

Job Satisfaction in Basic and Clinical Faculty Members in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Iran

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Abstract

Background and Purpose: Shiraz University of Medical Sciences as one of the oldest and largest universities of medicine in Iran with 50 years history has more than 450 faculty members and 5000 students. This study is an attempt to find out the level of job satisfaction among Shiraz University of Medical Sciences' faculty members.

Methods: In midterm of 2003-2004, data on job satisfaction level among 404 faculty members from all schools of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences were collected. The translation of Spector's job satisfaction score was used including 34 questions in 9 items of job satisfaction and each one based on Likert's Scale with score an of 1-5. A question related to overall job satisfaction of faculty members was added.

Results: Of all faculties,, 252 responded to the questionnaire and 70.1% expressed satisfaction in response the added question. The mean scores of job satisfaction in items of coworkers, work nature, supervision, management methods, academic relations, promotion, salary and suitable benefits were 3.771, 3.265, 2.557, 2.454, 2.395, and 2.376 out of 5 respectively ($F=223.8$, $p=0.0001$). In the promotion item, the satisfaction of female faculty was lower than male subjects. The level of job satisfaction was not different between clinical faculty members of Medical School with or without private activity. The results of linear regression analysis between the items of job satisfaction revealed that reimbursement and fringe benefits could predict the overall job satisfaction ($r^2=0.70$, $p<0.01$).

Conclusion: As a whole, the faculty members of the university were satisfied with their jobs, but a correction in reimbursement, benefits and promotion regulations especially in lower academic ranks is needed to improve the level of job satisfaction in this group.

Key words: JOB SATISFACTION, FACULTY MEMBER, BASIC AND CLINICAL DEPARTMENTS, FULLTIME, PART-TIME

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Introduction

Faculty members in medical universities in Iran

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have three main roles: teaching, research, and health care services. Shiraz University of Medical Sciences as one of the oldest and largest universities of medicine with 50 years history of activity has more than 450 faculty members, and 5000 students and offers health care services to Fars province with 5 million populations (1). Faculty members have the most important role in fulfilling the university's responsibilities. Job

satisfaction is related to various factors, and evaluation of job satisfaction should be considered a necessary procedure in all organizations (2). The most important criterion for the inappropriate working condition is low level of job satisfaction in an organization (3). Evaluation of job satisfaction can lead to recognition of effective drivers of staff activity, to improvement in relations of managers and personnel, to provide the opportunity for telling the truth, and to assessment of organization's general policies effects on the personnel (2). According to Job Satisfaction Score (JSS), the level of job satisfaction is dependent on nine factors in every organization: Reimbursement, Fringe benefits, Promotion, Supervision, Coworkers, Nature, Communication, Operating conditions, and Contingent rewards (4). Each factor can be assessed by four questions. So, the level of job satisfaction can be assessed by a questionnaire consisting of 36 questions. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire were documented in many studies (5). In this study, the level of job satisfaction in the faculty members of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences was determined using the Persian translation of JSS which was validated in Iran (5).

Methods and Materials

In this cross-sectional study faculty members of the Shiraz University of Medical Sciences participated in the second semester of 2003-2004. The university had 450 faculty members working in Medical, Dentistry, Nursing and Midwifery, Paramedical, Health, Pharmacy, and Rehabilitation faculties. The project was approved by Office of Vice Chancellor for Educational Affairs.

According to the Office of Vice Chancellor for Educational Affairs reports, 50 staffs were not available because of vacation or being on a mission. The Persian translation of the questionnaire was submitted to departments' offices to deliver to faculties. After two weeks interval, the filled questionnaires were collected through the departments' offices. The questionnaire was the Persian translation of the

JSS which was validated in Iran (5). The questionnaire consisted of eight areas with areas of reimbursement and fringe benefits being combined. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, a pilot review by 20 faculty members from different schools were conducted. One question was added about the overall job satisfaction and faculty members were also asked to write down any additional comments they might have. In this research, student t test, linear regression analysis, correlation coefficient, analysis of variance and ANOVA or repeated analysis of variance were used for analysis. A p value of less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Job satisfaction was defined as the attitude of faculty members according to Job Satisfaction Score (JSS). Categories of job satisfaction were eighth items in the Persian translation of JSS. Basic faculty members were the faculty members of the university who worked in basic departments and had not any direct relation to patients. These faculties had MSc or PhD degrees.

Clinical faculty members were the faculty members in the university who worked in the clinical departments and had direct relation to patients. These faculty members were specialist or sub-specialist. The geographic fulltime faculty members were those in the university who had no private practice outside the university and worked at least 54 hours per week in the university or university affiliated centers.

The non-geographic fulltime faculty members were those in the university who had some private practice activities outside the university and were working at least 40 hours per week in the university.

Results

Of 404 faculty members, 252 (62.3%) completed the questionnaire. Demographic characteristics of respondents were shown in Table 1. In response to the question of "as a whole I am satisfied from my job", 19% marked "completely agree", 61.1% marked "agree", 7.1% marked "indifferent", 10.7% marked "disagree", and

0.8% "completely disagree". The mean scores of job satisfaction in items of coworkers, work nature, supervision, management methods, academic relations, promotion, salary and suitable benefits were 3.771 ± 0.641 , 3.265 ± 0.435 , 2.557 ± 0.702 , 2.454 ± 0.756 , 2.395 ± 0.776 , and 2.376 ± 0.778 out of 5 respectively ($F=223.8$, $p=0.0001$). With increase of academic position ($F=0.21$, $p<0.01$) and duration of working ($F=0.21$, and $p<0.01$), the job satisfaction increased. There were no significant difference in job satisfaction between men and women. Job satisfaction among full professors (107.8 ± 18.27) was significantly higher than associate professors (97 ± 12.7), assistant professors (91.70 ± 14.78), and lecturers (94.5 ± 14.67), ($p<0.001$). Full professors also gave significantly higher scores in areas of promotion coworkers and communication areas. (Table 2). In the Medical School, there was not significant difference in the level of job satisfaction between clinical and basic departments. However in the university as a whole which included other schools such as Health, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Rehabilitation and Paramedical faculties, the score was significantly lower in basic departments in areas of promotion (10.37 ± 3.00 vs 8.84 ± 2.64 , $p<0.001$) and supervision (14.23 ± 3.20 vs 13.25 ± 3.05 , $p<0.05$). Regarding the level of satisfaction among geographic and non-geographic faculty members in Medical School, the scores on different areas were

compared and no significant difference was observed between these two groups. The level of job satisfaction was not different between clinical faculty members of Medical School with or without private activity. To find out which item may better predict the overall job satisfaction in faculty members, a linear regression analysis was done. The results showed that the reimbursements and fringe benefits can significantly predict the overall level of job satisfaction ($r^2=0.70$, $p<0.01$).

Discussion

In this cross sectional study, 62.3% of active present faculties (252 from 404) or 55.7% of total faculty members (252 from 457) responded to the survey. All respondents were satisfied from their work while based on the response to item "as a whole I am satisfied from my job" 70% of faculties were satisfied. In another study, in this university, 85% of faculty members were satisfied from teaching, 79.65% were satisfied from research activities and 72.05% did not want to leave or to be transferred from the university in spite of dissatisfaction from reimbursements, benefits, promotion and the regulations of the university (6). Similar results were previously reported by several studies and the faculty members were satisfied from their work (6,7,8). This satisfaction seems to be most from the teaching activity of faculty members (9).

Table 1. The characteristics of faculty members of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

Characteristics		Faculty members (n=404)		Respondents (n=252)	
		no.	%	no.	%
Gender	Female	132	(32.5)	83	(32.5)
	Male	272	(67.5)	167	(67.5)
Academic Ranking	Lecturer	105	(26)	81	(32.1)
	Assistant Professor	241	(59.6)	133	(52.7)
	Assistant Professor	37	(9.2)	25	(9.9)
	Full Professor	21	(5.2)	12	(4.7)
Type of Activity	Clinical	283	(70)	171	(67.8)
	Basic (non-clinical)	121	(30)	73	(28.9)

Table 2. Comparison of job satisfaction in different academic ranks of faculty members in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

Faculty members										
Characteristics	Instructors (n=81)		Assistant Professors (n=133)		Assistant Professors (n=25)		full Professors (n=12)		F	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pay and fringe Benefits	21.7	7.26	20.8	6.65	23	6.35	25.7	8.73	2.34	0.07
Promotion	9.2	2.95	9.5	2.8	11	2.95	13.6	0.05	9.74	0.00005
Supervision	13.1	1.66	13.0	2.14	12.9	2.13	13.5	1.83	0.29	0.82
Coworkers	15.3	2.49	14.7	2.7	15.48	2.00	16.75	1.42	3.31	0.02
Nature of Work	9.7	1.31	9.7	1.32	9.9	1.25	10.21	1.21	0.65	0.58
Communications	10.3	2.64	9.3	2.76	10.4	3.45	11.00	2.79	3.81	0.01
Operating Conditions	7.7	2.27	7.5	2.08	7.7	1.76	8.00	1.97	0.33	0.80
Contingent Rewards	7.0	2.35	6.9	2.28	7.2	2.07	8.80	2.75	2.83	0.06
Overall Satisfaction	9.45	14.67	91.7	14.78	97.8	12.7	107.8	18.27	5.17	0.001

The level of job satisfaction was not different between men and women. In other studies, the women were less satisfied which was mostly due to dissatisfaction with their reimbursement (9,10,11,12). There is no difference between men and women regarding their reimbursement in our university. In a study by Baldwin et al (13) in 110,000 faculty members, the causes of dissatisfaction were non-tenure employment, female gender, and lower academic ranking. However it should be noted that most of them were in beginning years of their academic career. In our study, 43.9% of women and 17.2% of men were lecturer.

In this study, full professors had the highest level of job satisfaction, and there was a significant difference between this group and others regarding promotion, coworkers and communication. This difference may be due to a higher reimbursement and rewards, more stable employment condition, less academic duties, and their more influence on management decisions in the university, as stated in previous reports too (14,15). We compared the level of satisfaction in 171 clinical staffs of the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Rehabilitation and Nursing and Midwifery and 73 non-clinical faculty members too. There was no significant difference as a whole, but in items of promotion and supervision, the levels of satisfaction were

higher in the clinical group. This may be due to a lower academic rank in the non-clinical group (47/72 instructor in non-clinical group and 26/171 instructor in clinical group, $P < 0.01$). Academic promotion of non-clinical group could improve their satisfaction.

In Medical School, 41 faculties practiced in private clinics and hospitals in spite of more income from practice in private sector and there was no difference between the two groups in relation to job satisfaction items. However, the level of reimbursement in the university is different between these two groups. The level of reimbursement and benefits is the most important predicting factor for job satisfaction in our faculty members which needs more attention and correction of this item to improve the level of satisfaction.

Other reported opinions of our faculty members were complaints of their intensive academic duties, difference in working conditions, scarcity of time, management regulations, bureaucracy and low communication of the managers with faculty members.

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