of the Problem

By the year 2010, the private sector owned 85.29% of the universities in Uganda (National Council for Higher Education, 2010). Therefore, the efforts of the private sector in the field of education are indeed appreciable. However, the report of the National Council for Higher Education (2010), as well as the studies conducted by Ssesanga (2003), Segawa (2007), Muyiggwa-Mubanda (2007) and the assertion of Seremba and Kigundu (2010) indicate that, academic officials' extent of job satisfaction seems to be low. Given the time lag, methodological and geographical gaps, the current study was carried out to provide answers to the following questions: 1. What is the relationship between academic officials' educational qualifications and their job satisfaction?; 2. What is the relationship between academic officials' rank and their job satisfaction?; and 3. What is the relationship between academic officials' position and their job satisfaction?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sample Size

Due to the desire of getting responses from informants at once, the study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The universal sampling technique was used.

All the 380 academic officials in the 13 universities were included in the study. As Amin (2005) asserts, the larger the sample, the more the accuracy of the generalizability of the findings to the population. Out of the 380 questionnaires distributed, 296 usable questionnaires were returned, thus, yielding a response rate of 77.86%.

Data Collection and analysis

Questionnaires were used because all the respondents were literate. The researcher also used oral interviews so as to supplement quantitative data to give detailed information on the items. For data analysis, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. The arithmetic mean was used to establish what percentage of the 296 respondents who filled and returned the questionnaires fell under different extents of job satisfaction (very low, low, moderate, High and very high) in terms of policies, salary, working conditions, job security and status.

Limitations of the Study

The following threats to the validity of the findings were faced. Attempts were however made to minimise them, for example,

- Questionnaire respondents were realized to have given only socially desirable responses especially on the Managerial Grid survey, despite being requested to be very objective in their responses, and their anonymity being guaranteed. This could have resulted in an overstatement of the relationships among the variables.
- Restriction to one employee group. The respondents of this study were only the universities' academic officials, whose pay, emoluments, terms of service, job security, among others, are, in most cases, better than those of many other categories of staff in the universities. They are hence more likely not to be subject to lower level needs.

Despite this however, the current study asserts that anonymous self-report which was required of the respondents provided the closest available approximation of the relationships among the variables.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that there is a significant relationship between academic officials' educational qualifications and their job satisfaction (sig .001).

This means, one can be satisfied with their job more or less because of the educational qualifications they are holding. Specifically, PhD holders were moderately satisfied with their jobs (mean2.62); Masters degree holders were not satisfied with their jobs (mean2.39); and Bachelors degree holders were also not satisfied with their jobs (mean, 2.51). Thus, the higher the academic qualifications, the higher the job satisfaction and vice-versa. Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between academic officials' academic rank and their job satisfaction (sig .005). This means, one can be satisfied with their job more or less because of the academic rank they are holding. Specifically, Professors were highly satisfied with their jobs (mean 2.73); Associate professors were highly satisfied with their jobs (mean2.58); Senior lecturers were moderately satisfied with their jobs (mean, 2.61); Lecturers were moderately satisfied with their job (mean, 2.39); and Teaching Assistants were not satisfied with their jobs (mean, 2.51). Thus, the higher the academic rank, the higher the job satisfaction and vice-versa. The P- value of 0.220 for the position one holds reveals that, the position an academic official holds does not significantly affect his or her extent of job satisfaction. This means, different academic officials holding different positions like the Deans, Associate Deans, Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Department are more or less satisfied with their jobs in the same way.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study that academic officials of lower academic qualifications and rank experienced low extent of job satisfaction are similar to those Wipada-Kunaviktikul, Nantasupawat, Wichit-Srisuphan and Booth (2001) who found out that the professional nurses employed in four regional hospitals in Thailand were dissatisfied with pay, but were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with work and the job in general facets of the job. Related findings by Chion and Jiu-Chering (2004) were reported based on a study they carried out in Taiwan's police force. These findings are also in agreement with Mulindwa (1998)'s findings of his study on job satisfaction among academic and administrative staff in technical education institutions in Uganda which revealed that the staff's extent of job satisfaction was low.

Similarly, the finding of the current study are in agreement with the finding of Boyer et al (1994) cited by Ssesanga (2003) who carried out research in 14 developed countries and found that professors were generally dissatisfied with salary. Related findings about dons' job dissatisfaction at Makerere University and IUIU were reported by Tizikara (1998), cited by Ssesanga (2003).

Table 1. Academic officials' Job satisfaction based on their educational qualifications in private universities in Uganda

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Phd	97	2.6206	.49627	.05039	1.68	3.80
Masters	183	2.3882	.49973	.03694	1.48	3.44
Bachelors	9	2.5136	.39382	.13127	1.84	3.02
Total	289	2.4701	.50613	.02977	1.48	3.80

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.441	2	1.721	6.996	.001
Within Groups	70.335	286	.246		
Total	73.776	288			

Table 2. Academic Rank and Job Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Professors	9	2.7348	.55824	.18608	1.84	3.38
Associate professors	12	2.5833	.46740	.13493	1.84	3.24
Senior lecturers	77	2.6170	.49341	.05623	1.68	3.80
Lecturers	184	2.3884	.49837	.03674	1.48	3.44
Teaching Assistants	10	2.5322	.37595	.11888	1.84	3.02
Total	292	2.4723	.50371	.02948	1.48	3.80

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.710	4	.928	3.796	.005
Within Groups	70.123	287	.244		
Total	73.834	291			

Table 3. Present Position and Job Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Dean/Director	63	2.4805	.50910	.06414	1.48	3.80
Ass. Dean/Deputy Director	33	2.6094	.43377	.07551	1.84	3.65
Head of Dept	192	2.4444	.51304	.03703	1.50	3.51
Total	288	2.4712	.50481	.02975	1.48	3.80

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.774	2	.387	1.523	.220
Within Groups	72.364	285	.254		
Total	73.138	287			

The findings of the current study are similar to those of Opolot (1991) and Ssentongo-Kafeero (2006) who reported that the dons of Makerere University experienced low degree of satisfaction with their jobs; and that the academic staff of the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (then) were generally dissatisfied, respectively. This means that the conditions obtaining in the universities as generally perceived by the academic officials are not the best. Academic officials feel that, what they are earning, entitled to and experiencing at their respective places of work is inadequate compared to their academic qualifications, and what other workers in other organizations, some of whom are holding lower qualifications, are earning. However, some findings of the current study contradict those of Lucy and Sheahan (1997) cited by Ssesanga (2003) who found out that academics in eight developed countries were generally satisfied with job security.

The difference in economic growth between those eight nations and Uganda could account for the difference. This suggests that in developed countries the job security of employees is taken care of. The academic officials who were at the rank of Professor, Associate professors and those holding PhDs were highly satisfied with their jobs, which implies that the officials were proud of their intellectual lives. They felt satisfied with the intellectual nature of their lives and the positions they held. According to qualitative data, this was because, it is a pride and prestigious to hold a managerial post in a university, the highest academic institution in a country. Also, by holding a managerial post, one gets monthly allowances in addition to salary, it builds one's curriculum vitae, one's managerial experience increases, and it is an added advantage for promotions and getting better jobs outside the university. In addition, it was because, majority of the respondents possessed more than one degree.

In the context of Uganda, where some people are even illiterate, possessing more than one degree is something to be proud of thus, as Maicibi (2007) asserts, status reduces dissatisfaction. Another explanation for people of higher academic qualifications and academic rank being more satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts of lower academic rank and qualifications could be due to different salary and allowances received. Practically a Professor is paid higher than a lecturer, and a PhD holder is paid higher than a Bachelors degree holder. Thus, agreeing with the claims of Nicole and Brigits (2010), that a dispersed wage structure usually attracts talented employees because it is generally perceived as satisfying. Other authors hold similar views that, because workers compare their wages with those of colleagues, wage dispersion within a firm influences employees' morale, individual productivity and firm performance (Coles, 2001).

This view is however rejected by other authors who claimed that a compressed wage structure instead is more satisfying to employees and usually cultivates teamwork, cooperation and positively affects firm performance (Akerlof and Yellen, 1990). Other authors claimed that, in technologically intensive firms, wage dispersion diminishes collaboration and subsequent firm performance (Siegel and Hambrick, 2005). Employees care about the wages of those above them and the ones below them in rank, and they are likely to respond negatively to compression from below (Brewley, 1999). All this means that those at a higher rank should be paid higher and the ones of a lower rank should be paid lower, but the difference needs not be big. The study revealed that the elements which were found out to be having significant relationships with job satisfaction were educational qualifications (p-value .001); academic rank (p-value, .005) and number of years in the present position (p-value, .000).

Specifically, it was found out that PhD holders were more satisfied than other officials holding lower qualifications; professors were more satisfied with extrinsic factors than other categories of academic rank; and the older one spends in a position, the more satisfied one becomes. These findings are not isolated. They are in agreement with Ssesanga (2003)'s findings that Ugandan dons were generally satisfied with intrinsic facets of their job. The P- value of 0.220 for the position one holds reveals that, the position an academic official holds does not significantly affect his or her extent of job satisfaction.

This means, different academic officials holding different positions like the Deans, Associate Deans, Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Department are more or less satisfied with their jobs in the same way. This could be attributed to the insignificant difference usually existing among them in their capacities as academic officials in their respective universities in terms of status accorded to them, the contractual nature of their work, salary and emoluments, the conditions under which they work, and the policies governing them. The findings of the current study on job satisfaction as perceived by academic officials are supported by the studies of Malima – Kisesi (1998); Mugabyomu (2006); Namubiru (2007); Mugizi (2007) which reported that the perception of fairness exert a strong influence on how employees usually react to a variety of aspects of organizational life. It is also congruent with the findings of the studies of Olaniyi – Owolabi (2007) and Kamagala (2005), that work experiences (Everything one experiences in the work context) correlates significantly with satisfaction at work as well as affective and normative commitment to the organization. This is because, good and sound work experiences are motivational and motivation has a significant relationship with work. A related view is held by Fisher (2000); Weiss (2002); Tsou and Liu (2005).

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