

An Investigation into Employee Job Satisfaction and its Impact on Organizational Effectiveness with special reference to the Buffalo City College

^{1} Onesimo Sibhoko, ² Mohamed Saheed Bayat*

¹ Quality Assurance Senior Co-Ordinator, Foundation for Professional Development, South Africa

² Department of Public Administration, University of Fort – Hare, South Africa

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ABSTRACT:

This study was aimed at investigating the impact of employee job satisfaction on organizational effectiveness at the Buffalo City College in East London, South Africa. Job satisfaction is critical in ensuring the continued growth and effectiveness of any organization. This study assessed the levels of job satisfaction among academic lecturers at Buffalo City College. A quantitative research approach was used in the study. A structured questionnaire was distributed to all the campuses of the college. The self-developed questionnaire was distributed to a population size of 100 employees. Out of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 75 were returned which puts the response rate at 75%. The findings of this study revealed that employees were dissatisfied with pay, recognition and advancement opportunities.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, Organizational effectiveness, Higher education, Academic employees*

INTRODUCTION

Attainment of a high level performance through productivity and efficiency has always been an organizational goal of high priority. In order to do that a highly satisfied workforce is an absolute necessity for achieving a high level of performance advancement of an organization. It is believed that satisfied workers tend to extend more effort to their jobs. Thus every organization tries to create a satisfied work force to operate the well-being of the organization. Job satisfaction and motivation remain relevant in any organization due to their role in overall organizational performance.

However, the total organizational performance depends on efficient and effective performance of individual employees of the

organization. Therefore, every organization places a considerable reliance on the individual employee performance to gain high productivity in the organization. Employee effort is an important factor that determines how an individual's performance will be. When an employee feels a satisfaction about the job, he/she is motivated to put greater effort to the job. This then tends to increase the overall performance of the organization and thereby lead to organizational effectiveness. In other words, a satisfied individual employee and his or her effort and commitment are crucial for the effectiveness of the organization.

Due to ever-increasing global competition, organizations throughout the world are under

*Corresponding Author, Email: mbmsaheed@gmail.com

continuous pressure to remain competitive (Peerbhai, 2005:1). The challenge of any organization is to meet its corporate objectives for effectiveness and productivity with the needs of the employee for motivation, reward and job satisfaction (Manolopoulos, 2008:1740). The recognition for the effective use of human resources has highlighted the importance of the employee for job satisfaction. Greenberg and Baron (2003:148) state that it has become clear that levels of job satisfaction have begun dropping off sharply in the early 21st century.

There is a general assumption that lecturer needs and wants are always beyond the resources of their institutions. As a result of this, it is common to see trade unions, tertiary institutions and government to be in a deadlock around issues of pay and working conditions in higher education institutions in South Africa. In most cases, the government has always argued that because of the current economic circumstances, it is difficult to meet employee needs of improving working conditions, salaries and benefits. On the other side, employees have argued that due to the increase in the cost of living, it is necessary that government and tertiary institutions provide them sufficient resources in order to meet their basic needs. The teacher's argument is seen to be in accordance with Adams (1963) equity theory of motivation. According to Adams Equity Theory, fair balance should be struck between employees' inputs (e.g., hard work, skill levels, tolerance, and enthusiasm) and employees' outputs (e.g., salary, benefits, and intangibles such as recognition).

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate the impact that job satisfaction has on organizational effectiveness in Buffalo City College. To date, there has never been a study that focused on job satisfaction in Buffalo City College. This work is built largely on the theoretical frameworks of previous scholars like Maslow (1970) and Herzberg (1959).

The point of interest in this study can be seen in how it refutes prior studies about job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. The findings of this study were compared to the findings of other similar studies in the higher education sector. The findings of this study will help in detailing the importance of employee job satisfaction in order to ensure the effectiveness of the organization.

It is believed that for any text, there is always multiple audiences, therefore, the intention of the researcher is to ensure that the people involved in the academic field can find this paper useful and thus help them in making sound decisions that will lead to organizational effectiveness. This research paper is written for managers, academic employees, education planners and human resources development department.

Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives

An organization's success and failure depends on how motivated its employees are. Motivation and employee job satisfaction can be studied through several approaches. Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon that has been researched quite extensively. From looking at the various literature sources, it becomes clear that job satisfaction goes hand in hand with employee motivation, the only difference being in the causes and effects. Joshua (2008:5) asserts that organizational researchers have attached a high level of importance to job satisfaction. Locke, as cited by Moodley (2014:12), states that although the concept of job satisfaction has been extensively researched, it is still a subject of much controversy due to a lack of consensus among researchers. It is believed that high job satisfaction levels can lead to positive feelings towards ones job while on the other hand low satisfaction levels can lead to negative feelings towards ones job (Peerbhai, 2005:13).

The literature review was undertaken with a view of investigating factors affecting job satisfaction of academic employees at BCC and the impact that has on organizational effectiveness. According to research conducted by other researchers, there are a number of factors that impact job satisfaction in academic staff. Adekola (2012:4), examined some of these factors in his study using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). Peerbhai (2006:8) states that an examination of job satisfaction is important, emphasizing that it helps managers in managing their employees more effectively. Peerbhai (2006:8), further states that such an examination will produce a number of important benefits including assisting management in determining the levels of satisfaction and highlighting the specific areas of dissatisfaction.

Job satisfaction has received considerable attention, resulting in the construct being extensively researched over the past years (Loganathan 2013:9). Oshagbemi (2007:389) states that job satisfaction is an important subject because of its effect on the physical and mental wellbeing of employees. It is common knowledge that satisfied workers are productive workers. Job satisfaction is defined by Arnold and Feldman as cited by Luthans (2009:86) "as the amount of overall positive affect that individuals have towards their jobs". According to Robbins (2009:69), job satisfaction is one's general attitude towards work. He further states that an individual with high job satisfaction has a positive attitude to the job and a dissatisfied individual has a negative attitude to the job. According to Spector (2008:67), job satisfaction is not only how people feel about their jobs overall, but also how they feel about the various facets of the job. Luthans (2009:95) quotes a comprehensive definition given by Locke, 'A pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience'. Job satisfaction is a result of an employees' perception of how well their jobs provide those things which are viewed as important. Job satisfaction is also defined as reintegration of effect produced by individual's perception of fulfillment of his needs in relation to his work (Saiyadan, 2013:83). Werner (2007:335) states that only satisfied employees seem more likely to display positive behavior that contributes to the overall functioning of the organization.

From the above definitions, it is clear that job satisfaction is an unobservable variable. Therefore, there is no definite way of measuring job satisfaction. But there are a variety of ways that can be identified in the current literature. There are a number of factors that can influence job satisfaction. Luthans (2009) views them as the work itself, pay, promotion, supervision, work group and working conditions. Mullins (2005:699) states that the manager needs to understand how best to make work more satisfying for the employee and to overcome obstacles to effective job performance.

Every organization is a people organization. At the heart of successful organizations there are employees who work tirelessly to achieve

organizational goals. Human resources are a business's most important resources which assist the organization in building a long term profitability and success of the organization. Hasebur and Abdullah (2013:91) state that human capital consists of people assets that drive an organization's continuous development and sustained growth. Hasebur and Abdullah (2013:91) also state that human capital includes the collective attitudes, skills, abilities, and knowledge base of an entire workforce. They further state that human resources play an important role in an organizations ability to remain competitive and effective.

From the above, it is clear that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Satisfied employees will work harder and produce more. That in turn results in the organization achieving its set goals and objectives. Although academic employees at BCC showed dissatisfaction in certain areas of their jobs, they still showed commitment to making the organization effective. This indicates a contradiction to what literature provides.

It is clear therefore, that there exists a relationship between job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. It is also clear that job satisfaction is of high importance for any organization to be successful.

Maslow's Hierachy of Needs

Maslow was one of the first scholars to define motivation (Oosthuizen, 2007:9). Maslow originally defined motivation as human needs which arrange themselves in hierarchies of prepotency. That is to say, 'the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another more pre-potent need' (Maslow, 1943:371). This implies that employees will be motivated should a specific need be met. Should the needs not be met, they will experience dissatisfaction (Du Toit, Erasmus and Strydom, 2008:235).

Maslow expressed the needs on the basis of a process theory, known as the hierarchy of needs. This hierarchy is based on five needs, namely; physiological needs, safety needs, love and affiliation, esteem and self-actualization (Oosthuizen, 2007:9) as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

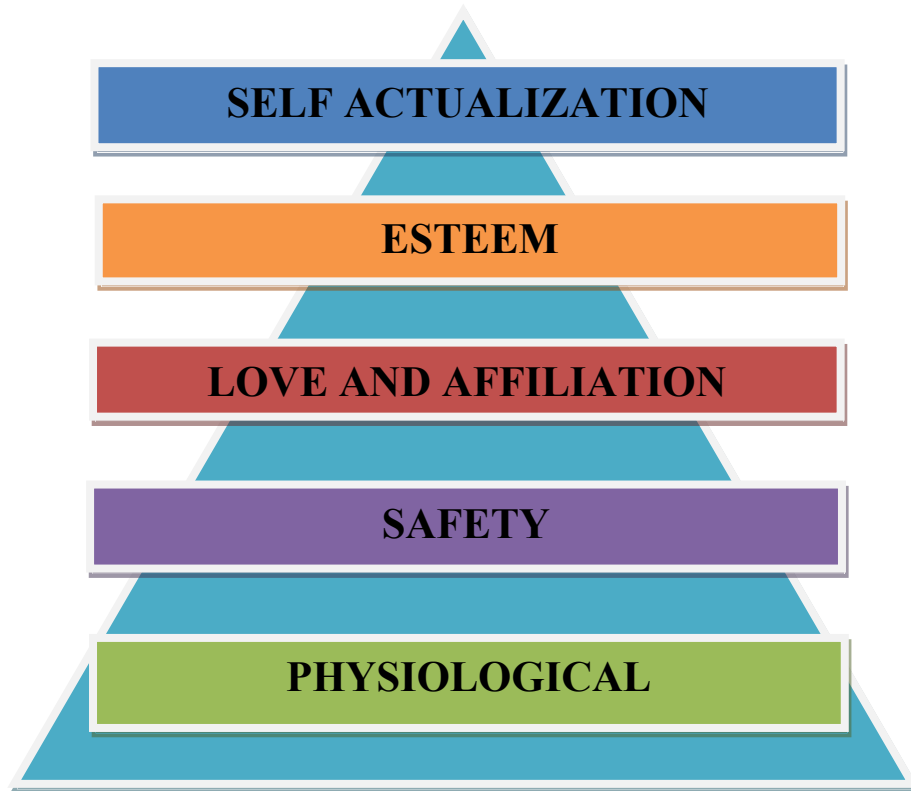


Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: Du Toit et al. (2008:234)

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

In the late 1950's Frederick Herzberg, considered by many to be a pioneer in motivation theory, interviewed a group of employees to establish what was satisfactory and dissatisfactory on the job. He asked the respondents two sets of questions: think of a time when you felt especially good about your job. Why did you feel that way? And think of a time when you felt especially bad about your job. Why did you feel that way? (Anon, 1999). According to the studies conducted by Herzberg, the factors that cause job satisfaction are different from those that cause job dissatisfaction (Mullins, 2007: 262). Greenberg and Baron (2008:221) agree with (Mullin, 2007) suggesting that the Herzberg's Two Factor Theory is a theory of job satisfaction where satisfaction and dissatisfaction stems from a

variety of variables. Emanating from the interviews, Herzberg developed a theory that states that there are two dimensions to job satisfaction namely; motivation and hygiene factors.

Motivating Factors (Satisfaction)

- motivating factors can play an important role in ensuring job satisfaction; it can make employees perform above the standards. Robbins (2009:51) states that motivating factors such as the following make employees satisfied with their jobs.
 - Recognition
 - Achievement
 - Challenging work
 - Responsibility
 - Growth and development

Hygiene Factors (Dissatisfaction)

Hygiene factors are the environment or working conditions that contribute to employees not feeling satisfaction within their jobs. Hygiene factors are based on the needs of the organization in order to prevent unpleasantness in the working environment. Herzberg (1975) further argues that if hygiene factors are missing in the workplace, the likelihood is that employees will be dissatisfied. Herzberg (1975) further indicates that the presence of these factors does not guarantee employee job satisfaction.

These factors, according to (Du Toit et al, 2008:237) include:

- Physical working conditions
- Remuneration
- Security
- Relationship with peers
- Policies and procedures

According to Smerek and Peterson (2007:230), this theory remains one of the major hypotheses in the field of job satisfaction. When linking this theory with the job satisfaction of academic employees, the conclusion can be that it focuses more on the content factors that help in motivating employees. This theory further states that the working conditions, benefits and pay have little influence on the motivation of employees. These authors state that the above factors contribute in preventing dissatisfaction. According to a study conducted by Smerek and Peterson (2007), managers at higher education institutions are faced with the challenge of identifying the most dominant needs of their employees and offer employee development opportunities.

Locke's Value Theory

According to Locke's theory, the factors that impact job satisfaction can be determined only when the value an employee places on his or her work is known. The more value placed on each factor, the greater the shift in satisfaction changes that will be produced (Baron and Greenberg 2007:155-156). This theory further emphasizes that if there is more value placed on a particular factor, chances are dissatisfaction might occur.

Locke (2012:158) illustrates by means of the following example: Teachers that perform the same task at the same place of work may experience the same level of satisfaction but in totally different ways. The one educator may be strongly influenced by the physical aspects of the job whilst the other educator may be influenced by the challenge and variation inherent in the job. In this background, it is clear that Locke's theory is multi-faceted and importantly detailed to every single individual. Further, whilst some staff may feel strongly positive about their jobs and others very negative, it is therefore essential to determine the factors that contribute towards the varying degrees of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Baron and Greenberg (2007:156-157) state that although Locke's theory has not been extensively researched, a great amount of emphasis placed on values alludes that job satisfaction may rise from many factors.

RESEARCH METHOD

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 22), research designs can be defined as "*a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem*". Research design's main function is to allow the researcher to foresee appropriate research decisions, in order to maximize the eventual results' validity. According to Bryman and Bell (2007:44), selection of the research design reflects decisions about the importance being given to a range of dimensions during the research process. There are two general approaches for a research design that are widely recognized, namely, qualitative research and quantitative research (Saunders, et al., 2003:97). The quantitative method was used in this research so that relevant and accurate information could be obtained. According to Sekaran (2003:87), qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting and involves a process of building a complex and holistic picture of the phenomenon of interest.

This study rests upon the quantitative research approach. A structured questionnaire was used in this study to investigate the impact of job satisfaction on organizational effectiveness. According to Sukamolson (2010), the quantitative research is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations

for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect.

Measuring Instruments

A self-developed questionnaire was the main instrument utilized in this study. The questionnaire was in a five point Likert scale structure. According to Boone and Boone (2012), a five point Likert scale questionnaire is the most relevant instrument to guide the study throughout the data collection period. In order to get the views and perspectives of the respondents, the five points were (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Unsure, (4) Strongly Disagree and (5) Disagree.

RESULTS

Data Collection and Analysis

A Likert scale structured questionnaire was used for data collection in this study. This structured questionnaire was distributed to 100 participants and 75 responses were returned thereby generating a response rate of 75%. The data collected from the responses was analyzed with SPSS version 24.0.

Ethical Considerations

For the purposes of ensuring the confidentiality of the respondents, the researcher distributed and collected the questionnaires through the self-administering method. The researcher was authorized to do this through an ethics clearance letter. The researcher believes that it was ethically correct to show respect and honor to those academic lecturers who participated in the study. Prior to administering the questionnaire, the researcher sent a letter of information to all the respondents. This information letter sought to outline the purpose of the study and to remind the participants of their right to participate or withdraw from the study.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of the study was to investigate the impact of job satisfaction on organizational effectiveness. This study revealed that while academic employees may not be satisfied with the pay, they still are committed to making the institution effective. This finding is incongruent with Molontoa's (2015) concern that pay leads to employees being demotivated

and therefore not contributing to the effectiveness of the organization. This study revealed that academic employees have a good relationship with their colleagues. According to Noordin (2009:122), the relationship with colleagues stands out clearly as an element affecting job satisfaction because, without their cooperation, smooth operations at tertiary institutions can be jeopardized. The study also revealed that academic employees were dissatisfied with promotion opportunities in the institution. Literature reveals that different organizations or institutions use promotions as a reward for higher productivity of their employees, which accelerates their efforts. However, this was different with BCC. Most respondents revealed that they were not getting opportunities for promotion. The study revealed that academic employees were more satisfied with having enough material to do their work. This finding is incongruent with the findings of Molontoa's study (2015). His study suggested that academic employees were dissatisfied with not having adequate resources to ensure smooth operations in their institution. Furthermore, this study indicated that academic employees were dissatisfied with the way top management communicates with them. Smerek and Peterson (2007: 230) state that management at higher education institutions have a challenge of not being able to identify and address the needs of their employees. This, therefore shows that top management should develop and maintain good relations with their employees and communicate clearly with them on matters of mutual interest.

CONCLUSION

This study provided insights into the existing body of knowledge on job satisfaction. It may be concluded from this study that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. From the findings of this research, it is evident that job satisfaction can have both a negative and positive impact on employees and how they perceive their work and that is crucial for organizational effectiveness. This not only applies in business but the higher learning institutions as well. The job satisfaction of lecturers is critical for the success of the college. This study observed that job satisfaction varies from one person to the other, and from organization to the other. This variation is

observed when looking at different literature sources. Other authors have argued that if employees are dissatisfied with certain facets of their jobs, the organization cannot be effective. However, in this study, it was noted that academic employees were dissatisfied with certain aspects of their jobs, but they still showed commitment to making the institution effective.

Limitations

This study was limited to academic lecturers only. A study of the entire institution would prove interesting. With this study being a success in measuring job satisfaction, another larger study would allow all of the employees and departments to be involved in the data pool. The results of such a study could yield some interesting findings and could also significantly impact the delivery of meaningful results to the management of the institution. The institution in turn could use the outcomes of the research study to revisit its current human resources programs and in particular focus on addressing the needs of diverse groups of people within the workplace.

Furthermore, a qualitative study would be beneficial in probing further questions. For example, the question of working conditions received an almost equal number of people who were satisfied and dissatisfied. This question can be better tackled in a qualitative study using focus groups. While appreciating those respondents who were satisfied with their working conditions, management could focus on those that were dissatisfied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Top management should consider creating opportunities for career growth and advancement for employees. Employees normally feel more engaged when they believe that their employer is concerned about their growth and provides avenues to reach individual career goals while fulfilling the company's mission.

- Top management should consider improving their benefits and pay structure. Giving employees a competitive market related salary combined with benefits could work in the best interest of the organization in terms of retaining the best employees. According to

Ghazanfar, Chuanmin, Khan and Bashir (2011:123), money possesses significant motivating power in as much as it symbolizes intangible goals like security, power, prestige and a feeling of accomplishment and success.

- Top management should communicate well with the rest of the employees on issues that affect them. Communication in the workplace is important because it creates job satisfaction, it decreases conflicts, and it increases productivity, Oppong and Birikorang (2014:209).

- Top management should involve employees in decision making particularly on matters that directly impact on employees.

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