



Job Satisfaction and Motivation - What Makes Teachers Tick?

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Author's contribution

The only author performed the whole research work. Author PG wrote the first draft of the paper. Author PG read and approved the final manuscript.

Research Article

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ABSTRACT

Aims: To find out the extent to which various factors affect the job satisfaction and motivation.

Study Design: The study used a questionnaire survey.

Place and Duration: The British University in Egypt, between April and May, 2013.

Methodology: Participants were 103 academic staff (27 male, 76 female) from four faculties and the English department. A 34-item questionnaire survey was used to collect data. Frequencies, descriptive statistics and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to answer the research questions.

Results: The two most prominent intrinsic variables selected by teachers (N= 103) were a good relationship with people they work with (Mean 2.0291) and responsibility within the job (Mean 1.9903). Extrinsic factors which ranked the highest by over 50% of teachers were: students' interest in the module (70.9%), the working environment (68.9%), and recognition by one's boss and others (61.2%), sufficient positive feedback (56.3%) and pay/salary (55.3%). Factors related to job dissatisfaction by 50% or more teachers were: pay/salary (61.2%), university policy and administration (55.3%), lack of positive feedback (54.4%) and lack of time for family and home (51.5%). Males regard job security ($P = .000$) as being a major factor for their job satisfaction. For females, opportunities for training and development ($P = .030$), and recognition by one's boss and others ($P = .002$) are important factors. When comparing status, there was a significant difference for associate professors

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($P = .001$) as autonomy was found to be fundamental for their job satisfaction. For professors, heads of departments, and deans, job security is regarded as an essential factor for their job satisfaction ($P = .018$). There were no significant differences for job satisfaction variables and age.

Conclusion: Teachers are likely to be satisfied and motivated if a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors were present in their job.

Keywords: Motivation; job; satisfaction; factor; variable.

1. INTRODUCTION

The motivation of teachers in developing countries such as Egypt has received little attention in general educational psychology and in the applied linguistics literature despite the fact that research has demonstrated just how important the teachers' influence is on their students' motivation. This is very surprising since "teachers who are themselves highly motivated inspire their students to be motivated as well" [1] (p. 229). Research in general has tended to focus more on the motivation of learners than on teacher motivation despite the fact that "the teacher's level of enthusiasm and commitment is one of the most important factors that affect the learners' motivation to learn" [2] (p. 31).

Motivation is considered to be the driving force behind all actions performed and is thought to be responsible for "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it" [3] (p. 8). Internal and external factors are usually responsible for providing people with a reason to behave in a certain way. Since teachers are the backbone of the educational systems worldwide, it is imperative that the factors related to their dissatisfaction and demotivation are sought and responded to.

1.1 Review of the Literature

A number of empirical studies have proposed that there is a connection between the teacher and the learners' motivation, achievement, negative feelings, and effort [4-18]. The results of these studies highlight the fact that "the teacher's level of enthusiasm and commitment is one of the most important factors that affect the learners' motivation" [2] (p. 31). Moreover, researchers have presented a set of self-motivating strategies for teachers that can help strengthen their commitment, enthusiasm and increase their motivation towards teaching [19].

On the other hand, student motivation and achievement can have an impact on teacher motivation [20-23]. To shed some more light on this rather neglected area, two empirical studies have contributed to our understanding of what makes teachers motivated and how this is reflected in their learners' achievement [1,24]. Some factors will undoubtedly be more relevant than others in terms of their impact on teacher's motivation and how they affect teaching. After reviewing the literature, Dörnyei [3] suggests four motivational aspects: intrinsic component, contextual factors, temporal axis and being fragile, that is, being exposed to several powerful negative influences (p.157-58). Intrinsic motivation, as expressed by Dörnyei [25] is "performing a behavior for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity" (p. 47).

In contrast to intrinsic motivation “tangible benefits” [26] (p. 55) related to the job such as, salary are called extrinsic rewards. From the available published research findings conducted in different parts of the world, the causes of dissatisfaction and demotivation stem from a number of factors which are outside of the control of the teachers such as ‘salary’ and ‘fringe benefits’ [27-38], ‘job security’ [30], ‘promotion opportunities’ [23,28,33,34,39,40], and ‘training opportunities’ [28].

Other major demotivating factors include the ‘workload’ and ‘working conditions’ [20,28-33,37,39,41,42], the ‘curriculum’ [20,29,30,43], ‘teacher autonomy’ [23,30,39], ‘administration’, ‘leadership’ & ‘management’ [28, 38, 43, 44], the ‘relationship’ and ‘attitudes’ of colleagues [38,43,44] and ‘lack of encouragement’ from heads and management [33]. Additionally, the ‘low motivational levels’ and ‘attitudes’ of students as well as their ‘lack of interest’ towards learning and ‘disruptive behaviour’, can also have a significant impact on teacher motivation [20,22,23,37,41,42,44,45].

Demographically related factors have also been found to influence job satisfaction among academics. With regard to ‘gender’, the results of studies have reported that male academics had significantly higher levels of overall job satisfaction than their female counterparts [46-48]. On the other hand, Egbule [49] found that male lecturers were significantly less satisfied with their job than their female counterparts were.

Besides this, ‘age’ has been reported to affect the job satisfaction levels of teachers [35]. Sadeghi et al [47] found that academic staff of 56 years or more was more satisfied than those in other age categories. In contrast, Paul & Phua [37] found that the satisfaction level plummeted for those aged between 45 to 52 years. In a cross-national study to examine teachers’ engagement in five countries: Australia, Canada, China (Hong Kong), Indonesia, and Oman, the results demonstrated a significant but weak correlation between workers ages and engagement [50]. Contrary to this, Karlı & Iskender [51] found that age was not a significant factor affecting the motivational level of teachers and their commitment to the organisation.

Furthermore, ‘status’, that is, the job position/rank has also been reported to affect job satisfaction [28,35,37,39,49]. In a study conducted at three Malaysian Research Universities, Sadeghi et al [47] reported that professors were more satisfied in terms of their overall satisfaction compared to their counterparts in other academic ranks. Moreover, the results revealed that associate professors were less satisfied compared to the senior lecturers and lecturers, but a significant difference only existed between associate professors and professors.

Since motivation is a dynamic construct subsuming various variables that affect a teachers’ level of performance, the main aim of this research was to investigate which variables affect teachers’ job satisfaction and motivation at the British University in Egypt (BUE). To this aim, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the intrinsic factors related to job satisfaction and motivation?
2. What are the extrinsic factors that cause dissatisfaction and demotivation?
3. Do demographic variables (gender, age and status) affect job satisfaction?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

2.1 Participants

Although all academic staff (n=314) in four faculties and the English Department at the British University in Egypt (BUE) were invited to take part in the completion of the instrument only 103 questionnaire surveys were completed and returned to the researcher, towards the end of Semester Two, 2013. The participants' demographic characteristics are illustrated in Table 1.

2.2 Instrument

The research instrument that was used to gather data for this study was adapted from the Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Motivation Questionnaire (TEJOSAMOQ) by Ololube [36]. With regard to the choice of instrument, this questionnaire includes most of the questions related to job satisfaction and motivation that have been found useful in past survey research.

The questionnaire survey was made up of 34 items. Section "A" (7 items) describes respondents' demographic information including: gender, age, status, academic qualification, length of service, faculty/department and contract type. Section "B1" (15 items) consists of possible job satisfaction variables, whereas Section "B2" (12 items) contains job dissatisfaction variables.

2.3 Procedures and Data Collection

The researcher obtained permission to carry out this research and administer the questionnaire on the chosen sample from the Head of the English Department and Deans of the Faculties at the BUE.

A copy of the questionnaire was sent electronically to the Executive Assistants in the Faculties of Business, Engineering, Informatics and Computer Science and Nursing to be forwarded to the academic staff. The completed questionnaires were collected by Teaching Assistants from the faculties who were assigned this task and then given to the researcher. For the English Department, copies of the questionnaire were handed to the academic staff for completion and returned to the researcher. No personal details such as name were required. Academic staff was required to respond to the different sections of the questionnaire by simply ticking the appropriate boxes in section A. The first part of section B1 required the respondents to rank the variables according to the 'most important' 1 to 'least important' 4. The second part of section B1 respondents were required to tick no more than five factors and B2 no more than six factors which they considered to be most important sources for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Table 1. Participants demographic characteristics

	Independent variables	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	27	26.2
	Female	76	73.8
Age (Years)*	20-29	29	28.4
	30-39	30	29.4
	40-49	18	17.7
	50 and above	25	24.5
Status	Teaching Assistant	26	25.2
	Instructor of English	27	26.2
	Lecturer	30	29.1
	Associate Professor	9	8.7
	Professor	6	5.8
	Head of Department	3	2.9
	Dean	2	1.9
Faculty/Department	Business	25	24.3
	Engineering	17	16.5
	Nursing	9	8.7
	English Department	39	37.9
	Informatics and Computer Sciences	13	12.6
Academic qualification	Bachelor degree	26	25.2
	Master degree	29	28.2
	PhD	48	46.6
Length of Service (Years)*	Below 1 year	25	24.5
	1-3	19	18.6
	3-4	15	14.7
	4 years and above	43	42.2
Contract type	Part time	20	19.4
	Full time	83	80.6

**Only 102 responded to age and length of service.*

2.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires was computer coded and processed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 13.0 and several sets of statistical analysis were performed. Firstly, frequencies of the job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction factors were obtained. Secondly, descriptive statistics, that is, the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' responses to all the statements in sections B1 and B2 of the questionnaire was computed. Thirdly, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to identify the interrelationship between job satisfaction and motivation with the respondents' background information: a) gender, b) age; and c) status.

3. RESULTS

Of the four variables measuring intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction in this study, the two most prominent variables selected by teachers are 'a good relationship with people they work with' and 'responsibility within the job'. Furthermore, 'seeing changes in students' performance' and a 'sense of achievement' ranked third and fourth respectively.

For the extrinsic factors related to teachers' perceived sources of motivation and job satisfaction, Table 2 presents the ranking and mean scores. Of the 11 variables measured in this study, the context of the job is fundamental to teachers job satisfaction and motivation, i.e. students' 'interest in the module' (70.9%), the 'working environment' (68.9%), 'recognition by one's boss and others' (61.2%), 'sufficient positive feedback' (56.3%) and 'pay/salary' (55.3%). These five factors have been ranked the highest i.e. by over 50% of teachers. According to these results, it seems that teachers could be more motivated if they feel that students are more willing to be actively involved in their modules and if they are supported environmentally in their faculties/departments. In addition to this, it can be said that teachers' salaries and feedback are a motivational factor.

Table 2. Respondents' perception of teaching related sources of job satisfaction

Variables	Ranking	Frequency	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Students interest in the module	1	73	70.9	.7087	.45657
The working environment	2	71	68.9	.6893	.46503
Recognition by my boss and others	3	63	61.2	.6117	.48976
Sufficient positive feedback	4	58	56.3	.5631	.49843
Pay/salary	5	57	55.3	.5534	.49957
Opportunities for training and development	6	49	47.6	.4757	.50185
Autonomy to make changes	7	36	35	.3495	.47915
Opportunity for promotion	8	35	34	.3398	.47596
Job security	9	29	28.2	.2816	.45196
University policies and administration	10	14	13.6	.1359	.34438
The workload	11	11	10.7	.1068	.31036

The next set of statistical analysis was conducted to determine which factors teachers' perceive to be related to their job dissatisfaction. Frequencies were obtained and descriptive statistics were run to identify their mean scores. The results as shown in Table 3 demonstrate that the most important factors of job dissatisfaction as stated by 50% or more teachers are 'pay/salary' (61.2%), 'university policy and administration' (55.3%), lack of 'positive feedback' (54.4%) and 'lack of time for family and home' (51.5%) respectively. It is important to note that homogeneity occurs for pay/salary and feedback on one's performance as 'satisfiers' and 'de-satisfiers'. One explanation for this is teachers need sufficient salary not just for their living expenses as clothing, food etc, but also for their personal and academic improvement.

In order to determine whether any differences exist between the teachers' demographic characteristics (gender, status and age) and their job satisfaction, correlational analysis and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted. The results revealed that a number of significant differences were found with job satisfaction variables and gender. Males regard 'job security' ($P = .000$) as being a major factor for their job satisfaction, whereas, 'opportunities for training and development' ($P = .030$), and 'recognition by one's boss' ($P = .002$) are considered to be important factors for females. With regard to status, a significant difference ($P = .001$) was observed for associate professors as they consider 'autonomy' to be fundamental for their job satisfaction. As for professors, heads of departments, and deans they regard 'job security' as being an essential factor for their job satisfaction ($P = .018$). No significant differences were observed for the job satisfaction variables and age.

Table 3. Teacher related sources of job dissatisfaction

Variables	Ranking	Frequency	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Pay/salary	1	63	61.2	.6117	.48976
University policy and administration	2	57	55.3	.5534	.49957
Lack of positive feedback	3	56	54.4	.5437	.50052
Lack of time for family and home	4	53	51.5	.5146	.50223
Pressure to meet deadlines	5	47	45.6	.4563	.50052
Lack of training and development	6	46	44.7	.4466	.49957
Lack of promotion opportunity	7	42	40.8	.4078	.49382
Poor students language level	8	42	40.8	.4078	.49382
Too much work	9	39	37.9	.3786	.48742
Lack of autonomy	10	37	35.9	.3592	.48212
Lack of challenge	11	30	29.1	.2913	.45657
Job security and stability	12	29	28.2	.2816	.45196

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This quantitative study set out to explore what makes teachers tick at the British University in Egypt. From the teachers own perspective, the critical factors influencing their motivation and job satisfaction were sought and analysed. The results obtained in this research indicate that there are a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that can have an impact on teachers' job satisfaction and motivation.

The most important reason found to be intrinsically motivating for teachers was 'having a good relationship with colleagues/co-workers'. Along similar lines, the second ranked extrinsic factor, 'the working environment in one's department/faculty', is a motivational reason for teachers to work harder. These findings are in accordance with the results of other studies conducted in different parts of the world [23,37,38,43,44]. Since people spend at least 7 hours or more a day working with colleagues/co-workers, forming a good working relationship with them is essential for anyone who is to enjoy their work and their time at the university.

Although a number of extrinsic factors related to the job context have been found to play a key role in determining a teacher's job satisfaction and motivation, only the factors identified by 50% or more teachers will be discussed in this study. Factors related to teaching and educating the next generation of students have been found to result in either job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The results of this study illustrate that teachers are motivated and satisfied if students show interest in the module they are taking. However, the reverse can also be said. It is also important to note that 40.8% of teachers in the different faculties and the English Department are dissatisfied with the 'poor language level' of students upon entry to the university. It is quite possible that the students' lack of interest in the modules they are taking is the result of their poor language level, as this will dramatically affect their comprehension, participation and motivation towards the lectures and teaching sessions. Unfortunately, this will result in teachers feeling a lack of personal accomplishment and disillusionment as they are burning themselves out by investing their valuable time and energy into preparation and teaching yet to no avail. The impact of student motivation and achievement on teachers' motivation has been an important issue reported in other studies [20-23].

Besides this, receiving 'recognition by one's boss and others' at the university will motivate teachers to perform better. This finding is in accordance with a study which found that 'lack of encouragement' from heads and management affects teacher motivation [33]. In addition, receiving 'sufficient positive feedback on one's teaching' is also a prominent factor for teachers' motivation and performance. As is the case with students, teachers can only develop their skills if they get real constructive feedback on how they are doing and on what they can further do to improve [52].

Moreover, findings indicate a relationship between 'pay/salary' and teacher dissatisfaction. This is consistent with other published research findings [27,29-38]. Teachers are also dissatisfied with 'university policies and administration' as well as 'insufficient time for family and home'. One explanation for this is teachers need adequate university policies and administration in terms of adequate pay/salary, which is proportionate with the job they do and the hours spent on it to be able to satisfy their needs. Teaching is considered to be one of the most stressful and demanding professions due to the workload and deadlines to be met.

Further findings indicate that demographically related factors influence job satisfaction. With regard to the current study, males regard 'job security' as being an important contributor to job satisfaction. This is probably because men need secure and stable jobs due to their traditional social role of breadwinner. Job stability and long-term security will ensure people are satisfied and motivated enough to be committed to the university's objectives and goals. On the other hand, 'opportunity for training' and 'recognition by one's boss and others' have been found to be significant factors for females job satisfaction. One possible explanation for this is that females regard opportunities for training as being a significant factor in their job as the development of their skills will help them to advance their career and in turn will create a more gender-balanced institution. By achieving gender-balance, women will be able to apply for and perhaps hold the highest leadership positions within the university. Since women believe they need to work harder than men to prove themselves recognition by their boss and others is of paramount importance to their job satisfaction and motivation.

The results have also revealed a relationship between job security and status as professors, heads of departments, and deans regard this as a fundamental factor for their job satisfaction. One logical explanation for this is once academics are assigned senior ranking positions it allows a lot of control over the content of the job, what the person does and also the opportunity to climb the ladder to develop one's career. Therefore, job security is considered important as it entails remaining attached to the job.

The findings also showed that associate professors regard 'autonomy to make changes to the modules they teach on' as being a fundamental factor for their job satisfaction. Since associate professors are on a journey to reach the highest rank of professorship it is deemed necessary for heads of departments to delegate them the appropriate autonomy to make changes to modules they teach on. At the BUE the number of academic staff that advance to the position of head of department or dean are few as one of the key requirements for these positions is the rank of professorship. In conclusion, an academics job satisfaction and motivation is a significant factor that will influence the productivity and effectiveness of an institution. Therefore, the results of the present study indicate the need for higher management, deans and heads of departments to give immediate attention to the extrinsic factors that can result in job satisfaction, so that the university will be able to motivate and retain its academic staff.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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