



Impact of Working Conditions and Supervision on Academic Staff's Job Satisfaction at Dilla University

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Organizations in the 21st century are faced with more challenges than ever before. Job satisfaction is assumed as a one of the main factors amongst academic staff and placed as a basic inner feeling for them. The researcher was inspired to carry out this research because different stakeholders often question why job satisfaction at Dilla University is low. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of working conditions and supervision on academic staff's job satisfaction at Dilla University. This study tries to identify the relationship between working conditions, supervision, and job satisfaction. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted for the study. Both questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data. Stratified sampling techniques were used. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. The study found that there is a positive significant relationship between working conditions, supervision and job satisfaction. The study also revealed that the lack of equipment and tools for academic staff to carry out their tasks was one of the major challenges that academics experienced. The study recommends that top management should improve working conditions within the organization. The working conditions should be conducive to the academic staff's health and safety at the University. The decision makers at Dilla University need to pay more attention to the physical aspects of the working environment, such as buildings, equipment, furniture, lighting and air-conditioning.

Keywords: working conditions, supervision, job satisfaction, academic staff

Background of the Study

Organizations in the 21st century are faced with more challenges than ever before. Job satisfaction is one of the main factors contributing to the improvement of university outcomes. For decades, many researchers have examined the topic related to job satisfaction and investigated the determinants of job satisfaction. It has been reported that satisfaction and dissatisfaction significantly influence an employee's morale, organization productivity, commitment to job, absenteeism, as well as turnover rates. It has been an interesting and continuing topic that has been studied by many researchers in about 5000 reports, articles and publication related to topic of job satisfaction (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). Most researchers make

an effort to investigate the concept and theories related to job satisfaction used in any industrial organization, in the banking sector, as well as in institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is important for researchers to focus on, and not to overlook, the topic of job satisfaction among academic institutions of higher education.

Job satisfaction should be considered as a vital factor in each organization. In other words, the existence of a positive organizational feeling is very different among academic staff, but it provides an accurate way for improving and monitoring it as one of the main organizational policies to be protected by a university (Dawal & Taha, 2006). Indeed, job satisfaction is assumed as one of the major organizational factors having an effective role on academic staff's attitudes and feelings. Likewise, this factor conducts staff's behaviors and reactions at the university (Strydom, 2011). Meanwhile, the objective of a university is to provide quality and comprehensive knowledge, educate students, seek academic development and coordinate national development demands (Hassan & Romle, 2015).

Academic staff who were planning to leave the profession reported less satisfaction and a more negative attitude towards teaching as a career (Smith, 2007). Muindi (2011) found that academic staff's job satisfaction has a significant relationship with their job performance and the academic performance of their students. Attitudes of academic staff are affected, in part, by workplace conditions such as a positive and safe environment, a supportive administration, career progression, adequate salary, supportive work team, and the appeal of the job itself. This study aims to investigate the impact of working conditions and supervision on academic staff's job satisfaction at Dilla University.

Statement of the Problem

Understanding whether academics are satisfied or dissatisfied with their work may also lead to improvements and innovations in their teaching. Furthermore, the understanding about job satisfaction can also help the university to retain potential academics, as well as to decrease absenteeism and turnover rate, or to attract new competent staff. To achieve quality education and job satisfaction among academics, various dimensions should be studied, as job satisfaction increases productivity and performance of individuals.

The current level of academic staff's job satisfaction at Dilla University is quite low. Their performance is still less satisfactory than the expected standards and thus consequences could follow due to rising concerns over poor coverage of term projects and course content, delayed examination results and missing marks, poor assessment of examinations, poor lecturer-student interaction, deteriorating academic performance and reduced levels

of research and publications. As a result, academic standards and performance among students have been adversely affected and are still a daily complaint at the University. With these problems, the University is losing credibility, as students are no longer applying to study there, while a good number of them are resorting to other universities and colleges. This unsatisfactory performance of academic staff members has, in turn, posed a threat on the quality of education offered by the institution and service delivery.

The main problem the academic staff at Dilla university is facing today seems to be a lack of job satisfaction and motivation. It is widely believed that academic staff who is well motivated and satisfied with his or her job is likely to perform his or her duties very efficiently. The duties of academic staff are enormous. The attitude of any academic staff is affected by work-force conditions, such as a positive and safe work environment, and supervision. In addition, when university authorities make decisions and behave as if academic staff's opinions are not needed, the academic staff would feel slighted and demoralized. This is an indication of the presence of job dissatisfaction. It may lead to negative consequences such as low productivity, intentional absenteeism, brain drain, and low job performance. It is sad to note that, because they lack job satisfaction, academic staff leave universities for the industrial sector of the economy. For these reasons, academic staff should be made to experience high levels of job satisfaction and motivation. As per the researcher's one year observations made before conducting this study at Dilla University, there is a high academic staff turnover at the University, which indicates the existence of a job satisfaction problem where the level of job satisfaction is unclear.

A very challenging issue at Dilla University is the decline of academic staff and a rising turnover. The University has failed to attract and retain highly qualified professional staff. The present study investigates the impact of working conditions and supervision on the academic staff's job satisfaction at Dilla University.

Basic Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following basic research questions:

1. What significant relationship exists between working conditions and job satisfaction?
2. What is the relationship between supervision and job satisfaction?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are divided into two main areas: the general objective and the specific objectives.

General Objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate the impact of working conditions and supervision on the academic staff's job satisfaction at Dilla University.

Specific Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following specific objectives in line with the basic research questions:

- To explore the relationship between working conditions and job satisfaction.
- To assess the relationship between supervision and job satisfaction.

Research Hypotheses

To provide answers to the research questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

- H1 *There is a positive significant relationship between working conditions and job satisfaction.*
- H2 *There is a positive significant relationship between supervision and job satisfaction.*

Significance of the Study

The study results will provide evidence to the management of the Dilla University on how they conform to the academic staff's satisfaction. The study will be significant to policy makers and other players in the education sector in Ethiopia, as they will undertake policy reforms in the higher education sector in order to deal with emerging issues in these areas. The study will provide background information to research organizations and scholars who will want to carry out further research in this area. From the academic point of view, this research will encourage other researchers or academicians to carry out more extensive studies in this area and to explore overlooked factors associated with job satisfaction of academic staff. The study will serve as a reference material for further studies in this area. The study is expected to contribute to expanding literature on issues related to job satisfaction of academic staff.

Scope of the Study

Conducting a research at a university is not an easy task: it requires much money, time and effort. Considering these factors, the geographical coverage of this study was Dilla University in South Nation, Nationalities and Peoples, Ethiopia. Methodologically, the study was delimited to a descriptive

correlational research design. For the purpose of this study, working conditions and supervision variables were examined. This study was conducted between January and August 2017.

Limitations of the Study

Unwillingness of the respondents during filling questionnaires. This study focused only on job satisfaction of academic staff. Therefore, the results of this study might not be applicable to job satisfaction of non-academic staff (administrative) at the university. The study considered factors of job satisfaction working conditions and supervision. However, there may be other factors that may affect job satisfaction that the study does not incorporate or explore. The study was limited to Dilla University, implying that the results obtained should not be generalized to other universities that were not included in this study.

Operational Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definition of key terms was applied:

- *Job satisfaction* refers to the feeling of content an individual has with his or her job (Scott, Kirk, & Taylor, 2004).
- *Academic staff* staff are defined as professionals who are responsible for planning, directing and undertaking academic teaching and research within academic institutions.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Review

Working conditions

Working conditions are relevant to the environment impact, such as the space for operating and resting, the criticality of the job, the degree of required technology and skill, the equipment situation and so on. Working conditions are hygiene factors to prevent dissatisfaction (Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971). Locke (1976) finds that working conditions, which are compatible with the individual's physical needs and work goals, are positively associated with job satisfaction. Employees are highly motivated with good working conditions, as they provide a feeling of safety, comfort and motivation. On the contrary, poor working conditions bring out a fear of bad health in employees. The more comfortable the working environment is the more productive the employees will be. The following points come under this category:

- Feeling safe and comfort in a working environment.

- Tools and equipment.
- Working methods
- Security guards and parking facility.
- Well ventilated, with good light fans and air-conditioning.
- Neat and clean office place, rest area and washrooms.

Supervision

Factors such as supervisory style and influence, human relations and administrative skills are analyzed in this dimension (Locke, 1976).

Supervision is the affiliation between leaders and subordinates. A synergistic supervision is an appropriate instrument to enhance job satisfaction. It will establish open communication, trust relationships, supervisory feedback and evaluation. Supervisors should apply the appropriate strategies with their employee's status and act accordingly (Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

According to Baron and Greenberg (2003, p. 158), if workers view their superiors as fair, competent, and sincere, the level of job satisfaction will be high. Furthermore, those workers that perceive their employers as unfair, incompetent and selfish will therefore experience a lower level of job satisfaction. There has been a huge outcry from educators regarding the poor supervision in the education sector. Many staff has complained that their seniors lack human relations and supervisory skills. They have also mentioned the tremendous amount of favoritism and inequities that exist at the management level.

Job Satisfaction

Even though job satisfaction is defined in various ways, Cranny et al. (1992) suggest that there is consensus on the definition of job satisfaction as an emotional reaction. They define job satisfaction as one's affective or emotional reaction to a job that is the result of one's comparison of actual outcomes with expected or deserved outcomes. From the definitions above, job satisfaction can be defined as the attitude or feeling that one has about one's job, which is either positive or negative. Hence, someone who has a high level of job satisfaction will have a positive feeling about his/her job, while someone who is dissatisfied will have negative feelings.

Empirical Review

Several studies have been done on job satisfaction, its determinants and consequences during the past several decades. However, little progress has been made in integrating those research results. Some of the important studies conducted on job satisfaction are reviewed here.

Egbule (2003) conducted a study on factors related to job satisfaction of academic staff in Nigerian universities. The results show that lecturers in federal universities have a higher mean job satisfaction score than those in state and private universities.

Mukyanuzi and Benell (2005) assessed the nature and causes of job satisfaction. The study revealed that, compared to what is paid to similar professionals with the same or at times less academic qualifications and experiences in the non-academic private sector and in politics, academics in the majority of Tanzania's public higher education institutions receive meager pay despite their stressful job, which is often characterized by long working hours. All these challenges can be major causes of job dissatisfaction, which results into internal brain drain of the academics in Tanzania's public universities.

A research conducted by Naeem, Hadi, & Shish (2011) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and supervision. However, Nezaam (2005) found a weak relationship between job satisfaction and supervision.

Mkude (2011) conducted a study on challenges and opportunities facing academic staff in Tanzania. The findings revealed that public universities experienced many problems associated with staff job dissatisfaction. Although the problem of turnover was reported to be low compared with private universities, it affected the university to some extent.

For example, Mkude (2011) pointed out that the Faculty of Education was being threatened by an economic crisis and reduced resource flow. Newly trained staff in which the faculty and donors had invested heavily became frustrated and left for green pastures because of job dissatisfaction. The reason behind was inadequate remuneration, which forced academic staff to seek other employment or engage in personal economic activities.

Chimanikire, Mutandwa, Gadzirayi, Muzondo, & Mutandwa (2007) determine factors affecting job satisfaction among academic professionals in tertiary institutions of Zimbabwe against the backdrop of a high brain drain in the sector. The results of the study showed that a greater proportion of the academic staff was not satisfied with their jobs. Reasons for dissatisfaction included a high volume of work, inadequate salaries, allowances and so on.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

A conceptual framework gives a familiar and easily understood relationship of the variables under the study. Based on the above literature, the following conceptual framework was developed: the independent variables represent the factors (working conditions, supervision), while the dependent variable represents job satisfaction.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework
Developed by the Researcher



Research Methodology

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, a descriptive correlational research design was employed to describe the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables and to establish any association between these variables. Using this design, the researcher focused on examining the relationship between working conditions, supervision, and job satisfaction. The goal of a descriptive correlational design is to determine the relationship between one thing (the independent variable) and another thing (the dependent or outcome variable) within a population. It allows the researcher to measure variables and then analyze them to see whether the variables are related and to what extent.

Research Approach

Taking into consideration the significance of applying mixed methods in modern research, the researcher adopted a mixed method, which combines quantitative and qualitative techniques for the reasons of achieving credibility of results, for a better interpretation of results, to offset the weaknesses associated with using one method and to achieve corroboration between the two methods. When using a mixed approach, the researcher mixes different data collection methods, which enable the researcher to see the same phenomenon from different perspectives in order to understand the problem more completely (Creswell, 2007).

Total and Target Population

In this study, the population is comprised of academic staff at Dilla University, as being the target respondents. The target population of this study was all academic staff of Dilla University. The total number of academic staff at Dilla University is 1,610.

Sampling Frame

To achieve the objectives of the study, the sampling frame was drawn from the lists of all academic staff at Dilla University, which is 1,610.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

For the purpose of this study, a stratified random sampling technique, which is based on their faculty/colleges, was employed to get information from Dilla University academic staff. This technique is preferred because it is

Table 1 Scale Reliability Analysis of Each Variable

Variables	Cronbach alpha	No of Items
Working conditions	0.815	7
Supervision	0.943	8
Job satisfaction	0.884	7

used to assist in minimizing bias when dealing with the population and when the population is heterogeneous. Regarding sample size determination, among different methods, the one developed by Joseph Carvalho (1984) was used. The population size of the study is 1,610, which ranges between 1,201 and 3,200 according to Carvalho sample size determination. Therefore, the sample size selected for the study under consideration was 125.

Method of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources of data were employed in this study.

Research Variables

In this study, job satisfaction is identified as the dependent variable. Independent variables used in the study are working conditions and supervision.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The descriptive statistics for working condition variables are shown in Table 2. The mean score of the respondents' answers to the item 'Dilla University has strong values that support academic excellence' is 2.85 on a 5-point scale, while the standard deviation is 1.120. This means that, at Dilla University, the respondents disagree on the University's strong values that support academic excellence. Respondents are of the opinion that working conditions in their department allow them to perform at a high standard, with a mean value of 2.67 and a standard deviation of 1.221, and the physical set up (furniture, lighting, air-conditioning, etc.) at work allows them to do their best, with a mean of 2.19 and a standard deviation of 1.238. Respondents disagree on statements that Dilla University supports the use of different types of technology to improve teaching, learning and research, with a mean value of 2.64 and a standard deviation of 1.226. The mean score of the respondent's answers to 'The University provides the equipment and resources necessary' for them to execute their responsibilities is 2.53 on a 5-point scale, while the standard deviation is 1.296.

This means respondents at the University disagree on the fact that the University does not provide the equipment and resources to execute their responsibilities. In other words, the respondents agree that working conditions for academics support their advancement, with a mean value of 2.15 and a standard deviation of 1.243. They also supported the fact that

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Working Condition Variables

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dilla University has strong values that support academic excellence	113	2.85	1.120
Working conditions in my department allow me to perform at a high standard	113	2.67	1.221
The physical set up (furniture, lighting, air-conditioning, etc.) at work allows me to do my best	113	2.19	1.238
Dilla University supports the use of different types of technology to improve teaching, learning and research	113	2.64	1.226
The University provides the equipment and resources necessary for me to execute my responsibilities	113	2.53	1.296
Working conditions for academics support their advancement	113	2.15	1.243
Academic staff are encouraged to undertake research	113	2.81	1.094
Overall mean score	113	2.548	1.205

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation.

academic staff is encouraged to undertake research, with a mean score of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.094. A critical review of the mean column in Table 2 shows that the majority of variables has a mean score of less than 3.00 on a 5-point scale. This indicates that respondents disagree or strongly disagree with all the variables regarding working conditions. The overall mean score of the working conditions variable is 2.5485 with a standard deviation of 1.205. According to the criterion set in Table 2, the mean value falls to a 'disagree level' of the respondents. This means that the majority of the respondents disagree on the working conditions variables. This shows that the University should work more to improve its working conditions.

The response from Table 3 show that the respondents are not satisfied with the totality of their supervisor except the sixth row or construct, i.e., 'It is easy for me to talk with my supervisor.' For this statement, they agree at a mean value of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.046. They disagree that their supervisor takes prompt and fair corrective action on staff who fail to perform their work satisfactorily, at a mean value of 2.13, which is below the average on a 5-point scale. The mean value for their responses on the construct that their supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job is very low, as it tends towards the value of the average of a 5-point scale, that is, 2.53, just a little above the average. They disagree with the construct that their supervisor gives them the opportunity to participate in important decision making, at a mean value of 2.23.

The respondents disagree that their supervisor shows consideration for subordinates' feelings, at a mean value of 2.72 and a standard deviation

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Supervision Variables

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)
My supervisor takes prompt and fair corrective action on staff who fail to perform their work satisfactorily	113	2.13	1.235
My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job	113	2.53	1.272
My supervisor gives me the opportunity to participate in important decision making	113	2.23	1.193
My supervisor shows consideration for subordinates' feelings	113	2.72	1.110
My supervisor often takes time to listen to staff feelings and opinions	113	2.54	1.120
It is easy for me to talk with my supervisor	113	3.13	1.046
My supervisor is fair in recognizing individual & team accomplishments	113	2.42	1.113
My supervisor is always available and willing to give me advice whenever I need it	113	2.28	1.295
Overall mean score	113	2.50	1.173

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction Variables

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)
I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases	113	2.75	1.181
I am satisfied with my chances for promotion	113	2.67	1.175
I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do on this job	113	2.56	1.235
I am satisfied with the physical working conditions in the University	113	2.31	1.386
I feel positive about my future in the organization	113	2.46	1.307
The University retains its best employees and really cares for its employees	113	2.32	1.322
I feel comfortable within the University and because of that I am able to work to well	113	2.48	1.325
Overall mean score	113	2.51	1.275

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation.

of 1.110. The construct on their supervisor often taking time to listen to staff feelings and opinions is at a mean value of 2.54, while the one that their supervisor is fair in recognizing individual & team accomplishments is at a mean value of 2.86 and a standard deviation of 1.139. The construct on their supervisor being always available and willing to give them advice whenever they need it shows a mean score and a standard deviation of 2.68 and 1.295, respectively. The overall mean score for the supervision variable is 2.497 and a standard deviation of 1.173. This value falls under the response of 'disagrees.' This implies that, in the study, the job satisfaction of academic staff was affected by the supervision variables.

Table 5 Model Summary

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²
1	0.752	0.566	0.541

Notes Predictors: (constant), supervision, working conditions. Dependent variable: job satisfaction.

Responses in the table show that respondents feel satisfied with their chances for salary increases at a mean value of 2.75 and a standard deviation of 1.181. They are also satisfied with their chances for promotion and they are generally satisfied with the kind of work they do on this job, at a mean score of 2.67 and 2.56, respectively. However, the mean value of the respondent's answers to the physical working conditions at the University is 2.31, which is below average, that is, 2.5 on a 5-point scale. They disagree that they feel positive about their future in the organization, at a mean score of 2.46. The respondents disagree on the statements 'The University retains its best employees and really cares for its employees' and 'I feel comfortable within the University and because of that I am able to work to well,' at a mean value of 2.32 and 2.48, respectively. The majority of the respondents are not satisfied with the physical working conditions and they do not feel comfortable within the Dilla University. So the University management should be improving this by giving more attention to academic staff. According to the criterion set in Table 4, the overall mean value (2.5071) falls to a 'disagree level' of the respondents.

Adjusted R-Square or coefficient of determination of the model is 0.541 or 54.1%. So, Table 5 with Adjusted R-Square = 0.541 means that the total variation in the dependent variable (job satisfaction) is explained by 54.1% by all independent variables (working conditions, supervision). In other words, the remaining 45.9% can be explained by other variables or factors. As a result, there must be other factors that are not incorporated in this study to explain job satisfaction of academic staff. This means there are other additional variables that are important in explaining job satisfaction that have not been considered in this study.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Method

Multiple regressions are used to express the effect of independent variables and the dependent variable. The formula of linear regression (multiple linear regressions) in general is as follows:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \varepsilon \quad y = f(x_1, x_2), \quad (1)$$

where y is job satisfaction (dependent variable), β_0 is constant, β_1 and β_2 are regression coefficients of each variable, x_1 is working conditions, and x_2 is supervision.

Table 6 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Variable	Working conditions	Supervision	Job satisfaction
Working conditions	1	0.559**	0.634**
Supervision	0.559**	1	0.633**
Job satisfaction	0.634**	0.633**	1

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

Table 7 Rule of Thumb on Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Correlation Range	Classification
0.0–0.2	Very low correlation
0.2–0.4	Low correlation
0.4–0.6	Reasonable or moderate correlation
0.6–0.8	High correlation
0.8–1.0	Very high correlation

Notes Adapted from Harris, Taylor, & Taylor (2005, p. 158).

Testing Hypotheses

This study has two hypotheses formulated in a previous page of the research hypotheses part. In order to determine the relationships between independent and dependent variables, further statistical analysis was calculated. As it is clearly indicated in Table 7, a strong positive relationship was found between working conditions and job satisfaction because of the positive value for correlation coefficient. The working conditions variable has a 0.634 correlation with the job satisfaction variable. The value of this correlation coefficient 0.634 falls under a coefficient range from ± 0.6 to ± 0.8 . Thus, the relationship between working conditions and job satisfaction is high and significant. This is so because the p -value 0.000 is less than alpha value 0.01. In conclusion, it rejects the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis.

Based on Table 7, there is a positive relationship between supervision and job satisfaction because of the positive value for correlation coefficient. The supervision variable has a 0.633 correlation with the job satisfaction variable. The value of this correlation coefficient 0.633 falls under the coefficient range from ± 0.6 to ± 0.8 . Thus, the relationship between supervision and job satisfaction is high and significant. It is because the p -value 0.000 is less than alpha value 0.01. In conclusion, it rejects the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis.

Conclusion

From the study, the researcher found that working conditions and supervision are the factors that determine the job satisfaction of academic staff. The study found that there is a positive significant relationship between

working conditions, supervision and job satisfaction. The findings of this study show that employee's job satisfaction with their working conditions is low. The study also revealed that the lack of equipment and of tools for academic staff to carry out their tasks was one of the major challenges that academics experienced.

Recommendations

Top management should improve working conditions within Dilla University. The working conditions should be conducive to academic staff's health and safety at the University. The University should use technology to improve teaching, learning and research, which are fundamental aspects for the success of higher education institutions. Therefore, this study recommends that the use of technology as an additional support to teaching and learning, as well as the improvement of research at the University, needs the implementation of technology by staff members, as this will ensure they remain motivated with their job. It is suggested that proper facilities must be provided at the University, including by building infrastructure, introducing the latest technology for teaching and other resources, so that teaching can be easier and more effective, while academic staff would feel motivated in delivering quality education. The decision makers at the University need to pay more attention to the physical aspects of the working environment, such as buildings, equipment, furniture, lighting and air-conditioning.

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