

Academic Staff Job Satisfaction in Saudi Arabia: A Case Study of Academic Institutions in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Academic staff and their job satisfaction, in general, is a widely discussed topic in human resources and organizational management. Much of the interest in this concept is based on the realism that a person with a higher level of job satisfaction would demonstrate a positive attitude toward his/her job than an individual who is miserable with his or her position. This paper examines job satisfaction of academic staff in various institutions in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia as a means for continuous improvement in the understanding of the role played by academic staff in academic institutions. The principal objectives of the paper are to comprehend the nature of academic staff job satisfaction in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Job satisfaction questionnaire with 36 items obtained adopted from Spector (1997) for this paper. 45 questionnaires were mailed to various respondents of different universities and institutions in the province with 100% responses. The result shows varieties of response to the nine facets of job satisfaction instruments, namely: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operational conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. Despite the variations in response it is very important for managers of various institutions in the region to ensure job satisfaction of their employees for the survival of their institutions in a competitive global learning environment

Keywords: Academic job satisfaction, Education, Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction is a broadly discussed topic in organisational behaviour, human resources management and organisational management. Job satisfaction has been an example of the most current interests among researchers and practitioners for some decades [1]. Spector [2] argues that job satisfaction is the greatest regularly studied variable in organisational research. That is because a person with a high level of job satisfaction has a positive attitude toward his/ her job than the person who is dissatisfied with his/her job. Job satisfaction is linked to the employee's well-being and also to a good functioning organisation. According to Robbin and Coulter [3] in most cases when people talk of employees attitudes they are referring to job satisfaction. On the other hand, Pan [4] argue that when workers are free to decide how to develop and organise their work, they often feel more satisfied and committed to their job. Thus, job satisfaction comes from fulfilment and gratification of work. The significance of job satisfaction includes better performance and a lessening in withdrawal and counterproductive behaviour [5] Thus, what is job satisfaction?

Spector [2] defines job satisfaction as the way how one feels about one's job and the attitudes they have towards various characteristics or facets of their job, as well as an attitude and perception that could consequently affect the degree of fit between the individual and the organisation. On the other hand Sempane et al. [6] argues that job satisfaction is an outcome of an individual's awareness and assessment of their job predisposed by their unique requirements, values and expectation, which they regard as being significant to them. To others, job satisfaction is the extent to which expectation matches the real rewards, and at the same time a sense of achievement and success on the job. To many, it is a sense of doing a job that one loves doing and is paid for doing it so well. Kaliski [7] argue that job satisfaction is an important ingredient that leads to recognition, promotion, and income including the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of self-actualization. Oshagbemi [8] argues that job satisfaction is an individual's optimistic expressive reaction to a specific job and these responses are an outcome from associating the real and present-day result with those that are expected or anticipated by the individual. In Saudi Arabia especially in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, most of the employees are foreign expatriates working with their Saudi counterpart in academic institutions. Education plays a vital role in the development of Saudi Arabia, especially the higher education sector which is the focus of this paper. Academic staff in various institutions within the Eastern region of Saudi Arabias are key resources within Higher Education in the Kingdom and they play a major role in achieving the objectives of their various institutions or organization. Saudi Arabia education expansion has been of greater importance. For example Kind Abdullah expanded and created many universities all over the kingdom, and with the creation of these universities also sees an increase in the number of academic staffs from all over the world with different cultural background and race. Higher institutions in the Eastern Province are part of the expansion of higher education in the Kingdom.

The role of the academic staff in higher education in Eastern Province is crucial because they are the

productive workforce of higher education institution, they are key to a knowledge society in terms of developed or underdeveloped countries. The aim of this paper is to examine academic job satisfaction among academic staff in Saudi Arabia who make up a diverse workforce across the sector a case of Eastern province of the region. This is because a job satisfaction survey is the best way to examine various causes and factors of job satisfaction in a job environment.

For academic institution or universities to succeed in the Kingdom much depends on retaining and hiring of satisfied employees who are willing and are able to do their job efficiently and effectively. Job satisfaction (JS) investigation is an important instrument to elevate and improve the routine of employees as well as the organization or institution. This is because faculty academic members play an important part in the success of higher educational institutions. To this effect Cordeiro [9] attest to the fact that faculty members play a vital role in the successes of educational institutions. The same could be said for academic institutions in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia. Slocum and Hellriegel et al [10] demonstrate that “Employees have attitudes about their managers, pay, working conditions, and promotions, where they park, coworkers, etc. For them these attitudes are more significant than others because they are closely linked to performance, and they are related to hope, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment”.

Faculty job satisfaction in higher Educational institutions is very important because it can result in substantial academic achievement. Froeschle and Sinkford [11] argued that through increased job satisfaction, greater employee’s retention can help colleges and universities to accomplish satisfactory faculty provisions. Similarly, Wong and Heng [12] also argued that job satisfaction plays a vital role in retaining faculty. The academic institutions in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia which has numbers of universities and academic institution employ staff from different parts of the world and represent an ideal area of study for this paper. Thus, the principal aim of this study is to use a Job Satisfaction Survey to investigate job satisfaction of academic staff of various institutions in the Eastern region as a means of continuous improvement of the role play at by an academic staff in academic universities in the area, this is due to the fact that academic staff with proper backing can shape international and national reputation for the institution they are working for and for themselves by publishing research papers in various higher impact journal or scientific journals. In other words, academic job satisfaction can motivate staff to play an important role which can contribute to a positive outcome to the academic institutions and student learning. Little or no research has been published to our knowledge about academic job satisfaction hence our interest.

The rationale for this study is that little or no study has been conducted to examine the academic job satisfaction of staff in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia hence my interest. Thus, the significance of this investigation is to understand the nature of academic staff job satisfaction in the province. Academic staff satisfaction is observed as a cornerstone of ensuring a higher quality of education in the region. It also hoped that the finding from this paper is adopted as means for continuous improvement process of Academic job satisfaction in the province. Furthermore, the aim of this paper is mainly to examine staff job satisfaction in the area.

2. Theoretical framework

Theories of Job satisfaction overlap with motivations theories in such a way that it is difficult to know the limitations between the two. According to Bowling [13], this is because job satisfaction is connected to employee’s motivation and quality of job routine. The theoretical framework proposed by Herzberge [14] on job satisfaction and dissatisfaction is one of the important theories of job satisfaction. This theoretical framework of job satisfaction has five dimensions such as work itself, achievement, recognition, advancement and responsibility. On the other hand, job dissatisfaction has five dimensions such as working conditions, salary, supervision, interpersonal relations and policy and administration. Locke [15] developed the range of Affect theory, which is seen as one of the famous job satisfaction theories. This theory is based on the assumption that people, or employees, respond to an incentive in a satisfactory or on undesirable manner. The theory also explains the positive effects that one has from involvement will inspire individual to continue with the specific action, as they obtain positive results and reinforcements. And that the opposite is true in that when an individual experiences undesirable response or is confined in a negative state, they are motivated to escape and move away from the condition. In a case of a negative attitude towards an individual organisation of service, job satisfaction involvements can lead to either motivated or less motivated staff, which have an effect on the output of the individual. Maslow [16] hierarchy of need theory is observed by many researchers as the one who laid the foundation of the concept of job satisfaction know today in the workforce. This theory assumed that five specific needs desired in life are physiological needs, safety and security needs, social needs, self-esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The physiological needs are known as basic needs which an individual has for basic survival, such as food, water, shelter, clothing, oxygen, and family life. When these basic needs are satisfied, the next level of need which is safety can be discussed. Safety needs are needs such as emotional safety and physical safety, and health. Job security is very important for any employees either in business or any organisation or

institution. The social need involves issues such as intimacy that are considered by members of the organisation or institution, a friendship which makes employees have a sense of belonging or a feeling of belonging which is not manifested in the organization can lead to a sense of loneliness and depression.

Self-esteem need is a feeling of respect and confidence, and if this kind of feeling is eroded in an organisation, it can develop to negative self-esteem, which in any working environment will lead to demotivation and less productivity. If this happens in an organisation, it will have consequences on job satisfaction of the employees. Self-actualization is the realisation of one's potential in other words achieving one's dreams in all aspects of life.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and sampling. This paper uses quantitative methods to analyse the data. The participants for this paper were academic staff from different institutions in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Participants were chosen using a purposive sampling method technique. A questionnaire was sent to staff of various institutions in the region to respond. Samples of 30 staff were selected from various academic institutions in the region. This study uses positivist's paradigms because they can describe and explain features of reality from different perspectives using data from a questionnaire survey. The quantitative approach is relevant for this paper.

3.2. Questionnaire design. A structured questionnaire was given to respondents to respond to Job satisfaction instrument designed by Spector 1997[5]. The respondents were asked to answer questions related to their age, their level of education and years of teaching experiences

3.3. Study setting. The study for this paper was conducted in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. In other words, the data for this paper was collected from academic staff members of various academic institutions in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. The main purpose of this paper is to find out the perceived job satisfaction of academic staff in the region as a mean for continuous improvement in the understanding of the role played by the academicians and to ascertain whether they are satisfied with their jobs or not.

3.4. Instrument. To measure the job satisfaction of the academic staff in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia a Job satisfaction questionnaire developed by Spector [5] was adopted and used. This instrument contains 36 items, which are designed to assess employee's attitudes about aspects of their jobs. The instrument identifies and measures 9 key job satisfactions, using a Likert-type rating scale format, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" see Table 1. The purpose is to find out the perceived job satisfaction of academic staff in the region as a mean for continuous improvement in the understanding of the role played by the academicians and to ascertain whether they are satisfied with their jobs or not.

4. Literature review of academic job satisfaction.

There have been many studies on job satisfaction all over the world. There are many dimensions of job satisfaction, and the most focus was on the domain of Psychology. However, scholars in management are interested in studying employee's satisfaction of their job.

A study done by Batech and Heyliger[13] (2014) on academic administrator leadership styles and the impact of job satisfaction concluded that social change at the departmental level by creating academic administrators aware of real leadership models that encourage developed job satisfaction between faculty in universities.

They also cited (Cordeiro [9] who argue that it is serious that universities retain gratified employees to improve output and preserve comprehensive financial standing.

Aziri [14] did a review on job satisfaction and concluded that job satisfaction signifies one of the greatest complex parts fronting managers today when it comes to managing workers. He also asserts that job satisfaction has a large impact on the motivation of employees. The level of motivation also has an impact on productivity and henceforth performance of a business organisation, but unfortunately for his country job satisfaction has not been confirmed as an area of study either from managers or scholars of numerous business organisations.

Du et al.[15] conducted a study with 1770 teachers, from different levels in academic universities in China. They wanted to know the relationship between job satisfaction with six dimensions such as (career, development, school administration, teaching and research services, salary, benefits and logistical services, professional reputation, research facility and work itself) and the organisational characteristic of the university. Their findings show that overall job satisfaction was near average and benefit and salary scored the lowest level of satisfaction.

Sharma and Jeevan [16] did a study with university teachers, and the result shows that various proportions of job satisfaction are positively correlated.

Mahdi et al. [17] conducted a study on Northern Border University Academic Staff Job Satisfaction and concluded that staff were satisfied with their job and had loyalty to the institution. The highest dimension of satisfaction was with supervision dimension and the lowest

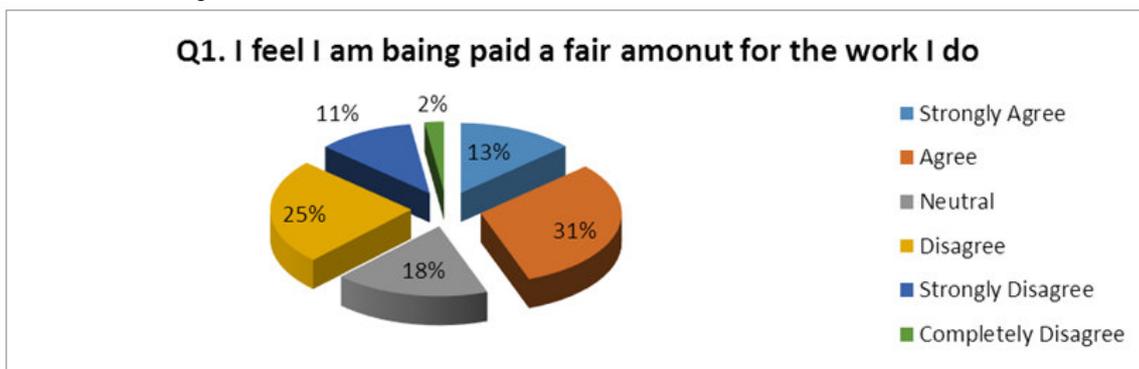
Banerjee [18] conducted a study on the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction and concluded that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and the all-inclusive life of a man leads and that a person who is pleased with his job is probably joyful with his life.

5. Result analysis

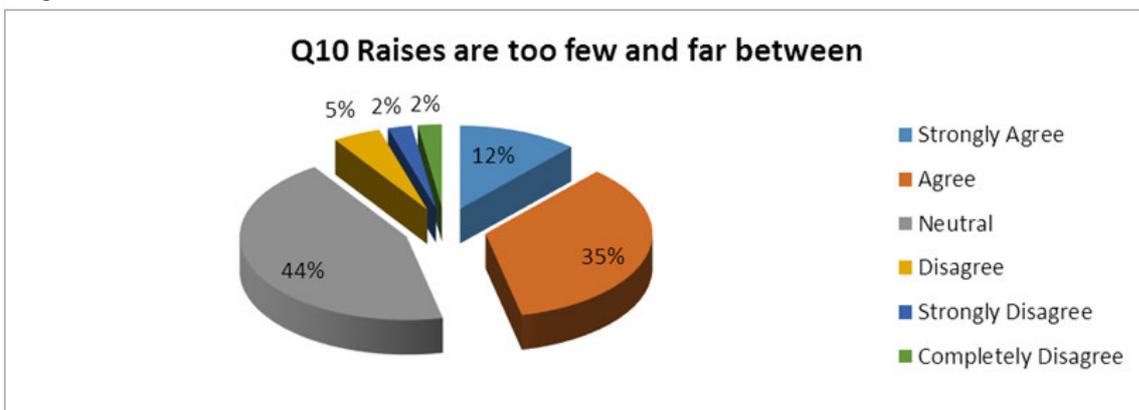
The result of this paper is analyzed using the Job satisfaction scale and grouping each section of the items and analyzing it one by one. For example pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operational conditions, coworker, nature of work, and communication. The result shows that respondents have different views on various items. I started analyzing with pay and remuneration item.

Pay items:

The total number of the respondent where 45, 13 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they are reasonably paid, 31% agree, while 25% disagree, 2% completely disagree, 25% disagree, 11% strongly disagree and 18% of the respondent neutral.

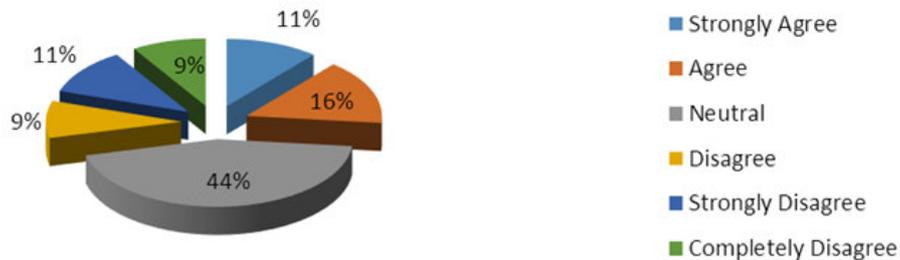


The second item on pay raises. 12% of the respondent strongly agree that there are too few and far between raises in pay. 35% agree, 44% are neutral, 5% disagree and 2% strongly disagree, while 2% completely disagree.



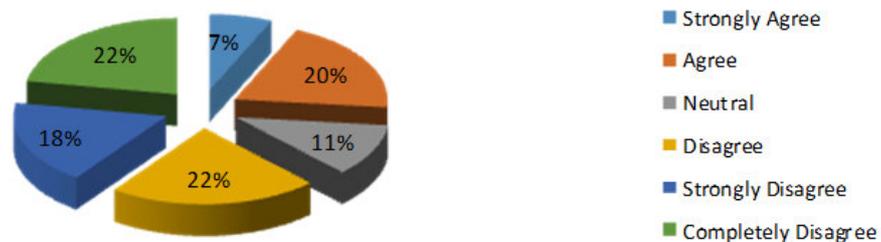
The third item in pay is the feeling of appreciation by the organization. 11% of the respondents strongly agree that they feel unappreciated by the organization when thinking about what they pay them. 16% agree while 44% are neutral, 9% disagree, 11% strongly disagree while 9% completely disagree.

Q19 I feel unappreciated by the organisation when I think about what they pay me.



The fourth item on pay is the feeling of being satisfied with the chance of salary increases. 7% strongly agree, while 20% agree. 11% of the respondents are neutral, 22% disagree, 18% strongly disagree and 22% completely disagree.

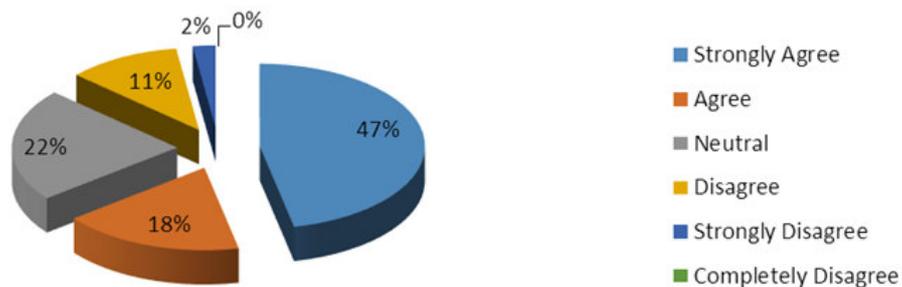
Q28 I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases



Promotion Items:

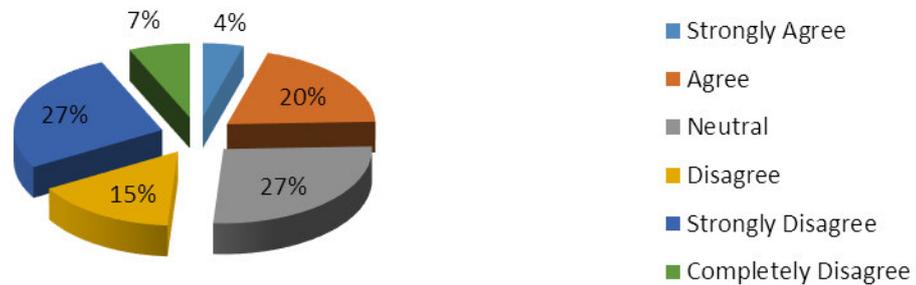
The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. 47% strongly agree that there is really little chance for promotion in their job, 18% agree, 22% neutral, 11% disagree while 2% strongly disagree.

Q2 There is really too little chance for promotion on my job



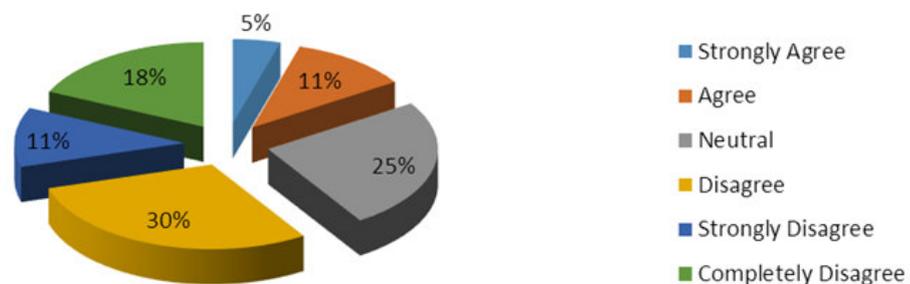
The second item in promotion is those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted. 4% strongly agree, 20% agree and 27% neutral. 15% disagree, 27 strongly disagree, while 7% completely disagree.

Q11 Those who do well on job stand fair chance of being promoted



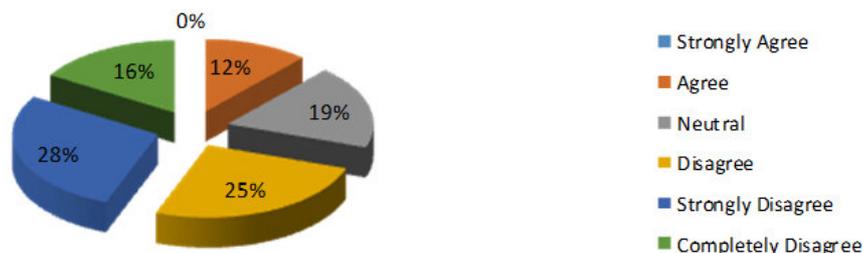
The third item on promotion is that people get ahead fast here as they do in other places. 5% strongly agree, 11% agree and 25% neutral. #0% disagree, 11% strongly disagree, while 18% completely disagree.

Q20 People get ahead fast here than they do in others



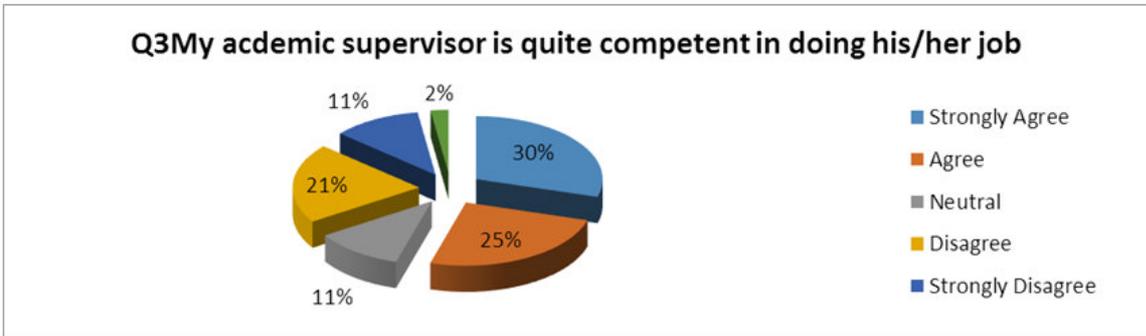
The fourth item is being satisfied with chances of promotion. 12% agree and 19% neutral. 25% disagree, while 28% strongly disagree and 16% completely disagree.

Q33 I am satisfied with my chances for promotion

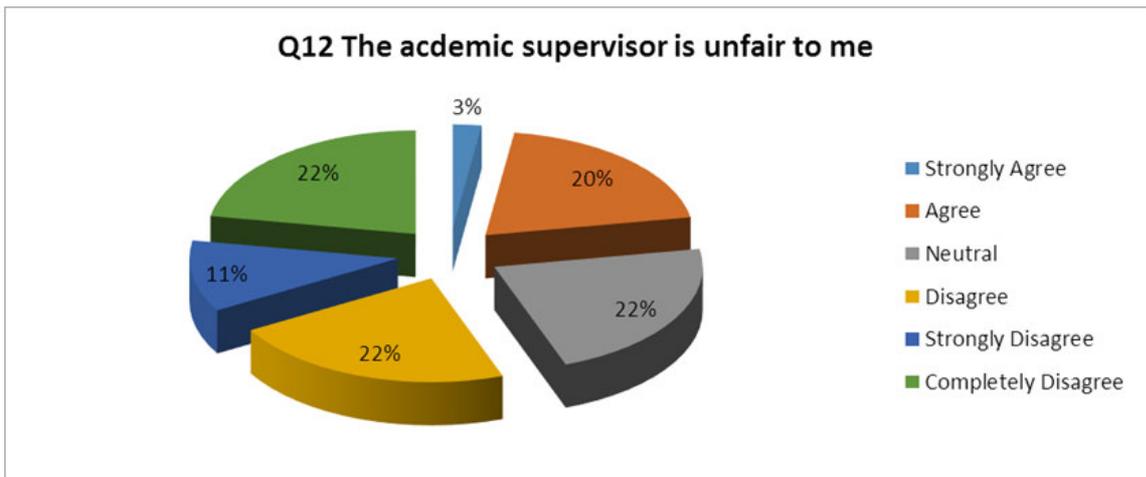


Supervision:

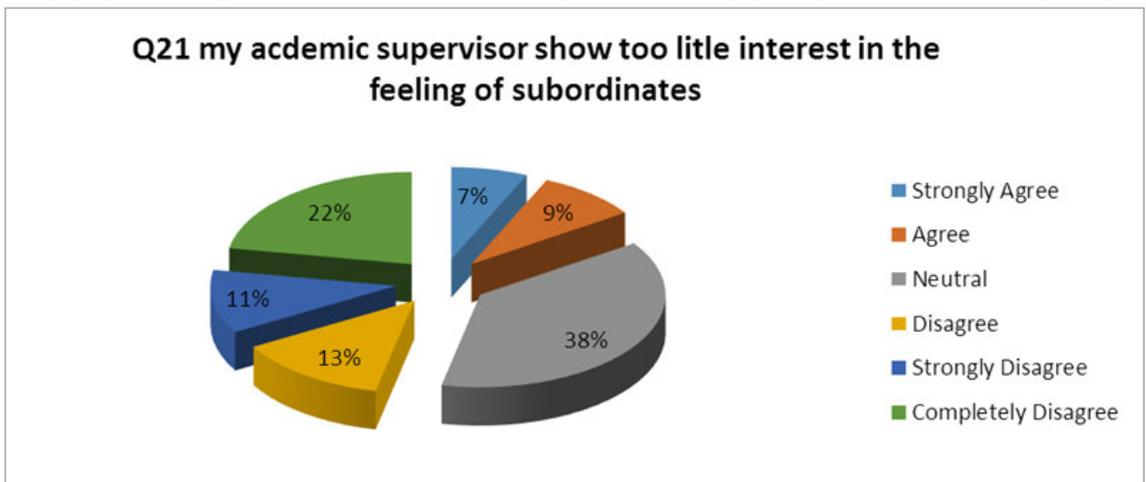
The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. The first item on academic supervision is competent of the supervisor in doing his/her job. 30% strongly agree that their supervisors are competent in doing his/her work. 25% agree and 11% neutral. 21% disagree, 11% strongly disagree, while 2% completely disagree.



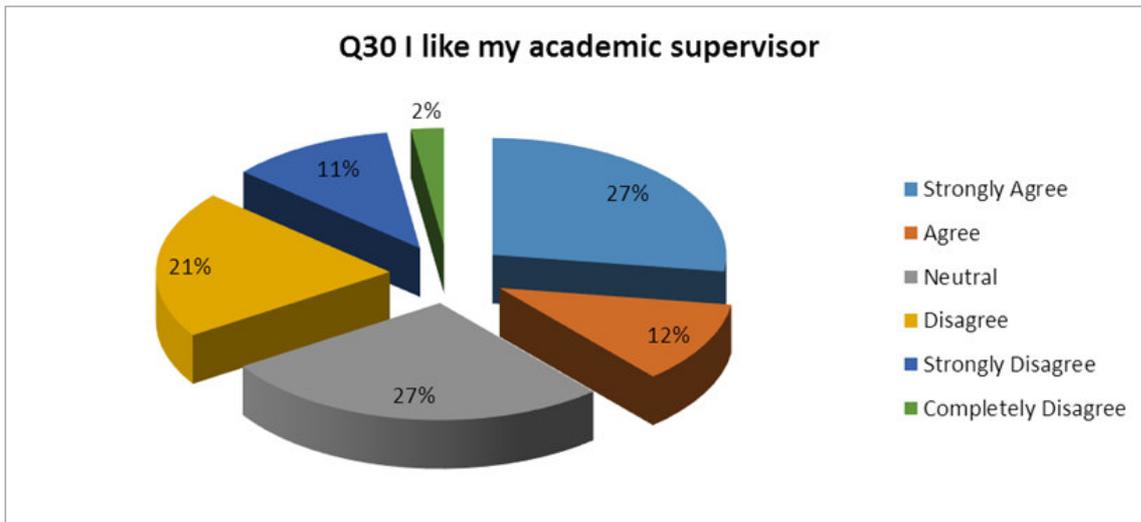
The second item in academic supervision is being unfair. 3% strongly agree, 20% agree and 22% is neutral. 22% disagree, 11% strongly disagree, while 22% completely disagree.



The third item on academic supervision is having less interest in the feeling of subordinates. 7% strongly agree, 9% agree and 38% neutral. 13% disagree, 11% strongly disagree, while 22% completely disagree.

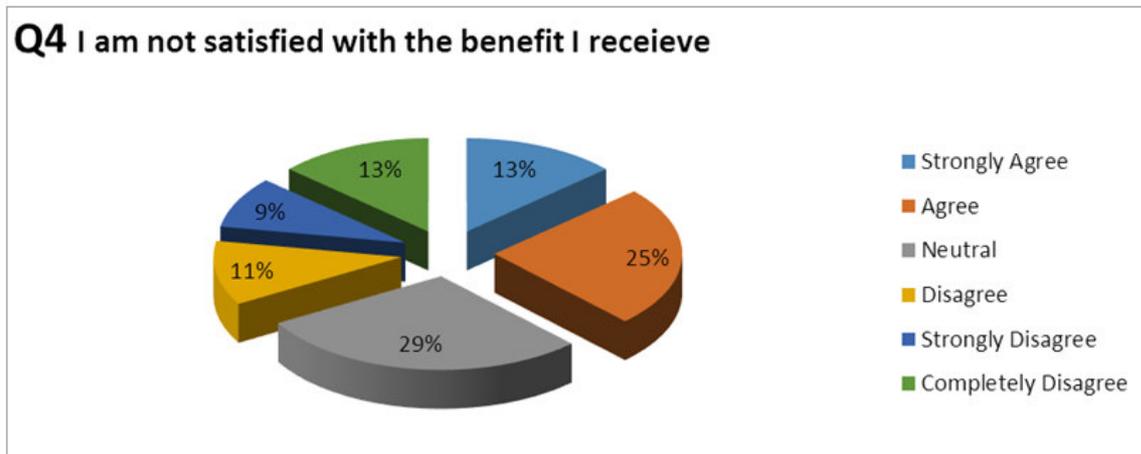


The fourth item in academic supervision likes the academic supervisor. 27 %strongly agree, 12 agree and 27% neutral. 21% disagree, 11% strongly disagree, while 2% completely disagree.

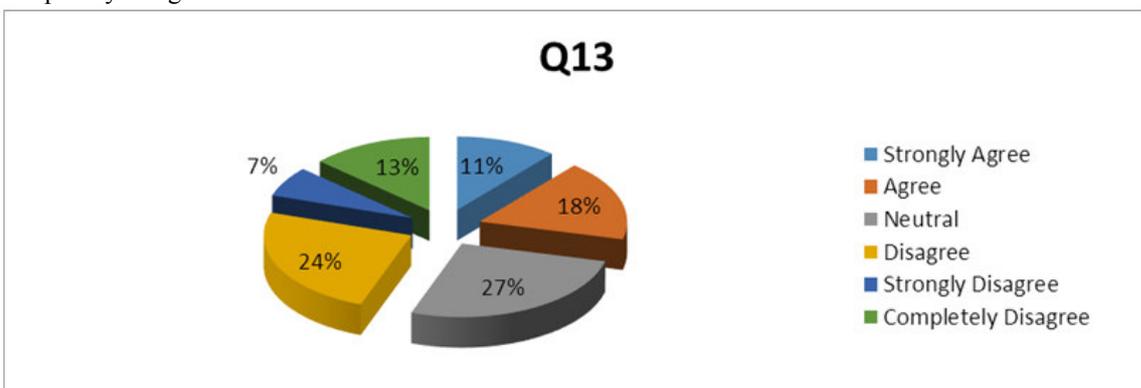


Fringe Benefit:

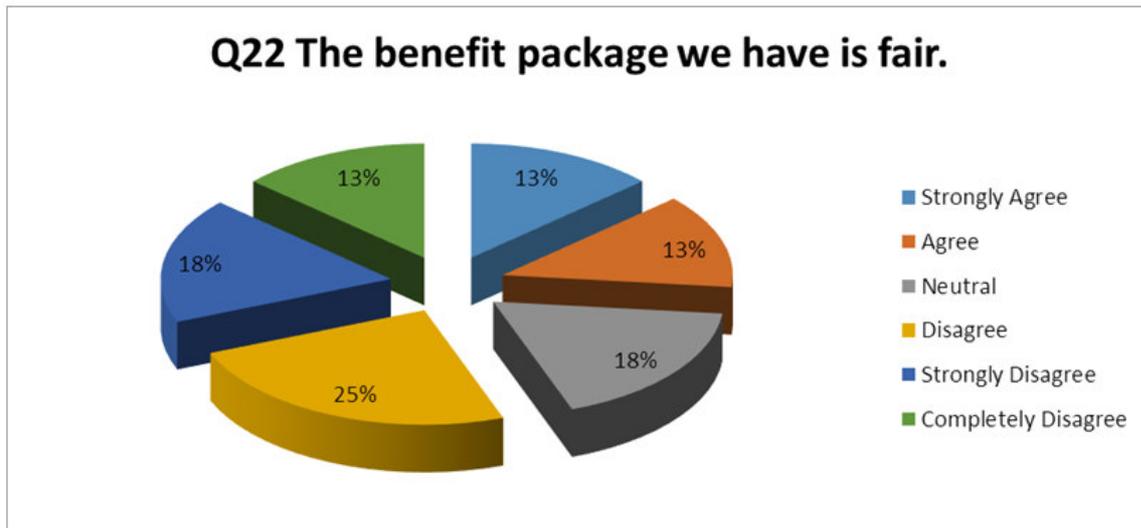
The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. The first item in the fringe benefit is not satisfied with the benefit received. 13% strongly agree that they are not being satisfied with the benefit they receive, 25% also agree and 29% neutral. 11% disagree, 9% strongly disagree, while 13% completely disagree.



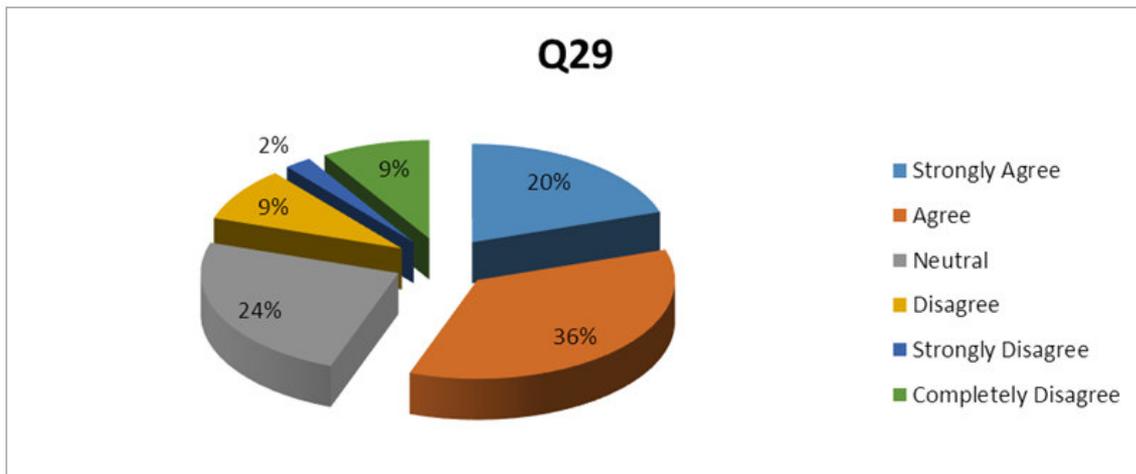
The second item in fringe benefit is that the benefits we receive are as good as most other organization offers. 11% strongly agree, 18% agree, and 27% are neutral. 24% disagree, 7% strongly disagree, while 13% completely disagree.



The third item in fringe benefit is that the benefit package they have is fair. 13% strongly agree, 13% agree, while 18% is neutral. 25% disagree, 18% strongly disagree, while 13% completely disagree.

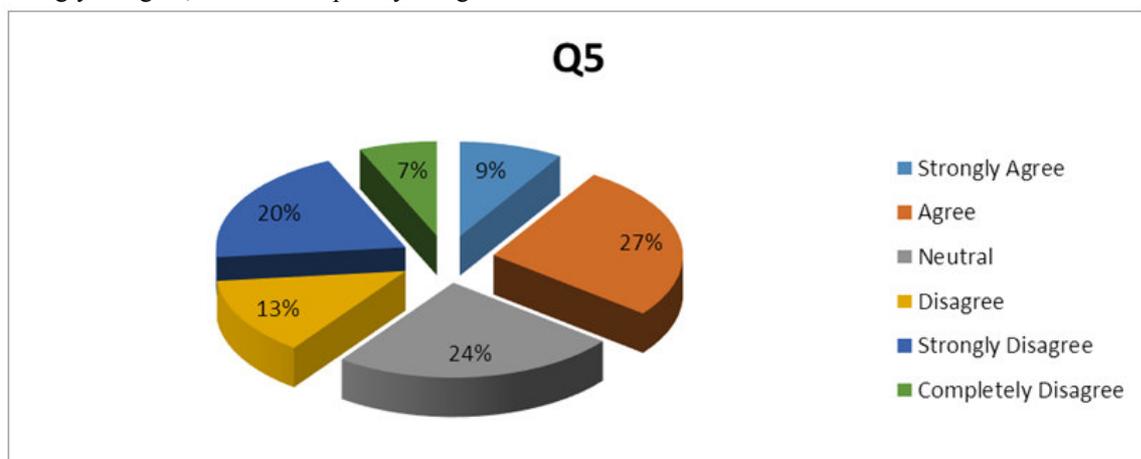


The fourth item is that there are benefits we do not have which we should have. 20% strongly agree, 36% agree, while 24% are neutral. 9% disagree, 2% strongly disagree. 9% completely disagree.



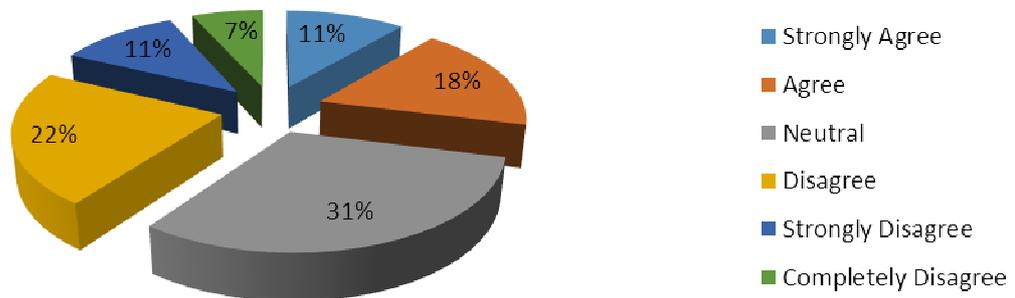
Contingent Rewards:

The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. The first item in contingent rewards is that when they do well, they receive recognition for it. 9% strongly agree, 27% agree, while 24% is neutral. 13% disagree, 20% strongly disagree, and 7% completely disagree.



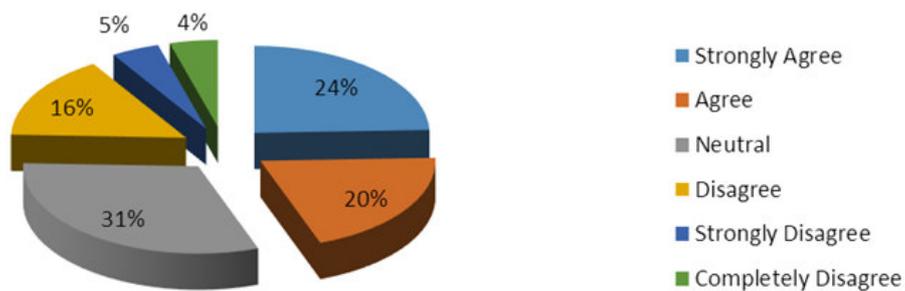
The second item in contingent reward is based on the feeling that the work that is done is not appreciated. 11% of the respondents strongly agree that they feel that the work they do is not appreciated, 18% also agree that they feel that the work they do is not appreciated while 31% remained neutral. 22% disagree, 11% strongly disagree and 11% completely disagree.

Q14I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated



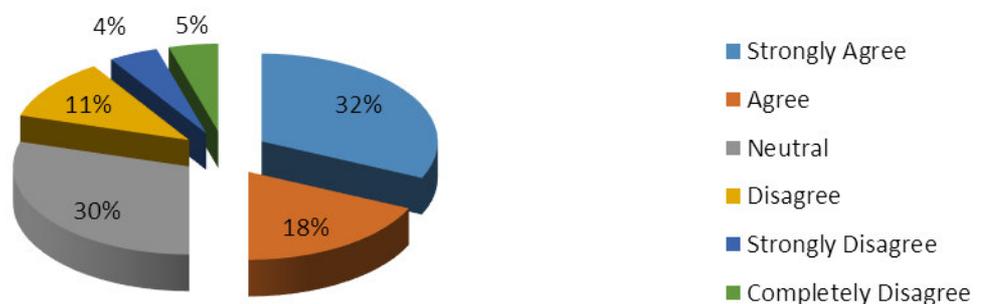
The third item in contingent reward is that there are few rewards for those who work here. 24% of the respondents strongly feel that there are few rewards for those who work for the organization, and 20% strongly agree, while 31% are neutral. 16% disagree, 5% strongly disagree and 4% completely disagree.

Q23



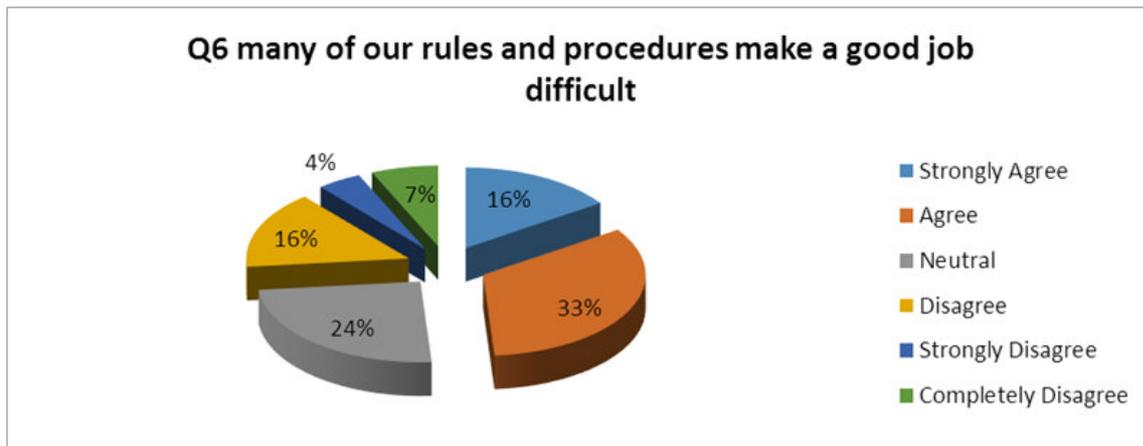
The fourth item concerns the feeling of being not rewarded the way it should be. 32% strongly agree that they are not being rewarded the way they should be and 18% agree, while 30% are neutral. 11% disagree, 4% strongly disagree while 5% completely disagree.

Q32 I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be

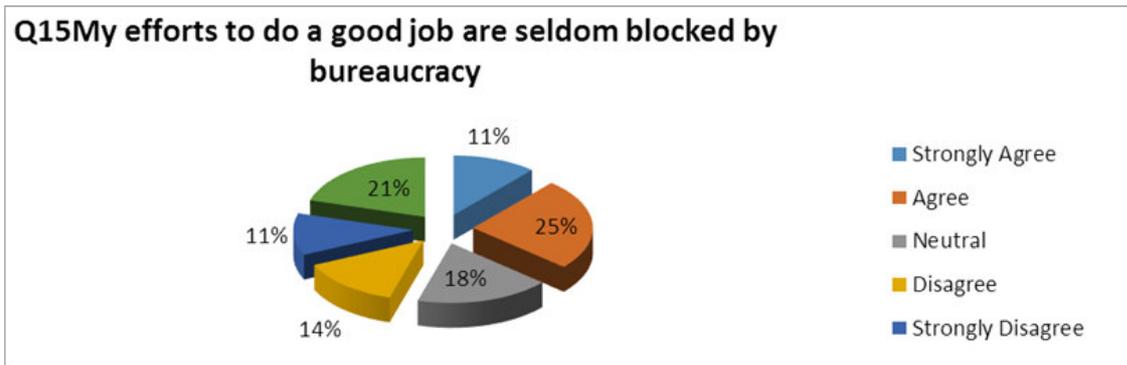


Operating Conditions

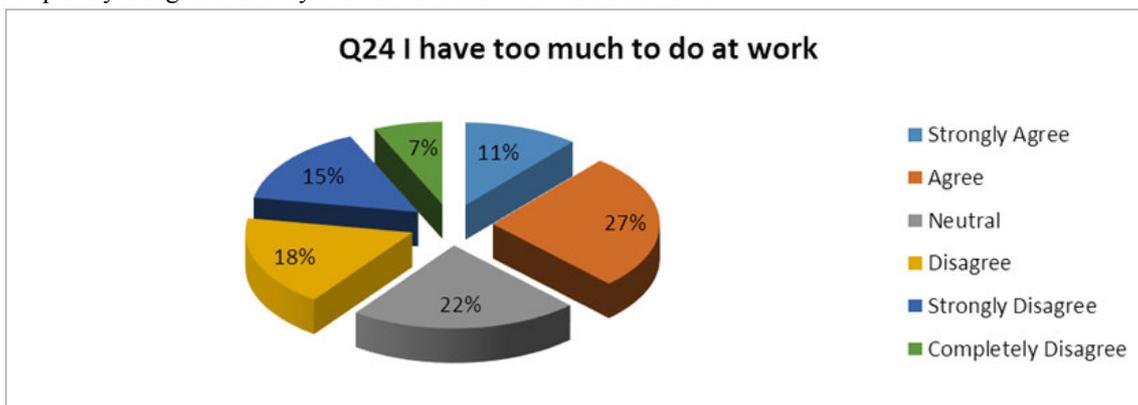
The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. The first item in operating conditions is that many of the rules and procedures make a good job difficult. 16% strongly agree that the rules and procedures in their organisation make a good job difficult, 33% agree that rules and procedures make a good job difficult, while 24% remain neutral. 16% disagree, 4% strongly disagree, while 7% completely disagree that rules and procedures in their organisation make a good job difficult.



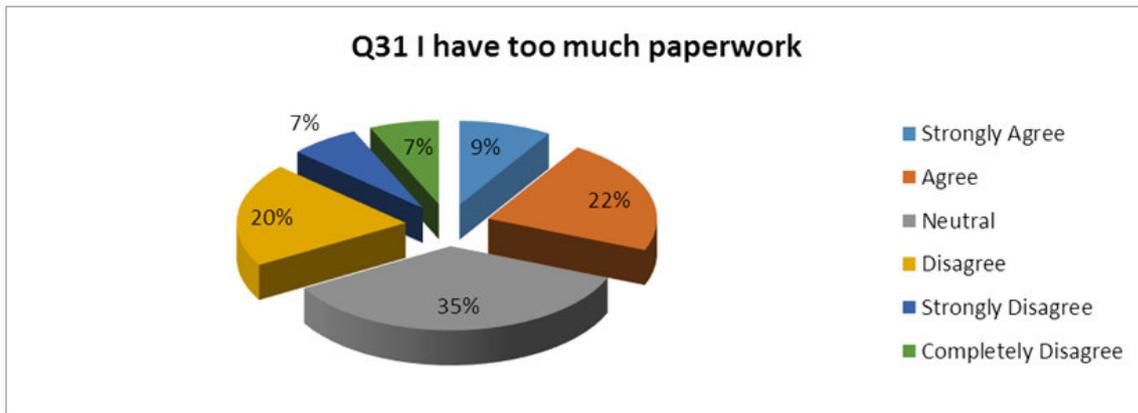
The second item in operating conditions is concerned with the feeling that efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by the administration of the organisation. 11% of the respondents strongly agree that their efforts to do a great job are seldom blocked by authority, 25% also agree that their efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by bureaucracy, while 18% remain neutral. 14% disagree, 11% strongly disagree while 21% completely agree.



The third item on operating conditions is about having too much to do at work. The respondents of this item strongly agree that they did have too much to do at work, and 27% agree with them, while 22% remain neutral. 18% disagree that they did not have too much to do at work, while 15% strongly disagree and 7% completely disagree that they did not have too much to do at work.

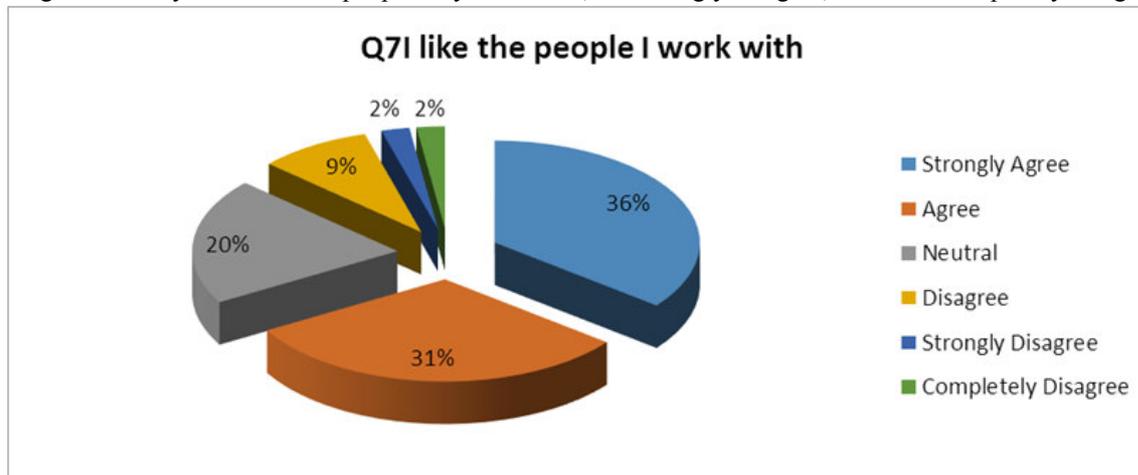


The fourth item is to do with having too much paperwork. The first respondents to this item strongly agree that they had to do too much paperwork with 9%, while 22% strongly agree with them and 35% remain neutral. 20% disagree that they did not have too much paperwork, and 7% strongly disagree with them while 7% also completely disagree with them.

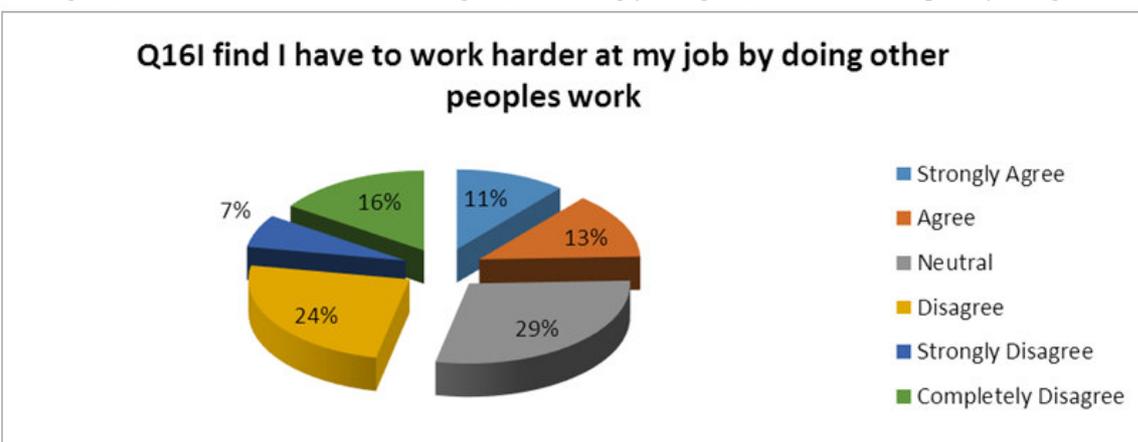


Coworker

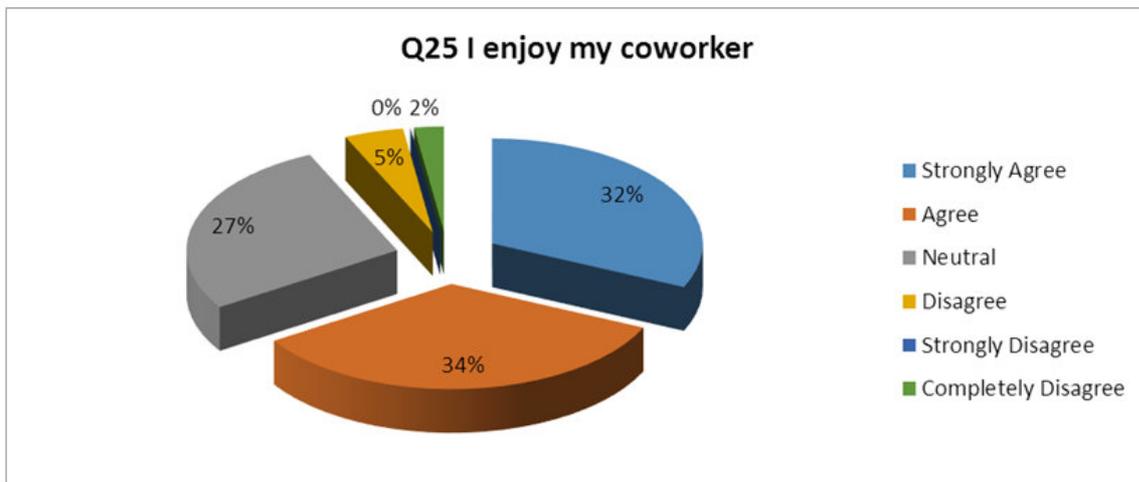
The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. The first item in coworker likes the people they work with. 35% of the respondents for this paper strongly agree that they like the people they work with, 31% also agree that they like the people they work with, while 20% of them remain neutral. However, 9% of the people disagree that they don't like the people they work with, 2% strongly disagree, while 2% completely disagree.



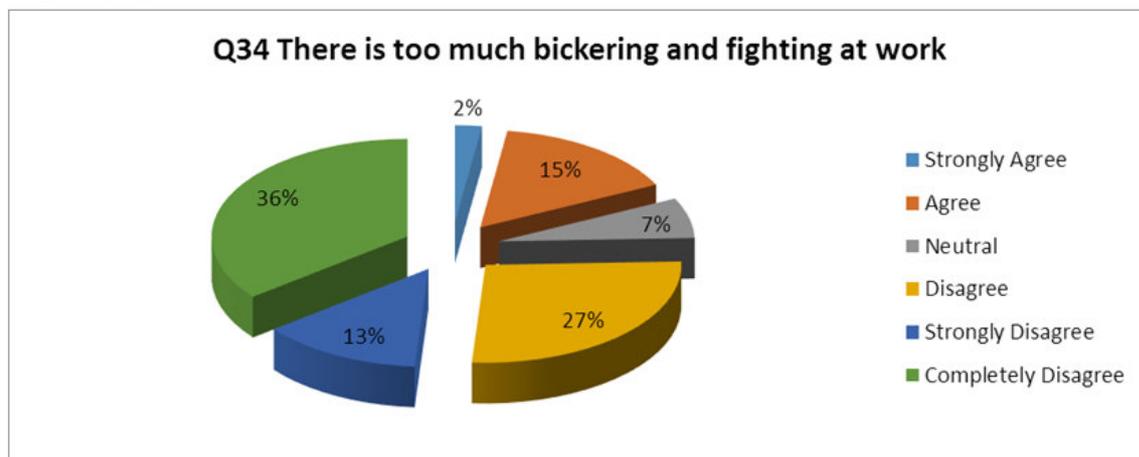
The second item in coworker liking the people they work with is to work harder at their job by doing other people's work. 11% strongly agree that they had to work harder at their job by doing other peoples work, 13% agree, while 29% is neutral. 24% disagree, 7% strongly disagree, while 16% completely disagree.



The third item in coworker is enjoying coworker. The respondents of this item with 32% strongly agree being with their coworker, 34% agree, while 27% were neutral. However, 5% disagree, 5% strongly disagree, while 2% completely disagree.

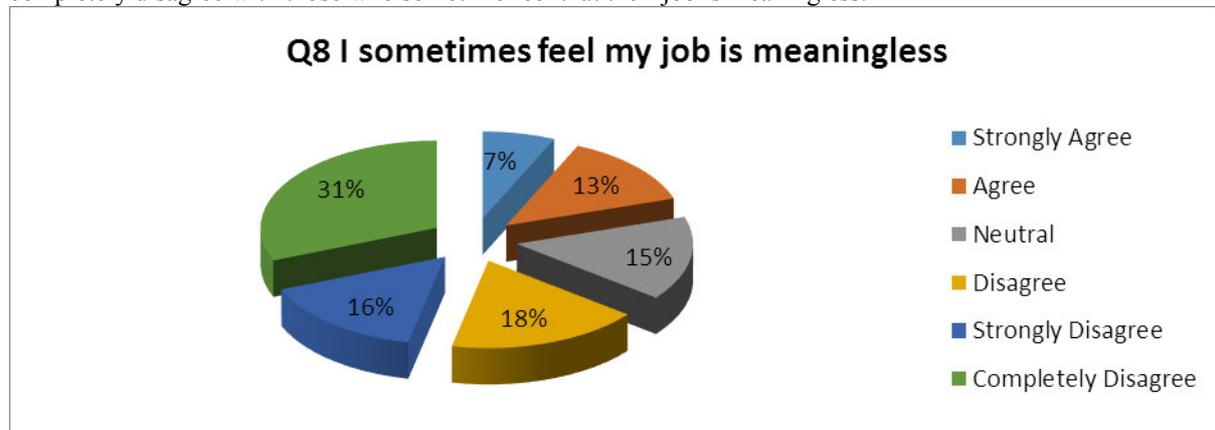


The fourth item is to do with too much bickering and fighting at work. The respondent with 2% strongly agrees that there is too much bickering and fighting at work, 7% agree, while 7% stayed neutral. 27% disagree, 13% of the respondent strongly disagree that there is too much bickering and fighting at work, and 36% completely agree with them.

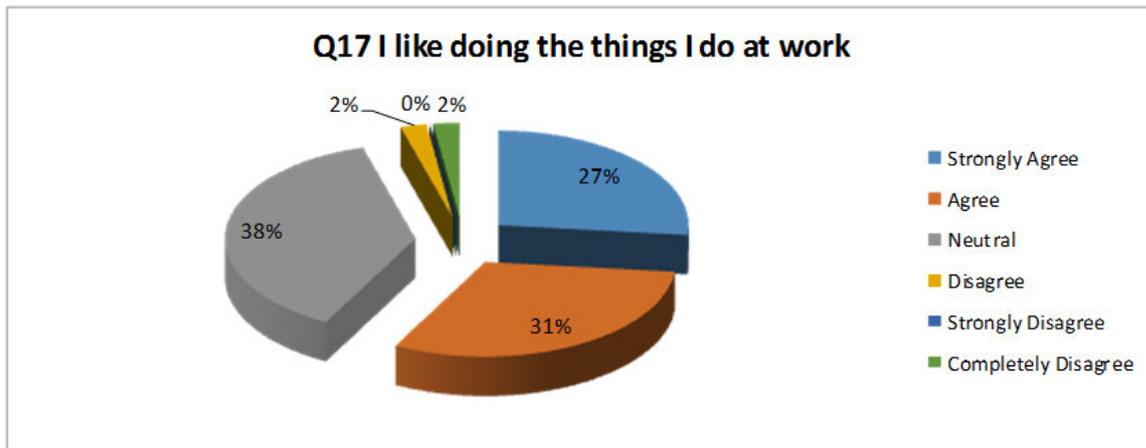


Nature of work:

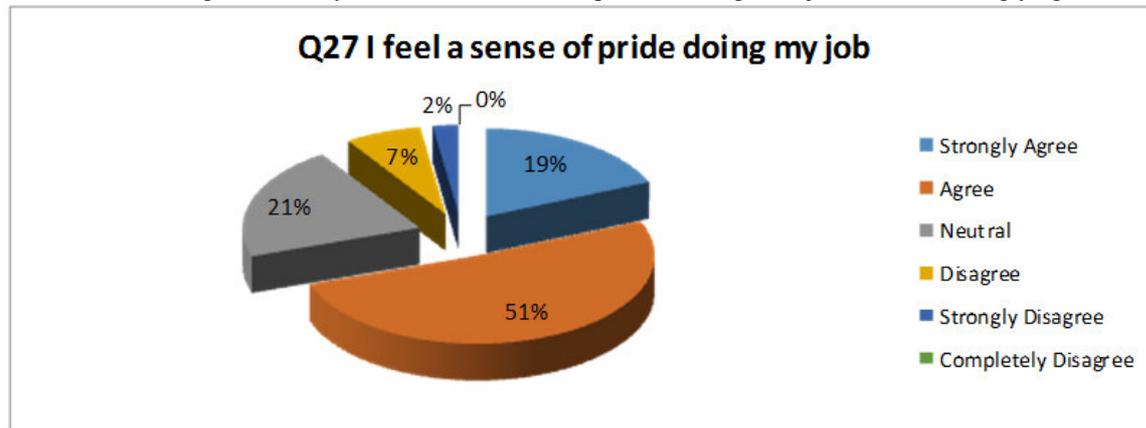
The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. The first item in nature of work is concerned with the feeling that the job is meaningless. The respondents on this first item on nature of work with 7% strongly agree that they feel that their job is meaningless, while 13% agree with them, 15% of the respondent remain neutral in the feeling that their job is meaningless. However, 18% disagree, 16% also strongly disagree, while 31% completely disagree with those who sometime feel that their job is meaningless.



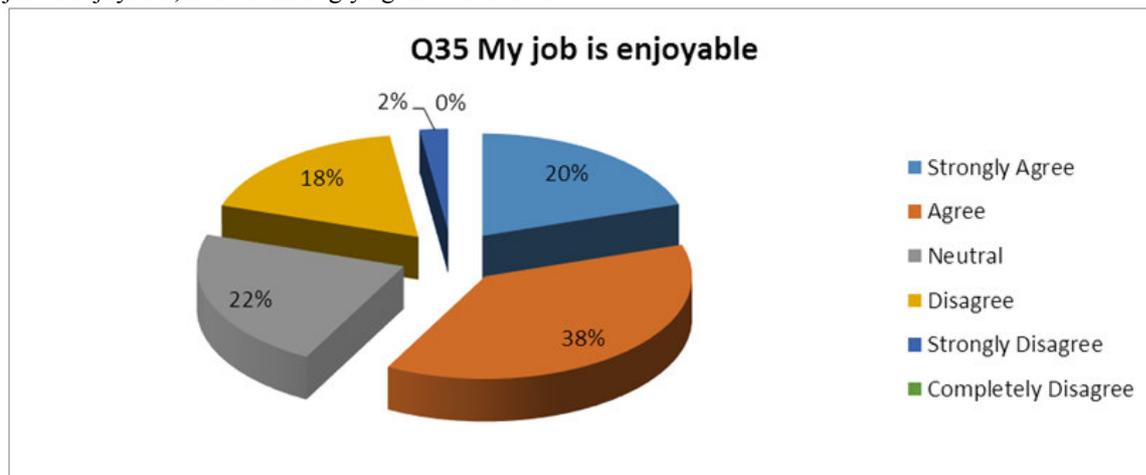
The second item on the nature of work is I like doing the things I do at work. 27% of the respondents strongly agree that they like doing the things they do at work, 31% of the respondents agree with them, while 38% remain neutral. 2% of the respondents disagree, and 2% completely disagree.



The third item in the nature of work is a concern with feeling a sense of pride in doing one's job. 19% strongly agree that they feel a sense of pride in doing their job, while 57% of them agree, 21% were neutral. However, 7% disagree that they did not feel a sense of pride in doing their job, and 2% strongly agree with them.

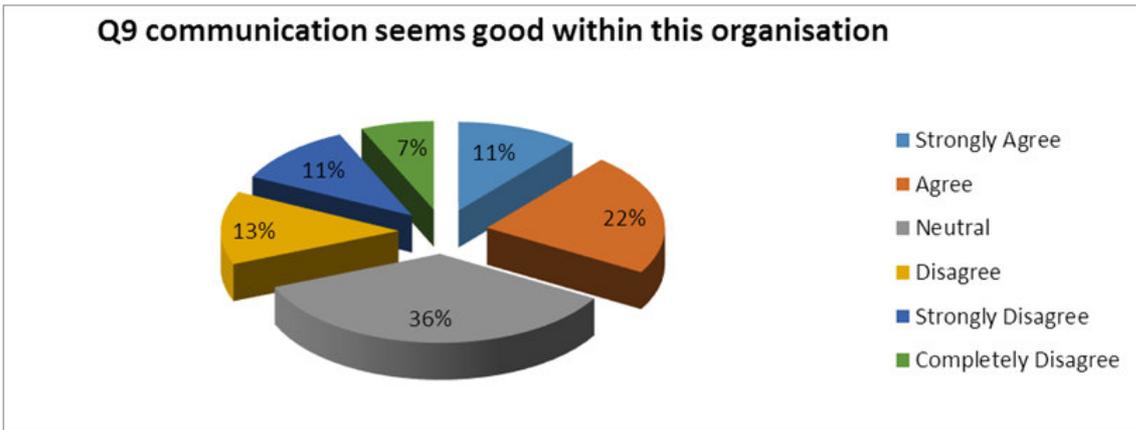


The fourth item is about enjoying the job. The respondent on this item, with 20% strongly agreeing that their job is enjoyable, 38% agree with them, while 22% remain neutral. However, 18% disagree that their job is enjoyable, and 2% strongly agree with them.

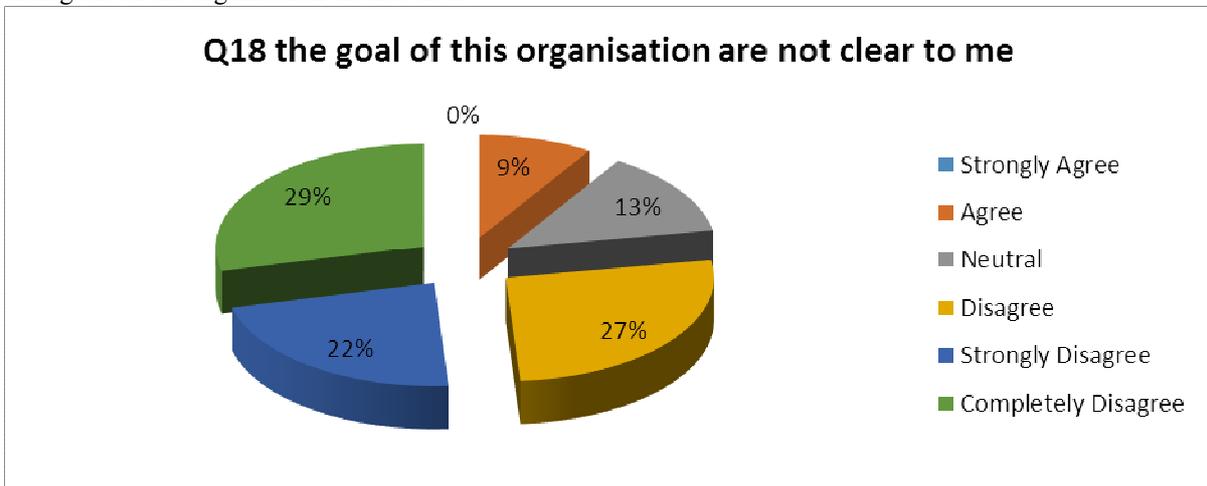


Communication:

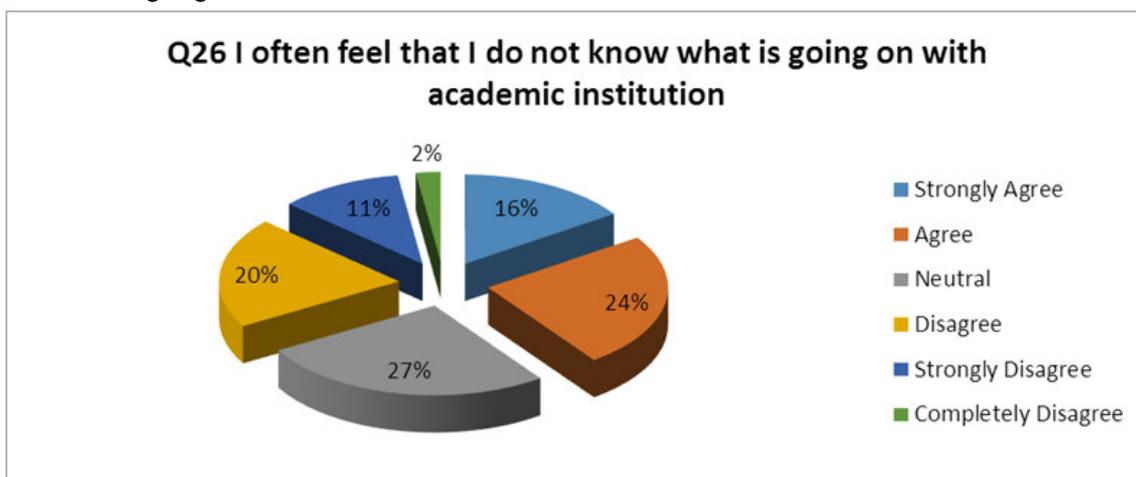
The total numbers of respondents for these items were 45. The first item in communication is concerned with good communication in the organisation. 11% strongly agree that communication seems good within their organisation, 22% agree with such an assessment, while 36% is neutral. However, 13% disagree that communication in their organisation seems good, 11 strongly disagree, while 7% completely disagree.



The second item is to do with the concern that the goal of the organisation is not clear to them. 9% only agree with the respondents, while 13% stayed neutral. However, 27% disagree with the notion that the goals of their organisation are not clear, while 22% strongly disagree, 29% completely disagree with the concern that their goals of the organisation are not clear.

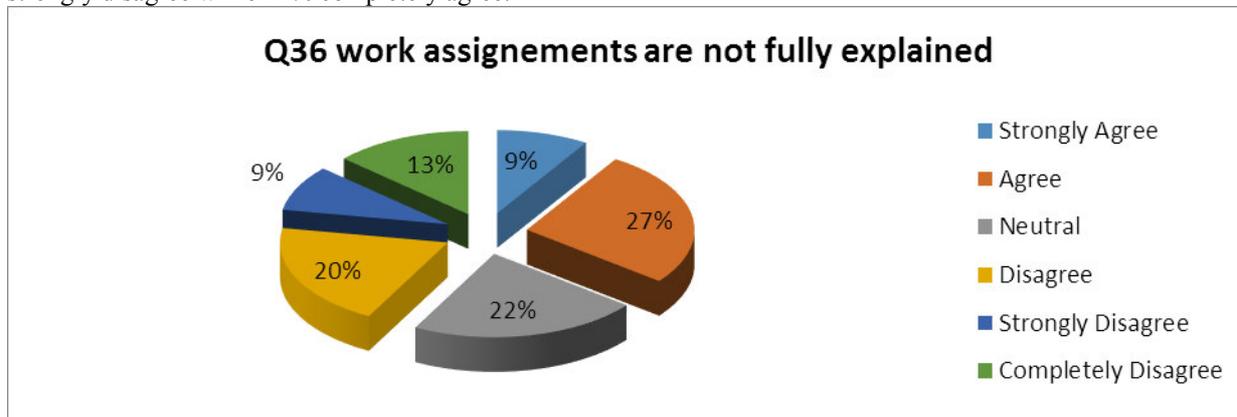


The third item with regards to communication in the organisation is concerned with the often feeling that they do not know what is going on with the academic institutions. 16% strongly agree that they often feel that they know what is going on with their academic institution, and 24% agree with them, while 27% is neutral. However, 20% disagree with the understanding that they feel that they do not know what is going on with their academic institution, 11% strongly disagree, while 2% completely disagree with the feeling that they do not know what is going on in their academic institution.



The fourth and the final item in the instrument of job satisfaction is to do with a concern of communication within the organisation is to do with work assignments are not fully explained. 9% of the

respondents strongly agree that work assignments are not thoroughly explained, and 27% agree, however, 22% were neutral. 20% disagree and 9% strongly disagree, while 13% completely disagree that communication within the organisation with regards, work to the assignment are not sufficiently explained. 5% also agree that their efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by bureaucracy, while 18% remain neutral. 14% disagree, 11% strongly disagree while 21% completely agree.



6. Conclusion

The findings of this paper show that there are varieties of the score under the nine facets subscale based on 4 items each. The first four items on pay subscale show that the respondent strongly agrees with the highest of 13% that they are being paid a fair amount for the work they do, while 2% completely disagree. The second subscale was to do with promotion, and only 12% agree that there is a chance for them to get promoted in their organisation and the highest strongest agreement with 47% was with the respondents who feel that there is a really little chance for promotion in their jobs. The third subscale reflects supervision. 30% strongly agree that their academic supervisors were quite competent in doing their job, while 2% completely disagree. The fourth subscale reflects fringe benefit. 20% of the respondent strongly agree that there are benefits they do not have which they should have, while 13% think that the benefit they have is fair. The fifth subscale contingent rewards, 32% of the respondents strongly do not feel that their effort is rewarded the way they should, while 5% completely disagree. The six subscales were to do with operation conditions, 33% agree that many of their rules and procedures make a good job difficult and 25% agree, however, 7% completely disagree. The seven subscale coworker, 36% strongly like the people they work with, while only 2% disagree. The eight subscales were to do with nature of work, 27% like doing the things they do at work, while 2% completely agree. Finally, the last subscale was to do with communication, 11 seem to believe that communication at their workplace is good while at the same time 7% completely disagree. It really important to note that it is very difficult to measure academic job satisfaction of the staff due to many items measuring it, some staff are happy with the pay; some are not while others are happy with those whom they work with and others not. The most important lesson learn from this paper is that organisations or academic institutions should do their best to make their staff satisfied by making sure that all the issues related to job satisfactions are tackle with due care and sincerely.

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