

# Factors Affecting Academic Job Satisfaction in the Public Institutions of Higher Education, Eritrea

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## Abstract

Although, many researches in Africa have investigated the factors which affect job satisfaction of employees in different profit and non-profit organizations, few researches are devoted in institutions of higher education. The aim of this study is to examine the factors affecting faculty job satisfaction in institutions of higher education in Eritrea. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire from a randomly selected sample of 100 respondents from the IHE in Eritrea with a return number of 95 responses. SPSS 20 is utilized for analysis purposes. Correlation and regression analysis is made to examine the relationships between the factors and job satisfaction, and to identify the overall contribution of the factors to the job satisfaction of the staff members. The analysis finds that research, co-workers relations, and training and development have strong positive and significant contributions to job satisfaction of the faculty in institutions of higher education in Eritrea. Although the correlation result of the other three variables was moderately strong and significant, the regression outcome has shown insignificant but positive contributions. The research finally concludes that these factors need to get more focus so that the IHE in Eritrea can retain their faculty members.

**Keywords:** Academic job satisfaction, Eritrea, influencing factors, Institutions of Higher education,

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In any kind of organization the study of job satisfaction is important as it may affect motivation, absenteeism, turn over and job performance. Given this association with issues that are central to the functioning of any organization, it is vital that colleges and universities monitor the satisfaction levels of their employees. According to Truell et al, 1998, highly satisfied faculty will generally be innovative and motivated to establish and maintain an environment conducive to learning'. Thus, university officials and current faculty in higher education must recognize the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction among faculty and eliminate them; as well as, recognize the factors that increase job satisfaction and enhance them (Tack and Patitu, 1992). The term job satisfaction refers to the positive attitudes and feelings of people towards their work. As Armstrong (2006) indicated that positive and favorable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction, vise-versa.

The most valuable asset available to an organization is its people, thus retaining staff in their jobs is essential for any organization. The ability to hire and retain effective faculty remains a serious problem for institutions of higher education (Wong and Heng, 2009). Higher education institutions, in almost all African countries, are largely unable to retain qualified faculty and research scholars. The situation does not only cripple the higher education institutions but also affects the other levels of education services, health care systems and overall economic activities (Armstrong, 2005). Job satisfaction plays a vital role in retaining faculty (Wong and Heng, 2009).

Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopian colonization in 1991. Until 2004, the University of Asmara (UoA) which was established by Italian Missionaries in 1958 was the only Institution of higher education (IHE) in the country. It had a limited capacity enrolling a maximum of 1,200 students per year. Thus, it was not only unable to absorb enough students at tertiary level but it was also unable to fulfill higher education needs of the country. To this effect, there was a need of decentralizing and expanding tertiary education throughout the country. As a result, in 2004 and 2005, seven new IHE were established in different parts of the country.

At present, these IHE accept between 4000 –5000 students per year for degree and diploma programs. This is four times more than the number of students that University of Asmara used to accept. In terms of overall number of students, there are about 13,000 – 14,000 students in all these colleges. (Tesfanews, 2015)

In all IHE of Eritrea there are about 621 academic staff. Out of this, 387 are nationals and 234 are expatriates (Tadese, 2014). This shows that Eritrea lacks qualified national academicians. In the IHE of Eritrea, job satisfaction has not been studied. As faculty members play a vital role in the success of higher education institutions (Cordeiro, 2010), it is imperative to study and improve the level of satisfaction of the academic staff in order to make sure the available staffs are being retained in one hand and to attract other qualified academicians on the other hand.

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors affecting employee job satisfaction in institutions of higher education in Eritrea. This study was guided by the following research questions: What are

the factors that affect Academic job satisfaction at IHE? What strategies can be employed to foster employee job satisfaction at IHE?

## 2. Review of Related Literature

Locke and Lathan (1990) define job satisfaction as the pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Herzberg et al (1959) considered job satisfaction to be derived from two sources: motivators (intrinsic factors) and hygienes (contextual and extrinsic factors). The two-factor theory considers factors promoting job satisfaction to be different to those which prevent dissatisfaction. Motivator/intrinsic factors, such as challenging and interesting work, help promote job satisfaction. However, they do not prevent dissatisfaction if certain hygiene factors are left unmet, such as satisfactory salary workplace or policies. By contrast, satisfactory salary and hygiene factors, whilst effective at preventing dissatisfaction, do not lead one to be satisfied, as job satisfaction is believed to be an outcome of motivating factors and the intrinsically rewarding elements of one's work.

Bowen and Radhakrishna (1991) found that the academics were most satisfied by the work itself and least satisfied with their opportunities for advancement. With regard to hygiene factors, academics were most satisfied with interpersonal relationships inherent in being a faculty member and least satisfied with the level and method used to determine their salary.

Boyer et al. (1994) conducted an international study that explored among other factors, sources of satisfaction and frustration among professors in 14 countries (Australia, Brazil, Chile, USA, UK, Germany, Israel, Hong Kong, The Netherlands, Korea, Japan, Russia, Sweden and Mexico). The results of this research showed, that professors had a high sense of satisfaction with their intellectual lives and the courses they taught as well as their relationships with colleagues. Contrary to Herzberg's theory, this finding showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors can contribute to job satisfaction. Most faculty members, however, felt that they were not well paid. Only in Hong Kong and the Netherlands did more than 50% of faculty rate their own salary as 'good' or 'excellent'. For instance, only 46% of surveyed professors in the USA rated their salaries favorably. In nearly half the responding countries, more than 40% of the surveyed professors reported their job was a source of considerable strain with Japanese, Russian, and Korean faculty reporting the most pressure.

Muhammad Ehsan et al (2012) in their study of the impact of pay and promotion on Job Satisfaction in the Higher Education Institutes of Pakistan found that pay has significant influence on job satisfaction but promotion has less influence and partially significant to the job satisfaction.

Mehboob and Bhutto (2012) observed that faculty members were generally satisfied with their job however female faculty members were more satisfied with their jobs compared to male faculty members. In their study, they found "Work itself" the most satisfying aspect while "Policy" and "Working condition" the least satisfying aspects of job. Stephen (2005) found that actual work was the biggest satisfier and working conditions were the least satisfier; job security was also big determinant of job satisfaction.

According to Opolot (1991) study in Uganda's higher education sector, academic staffs were dissatisfied with their pay. He concluded that if job satisfaction was to prevail in an institution, there should be fair remuneration of staff based on output, experience and level of education.

Mulindwa (1998) in his study of job satisfaction among academic and administrative staff at Polytechnic College, revealed that levels of remuneration were the greatest contributor to job satisfaction among staff, followed by government policy on higher education and institutional policy, in that order. His finding may contradict Herzberg's theory, which assumes that extrinsic rewards such as salary contribute towards reducing dissatisfaction but of themselves do not increase job satisfaction.

Bozeman and Gaughan (2011) in their study of job satisfaction among university faculty found that faculty are more satisfied with their jobs when they perceive that they are paid what they are worth and when they perceive that their colleagues respect their research work.

Faculty members are satisfied when they are recognized for the work that they do. Ali and Ahmed (2009) confirmed the strong positive effects of rewards and recognition on job motivation and satisfaction.

According to Sonmezer and Eryaman (2008) salary, social status, advancement, ability utilization, administrative-employee relationship, creativity, and security are the main factors that determine job satisfaction amongst education sector employees.

Absence of work life balance, work environment, lack of advancement opportunities, encouragement and recognition may lead to stress, which ultimately causes dissatisfaction, burnout, and finally increases turnover rate within organization (Ahmadi and Alireza, 2007).

Hagedorn (1994) tested a causal model among faculty at different stages of career development and found that satisfaction with salary, total work hours, and co-workers support affected the level of stress and ultimately satisfaction.

Therefore, job satisfaction of the faculty members of higher institutions is the outcome of many influencing factors. This research is going to investigate the impact of some of the selected variables according to

the context and level of the Eritrean higher institutions. For this purpose, the research focuses on the role of leadership and management quality, training and development, compensation, research, co-worker relationship and opportunities for promotion on job satisfaction of the faculty members in institutions of higher education in Eritrea.

### **3. Methodology**

In this paper, descriptive research method was utilized in the data analysis processes. The research is mainly of quantitative research method. The population of the study was 387 national academic staff members working in the seven IHE in Eritrea. For this study, a sample size of 100 faculty members working in the IHE in Eritrea, were randomly selected to take part in this research. The academic professionals; graduate assistants, assistant lecturers, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and professors of various departments in these institutions were selected as the target respondents. Academic staff with at least two years of work experience was used as an inclusion criteria for this study.

The survey data was collected through a purposeful and systematic developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was basically designed and adapted according to the works of Singh (2004) and Bodla et. al (2014) Schulze (2006). The questionnaire consists of two parts. The respondents are asked to respond the extent to which each statement pertaining to his/her knowledge regarding the factors affecting satisfaction of faculty contributes to their job satisfaction. The first part is mainly consisted of questions regarding to the demographic characteristics. While the second part comprises five point likert scale types with responses varying from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. This part of the questionnaire contains 38 items; of which 5 are related to job satisfaction while the remaining 33 are related to the independent variables. Independent variables used in this study are; training and development, research engagement, job characteristics, leadership and management, compensation, Co-worker relations, opportunities for promotion and job satisfaction. The literature review showed that these independent variables are major determinants of job satisfaction.

The questionnaire was pilot tested and discussed with a number of academics to ensure that all relevant factors were included in each of the sections. Thus, content validity was ensured. Face was also addressed by means of the judgment of an expert, before the questionnaire was finally approved and distributed. The alpha reliabilities for the scales were calculated and found as follows: Leadership and management qualities =0.74, Training and development = 0.76, Compensation = 0.73, Co-workers relationship =0.82, Research = 0.76, Opportunities for promotion = 0.72, Job satisfaction = 0.75

Data analysis was made using descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages to examine the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study. The correlation analysis was also applied to find out the relations existed among the variables and regression analysis of the variables was conducted to see the combined effect of the variables to job satisfaction. The SPSS 20 was employed as statistical software for analysis. And excel was also used to summarize and tabulate the classification of the data.

## **4. Result and discussion**

### **4.1 Demographic characteristics**

Table 1 provides a summary of the population based on Gender, Marital status, Academic rank and Years of experience that took part in the study. Regarding the gender of the respondents, 96 (96 %) were males and 4 (4 %) were females. This shows that there is high gender disparity in the academic staff of IHE in favor of males. 51 (51%) were married and 48 (48 %) were not married. The academic rank of the respondents constituted 36% Graduate assistant, 4% Assistant lecturer, 13% Lecturer, 37 % Assistant professor, 7% Associate professor, 3 % Professor. This indicated that IHE are endowed with very few numbers of Associate professors and professors. 27 % of the respondents had less than 5 years of experience and 73% had an experience more than 5 years.

**Table 1** Frequency of the demographic characteristics of the respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	1. Male	96	96
	2. Female	4	4
Marital status	1. married	51	51
	2 Unmarried	48	48
Academic rank	1. Graduate Assistant	36	36
	2. Assistant Lecturer	4	4
	3. Lecturer	13	13
	4. Assistant Professor	37	37
	5. Associate Professor	7	7
	6. Professor	3	3
Years of Experience	1. Less than 5 years	27	27
	2. Greater than 5 years	73	73

#### 4.2 Pearson's Correlation result

This section presents results about the relationship between the influencing factors: leadership and management quality, and training and development, compensation, co-worker relation, research, opportunities for promotion; and job satisfaction. To examine the effect of determining factors and job satisfaction, Pearson's product-moment correlation is used. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** Pearson's Correlation result

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Job satisfaction	1						
Leadership and management qualities	0.337**	1					
Training and development	.491**	.275**	1				
Compensation	.274**	.227**	.271**	1			
Co-worker relationship	.538**	.318**	.240*	.51	1		
Research	.597**	.184	.362**	.294**	.005	1	
Opportunities for promotion	.381**	.307**	.113	.185	.215*	.317**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the correlation analysis revealed that all the variables taken into consideration in this study have shown strong positive and significant relation with job satisfaction of the faculty members. It is indicated that training and development (.491,  $p < .01$ ), co-workers relationship (.538,  $p < .01$ ) and research (.597,  $p < .01$ ) have strong positive and significant correlation with job satisfaction. This finding is the same with volkwein & parmley (2000) which found a strong positive association of co-worker relations, and training and development with job satisfaction. Similarly Schulze (2006) in his study found that job satisfaction had highest correlation with research. Leadership and management quality (.337,  $p < .01$ ), compensation (.274,  $p < .01$ ) and Opportunities for promotion (.381  $p < .01$ ) have also positive and significant relations with job satisfaction although the relationship is small compared to the other three upper mentioned variables. Thus, the result shows that all the variables are positively related to job satisfaction, though the degree of relation differs.

#### 4.3 Regression analysis

The regression analysis was made to investigate the combined effects of the influencing factors on the job satisfaction of the staff in Eritrea's higher institutions. This was made to analyze deeply the impact of the variables as compared to the results of correlation analysis. The results are presented in table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Regression results

	B	SEB	$\beta$	Collinearity statistics	
				Tolerance	VIF
Constant	1.695	.170			
Leadership and management Quality	.005	.039	.009	.772	1.295
Training and development	.106	.040	.179**	.765	1.306
Compensation	.024	.039	.039	.841	1.190
Co-worker relations	.269	.037	.468**	.833	1.201
Research	.310	.043	.487**	.748	1.338
Promotion	.050	.034	.096	.805	1.243

$R^2 = .681$ ,  $F(6, 93) = 33.052$   $p < 0.001$

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

The  $R^2$  value indicates the percentage by which the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.  $R^2$  is 0.681 which reveals that 68.1% of the total variation of the job satisfaction of the faculty members in Eritrean higher institutions is explained by the independent variables. The remaining 31.9% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by other variables. This result shows that the determinant factors taken into consideration within this study have much impact on the overall job satisfaction of the faculty members. The values of tolerance which are higher than the cut of  $1 - R^2$ , 0.318 and VIF indicator with values very close to 1 have indicated that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables. The collinearity assumption of the independent variables in regression analysis is being fulfilled in this study.

The result of the regression analysis reveals that two of the factors which affect job satisfaction of faculty members have large and significant contribution to job satisfaction of the staff in Eritrea's higher institutions. They have backed by .468 and .487 at  $p < .01$  to their job satisfaction. This study coincides with Ziyana, (2013) findings in which he found that, workloads like encouragement towards research activities and publications have significant contributions to the job satisfaction. Moreover, training and development has small positive and significant, .179 at  $p < .01$  contribution to their job satisfaction. However, the remaining influencing factors, leadership and management quality, compensation, and opportunities for promotion have positive but insignificant outcome to their job satisfaction. This result contradicts to what the correlation analysis of these variables have shown which is significantly related to job satisfaction at  $p < .01$ . Muhammad, et al (2012) in their study of higher education institutes of Pakistan found that promotion is directly related to job satisfaction but impact of it is not significant. But contrary to this study, they found that, pay has significant impact to the job satisfaction.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has investigated the factors affecting employee job satisfaction in institutions of higher education in Eritrea. Correlation and Linear regression analysis were used to analyze the relationship among the variables and determine the overall effect of the variables to job satisfaction. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire from faculty members of different colleges in the IHE of Eritrea.

The result of the correlation analysis revealed that all the variables taken into consideration in this study have shown strong positive and significant relations with job satisfaction of the faculty members. The result of the regression analysis, shows that, research and co-workers relations, have large and significant contribution to the job satisfaction of the staff in institutions of higher education in Eritrea. Hence, the IHE should work in facilitating cooperation and coordination of staff engagement on research and co-workers relations to enhance academic staff job satisfaction. Training and development has small positive and significant, contribution to their job satisfaction. Contrary to the correlation result, leadership and management quality, compensation, and opportunities for promotion have positive but insignificant outcome to their job satisfaction. Therefore, if job satisfaction was to prevail in the IHE, there should also be focus on improving leadership and management quality, compensation, and opportunities for promotion.

The study concludes that the factors which affect job satisfaction of faculty in higher institutions considered here are helpful in retaining of existing members and for creating good reputation of the institutions. Thus, the higher institutions should work relentlessly to improve these variables. Furthermore, the research concludes that the authorities of IHE in Eritrea should make further investigations on other factors which influence job satisfaction.

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