A Survey on University Lecturer Job Satisfaction

უნივერსიტეტის ლექტორების სამსახურით კმაყოფილების საკითხის მიმოხილვა

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Abstract

Even in student-centered educational systems, teachers still remain important subjects of knowledge construction process, thus their satisfaction should be studied if efficient education process and healthy classroom environments are the goals. The addressees of the article are both administration of educational institutions and lecturers. The goal of research is to find out which factors of job satisfaction lecturers find especially important. Based on literature analysis three groups of factors were defined (internal, semi-external and external), with a list of 27 factors totally. Respondents were asked to assess them on a Likert scale. Based on results, recommendations were offered.

Keywords: job satisfaction, factors of satisfaction, self-efficacy, motivation

რეზიუმე

სტუდენტზე ორიენტირებულ საგანმანათლებლო სისტემაშიც ლექტორი ინარჩუნებს ცოდნის კონსტრუირების მნიშვნელოვანი სუბიექტის როლს. თუკი ჩვენი მიზანია ეფექტური სასწავლო პროცესისა და ჯანსაღი საauditორიო გარემოს შექმნა, უნდა შევისწავლოთ, რამდენად არიან ეფექტორები სამსახურით კმაყოფილები. სტატიის ადრესატები არიან როგორც საგანმანათლებლო დაწესებულებების ადმინისტრაცია, ისე ლექტორები. სტატიის მიზანია, დავადგინოთ, თუ კმაყოფილების რომელი ფაქტორები მიაჩნიათ ლექტორებს განსაკუთრებით მნიშვნელოვნად. ლიტერატურის ანალიზის საფუძველზე დადგინდა ფაქტორების სამი ჯგუფი (შინაგანი, შერეული და გარეგანი), მთლიანად 27 ფაქტორი. რესპონდენტებმა შეაფასეს ისინი ლიკერტის სკალის გამოყენებით. შედეგებზე დაყრდნობით, შეთავაზებულია რეკომენდაციები.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: სამსახურით კმაყოფილება, კმაყოფილების ფაქტორები, თვით-ეფექტურობა, მოტივაცია

Introduction: Why Research Lecturer Job Satisfaction and Motivation

The importance of satisfaction (self-efficacy) in education is obvious. However, it has been studied mostly in student's perspective. Even in student-centered educational systems, teachers still remain important subjects of knowledge construction process whose jobs have become more sophisticated with new roles such as facilitator, thus their satisfaction and motivation should be studied if efficient education process and healthy classroom environments are the goals.

While no direct correlation between teacher motivation and student achievement (Stewens and White, 1987) (as well as between student motivation and student achievement) has yet been established, the correlation between teacher motivation and student self-esteem has been shown by Peck, Fox, and Morston (1977). This is natural, as there are many other factors influencing (some of them more directly) education outcomes: how much the type of multiple intelligence of the student is beneficial for the given course, student's IQ, his/her learning style and strategies, time spent learning, etc. Really, based on research which does not find positive correlation between teacher satisfaction and efficient learning, we may ignore teacher satisfaction factor in education management and research. But for me, as a person with over 30 years of teaching experience and humanistic views on education, it is obvious that though student factor is incredibly important in outcomes of education, a satisfied and (primarily internally) motivated lecturer teaches well, and good teaching does contribute to good learning.

Research Goals

This is why in this research I would like to find out:

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a) What factors influence university lecturer job satisfaction?

b) How does lecturer satisfaction levels differ in various countries?

c) What practical recommendations can I give to increase lecturer satisfaction?

In this article I am not trying to prove that there is some relationship between the factors described below and student competences, but to find out which of them lecturers find more important.

Definition

According to BusinessDictionary.com, job satisfaction is contentment (or lack of it) arising out of interplay of employee's positive and negative feelings toward his or her work. Job satisfaction, a worker's sense of achievement and success, is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal wellbeing. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well, and being suitably rewarded for one's efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work.

Locke and Lathan (1990) define job satisfaction as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Job satisfaction is a result of employee's perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important. Luthans (1998) enumerates three important dimensions to job satisfaction:

- Job satisfaction is an emotional response to a job situation. As such, it cannot be seen, it can only be inferred.

- Job satisfaction is often determined by how well outcomes meet or exceed expectations. For instance, if employees feel that they are working much harder than others in the department but are receiving fewer rewards they will probably have negative attitudes towards the work, the boss and/or coworkers. On the other hand, if they feel they are being treated very well and are being paid equitably, they are likely to have positive attitudes towards the job.

- Job satisfaction represents several related attitudes which are: the work itself, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and coworkers.

If we modify these definitions for a university, we may say that university lecturer's job satisfaction is his/her positive feelings (or their lack) with the educational process and its results, his/her enthusiasm in the process of work, and his/her relations with students (which is especially important), colleagues and administration.

We shouldn't mix job satisfaction and job motivation, which are related, but not the same. Luthans (1998) asserts that motivation is the process that arouses, energizes, directs, and sustains behavior and performance.

Literature review

I used ERIC resources and also scanned Internet, but, unfortunately, I was unable to find any publications concerning university lecturers' job satisfaction. However, as there is plenty of literature dealing with school teachers, I believed it would be possible to borrow ideas from these publications.

It is also necessary to mention that, to my mind, some factors influencing university lecturers' satisfaction depend on them less than on school teachers, as students come to universities with some formed habits, stereotypes and prejudices. It is easier for a school teacher to try to form some features, competences and attitudes than for university lecturers to struggle changing them.

Teacher and lecturer satisfaction, of course, is linked with their sense of professional identity – what they view as their important characteristics (knowledge of content matter, methods of teaching, relations with class, colleagues and administration, etc.) (Olsen, 2008).

Many of today's teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs. The mean CES-D (depression scale) score of a sample of 75 Los Angeles teachers was 15.6, a value about twice the mean score obtained in community surveys for various professions (Beer & Beer, 1992). A CES-D score of 16 or greater is considered significant because it is associated with increased risk of depression (Schonfeld, 1989).

According to a more contemporary survey (Keigher, Cross, 2010), of the 3,380,300 US public school teachers who were teaching during the 2007-08 school year, 84.5 percent remained at the same school ("stayers"), 7.6 percent moved to a different school ("movers"), and 8.0 percent left the profession ("leavers") during the following year. Among the 487,300 private school teachers who were teaching during the 2007-08 school year, 79.2 percent were stayers, 4.9 percent were movers, and 15.9 percent were leavers. It is interesting that, though the numbers for public and private schools are similar, percentage of leavers and movers are higher in private schools, which proves that among the reasons of their dissatisfaction salaries are not the priority (those in private schools are higher than in public ones).

The younger and the less experienced the teachers, the more often they both move to other schools and quit the professions.

Wells (2011) study examines the extent to which teachers support policies that provide bonus pay to teachers primarily on the basis of student performance, as measured primarily by student achievement results at the school- and/or classroom levels, and teacher performance, as determined by classroom evaluations. Prior research has demonstrated that teachers are often skeptical of and express limited support for new programs. "Although a fundamental purpose of pay-for-performance policies is to

help improve student achievement, it is important to determine the effects of such policies specifically on teachers because such effects could have implications for opportunities and outcomes for students" (p.5). The U.S. Department of Education established this program in 2006 to support efforts to develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools. The federal program has four primary goals:

- Improve student achievement by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness;

- Reform teacher and principal compensation systems so that teachers and principals are

   rewarded for increases in student achievement;

- Increase the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged

   students in hard-to-staff subjects; and

- Create sustainable performance-based compensation systems (p.6).

The analysis of project results brought Wells to conclusions that, though teachers' support for the pay-for-performance policies was high, they expressed mixed opinions regarding changes that have occurred as a result of the implementation of the program. Many of them supported opportunities for development provided by the program than the increase in pay.

Ayan and Kocacik (2010) analyzed literature as well as the educational process in Turkey (1036 teachers employed in 25 high schools of the Sivas district) and came to conclusion that personality has an extremely important effect on perception and evaluation of the work and environment of the individual, because behaviors of the individual are formed as a consequence of the continuous interaction between the environment s/he lives in and other individuals in the environment. In their opinion, individuals with high levels of satisfaction have more flexible and determined personalities and those unsatisfied with their jobs are individuals who are not realistic when selecting their goals, unable to cope with the environmental difficulties and have rigid personality structures. Besides, they named as influential factors organizational structure, management, culture, educational qualities, resources, tasks and duties of the school, size and composition of the class, talents of students, climate of the class, and relationships between students and the teacher.

Various factors have been examined in an attempt to find which ones promote teacher satisfaction. Sylvia & Hutchinson (1985) found pay incentives ineffective in increasing teacher satisfaction. In their study of 167 teachers they explain that true job satisfaction is derived from the gratification of higher-order needs in Maslow's pyramid of needs, "social relations, esteem, and actualization" influence satisfaction rather than lower-order needs. This conclusion is supported by findings of Greenwood & Soars (1973): less lecturing by teachers and more classroom dis-

cussions relates positively to teacher satisfaction.

For me Rothman's (1981) research comparing the security and financial factors of teacher satisfaction during the Great Depression and in the 1980s was especially interesting as Georgian economy today is not very developed. According to it, today American teachers' satisfaction is more often a consequence of higher-order needs, as it shows that security and financial factors become more influential in the hardship periods.

In Bishay (1996) study, levels of job satisfaction and motivation were measured by survey in a sample of 50 teachers. A sample of 12 teachers was then studied using the Experience Sampling

Method (ESM). The Experience Sampling Method (ESM) makes use of an electronic device to page the subject several times a day. When beeped, the subject completes a short survey about what they are doing, who they are with, and how they are feeling. ESM thus provides a more richly detailed picture of the day-to-day lives and emotions of participants than conventional surveys. Conventional survey data corresponded with ESM data. Job satisfaction and motivation correlated significantly with responsibility levels, gender, subject, age, years of teaching experience, and activity. For this group of teachers who work in a school with a selective student body, overall motivation and job satisfaction levels were high. Based upon the findings, it appears that gratification of higher-order needs is most important for job satisfaction. However, we have to bear in mind that with self-report data there is the danger of social desirability bias: teachers may not wish to admit that money is important to them.

Student advisors (staff with higher responsibility level) were more often satisfied with their jobs than those teachers who did only teaching. Women were more often dissatisfied than men. Language, humanities, and social sciences teachers also were more often dissatisfied than teachers of math and science. Job satisfaction increased with age and working experience. (By the way, these figures may not show the real picture, as many of those who were really dissatisfied have dropped out of the profession). Teachers who were "lecturing" were less satisfied than teachers who organized and were involved in many activities. In the discussion section, however, Bishay righteously mentions that in the correlation between responsibility and motivation we cannot say which is cause and which – effect. As majority of women teachers were in humanities, social sciences and languages, one cannot judge whether dissatisfaction really deals with gender of subject factor. At the same time, satisfaction of math and science teachers might have been linked with school's emphasis on math. Besides, the findings regarding the high satisfaction levels of teachers who have been working for longer may be related to higher salaries. Though the research is rather inconclusive to whether what really is the cause of low level of satisfac-

tion and uses job satisfaction and motivation as synonyms, it gave me some useful ideas on survey questions.

Methodology: Survey Questions and Respondents

Based on literature analysis as well as my own ideas I selected survey items. I asked my respondents to rate factors that influence their job motivation according to the Likert scale:

1 – totally unimportant
2 – of little importance
3 – of average importance
4 – of considerable importance
5 – of great importance

Among factors found in literature I rejected gender and course, as the mechanism by which gender, as well as the taught course influence job satisfaction is very sophisticated and less studied. I was interested not only in the factors themselves, but also whether they came from within the lecturer or external sources. In the tables in the appendix they are presented in three groups, for statistical purposes, but in the questionnaire given to respondents they were mixed, not to direct respondents towards one group of responses.

The factors in the list can be seen in the tables in the attachment. The respondents had to provide the following information about themselves: citizenship and/or country of recent employment, working now for a private or state university, teaching experience (0-3 years, 3-10 years, more than 10 years), degree of consciousness in choosing profession, level of their job satisfaction (both in 5 points, from very tow to very high).

Questionnaire was distributed via e-mail, also in person to one UK, two Turkish and three Georgian universities (including IBSU) with which IBSU has active relationships. Potential respondents were just welcomed to volunteer. After a week there was a reminder. Finally 35 lecturers (8 from the UK, 14 - from Turkey and 13 - from Georgia) volunteered to participate. I realize that the scale of my research is rather limited, however, it can reveal some general tendencies. Among lecturers 19 were from private and 12 - from public universities (4 work for both kinds). I wanted to have respondents from both kinds of universities, to get a more balanced view, as I believe their attitude towards some aspects of satisfaction (e.g., salary) may be different. Majority have chosen their profession very consciously: averaging (according to Likert scale, here and below) from 3.25 in the UK to 4.71 in Turkey). Among them were lecturers with 0-3 (%), 3-10 (%), and above ten years (%) of experience, also to provide a balanced view. Majority of them are very (5 points - 34%) or rather (4 points – 48%) satisfied by their jobs, but some cir-

cled the answers "3" (15%), "2" (2%) and even "1" (2%) (average point is 4.1).

Survey results and analysis

Survey results are given in Tables 1-3 in the appendix. It is easy to see, that highest rating received such items as "my degree of interest towards teaching" (4.70), "my ability to teach well" (4.49) and "my own effort of professional development" (4.43). These items are leaders not only on average, but also among lecturers of all three countries involved. All of them are internal, which, on the one hand, is good, as teachers are self-efficacious and self-reliant, but, on the other hand, it seems to me that they should learn to care not only about themselves. I was satisfied to see that salary wasn't among leaders, however, it is rather important (4.0), especially for lecturers from Georgia, probably because it is economically less developed that the other two countries. The least popular answers are such items as "receiving rewards" (2.51) and "training programs offered" (2.89). Concerning rewards, lecturers from Georgia value them higher than their colleagues from Turkey and the UK. Both factors are totally (training programs offered) or mostly external. I believe that lecturers should have more control over these factors – and, correspondingly, more satisfaction in them. On some issues lecturers demonstrated great unanimity (giving the most popular items 4-5 points), while on others they differed a lot (1-5 points). For Georgian lecturers among the leading items were also "my own effort of professional development" and "student engagement in classwork" (both 4.84). For their British colleagues – "my degree of interest in the subject" (4.87) and "my ability to teach well" (4.75), while for their Turkish colleagues – "trying out new methods" (4.80), and "my degree of interest towards teaching" (4.64). Naturally, as many people, as many opinions, but this shows that to get more relevant results the research should be carried out on hundreds of teachers which was, unfortunately, out of my reach. I will be very glad if my modest research stimulates somebody to continue studying lecturer satisfaction.

Conclusions and recommendations

Universities can and have to help create lecturer job satisfaction by
-    Decreasing class size, especially in courses demanding communication (satisfaction level 3.32)
-    Not overloading them, especially with paper and other additional work (3.34 & 4.11)
-    Providing free training and other professional growth opportunities within work hours (2.89)
-    Up-to-date technology, a good library and free access to electronic libraries (3.60)
-    Competitive salary and opportunities for promo-

tion (4.00)

- Providing a democratic management style, recognizing their high qualification (3.63)

- Increasing the feeling of belongingness (organizing social events and communication between colleagues, offering various benefits, rewards, etc.) (3.02 & 3.23)

Though the respondents in my research expressed relatively satisfaction with these issues (2.89-4.11), there still can be done much to improve the situation.

Lecturers should care more about student academic achievement, their relationships with students and colleagues.

Probably the most important point to bear in mind when considering lecturer job satisfaction is that there are many factors that affect job satisfaction and that what makes them happy with their jobs varies from one worker to another and from day to day.

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Appendix

Table 1: *Internal factors: those under teacher control*

	Georgians	UK	Turkish	Average
my degree of interest towards teaching	4.61	4.87	4.64	4.7
my degree of interest in the course taught	4.69	4.25	4.14	4.37
my attitude towards my university/faculty	4.61	3.62	3.57	4.05
trying out new methods of teaching	4.08	3.62	4.80	4.14
Correspondence of my own personality to teaching profession (communicability, teaching/learning style, flexibility, managerial skills, responsibility and punctuality, patience and insistence, etc.)	4.46	4.37	4.14	4.31
my own effort of professional development	4.84	4.5	4	4.43
my ability to teach well	4.71	4.75	4.14	4.49
my relationships with students (friendliness, mutual respect, etc.)	4.30	4.00	4.14	4.17
involvement in research on my own	4.15	3.50	4.64	4.20

Table 2: Internal/External factors: which do not depend only on the teacher

	Georgians	UK	Turkish	Average
students' relationships with each other	3.30	3.62	3.22	3.34
discipline	4.08	3.50	4.00	3.91
student motivation to learn in general and my course in particular	4.23	4.5	4.43	4.37
student engagement in the class work	4.84	4.37	3.80	4.31
academic success of my students	4.70	4.37	3.38	3.80
communication with colleagues (during breaks, at faculty/department meetings, after work, at conferences and professional organizations)	4.00	3.87	3.50	3.69
receiving rewards (like the best teacher of the year)	3.30	1.62	2.28	2.51

Table 3: External factors which (almost) do not depend on the teacher

	Georgians	UK	Turkish	Average
Salary	4.46	3.75	4.00	4.00
class size	3.77	3.12	3.30	3.32
student intellect	3.92	3.12	3.64	3.54
support from administration (understanding, when I'm trying to implement some innovation)	3.84	3.50	3.64	3.69
administration management style (authoritarian, authoritative or permissive/uninvolved)	3.70	3.62	3.57	3.63
cooperative and/or competitive relations within school	3.08	3.12	3.64	3.23
training programs offered	3.15	3.00	2.57	2.89
available educational resources	4.00	2.87	3.64	3.60
teaching load (reasonable, providing enough pay, but leaving time for improvement and professional growth)	4.38	4.37	4.00	4.11
additional responsibilities (administrative, class supervision, paper work, projects, research)	3.38	3.00	3.50	3.34
social events organized at the university (faculty/department meetings, parties, etc.)	3.38	1.75	3.64	3.02