

## Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff: A Cross-sectional Study

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### ABSTRACT

Academics of universities have a critical and important role in the development and progress of countries as the main pillars of the higher education system. Job dissatisfaction can lead to their reduced research efficiency and work quality. This study was conducted to evaluate job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among academics of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran. It was a cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical study conducted in 2012 on 206 academics working at that university. Sampling was done systematically and data gathered using a researcher made questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS16 software as well as parametric and nonparametric methods. Job satisfaction of academics was average, with a mean of  $58.5 \pm 15.7$  from 100 (Range: 42.8-74.2). The highest satisfaction was related to the dimensions of job nature and the lowest was in salaries and wages. Male academics were more satisfied than females ( $P=0.04$ ). In addition, the mean of faculty member's job satisfaction in different faculties was significantly different ( $P=0.03$ ). Generally, academics had a relatively good satisfaction level. Improving salaries, correcting the process of promotion and optimizing the management system are among factors that need more attention from authorities, in order to increase the academic members' satisfaction level.

**KEYWORDS:** *Job satisfaction, Academics, Iran*

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### INTRODUCTION

Universities are the central and

fundamental center of educational and scientific-research activities in countries [1] and their academics have important and key roles in the scientific development and growth of the country and are the most important pillars of the education system [2]. High-quality academics are the cornerstone of a successful educational system. Therefore, their job satisfaction is important. A positive and healthy university structure results in increased academics job satisfaction [3]. Meanwhile, academics of medical science universities play an important role in training physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other persons in the health system and students trained by these academics will have an effective role in the health system of societies [2]. Therefore, understanding academics expectations and motivation needs must be considered by organizations [3]. Investigating job satisfaction is important in the sense that job dissatisfaction causes decreased productivity and quality of work [4]. Success of each organization depends on its personnel's occupational effort and satisfaction. Job dissatisfaction demoralizes people and demoralization has a severe effect on efficiency. Therefore, managers should recognize the signs of dissatisfaction in their personnel and perform necessary actions as soon as possible [2-5]. Job satisfaction has important effects on personnel's organizational performance, absence of work, displacement and psychological disorders [3,6-8]. Higher salary, personnel cooperation, and promotion chances cause higher organizational obligation and job satisfaction [3]. Overall, academics have a moderate level of job satisfaction [7]. People's intent to leave their present job has a strong relation with job satisfaction[8-9]. Various investigations have been done on academics' job satisfaction in Iranian universities. Improper work conditions, limited occupational security, managerial problems, low salary, fewer promotion chances and insufficient facilities have had negative influences on academics and have caused occupational stress, dissatisfaction and reduced performance [1]. The motivation priorities of academics were salaries and privileges, the work nature and occupational security respectively [10]. About 60% of academics had job dissatisfaction and its most important reason was promotion chances and the physical conditions of the workplace [11]. In Isfahan, Iran, academics' job satisfaction was generally at a good level but was different in different areas. The highest satisfaction was about work nature; followed by occupational security, salaries, privileges, promotion chances and other areas were at a good level [12]. Research about people's job satisfaction has undeniable importance. Since no study had been performed about this topic among the academics of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran, this research was done with the aim of

investigating academics' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction level in 2012. This study can help take a step toward planning and promoting the satisfaction of academics based on documented information.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Subjects:** This descriptive analytical study was done in 2012 in Shiraz, Iran. The population under study was all clinical and non-clinical academics of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. Participants were chosen by stratified random sampling from a list of university academics. The required sample size in this study was calculated taking into account the possible value of about 65% satisfaction [12]; and with a confidence interval of 95% and  $d=0.065$ , 206 people were calculated. Sampling was done separately among clinical and non-clinical academics and 30% of the staff was chosen systematically from each faculty to obtain the calculated sample size.

From 661 members of faculty, 206 people were chosen from eight faculties, which were medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, paramedics, rehabilitation, health and nutrition, management and information technology and nursery faculties. All academics worked since 2012 were included in the study and retirees and guests were excluded from the study according to predefined entrance criteria.

This study started after approval from the Medical Ethics Committee of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. Participation in the study was voluntary. Subjects were informed about the aim of the study and confidentiality of information. Subjects do not agree to participate were replaced by others.

**Assessment tools:** Data was gathered using a questionnaire obtained from a study done in Isfahan about this topic, where the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were confirmed with Cronbach alpha as 0.95 [12].

This questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part included individual characteristics of academics such as gender, age, educational degree, kind of training group, scientific rank, kind of employment, marital status, work experience and the second part consisted of information related to job satisfaction. This information included 45 questions, the five first items related to salaries and privileges, 6 items related to promotion chances, 14 items were about the way of supervision and communications, 7 items about job security, 7 items about physical conditions and the work environment and 6 items about work nature. The grading scale used was 0 for dissatisfaction to 5 for complete satisfaction.

**Data Analysis:** The total scores were classified based on 25, 50, 75 and over 75 percentiles and as low, moderate, good and high satisfaction, respectively. We used ANOVA and t-test for variables (such as salaries and privileges, promotion chances, physical conditions and the work environment) with a normal distribution, and for non-normal variables (such as work nature, supervision, and communications, job security), Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests were applied.

## RESULTS

Job satisfaction was studied among 206 academic staff of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. The participants included 126 (61.2%) men and 80 (38.8%) women. Mean and standard deviation of age was 43.4 yr (7.4). 39.3% of the academics were from basic sciences and 60.7% were clinical academics. Some characteristics of these academics are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The demographic characteristics of the academics

Variable	N (%)	
<b>Scientific rank</b>	Lecturer	32(15.5)
	Assistant professor	108(52.4)
	Associate professor	51(24.8)
	Professor	15(7.3)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	126(61.2)
	Female	80(38.8)
<b>Marriage status</b>	Single	26(12.6)
	Married	180(87.4)
<b>Academic group</b>	Basic sciences	81(39.3)
	Clinical	125(60.7)
	Less than 10 yr	83 (42.7)
<b>Work experience</b>	10- 20 yr	73(35.4)
	More than 20 yr	45(21.8)
	Medicine	120(58.3)
<b>Faculty</b>	Dentistry	29(14.1)
	Pharmacy	10(4.9)
	Health and nutrition	10(4.9)
	Rehabilitation	8(3.9)
	Paramedics	9(4.4)
	Management	3(1.5)
	Nursing	17(8.3)

The total job satisfaction score of the academics was at an average level with a mean of  $58.5 \pm 15.7$  out of 100. Job satisfaction in work nature, supervision, and communications, occupational security, physical conditions of the workplace, promotion chances, salaries and privileges were also average with a means of respectively  $74.9 \pm 17.3$ ,  $58.9 \pm 19.0$ ,  $58.6 \pm 21.7$ ,  $54.7 \pm 17$ ,  $53.4 \pm 19.7$  and  $48.9 \pm 21.3$  out of 100.

The maximum and minimum satisfactions belonged to work nature, salaries, and privileges, respectively (Fig.1).

In promotion chances ( $P=0.001$ ) and work nature ( $P=0.03$ ), men's job satisfaction was higher than women were; but in other areas, there was no significant difference between women and men.

Male academics had higher satisfaction than females ( $P=0.04$ ). In addition, married people had higher work satisfaction compared to single people ( $P=0.01$ ), in other areas, no difference was observed between married and single people (Table 2).

Job satisfaction rates in salaries and privileges ( $P=0.02$ ), occupational security ( $P=0.001$ ), physical conditions of work environment ( $P=0.001$ ) was higher in academics with higher scientific ranks than others. Nevertheless, in other areas, no difference was observed in job satisfaction among academics with different scientific ranks ( $P=0.08$ ) (Table 2).

In addition, subjects with a master degree had the highest satisfaction in salaries and privileges ( $P=0.03$ ) and physical conditions of the work environment ( $P<0.001$ ) while in other areas, educational degree had no influence on job satisfaction ( $P=0.09$ ) (Table 2).

Although greater satisfaction scores with salaries and physical conditions were observed in basic sciences academic staff than clinical academics, no significant difference was observed for all items between the two groups ( $P=0.07$ ) (Table 2).

In other areas except in salaries and privileges in which the maximum satisfaction belonged to subjects with more than 20 yr ( $P=0.002$ ) experience, the work experience of individuals had no effect on job satisfaction.

The employment status was one of influencing factors on subjects' job satisfaction and satisfaction in salaries and privileges ( $P=0.001$ ), occupational security ( $P=0.02$ ), and physical work environment conditions ( $P=0.03$ ) was different in various employment statuses. In sum, maximum job satisfaction belonged to academics with a contracted employment status (Table 2).

Satisfaction in the investigated faculties was different ( $P=0.03$ ) and the maximum belonged to the Rehabilitation Faculty. In promotion chances, the maximum satisfaction belonged to the Rehabilitation Faculty ( $P=0.001$ ) and in workplace physical conditions the maximum was seen in the Health Faculty ( $P=0.04$ ) (Table 2).

Job satisfaction increased by age, and this was significant statistically ( $P=0.01$ ). Maximum job satisfaction was observed in the over 60 yr old academics with the mean score of  $73.2 \pm 7.8$  and minimum job satisfaction was in the less than 40 yr old with a mean score of  $55.4 \pm 16.6$ .

**Table 2.** Effective factors on job satisfaction in different areas

Variables	Area	Salaries and privileges		Promotion chances		Physical conditions of workplace		Supervision and communications	Job security	Work nature	All items					
		Mean. (SD)	P	Mean. (SD)	P	Mean. (SD)	P	P*	P	P	Mean. (SD)	P				
Age	< 40	41.4(22.5)	0.010	50.6(21.3)	0.240	52.3(17.0)	0.070	0.220	0.020	0.070	55.4(16.6)	0.010				
	40-60	52.6 (18.9)		54.7(18.5)		55.5(17.3)							59.7(14.9)			
	>60	67.2(28.1)		61.3(24.2)		69.1(9.1)							73.2 (7.8)			
Gender	Male	49.4(22.1)	0.680	57.0(11.3)	0.001	55.1(17.0)	0.690	0.090	0.130	0.030	60.2. (15.6)	0.04				
	Female	48.1(20)		47.5(18.0)		54.1(17.6)							55.8(15.5)			
Marriage status	Single	44.0 (19.2)	0.210	48.2(16.7)	0.150	53.7(17.1)	0.750	0.510	0.540	0.010	55.5(14.7)	0.030				
	Married	49.6(21.5)		54.1(20.1)		54.8(17.3)							58.9(15.8)			
Educational degree	MSc	56.3 (17.4)	0.030	53.3(22.2)	0.100	62.9(17.1)	<0.001	0.560	0.100	0.620	61.9(16.6)	0.090				
	PhD												53.2(19.6)	55.0(17.8)	58.4 (15.6)	59.9 (130.)
	Clinical Specialist												45.3 (23.3)	50.0(19.3)	51.9.(17.2)	56..2 (16.7)
	Sub- specialist												43.9 (19.0)	59.3(19.8)	52.6(15.9)	60.6(13.8)
	Fellow												49.3(26.4)	46.3(19.8)	40.9(17.5)	49.7(20.0)
Scientific rank	Lecturer	57.2(16.0)	0.020	52.0(22.6)	0.170	62.9(17.1)	0.010	0.120	0.010	0.070	61.7 (16.8)	0.080				
	Assistant professor												45.2(21.8)	51.2(19.2)	52.2(15.7)	55.8(14.7)
	Associate professor												49.5(21.6)	56.4(19.6)	53.5(19.1)	61.0 (17.1)
	professor												55.2(21.7)	61.3(16.1)	59.6(16.5)	62.6(12.4)
	Professor															
Academic group	Basic sciences	54.5(18.8)	0.002	54.7(19.4)	0.430	60.2(16.3)	<0.001	0.800	0.270	0.480	60.9(14.4)	0.070				
	Clinical	45.2(22.1)		52.5(20.0)		51.1(16.9)							56.9(16.3)			
Type of employment	Certain official	54.1(19.6)	0.001	55.2 (19.2)	0.330	55.9 (17.5)	0.010	0.240	0.020	0.030	60.1 (15.6)	0.040				
	Experimental official	55.5 (19.7)		53.1 (19.4)		59.7(17.8)							60.9(14.6)			
	Contractual	45.3(22.8)		55.8(22.8)		56.1(17.2)							60.4(17.1)			
	Contracted	38.6(11.5)		51.1(10.1)		70.4(10.0)							65.6(9.2)			
	Liabilities	40.0(20.9)		48.5(18.5)		48.3(15.3)							52.6(14.4)			
Work experience	< 10	43.1(20.7)	0.002	53.0(21.1)	0.700	52.8(173)	0.250	0.700	0.670	0.280	57.1(16.4)	0.540				
	10-20	51.4(21.9)		54.8(18.3)		55.0(17.1)							59.8(14.8)			
	20<	56.0 (18.8)		51.7(19.6)		58.0(17.2)							58.9(15.7)			
Faculty	Medicine	46.7(21.9)	0.160	56.6(19.2)	0.001	53.2(17.0)	0.040	0.070	0.400	0.600	59.5(15.4)	0.030				
	Dentistry	45.1(21.5)		40.2(16.8)		49.3(17.4)							50.4(15.7)			
	Pharmacy	56.0(24.0)		54.0(18.7)		53.4(17.2)							54.9(17.0)			
	Health	47.2(21.4)		60.6(19.3)		66.5(11.9)							66.6(12.0)			
	Rehabilitation	63.0(14.6)		64.1(12.9)		57.5(17.3)							66.8(9.4)			
	Paramedics	53.7(16.1)		50.7(17.3)		65.0 (17.1)							62.4(15.6)			
	Management	61.3(8.3)		54.4(19.2)		62.8 (11.4)							60.1 (15.6)			
	Nursing	56.4(17.4)		44.7(22.6)		60.0 (17.7)							56.1 (16.9)			

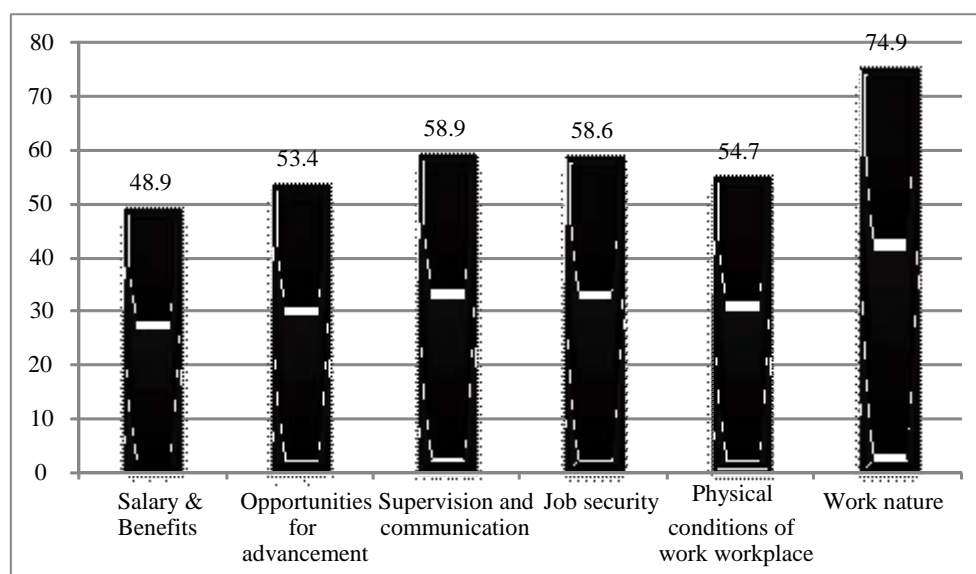


Fig.1. The average satisfaction score of participants in different areas

## DISCUSSION

Maximum job satisfaction was seen in work nature with an average score 74.9 from 100 (Range: 61.6-88.2). This finding was similar to the results of studies done in Arak [13], Isfahan [12], and Kermanshah [5], Iran, with average scores of 74.4, 82.5 and 70, respectively. Moreover, in England and Malaysia, people had more satisfaction of their work nature compared to other areas [7,14]. The probable reason for this relative satisfaction in Iran and other countries might be the respect this job has among the public or that working in an academic environment with elite increase satisfaction. Of course, the enjoyment of training and teaching along with independence in the person's profession can have an effect on increased satisfaction [12,15].

However, the present study shows minimum satisfaction in the domain of salaries and privileges. In other similar studies in Iran, in Rafsanjan [10] and Kordestan [16], the highest dissatisfaction was reported in salaries and privileges and these results were in line with our study. In other investigations done abroad, salaries and privileges were one of the most influencing factors on job satisfaction [17-18].

In the present study, academics had high satisfaction in relation to supervision and communications methods. Rational and proper relations between coworkers; and creating a calm and free of tension environment does influence individuals' satisfaction of their jobs [10]. A study in Tehran mentioned having good managers and counterparts and authority in the work environment had a positive effect on individuals' job satisfaction [19]. The present study showed that the relation

between academics and other counterparts was good, friendly and rational and people were satisfied with their own performance and the managerial system. Of course, feedbacks about an individuals' performance from managers can cause an individual's dissatisfaction, especially if these comments are not proper and realistic.

Occupational security is a means that keeps a person responsible and sympathetic for his own organization. A person with job security performs tasks allocated to him with calmness and even creates innovations and initiatives in his own tasks. In this study, academics felt rather satisfied with their occupational security, but the score was lower than the score reported in Isfahan and higher than the score found in Arak [12-13] in Iran. Individuals' job satisfaction can be promoted by creating an equal and stable environment and providing ancillary facilities and services including insurance, employment, and retirement.

In the present study, satisfaction of academics was not high for workplace physical conditions and minimum satisfaction belonged to not having welfare and recreational facilities in the university; while a study on primary physicians in private practice in Seattle suggested that 88% of people had satisfaction of their workplace physical environment [20]. Undesirable conditions of work environment including light, temperature, noise and improper tools, high work pressure and not having a quiet and calm environment can lead to occupational stress and decline in job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be raised by removing stressing factors or their reduction and also creating secure and calm environments and offering required facilities and services in this area [21-22].

Another factor influencing job satisfaction of academics is their scientific promotion and progress. In the present study, participants had a desirable satisfaction about their scientific promotion and progress. These results are in agreement with the results from Isfahan, Iran. In addition, the academics of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences were more satisfied compared to the Kermanshah study [5, 12]. It seems like providing an ideal situation for occupational and scientific promotion of academics will have a fundamental role in increasing these people's satisfaction [12].

Gender is an important factor in relation to job satisfaction of academics in universities. In this study, male academics had more satisfaction than females and this confirms the results of the Kermanshah and Arak studies, in Iran [5, 13].

Finally, the requirements for job satisfaction of this population have not yet been fully provided. This study also had limitations such as lack of cooperation of some academics due to their busy working schedule and their concern about confidentiality.

## CONCLUSION

Academics of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences had relatively good job satisfaction but in some areas including salaries and privileges, improving policies and further plans seems necessary. Promoting economic conditions and providing a proper and intimate environment for academics, improving the promotion processes, optimizing the management and supervision system, creating an equal environment and improving welfare and recreational facilities be among the factors that increase the satisfaction and work ability of these people. Other aspects of job satisfaction of academics are addressed in future studies.

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