

SATISFACTION OF INTERNAL CUSTOMER IN HIGHER EDUCATION — A CASE STUDY OF JHARKHAND

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Abstract: *Academician can be considered as internal customers of any educational institute and students can be considered as their external customers. Higher satisfaction level of internal customer will in turn result in higher satisfaction of external customer. This higher satisfied external customer are students with better understanding and broader vision. Alternatively, unsatisfied internal customer means academician who are not satisfied with their profession or life. Hence, the teaching-learning process will be hampered as an unsatisfied academician will fail to give his/ her 100 percent in the process. Satisfaction can be achieved, if the academician have a better work-life balance. Work-life balance can be defined as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum role conflict. On this backdrop, the present research paper is an attempt to find satisfaction level of internal customer in higher education i.e. academician in Jharkhand with the help of “Satisfaction with life scale model” of Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffon (1985).*

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Satisfaction with Life, Internal Customer, External Customer*

INTRODUCTION

Education is perhaps currently the most discussed word in the world. However, depth of its meaning may differ from one country to another. In its general sense, it may be defined as a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. Education is commonly divided into stages such as preschool, primary school, secondary school and then college, university or apprenticeship.

The definition of education clearly states that there is a need of teacher to impart knowledge to students. However, quality of knowledge a student can gain will vary as per the level of concentration of academician in the teaching-learning process. In other words, this concentration will vary from academician to academician, depending on their satisfaction with life. More satisfied academician will be able to concentrate more in the teaching – learning process.

For the purpose of this study, academicians who are contributing their intellect in the field of higher education have been surveyed. Universities are supposed to have two broad goals, to create knowledge and to disseminate

it. There are external customers for both these goals of university. However, for the purpose of present research external customer means those students who fall under second category i.e. receiver of knowledge.

Previous research in the field of internal and external customers failed to focus on academician as they were not considered as customers. Hence, there are very few research focusing on role of satisfied academician as satisfied internal customer.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researcher have analysed subjective well-being as construction of happiness (Marrero and Carballeira, 2011), i.e. both as an ideal state, as well as a factor of emotional content. The emotional content has been further divided in two subcomponents: First, positive affection and negative affection (Lucas, Diener and Suh, 1996), and second cognitive component, which has also been termed as “Satisfaction with Life” (Andrews and Withey, 1976).

This component is defined by many researchers as complete evaluation that an individual does of its own life (Pavot and Diener, 1993; Pavot, Diener, Colvin and Sandvik, 1991). It has been widely studied in different areas by different researchers, the major findings reflect that “Satisfaction with Life” is undoubtedly related with life expectancy (Xu

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and Roberts, 2010), health and longevity (Avey, Luthans, Smith and Palmer, 2010; Piqueras, Kuhne, Vera-Villarrol, Van Straten, and Cuijpers, 2011), satisfaction with marriage and friendships, income and work (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener, 2005).

Since, the Satisfaction with Life indicator was incorporated by multidimensional nature of the variable, Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffon (1985) highlighted the need to build a scale that graded "Satisfaction with Life" as a cognitive process of judgement, avoiding complete evaluation by just a single item (as was practiced till then). This embarked what is called the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).

The structure factor, reliability and validity of the SWLS have been assessed in several investigations; the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have indicated that the five elements of this scale provide a one factors' solution (Arrindell, Meeuwesen and Huyse, 1991; Diener *et al.*, 1985; Pavot *et al.*, 1991).

Hence, for the current study same five elements as of SWLS have been adapted to check the satisfaction with life of academican.

Research has also shown that colleges and universities have no clear understanding who are their customers, neither internal nor external. The concept of treating academican as internal customer, hence lacks ground. Hence, it becomes important to analyse the satisfaction of these customer which will have impact on the teaching-learning process.

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

Present research is an attempt to find the satisfaction level of academican in the state of Jharkhand with the help of SWLS model. The finding will help the govt. and other educational fraternity to understand the satisfaction level of these academican. Current study is focused on the academican of higher education institution in Jharkhand. The research will give the basic idea of satisfaction scale and can be used as a benchmark to initiate other researches with same objective, focusing on specific attributes of satisfaction among academican in other states.

METHODOLOGY

In order to collect data, a questionnaire was circulated among 125 academicians who are giving their services in the field of higher education in Jharkhand state. A hard copy (where sample were accessible) and a web link of questionnaire form were used to collect the data from academicians. However, the total number of correctly filled in data received was 105. The questionnaire contained two broad section, one seeking demographical information and other having five set of

question (as per Diener *et al.* model) in seven point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

They were asked to give points to each statement by giving appropriate no. to each statement. The 1-7 scale was used for the same, where 1 states strongly disagree and 7 denotes strongly agree and 4 being neutral (neither agree, nor disagree). The scores were then summed up. The score for an individual may range from a low of 5 to a high of 35. Higher scores indicate higher levels of life satisfaction. Scores are interpreted according to Table 1.

Table 1: Satisfaction with Life

Score	Satisfaction with life
30 – 35	Extremely satisfied; much above average
25-29	Very satisfied, above average
20-24	Somewhat satisfied, average
15-19	Slightly dissatisfied, a bit below average
10-14	Dissatisfied, clearly below average
5-9	Very dissatisfied, much below average

In order to find the average of satisfaction with life, the sum of all the scores was divided with the number of respondents. This gave us the average of satisfaction with life of academicians. Frequency analysis was done on question under demographic section. Factor analysis using principal component method was also used. The correlation with gender, age, foreign experience, income etc. has been done in order to find its role on satisfaction with life of academicians. At last mean was found for those sub-categories of factors which showed significant difference in correlation. Data has been analysed using SPSS 20.

MAJOR RESULT

In order to check the reliability Cronbach alpha was used and it was found that Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the present sample was 0.85, which indicates higher reliability. The same is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.847	.852	5

An important part of questionnaire included demographic questionnaire. This section contained information regarding the age, gender, academic title, marital status, experience etc. of the academicians. Frequency analysis was done to find the frequency of respondents in this section.

The result indicates that among the respondents, 87% are

male and 13% female in which the academic title of Assistant Professor is highest (53%) followed by equal number of Professor (13%) and Associate Professor (13%) and then Research Assistant (5%) and Lecturer (3%). An option of any other post than the known post in the academic field was also given to the academicians and surprisingly 11% of the participant have selected this option. Most of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-40 (48.6%), followed by age group of 41-50 (24.8%) among which 91% are married and 9% single. Also, 78% participants are having responsibilities of children. It was found that almost 26% of the respondent had experience of teaching in foreign countries, however 74% did not have any experience of providing education in foreign country. As per the experience in education field 57% are working in the same institution since 6 – 10 yrs. and 17% are in the same organisation since last 11 – 15 yrs and 13% are providing their service in same organisation since more than 15 yrs. However, percentage of those working since 1 -5 yrs and less than 1 yr in the same organisation is 9 % and 4 % respectively. This indicates that almost 88% of the participant are working in current organisation since last 6 yrs. or more. In term of total length of service in the field of education, 45% are in the group of 6-10 yrs of experience followed by more than 15 yrs and 11 – 15 yrs. group having 22% and 21% participants respectively. Participants under group 1-5 yrs. and less than 1 yr. are 9% and 4 % respectively.

Satisfaction with Life Scale

In order to find the sum of total score given on the five statements covered under Diener *et al.* model, the scores of all the respondents were added and it came to be 2410. Next, to find the average score of satisfaction with life, the total was divided with number of respondents. The total no. of respondents in our study is 105. Hence, dividing 2410 by 105, we get an average score of 22.95. As per satisfaction with life model, this score indicates that the academicians are “Somewhat satisfied or average satisfaction level” and not satisfied or highly satisfied.

Since we found that satisfaction level of academicians belongs to third category i.e. average satisfaction level, we shall now check whether this level has any relation with age, gender, income or academic title. In order to do this, firstly factor analysis has been used to reduce the five factors to one. After that a test of correlation is performed with variables such as age, gender, foreign experience, length of service, academic title, and income to analyse whether the satisfaction level shows different pattern in these variables.

Factor Analysis

Principal Component matrix was used to reduce the number of factors from 5 to 1. The result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Component Matrixa

	Component 1
If I could live my life over, I would have change nothing	.775
In most way, my life is close to my ideal	.875
The conditions of my life are excellent	.791
I am completely satisfied with my life	.871
So far, I have achieved the important things in my life	.645
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

As per Table 3, we conclude that second variable (with loading of 0.875) is having highest loading and hence, it will be extracted and used for correlation test:-

Variable 1: - In most way, my life is close to my ideal.

Hence, taking this variable we shall use correlation test to find that whether there exists any significant correlation between the variable and other factors.

Applying correlation test in SPSS 20 for the above variable, we find the result as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlations

		In most way, my life is close to my ideal	Total Length of service (in Educational Institution)	Male or Female	Academic Title	Monthly Income	Age	Marital Status	Foreign Experience	Child	Length of ser- vice (in present Institution)
In most way, my life is close to my ideal	Pearson Correlation	1	.320**	-.147	-.143	.265**	.472**	.065	.303**	-.171	.309**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.135	.146	.006	.000	.507	.002	.081	.001
	N	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 4, we can conclude that Correlation is significant in some variable and insignificant in other. Variables like Gender, Academic Title, Marital status, Children do not show any correlation (as significant level is higher than the acceptable level). Hence, we can conclude that satisfaction with life is same in all these case and has shown no difference in these variables.

However, in other cases like Monthly income, Age, Foreign Experience and Length of service there is correlation. This means, satisfaction with life shows significant difference in the respondents at different income level, age, foreign experience or length of service. In order to check the variability we shall analyse the mean score of the variable in each sub categories in these groups.

The result for these factors are depicted in Tables 5-9.

Table 5: Academic Title In Most Way, My Life is Close to My Ideal

Academic Title	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Professor	5.6429	14	.49725
Associate Professor	6.2857	14	.46881
Assistant Professor	4.3214	56	1.06356
Lecturer	4.0000	4	.00000
Research Assistant	5.0000	5	.00000
Any Other	4.6667	12	1.77525
Total	4.8190	105	1.23865

Table 6: Monthly Income In Most Way, My Life is Close to My Ideal

Monthly Income	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
10000-20000	5.5000	8	1.60357
20000-30000	4.4286	14	.93761
40000-50000	3.9231	13	.86232
50000-60000	4.6897	29	.76080
60000-70000	3.3333	9	1.58114
More than 80000	5.7188	32	.85135
Total	4.8190	105	1.23865

Table 7: Age In Most Way, My Life is Close to My Ideal

Age	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
21-30	4.0769	13	.86232
31-40	4.3922	51	1.23415
41-50	5.5385	26	1.10384
51 and above	5.6667	15	.48795
Total	4.8190	105	1.23865

Table 8: Foreign Experience In Most Way, My Life is Close to My Ideal

Foreign Experience	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Yes	4.1852	27	.73574
No	5.0385	78	1.30376
Total	4.8190	105	1.23865

From results shown in Tables 5-9, an effort has been made to find varied level of satisfaction in satisfaction with life model in those attributes which showed significant difference in correlation test. The 1-7 scale was used for the same, where 1 states strongly disagree and 7 denotes strongly agree and 4 being neutral. The result can be interpreted as under:-

Professor (Mean – 5.64) and Assistant professor (Mean – 6.28) have shown strong agreement with the statement and hence are highly satisfied. On the other hand Assistant Professor (4.32) and Lecturer (Mean - 4.00) are least satisfied. Slightly surprising result was achieved in income category as it was observed that those who are satisfied are those who either received least monthly income i.e. 10000-20000 (Mean 5.50) or those who receive maximum monthly income of more than 80,000 (Mean – 5.71). However, those who are dissatisfied fall in the scale of 4000-50000 (Mean 3.92) and 60000- 70000 (Mean - 3.33).

The satisfaction increases with age as the result has shown that the age group of 21 -30 (Mean – 4.07) are least satisfied and age group of 51 and above (Mean – 5.66) are highly satisfied. The satisfaction level has shown a positive increase from one age level to another.

Table 9: Length of Service

In most way, my life is close to my ideal						
Length of service (in present Institution)	Present Institution			Educational Institution		
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Less than 1	4.0000	4	.00000	4.0000	4	.00000
1-5 Yrs.	4.1111	9	1.05409	4.1111	9	1.05409
6 - 10 yrs	4.7667	60	1.04746	4.6809	47	1.08561
11 - 15 yrs	4.8889	18	1.96705	4.9091	22	1.77037
More than 15 yrs	5.6429	14	.49725	5.4348	23	.78775
Total	4.8190	105	1.23865	4.8190	105	1.23865

Those respondents who have foreign experience are lesser satisfied (Mean – 4.18) than those who do not have foreign experience (5.03)

Similarly, it can be interpreted that those who are in academic field for a longer duration are more satisfied than those who have started the career, irrespective of the fact whether they are in same institute or otherwise. It can be interpreted that satisfaction level in this category has also shown positive growth from one level to showing the similar pattern as of age group. Hence, the least satisfied are those who have less than one year experience [Mean – 4.00 (same Institute), 4.00 (Overall)] and maximum satisfied are those who have more than 15 year of experience [(Mean – 5.64 (same institute), 5.43 (Overall))] whether in the same institute or overall.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The finding of the study suggests that the academicians in the state of Jharkhand belong to third category in the scale of satisfaction i.e. average satisfied, and this holds true irrelevant of gender and academic title. With this level, they could not offer their 100 percent in teaching learning process. This will result in decline of quality of education as the service received by external customer is also dependent on the level of satisfaction of internal customer. If internal customer is dissatisfied, then external customer will fail to achieve the best. It has also been found that those with foreign experience are more dissatisfied compare to those who do not possess foreign experience. This is probably because the former compares the service and environment of Jharkhand with those in foreign. This leads to more dissatisfaction, as they could not achieve the same in Jharkhand.

The result should be used for the improvement of the satisfaction level of academicians. An effort should be made to improve the satisfaction level of academicians in the state. Providing healthy and research oriented environment in academic field, recognition for best teacher, feedback from students, transparent promotion policy, recognition of research works, smart classes etc. are some of the initiative which can be introduced to improve the satisfaction.

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