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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION:
A CASE STUDY OF EXPATRIATE LECTURERS IN IIUM

BY

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ABSTRACT

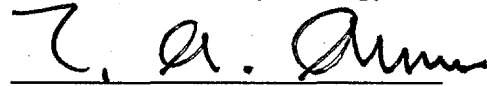
The purpose of this research was to study the level of job satisfaction and occupational stress and their relationship with each other among the expatriate lecturers of International Islamic University Malaysia. The sample consisted of 109 faculty members from various departments of the university on the Gombak campus. Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Imam (1998) was used to assess the level of job satisfaction, and the General Well-Being Schedule (Fazio, 1977) was employed as a measure of occupational stress. Information regarding the geographic region to which a lecturer belonged, his age, academic status and the Kulliyah to which he is affiliated, was obtained through a questionnaire. Four hypotheses were tested. The hypotheses that the lecturers belonging to South and South-East Asia would be more satisfied with their jobs and would feel less occupational stress were not confirmed. It was found that occupational stress was negatively related to job satisfaction. It was also found that academic ranks were related to intrinsic job satisfaction but had an inverted U shaped relationship with extrinsic job satisfaction.

ملخص البحث

استهدف هذا البحث دراسة مستوى الرضى عن العمل والتوتر المهني وعلاقة كل منهما بالآخر فيما لدى الأساتذة المغتربين بالجامعة الإسلامية العالمية بماليزيا. و قد تكوّنت العينة من ١٠٩ من أعضاء الكليات من أقسام مختلفة بالحرم الجامعي في غومباك. أُسْتُخْدِمَ في هذا البحث مقياس الرضى عن العمل (Job Satisfaction Scale) الذي طوره إمام (١٩٩٨) في تقييم مستوى الرضى عن العمل. كما استُخْدِمَ كشف الإرتياح العامّ (General Well-Being Schedule) (فازيو، ١٩٧٧) كمقياس لتقييم مستوى التوتر المهني (Occupational Stress). أما المعلومات الخاصة بالمنطقة الجغرافية للأستاذ وعمره ودرجته الأكاديمية والكلية التي ينتمي إليها، فقد جُمعت عن طريق الإستبيان. وعليه فقد جُرِّبَت أربع افتراضات (Hypotheses). فلم يُؤكِّد الافتراض على كون الأساتذة من جنوب أو جنوب شرق آسيا سيجعلهم أكثر رضى بأعمالهم، وكذلك لم يُؤكِّد الافتراض على أنّ ذلك سيجعلهم أقلّ شعور بالتوتر المهني. هذا، ووُجِدَت العلاقة السلبية بين التوتر المهني والرضى بالعمل. كما وُجِدَ أيضًا أن الدرجة الأكاديمية متعلّقة بالرضى عن العمل الداخلي (Intrinsic Job Satisfaction) مباشرة، ولكن بشكل معكوس (inverted U shaped) بالرضى عن العمل الخارجي (Extrinsic Job Satisfaction).

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Science in Psychology.



Zafar Afaq Ansari

Supervisor

Date: 29.7.02

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Science in Psychology.

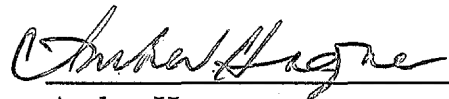


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Dean, Kulliyyah of Islamic
Revealed Knowledge and Human
Sciences.

Date: 5/8 /2002

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Name: Abdulai M. Kaba

Signature.....

Date.....27/07/02.....

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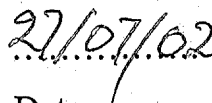
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To my beloved mother Mawah Sangary, who has passed away!

May the Almighty Allah bless her soul and engulf her in an everlasting peace!

To my dear father who was always there for me and encouraged me to continue my studies to the highest degree in Psychology.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Research

An expatriate coming to a foreign country enters an entirely different socio-cultural environment as compared to that of his home country where he had been educated, trained, and had lived and worked. This new environment includes numerous challenges such as a different work environment, workforce structure, management style, decision making process and motivation. He also encounters a different living environment, accommodation, acquaintances and leisure facilities. He faces isolation as well as different social realities such as family structures, human relations, social hierarchy, wealth and poverty. Moreover, he will encounter different norms and values such as what is right and wrong, good and evil, law, religion and ethics. This is in addition to different educational values, culture and economy. These new encounters and experiences could cause severe stress in an expatriate. If the expatriate is going to a foreign country in order to take up a job, he would also encounter a new job environment and his reaction to the job situation, his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it can become a source of his problems.

A vast literature has been accumulated regarding job satisfaction and its various facets, although the relationship between job satisfaction and stress has not been fully explored for highly educated expatriate staff living in a multiethnic, multireligious society like Malaysia.

Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on stress and job satisfaction among expatriate lecturers of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Various levels of stress and aspects of job dissatisfaction are probed, to see how they are related to each other. The relationships of these variables with demographic characteristics have also been analyzed.

The study aims at exploring this relationship in the context of International Islamic University Malaysia, which is a unique institution in the sense that it has employed a large number of expatriate staff. Such an investigation is likely to help the university in taking appropriate measures to address the problems of job satisfaction-dissatisfaction and job stress. Since Malaysia is becoming a regional center of tertiary education, it is expected that this study would also help other institutions in formulating their policies towards expatriate staff.

Rational of the Research

Teaching young minds is a noble task because university students are most likely to become future leaders or scholars and scientists in future. Unless the lecturers are satisfied and are relatively free from stress, they will not be performing to the best of their abilities.

Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction are combined in our study because the two variables appear to be linked together and the relationship between the two is likely to influence lecturers' performance. We have not come across any research that has combined stress and job satisfaction in the Malaysian environment. The present study

takes a special sample – that of expatriate lecturers in Malaysia – because the expatriate lecturers have some special problems which may be different in many aspects from the local lecturers. The results of such a study are expected to be of use not only to the International Islamic University, but also for other universities in Malaysia as many of these universities are employing lecturers from overseas.

Hypotheses

The present research has been designed to investigate the levels of stress of lecturers as well as their levels of job satisfaction. Differences in expatriate lecturers' occupational stress and job satisfaction patterns are studied by survey research method, in which comparisons are made in relation to the cultural background (region of origin), age, and the Kulliyah to which they are affiliated. The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Expatriate lecturers from South and Southeast Asia would be more satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts of Middle East and Africa.
2. Expatriate lecturers from South and Southeast Asia would feel less Occupational Stress as compared to their counterparts of Middle East and Africa.
3. Faculty members in higher academic ranks would be more satisfied with their jobs than those in lower ranks.
4. There will be a negative relationship between Job Satisfaction and Occupational Stress.

Definition of Study Variables:

Variables used in this study are the following:

Job Satisfaction:

According to Berry (1991), job satisfaction is an “individual’s reaction to job experience”. (p. 268). This job satisfaction is classified into Intrinsic Job Satisfaction and Extrinsic Job Satisfaction, a distinction made by Herzberg and Snyderman (1993).

Intrinsic Job Satisfaction:

Intrinsic Job Satisfaction (factors of job content) includes achievement, recognition and the work itself.

Extrinsic Job Satisfaction:

Extrinsic Job Satisfaction (Environmental factors) includes working conditions, pay, status and security.

Overall Job Satisfaction (Total):

The combination of Intrinsic and Extrinsic factors for Job Satisfaction.

Stress:

Stress has been defined as the pressure on an individual that in some way is perceived as excessive or intolerable, and to the psychological and physical changes in response to those pressures (Chandra, 1992).

Age:

Age means a person’s chronological age.

Pay:

Pay means salary a lecturer currently receives from the institution.

Academic Position:

Position denotes the designation, i.e. professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and lecturer that the individual is occupying currently. It may be noted that

while “lecturer” means a specific academic position, in Malaysian usage it also means the teaching staff of university—including lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and professors.

Kulliyyah:

Kulliyyah means the faculty a lecturer is affiliated to. However, for the purpose of this study we separated the Kulliyyah of IRK&HS into Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences. Engineering and Architecture were combined into one Kulliyyah (Technical), and so were Economics/Management, Law and Education (Professional). Celpad (Center for Language & Pre-university Academic Department) was considered as another unit.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction is “an affective (that is, emotional) reaction to a job that results from the incumbent’s comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired, expected, deserved etc.” (Stone, 1992, p. 1).

Considerable literature is available regarding the definitions of job satisfaction (Lownberg and Conrad, 1989; Dunnette and Hough, 1991). These definitions range from defining general satisfaction as well as satisfaction with facets of job, namely the work itself, co-workers, supervision, pay, working conditions, company policies and procedures, and opportunities of promotions. This chapter discusses dimensions of job satisfaction and dimensions of occupational stress as well as the relationship between job satisfaction and occupational stress.

The situationist perspective on job satisfaction maintains that satisfaction is determined by the characteristics of the job as well as those of the larger environment in which the job exists. According to Stone, Patricia & Cranny (1992), the majority of research studies assume that when a particular set of job conditions exist, a particular level of job satisfaction will follow. Kable (1988) states that satisfaction can only be increased by changing the job to suit the person. However, he believes that the relationship between employees is also an important link in improving an individual’s job satisfaction, “to the extent that working with people with the same frame of reference to promote satisfaction... is a vital environmental, or extrinsic factor which must be taken into account” (Kable, 1988, p. 61- 62). Therefore, another source of job

satisfaction can be achieved and enjoyed if an individual is able to maintain cordial relationship with colleagues and coworkers in a healthy working environment.

Job Facets and Global Job Satisfaction Views

There are two main approaches to job satisfaction. The first is the job facet approach which focuses on separate job dimensions that contribute to job satisfaction, including salary, supervision, relationship with coworkers, working conditions, the work itself and opportunities for promotions. This approach suggests that individual differences among workers may render them to have different levels of feelings towards various facets. The question that arises here is whether job satisfaction should be considered as a single entity or should satisfaction with each dimensions of interest be taken into consideration separately. The answer for such a question depends on the reason (s) or importance one attaches to one's job. If job measures are to be used to diagnose potential problem areas in the job setting, then separate dimensions are more valuable than an overall measure. The facet approach has a vital diagnostic potential in pinpointing the problematic areas of the job setting. Job facets enable an individual to learn and differentiate between which ones produce positive or negative feelings on the part of the employees. On the other hand, the measure of overall job satisfaction may be more appropriate should the interest be in the relationship between a general response to a job, i.e. quitting the job (McCormich and Ilgen, 1989).

The second is the global job satisfaction approach which is the opposite of the facet approach. The global approach simply asks if the employee is satisfied with the job as whole, instead of asking the employee how satisfied he/she is with the facets of the job. The global job approach suggests that "satisfaction is more than the sum of its

parts, and that employee can express dissatisfaction with facets of the job and still be satisfied generally” (Imam, 1988).

Both global and facet approaches have been empirically researched into. There have also been mixed results from studies about which one of the two approaches might be more useful than the other. In a study, Jackson, Potter, & Dale (1998) assessed the immediate utility of facet descriptions over several global criteria directly and indirectly related to global job satisfaction. About 20,000 respondents from a large UK military organization took part in the study. It was found that facet descriptions seemed to be simple and adequate measures of overall job satisfaction.

Correlations between the global and facet approaches have been found in some researches. Ironson, Smith, Brannick & Gibson (1998) found that the correlations between global and facet scales suggest that work might be the most important facet in relation to general job satisfaction. Some other researches are of the opinion that the facet approach is more useful. Rice, Gentile & McFarlin (1991) found that the relationship between facet amount and facet satisfaction was generally stronger among respondents who placed a high importance on the job facet than among respondents who placed a lower importance on it. Examining 6,003 officers (mean age 35 years) and 13,721 ranks (nonofficers; mean age 27 years) who completed measures of job facet description, facet importance, and global satisfaction, Jackson and Corr (2002) found that workers, when providing global measures of job satisfaction, might use cognitive heuristics to reduce the complexity of facet description.

Mark (2002) asserted that based on several non-psychometric properties, the single-item measure appeared to be preferable to multiple-item measures of facet satisfaction in that it was more efficient, more cost-effective, contained more face validity, and was better able to measure changes in job satisfaction. The researcher studied participants consisting of 207 employees from a variety of organizations who completed a job satisfaction survey containing the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) as well as a single-item which also measured each of five JDI facets. Results indicated that the single-item facet measure was significantly correlated with each of the JDI facets (correlations ranged from .60 to .72).

Some industrial and organizational psychologists recognize the fact that measuring overall satisfaction may not yield information with adequate precision about how employees feel about their job. Employees may differ notably in their degree of satisfaction about some aspects of their jobs. For example, an employee may be satisfied with physical working condition, and yet may not be satisfied with supervisors, and coworkers or the policy of the institution. This is the reason why organizational psychologists have exerted substantial efforts in concentrating on the measurement of job facet satisfaction. However, it is our view that both global and facet approaches should be given equal importance. This is because some other researches have reported minimal differences between the two approaches in relation to their importance and efficacy.

Highhouse and Becker (1993) examined whether facet job satisfaction measures lacked the elements necessary for capturing overall job satisfaction. The first study with 663 employees from 3 separate plants of a single company, investigated the

relationship between a composite facet measure and a single-item measure when facets chosen by an employee committee were added, while the second study with 66 employees of a division of a single company, investigated the relationship between two measures of a specific type of job satisfaction with a well-defined content domain. Results showed that adding employee-chosen facets marginally improved the relationship between the facet and single-item job satisfaction measures and that even when the entire content domain was specified, the magnitude of the relationship between a single-item measure of job satisfaction and a facet measure was not substantial. These findings supported the hypothesis that facet measures of job satisfaction did not incorporate all the elements that are involved in making an overall judgment about job satisfaction.

Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

One of the most popular and extensively researched measures of Job Satisfaction is the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall, & Hulin (1969, as cited by Stone, Smith & Cranny, 1992), which is one of the measures of job satisfaction that is often used in research. The said Index measures five facets of job satisfaction, namely:

1. *The Work Itself*: satisfaction with this area is usually measured in terms of the core job characteristics.
2. *Supervision*: this is about incentives, praise and feedback received from supervisors or employers.
3. *Coworkers*: people seek friendly, warm and cooperative relationships with others not only for what they produce in some immediate sense, but also for what those relationships provide in times of need and social support. Therefore, an amicable working environment produces satisfaction.

4. *Pay*: pay is an important source of satisfaction at work.
5. *Promotion*: studies have shown that employees who perceive few opportunities for advancement have negative attitudes toward their work and their organizations.

Specific Job Facets

The concept of job, being a complex one, and its facets are numerous. This is because jobs are of various types and therefore, no one number of facets can hold for all of them. Certain facets belong to some specific types of jobs only. There are about twenty content and context related job facets (Luthans, 1985), including the above five facets proposed by Smith et al. (1969).

Job Facets are identified in two ways. One is the statistical approach which involves analysing an employee's responses to job attitude questions. These responses are inter-correlated and clusters of facets are revealed based on how similar these responses are. In this context these factors become the facets of job as seen by the employee. On the other hand, the conceptual approach is another way of identifying facets. It involves specifying the factors to be looked into, depending on the goal of the research. It is the researcher's discretion to identify the facets either intuitively perhaps or through a theoretical perspective.

Locke (1976, cited by McCormick and Ilgen, 1989), summarized the facets that have been constantly found to have a significant contribution to an employee's satisfaction (as shown in Figure 1), which illustrates Locke's discussions of how he organized specific job facets according to classification scheme. These facets are typically used to measure job satisfaction.

“They are relatively specific attitude objects for which the organizational members have some