

Measuring the Effect of Academic Satisfaction on Multi-Dimensional Commitment: A Case Study of Applied Science Private University in Jordan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to empirically test whether academic satisfaction (university vision, respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues, teamwork, incentives, management support, salary) has an effect on university commitment (affective, normative, continuance). The population comprised of academic staff in Applied Science Private University, a questionnaire survey was adopted to collect the primary data from the respondents whom they were randomly selected using a stratified sampling technique, a total of 300 questionnaires were administered to potential respondents from the 9 faculties. The study findings indicate that overall academic satisfaction has a statistical significant effect on overall university commitment, it also reveals that university vision, teamwork, management support, salary and work environment has more impact on overall university commitment than respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues and incentives.

Keywords: Academic Satisfaction, Commitment, Private University, Jordan

1. Introduction

Most research into job satisfaction has been undertaken in the business sector, with attempts often having been made to adapt these findings to higher education. Given the shortages of prospective faculty to fill the numerous vacancies that exist, the matters of job satisfaction, recruitment, and retention must be given priority attention (Okapara; Squillace and Erundu, 2004).

Employee satisfaction influences organizational performance as much as customer satisfaction. Employees are the internal customers of the business; they satisfy the current working environment and are willing to cooperate with the business to accomplish business goals. Therefore, academic staff requirements must be fulfilled to improve the working environment and enable them to achieve outstanding research and teaching performance. So It is in the interest of universities to retain academic staff and minimize turnover.

Since employee satisfaction has been found to be as important as customer (student) satisfaction (Oshagbemi, 1997a), research on higher education quality has now also begun to considering academic satisfaction (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003). Organizational commitment and job satisfaction have received significant attention in studies of the work place. This is due to the general recognition that these variables can be the major determinants of organizational performance and effectiveness (Lok and Grawford, 2003).

It is believed that when employees are dissatisfied at work, they are less committed and will look for other opportunities to quit. If opportunities are unavailable, they may emotionally or mentally “withdraw” from the organization. An understanding of the factors involved in job satisfaction is crucial to improving the happiness of workers. Second, there is a need to understand the attitudes of faculty towards their work (Okapara; Squillace and Erundu, 2004).

Determining job satisfaction factors relevant to university teachers could lead to improvements and innovations in teaching that would help retain them. Third, job satisfaction has often been linked to organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and absenteeism (Koh and Boo, 2000). These variables are costly to organizations, as they often lead to poor performance and high turnover. Fourth, from a theoretical perspective, it is essential to increase our understanding of this topic, thereby stimulating further research in the area. The aim of this study is to provide empirical evidence to ascertain which of the academic satisfaction variables have a positive significant impact on commitment to university.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Job Satisfaction

Buitendach and de Witte (2005) proffer the view that job satisfaction relates to an individual's perceptions and evaluations of a job, and this perception is in turn influenced by their circumstances, including needs, values and expectations. Individuals therefore evaluate their jobs on the basis of factors which they regard as being important to them (Sempene, Rieger & Roodt, 2002).

Oshagbemi (1997b) measured job satisfaction for 566 college teachers, which include: teaching; research; administration and management; present pay; promotions; supervision/supervisor behavior; behavior of co-workers; and physical conditions/working facilities.

Ku"sku" (2001) proposed applying employee satisfaction surveys to the employees of a Turkish college, and applied the following dimensions for measuring their satisfaction: general satisfaction; management satisfaction; colleagues; other working group satisfaction; job satisfaction; work environment; and salary satisfaction.

One of the arguments often brought against theories of job satisfaction is that they take little account of differences between people. What is wanted by one group of individuals in terms of a job is often different from what is wanted by another group. Personal correlates of job satisfaction have become a recent focus of at least some researchers' interest (Hickson and Oshagbemi, 1999).

Job satisfaction is one of the most frequently studied work attitudes. There are more than 12,000 job satisfaction studies published by the early 1990 (Kinicki et al., 2002).

A sizeable amount of work in the job satisfaction literature has been devoted to developing conceptual and operational definitions of the job satisfaction construct, including overall or general job satisfaction and satisfaction with facets of jobs such as the work itself, co-workers, supervision, pay, working conditions, company policies and procedures and opportunities for promotion (Oshagbemi, 2003).

2.2 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has emerged as an important construct in organisational research owing to its relationship with work-related constructs such as absenteeism, turnover, job satisfaction, job-involvement and leader-subordinate relations (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2004; Bagraim, 2003; Eby, et al., 1999). Academics and human resource practitioners alike maintain a keen interest in organizational commitment because of its association with desirable outcomes, such as reduced absenteeism, reduced turnover, and improved job performance (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Iverson and Buttigieg, 1999; Jaramillo et al., 2005).

It's important to note here that several authors argue that Organizational Commitment evolves into different forms. There is considerable overlap in the various models to explain these differences. For our purposes, we focus on the three-component model developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). which they developed a three-component model that observes similarities and differences in the conceptualizations of organizational commitment. Distinguishing different levels of commitment characterized by these different mindsets, Meyer and Allen labeled them "affective commitment", "normative commitment", and "continuance commitment", respectively. (Meyer and Allen, 1991)

They proposed a three-component model of organizational commitment:

- (1) Affective commitment that involves the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization.
- (2) Continuance commitment that is based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization or on a perceived lack of alternative employment opportunities.
- (3) Normative commitment that involves the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organization.

3. Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment Relationship

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are related, but distinguishable, attitudes. Job satisfaction is associated with the affective response to the immediate work environment, while organizational commitment is

more stable and enduring (Norris and Niebuhr, 1983). Employees may be temporarily dissatisfied with their jobs, but nevertheless remain committed to their organizations. Generally, employees will be satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organizations if they are content with the nature of the work itself, are satisfied with their supervisor and co-workers, and if they perceive current pay policies and future opportunities for promotion within their firm to be adequate (Reed; Kratchman and Strawser, 1994).

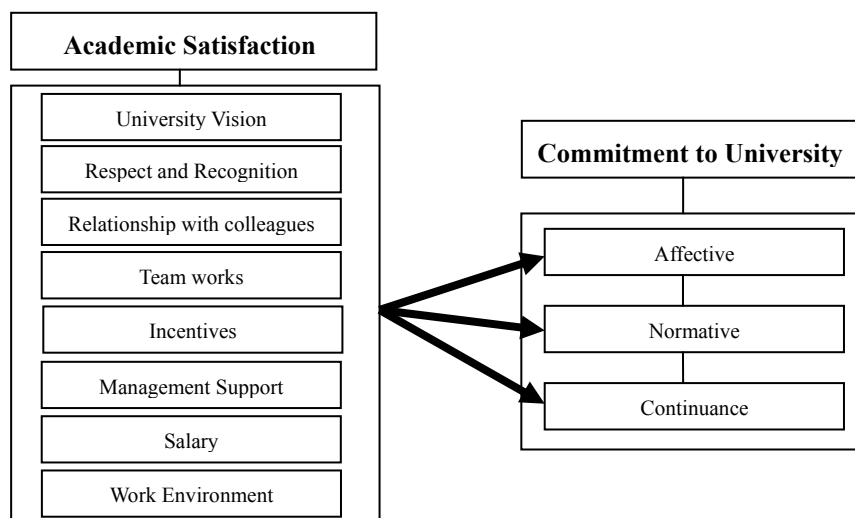
4. Literature Review

It was noted earlier that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are highly correlated. Martin and Bennett (1996) have identified from their review of literature four models of causal relationships between these two variables. In model 1 job satisfaction is viewed as antecedent to organizational commitment. Accordingly, as the employee continues to enjoy certain intrinsic and extrinsic benefits through performing his/her job, the employee experiences job satisfaction.

Joiner & Bakalis,(2006) found in their study that personal characteristics (gender, marital status, family responsibilities and education), job-related characteristics (supervisor support, co-worker support, role clarity and resource availability) and job involvement characteristics (tenure, second job and post-graduate study at the employing university) all impact on organizational commitment.

Harrison and Hubbard (1998) found in their study that job satisfaction is predictive of organizational commitment. Furthermore, Bhuian and Abdul-Muhmin (1997) found support for the influence of overall job satisfaction on organizational commitment. Yavas and Bodur (1999) and Yousef (2001) found strong association between satisfaction and organizational commitment.

5. Research Model and Hypothesis



5.1. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive significant impact of academic satisfaction on commitment to university. This hypothesis is subdivided into the following minor hypothesis:

Minor Hypothesis 1a: There is a positive significant impact of academic satisfaction on affective commitment.

Minor Hypothesis 1b: There is a positive significant impact of academic satisfaction on normative commitment.

Minor Hypothesis 1c: There is a positive significant impact of academic satisfaction on continuance commitment.

6. Methodology

6.1 Population and data Collection

The population comprised of academic staff in Applied Science Private University. A stratified sampling technique was used to select the instructors surveyed for this research from the 9 faculties, table 1 shows the percentage of each faculty against the total number of instructors for all surveyed faculties. A total of 300 questionnaires were administered to potential respondents. A total of 219 usable questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 73 percent

Instrument for primary data collection: A questionnaire survey was adopted to collect the primary data in this study, the questionnaire comprises two sections, the first section covers the demographic information (Gender, Rank, Nationality). The second section represents the instrument, we selected (54) items of academic satisfaction (university vision, respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues, teamwork, incentives, management support, salary, work environment) which were developed by the researchers based on the theoretical background and literature review (Martin and Bennett 1996; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Harrison and Hubbard 1998; Bhuian and Abdul-Muhmin 1997; Yavas and Bodur 1999; and Yousef 2001; Arnolds & Boshoff, 2004; Oshagbemi, 2003; Bagraim, 2003; Eby, et al., 1999). and (18) items of university commitment (affective, normative, continuance) which were adapted from the three-component model developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). All items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

6.2 Validity and reliability of the data.

6.2.1 Validity of data collected:

The instrument was submitted to a panel of experts for validation. The panel was asked to review the content of the items in each of the instruments and determine whether the items fell within the range of linguistic capabilities and understanding of the medical staff. The panel was asked to eliminate items or questions they considered to be irrelevant and to make suggestions for simplification of items that were not relevant. Some modifications were made Based on the comments and suggestions of the panel, which were taken into consideration.

6.2.2 Reliability of data collected:

The reliability of data collected was measured using Cronbach alpha coefficient; the reliability test was conducted to check for inter-item correlation of all variables in the questionnaire. The test results for over all instruments are 0.802, which exceeded the acceptable limit. (Zikmund, 2002)

6.3 Data analysis: In order to test the hypothesis, the following tools were used: multiple regression analysis was used to assess the effect of academic satisfaction on university commitment.

7. Data Analysis Results

In this section, simple regression analysis will be used to examine the prediction of overall academic satisfaction (university vision, respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues, teamwork, incentives, management support, salary) on university commitment (affective, normative, continuance), and multiple regression also was performed to examine the overall academic satisfaction on each dimension of university commitment independently, table 2,3,4,5 shows the simple and multiple regression results.

7.1 Major hypothesis testing result

Table (2) presents the results of regression analysis. The results indicate that there are significant impact of overall academic satisfaction on overall university commitment ($R^2 = 0.617$, $p < 0.05$). indicates that approximately 61 percent of the variance in university commitment can be accounted for by the eight academic satisfaction variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

To find out which of the academic satisfaction variables predicted more variance on overall university commitment multiple regression was performed, table(2)shows the results. It reveals that university vision, teamwork, management support, salary (with negative effect) and work environment has more impact on overall university commitment (the Beta value for the predicted variables respectively are $\beta=0.204$, $\beta=0.267$, $\beta=0.270$, $\beta= -0.202$ -, $\beta=0.204$, $P \leq 0.05$) than respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues and incentives.

7.1.1 Minor Hypothesis 1a testing result

The results on table (3) shows that there are a statistical significant impact of overall academic satisfaction on affective commitment ($R^2= 0.344$, $p < 0.05$), this means that overall academic satisfaction explained 34 percent of the variance in affective commitment, thus the result provide supports for the minor hypothesis 1a.

To determine which of the academic satisfaction variables predicted more variance on university commitment, multiple regression was performed, table (3) shows the results. It shows that teamwork, management support and salary (with negative effect) has more impact on affective commitment (the Beta value for the predicted variables respectively are $\beta=0.305$, $\beta=0.339$, $\beta=0.-.202$ -, $P \leq 0.05$) than university vision, respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues, incentives and work environment.

7.1.2 Minor Hypothesis 1b testing result

The results shows that there are a statistical significant impact of overall academic satisfaction on normative commitment ($R^2= 0.377$, $p < 0.05$), this means that overall academic satisfaction explained 37 percent of the variance in normative commitment, thus the result provide supports for the minor hypothesis 1b.

To determine which of the academic satisfaction variables predicted more variance on university commitment, multiple regression was performed, table(4) shows the results. It shows that teamwork, management support and work environment has more impact on normative commitment (the Beta value for the predicted variables respectively are ($\beta=0.286, \beta=0.296, \beta=0.365, P \leq 0.05$) than university vision, respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues, incentives and salary.

7.1.3 Minor Hypothesis 1c testing result

The results shows that there are a statistical significant impact of overall academic satisfaction on continuance commitment ($R^2= 0.139, p < 0.05$), this means that overall academic satisfaction explained 13 percent of the variance in continuance commitment, thus the result provide supports for the minor hypothesis 1c.

To determine which of the academic satisfaction variables predicted more variance on university commitment, multiple regression was performed, table(5) shows the results. It shows that respect and recognition, has more impact on continuance commitment (the Beta value for the predicted variable is ($\beta=0.234, P \leq 0.05$) than university vision, teamwork, management support, work environment, relationship with colleagues, incentives and salary.

8. Conclusion and Implications

8.1 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was intended to measure whether academic satisfaction has a statistical significant effect on university commitment, it also intended to determine which of academic satisfaction variables has more effect on each dimension of university commitment as a case study in the applied science private university in Amman, Jordan. The findings reveal that overall academic satisfaction has a statistical significant effect on overall university commitment, the study also indicate that overall academic satisfaction has a statistical significant effect on each dimension of university commitment. This result confirms that university vision, respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues, teamwork, incentives, management support and salary (with negative effect) are important predictors of each dimension of university commitment (affective, normative, continuance). This study also reveals that university vision, teamwork, management support, salary and work environment has more impact on overall university commitment than respect and recognition, relationship with colleagues and incentives. The results of the study are found consistent with the prior study such as: Martin and Bennett 1996; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006 Harrison and Hubbard 1998; Bhuian and Abdul-Muhmin 1997; Yavas and Bodur 1999; and Yousef 2001; Arnolds & Boshoff, 2004; Bagraim, 2003; Eby, et al., 1999.

8.2 Implications and limitations

As the study revealed the effect of academic satisfaction on university commitment, it is recommended here for the university decision makers to continually concentrate on leveraging the level of satisfaction for academic staff as they are the core of education system in the university, therefore they should develop a clear strategies to deal with the changing needs of academic staff to ensure their loyalty and commitment.

- Findings of the study provide decision makers in the university with key information about the relationship between the variables of academic satisfaction and their commitment to their university in general and their work in particular.
- It would be recommended to conduct a future research on other universities to investigate the effect of academic satisfaction on commitment as a comparison study to measure the differences.
- This study, like all studies, has limitations. One main limitation is that the population is confined to one university as, the applied science private university, Thus the results of this study cannot be generalized to other universities.

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Table (1). Details of sample selected for the study

Faculties	Percentage	Nationality	Percentage
Economic and Administrative Sciences	29.7	Jordanian	91.8
Engineering	16	Non Jordanian	8.2
I.T	11.9		
Pharmacy	7.3		
Arts	4.6		
Education	15.1		
Nursing	5.9		
Law	4.6		
Rank	Percentage	Gender	Percentage
Full Professor	8.7	Male	76.7
Associate Professor	18.7	Female	23.3
Assistant Professor	49.3		
Instructor	12.8		
Lecturer	10.5		

Table (2). Regression results: overall academic satisfaction on overall university commitment

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.*
University Vision	.204	2.073	.040*
Respect and Recognition	.139	1.397	.165
Relationship with Colleagues	.016	.165	.869
Teamwork	.267	2.612	.010*
Incentives	-.051-	-.583-	.561
Management Support	.270	3.173	.002*
Salary	-.202-	-2.263-	.026*
Work Environment	.204	2.546	.012*
(R² = .617; F=8.985) *Significant level at p≤ 0.05			

Table (3). Regression results: overall academic satisfaction on affective commitment

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.*
University Vision	.210	2.065	.0289
Respect and Recognition	.088	.857	.393
Relationship with Colleagues	-.049-	-.483-	.630
Teamwork	.305	2.904	.004*
Incentives	-.088-	-.979-	.330
Management Support	.339	3.875	.000*
Salary	-.202-	-2.198-	.030*
Work Environment	.123	1.497	.137
(R² = .344; F=7.654) *Significant level at p≤ 0.05			

Table (4). Regression results: overall academic satisfaction on normative commitment

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.*
University Vision	.184	1.864	.065
Respect and Recognition	.017	.171	.865
Relationship with Colleagues	-.079-	-.812-	.865
Teamwork	.286	2.797	.006*
Incentives	-.085-	-.972-	.333
Management Support	.296	3.473	.001*
Salary	-.162-	-1.806-	.073
Work Environment	.365	4.547	.000*
(R² = .377; F=8.869) *Significant level at p≤ 0.05			

Table (5). Regression results: overall academic satisfaction on continuance commitment

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.*
University Vision	.062	.537	.592
Respect and Recognition	.234	1.988	.049*
Relationship with Colleagues	.188	1.637	.104
Teamwork	-.006-	-.046-	.963
Incentives	.070	.678	.499
Management Support	-.046-	-.461-	.645
Salary	-.094-	-.889-	.376
Work Environment	-.061-	-.642-	.522
(R² = .139; F=2.358) *Significant level at p≤ 0.05			