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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN INVESTIGATION INFLUENCING FACTORS ON JOB SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEE IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (AREEO) IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate influencing factors on job satisfaction of employees in Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education organization (AREEO). The statistical population includes all employees in 66 institutes and centers in AREEO in Iran (N= 4630). Among them 357 employees (n=357) were selected by stratified random sampling method and finally 245 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. Data collection in this research was done in two general sections. Section one was associated with review of the literature, theories and models in order to identify influencing factors on job satisfaction of employees. These factors included the nature of the job, management, payments, work conditions, operational performance, and improve working conditions. Section two was done in order to examine the hypotheses by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM_s). The Results of this section showed that operational performance and improve working conditions, had significant effects on job satisfaction of employees in AREEO.

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations today are facing with major challenges in conditions of competition, such as innovation, organizational efficiency and human resource diversity (Bhaskar *et al.*, 2011). In this condition, the concept of job satisfaction is one of the most popular researched topics in the field of organizational psychology, because environmental conditions causes an employee honest work and have satisfaction from his/her work. Also, it is very vital, because most of the employees spend a major portion of their life at working place. For this reason, environmental conditions can affect the quality of work life and personal lives of employee (Jiang *et al.*, 2011). Job satisfaction is a concept which has a close relationship with motivation and activity (Celik, 2011). According to (Anshuman, 2011) the concept of job satisfaction can be represented employee's general attitude about their job because employees who have higher job satisfaction in the workplace, are usually less absent, less likely to leave job, more innovations, more likely to show organizational commitment, and more likely to be satisfied with their lives (Lease, 1998). While dissatisfied employees in organizations, are likely to contribute very little for any purpose. The outcomes of this dissatisfaction for organization cause low productivity and loss of organizational knowledge.

Judge and Bono (2001) define job satisfaction related to evaluate the current conditions of employee's job and how these conditions meet his/her expectations. It includes evaluation and attitude that the employees has regarding about their job. Swarnalatha and Sureshkrishna (2012) defines job satisfaction as the enjoyable emotional state that results from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job. Jiang *et al.*, (2011) believe that increase in job satisfaction will reflect improved organizational citizenship behavior. On the other hand, increased organizational performance has been connected to employee job satisfaction (Jha and Bhattacharyya, 2012). This positive emotion associated with high job satisfaction that result from favorable evaluations of what organization supplies make employees more willing to carry out behaviors associated with tasks that contribute to organizational efficiency (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Organization (AREEO) which are affiliated with the Iranian Ministry of Jihad-e Agriculture and it is one of the main organizations involved in agricultural research, knowledge processes particularly in knowledge creation, production technology, store and exchange. In fact, it is one of the main components of Iranian Agricultural Knowledge and Information System (AKIS). Determining job satisfaction in this organization, with heavy and sensitive responsibilities and having diverse employees in research institutes and centers improve the performance and achieving the goals in this

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organization because job satisfaction is a part of employee life satisfaction. Therefore the purpose of this study is investigation influencing factors on job satisfaction of employee

Literature Review

Employee's satisfaction is an important success aspect for all organizations. It is recognized to have a major impact on many economic and social phenomena, such as economic growth and higher standard of living. Tansel (2013) stated that one of the best ways to increase efficiency in organizations, determine the level of employee's satisfaction of the organizational performance. One of the most important theories which clarify the job satisfaction is Lawler's theory. Lawler (1973) explains job satisfaction in four basic conditions: A) the fulfillment theory which explains the reaching of the thing needed. B) The discrepancy theory, difference, contradiction and conflict theory. C) the equity theory, about equality and the fourth one is the two-factor theory (Celik, 2011). Maslow's theory (1954) is based on the comparison of the best and worst conditions at work. The conditions in which the workers fell well are called the motivators; the bad conditions are called defensive factors. According to him, preserving factors lead unsatisfactory conditions and contrary motivator elements lead fulfillment. The bad factors are: corporation policies and management, work condition, salary, status and relations with co-workers. The motivators are: success, fame, specialties of work, responsibility, awards and advancement (Koknel *et al.*, 1989).

Herzberg (1976) published the two-factor theory of work motivation: A) motivating factors (satisfiers such as achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth) and hygiene factors (dissatisfies such as company policy, supervision, working conditions, inter personal relations, salary, status, job security, and personal life). He concluded that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, was the products of two separate factors and could not be reliably measured on the same continuum. Herzberg's theory can be very helpful to managers in deciding how to develop motivated human resources, because if employee dissatisfaction is seen as the major problem, then the hygiene factors must be improved. But to improve performance the manager must work on the motivators, and this means changing the nature of the work to make it more challenging and basically rewarding (Tosi, Rizzo, and Carroll 1986). Various theories like Maslow's need hierarchy theory, Herzberg's motivation, hygiene theory, and Vroom's expectancy model have been extended to describe the factors responsible for the job satisfaction of the say that an employee's job satisfaction is related to a number of variables such as age, occupational level, size of the organization, organizational climate, educational qualifications, educational and economic background, size of the family, gender of the employee, etc. Researchers such as (Hunt and Saul, 1975; Gill *et al.*, 2012; Jiang *et al.*, 2011) reported other influencing factors in job satisfaction that a number of different factors can influence employee satisfaction with their workspaces, including the level of pay and benefits, the perceived fairness of the promotion system within a company, the quality of the working conditions, leadership and social relationships, the job itself (the variety of tasks involved, the interest and challenge

the job generates, and the clarity of the job description/requirements). McClelland has proposed a theory of motivation that is closely associated with learning concepts. The theory proposes that when a need is strong in a person, its effects to motivate the person to use behavior which leads to satisfaction of the need. The main theme of McClelland's theory is that needs are learned through coping with one's environment. Since needs are learned, behavior which is rewarded tends to recur at a higher frequency (Gibson *et al.*, 1979). Hackman & Oldham (1975) proposed the job characteristics model, which is widely used as a framework to study how particular job characteristics impact on job outcomes, including job satisfaction. The model states that there are five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback) which impact three critical psychological states (experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes and knowledge of the actual results), in turn influencing work outcomes (job satisfaction, absenteeism, work motivation, etc.). Zhang & Zheng (2009) explored that commitment is playing very important role, through which job satisfaction will lead to job performance. Hatton *et al.*, (1999) discussed that job satisfaction is the factor that is not only for employees well being and his or her health but certain other organizational outcomes such as attendance, motivation, actual turnover. Flanagan and Flanagan (2002) explored that professional level, relationship and communication with employee is the important and affective sources of job satisfaction. Green & Heywood (2008) performance-related pay allows opportunities for worker optimization and does not crowd out intrinsic motivation, thus increasing overall satisfaction, satisfaction with pay, and satisfaction with job security.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of this study was to investigation influencing factors on job satisfaction of employees in AREEO in Iran. For this purpose a quantitative method was used for this study. Target population of this study were 4630 employees (N=4630) in 66 institutes and centers affiliated to AREEO in Iran that by using statistical sampling in a stratified randomization method, 357 (n=357) employee were selected and finally, 245 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. In order to design the questionnaire, were reviewed existing resources from a standard questionnaire in Virginia research institute¹, Minnesota University, and job satisfaction questionnaire (JDI). Finally, 65 questions were selected. The main factors that addressed in this questionnaire included: The nature of the job (The employees' perspective about value of work, self-independence, feedback, job opportunities, job facilities, and job challenges), management (consists of the interlocking functions of creating corporate policy and organizing, planning, controlling, and directing an organization's resources in order to achieve the objectives of that policy), payments (Salary and benefits), work conditions (including but not limited to such things as amenities, physical environment, stress, degree of safety), organizational performance (performance as compared to goals and objectives, including financial performance, production capacity and etc), and improve working conditions (transparent and open

¹ <http://azmonyar.persianblog.ir/post/14/>

communication, work-life balance, training and development focused, recognition for hard work). Analysis of data collected from questionnaires was conducted in two stages. Stage one: descriptive statistics. This stage was used in order to assessment of personal and professional characteristics of employees in AREEO. Stage two is associated with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM_s) to examine the hypotheses about relationships among influencing factors and job satisfaction. In data analysis, the validity and reliability of the measurement items were firstly analyzed, and the significance of the model was determined by using SEM_s. Convergent validity occurs when all items measuring a construct load on a single one of them. We assessed each factor by performing within scale factor analysis it showed that all measurement items (54 items) converged onto their constructs with each factor loading having a value of higher than 0.7.

Thus, all of our factors demonstrated unidimensionality. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the proposed constructs. As a result, as all ranged from 0.81 to 0.91, these are greater than 0.7 and thus the constructs were considered as to be reliable. The test of the model was carried out using SEM, a confirmatory factor analysis that tests a model and its validity simultaneously. LISREL 8.5 was used to perform the SEM analysis. We followed the recommended two-stage analytical procedures of SEM: The measurement and structural model were checked to ensure that the results were acceptable and consistent with the underlying conceptual model, and the structural path model was then examined to determine the relations among the constructs and their significance. The various sections of the questionnaire were assessed on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from very high (1) to very low (5).

RESULTS

Employees in AREEO was averagely 46 years old and majority of them (52.4%) were between 41-50 age. 84 percent of employees in 66 institutes and research centers was male, and majority of them (63 percent) had 20-25 years of work experience.

The research model and hypotheses

Figure1 shows research model which integrated influencing factors on job satisfaction. In our study, job satisfaction is affected by six factors. These factors include: The nature of the job, management, payments, working conditions, organizational performance, and Improve working conditions. Accordingly, six hypotheses were developed as following:

- H1:** The nature of job has a positive impact on job satisfaction of employees in AREEO.
- H2:** The management has a positive impact on job satisfaction of employees in AREEO.
- H3:** The work conditions have a positive impact on job satisfaction of employees in AREEO.
- H4:** The organizational performance has a positive impact on job satisfaction of employees in AREEO.
- H5:** The improve work conditions have a positive impact on job satisfaction of employees in AREEO.

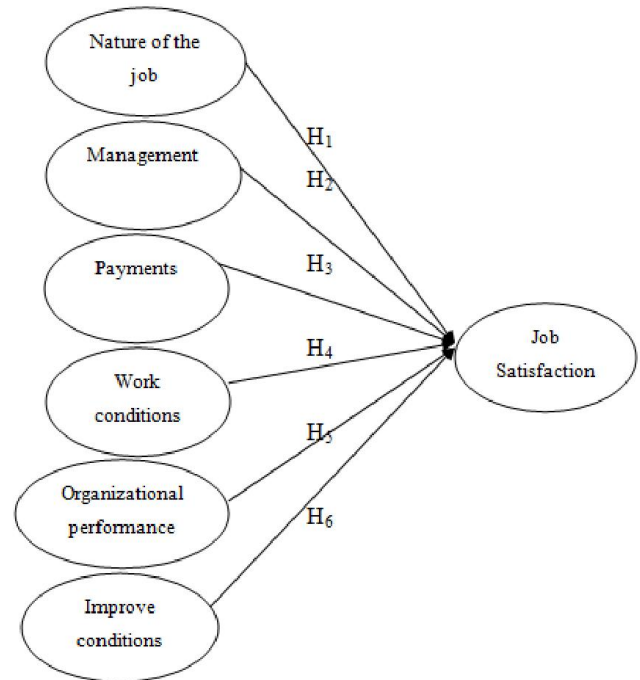
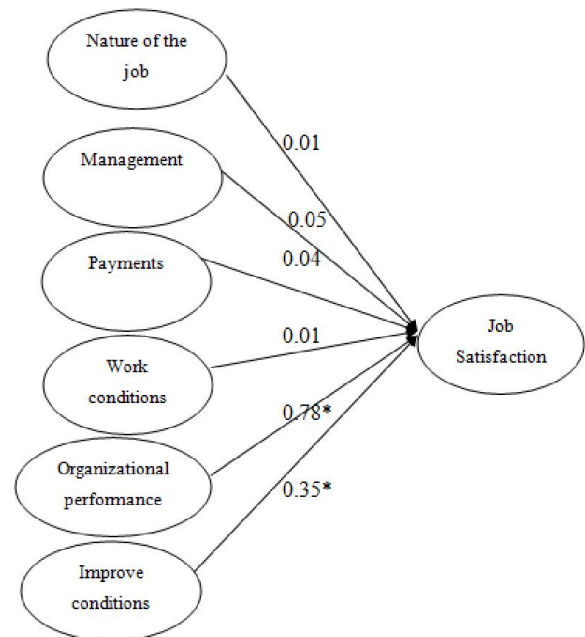


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of job satisfaction and related constructs



*P≤0.01

$\chi^2/d.f.$ 1.66

GFI= 0.90

RMR= 0.091

NFI= 0.90

NNFI= 0.90

RMSEA= 0.075

AGFI= 0.90

CFI= 0.91

PGFI= 0.66

Figure 2. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis model

Structural Equation Modeling

To test the model, we adopted a survey method for data collection and examined the hypotheses using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM_s) on the data. In the survey, all variables (54 items) were measured by using a 1–5 point (very low to very high) Likert-type scales. Table 1 summarizes the results of the measurement model; they show that two model

Table 1. Summary results of the model constructs

Model construct	Measurement item	Standardized estimates	t-value		
Nature of the job	V ₂	0.021	0.28		
	V ₃	0.26			
	V ₄	0.35			
	V ₅	0.38			
	V ₆	0.31			
	V ₇	0.24			
	V ₈	0.22			
	V ₉	0.41			
	V ₁₀	0.18			
	V ₁₁	0.27			
	V ₁₂	0.36			
	management	V ₁₄		0.39	1.38
		V ₁₅		0.36	
V ₁₆		0.28			
V ₁₇		0.31			
V ₁₈		0.54			
V ₁₉		0.41			
V ₂₀		0.49			
Payments	V ₂₁	0.54	1.19		
	V ₂₂	0.41			
	V ₂₃	0.48			
	V ₂₄	0.37			
	V ₂₅	0.87			
	V ₂₆	0.36			
work conditions	V ₂₇	0.51	0.25		
	V ₂₈	0.36			
	V ₂₉	0.29			
	V ₃₀	0.23			
	V ₃₁	0.55			
Organizational performance	V ₃₂	0.60	3.24		
	V ₃₃	0.11			
	V ₃₄	0.61			
	V ₃₅	0.54			
	V ₃₆	0.45			
	V ₃₇	0.62			
	V ₃₈	0.48			
Improve conditions	V ₃₉	0.91	3.17		
	V ₄₀	0.54			
	V ₄₁	0.41			
	V ₄₂	0.34			
	V ₄₃	0.87			
	V ₄₄	0.51			
	V ₄₅	0.46			
	V ₄₆	0.20			
	V ₄₇	0.29			
	V ₄₈	0.61			
	V ₄₉	0.57			
	V ₅₀	0.68			

Table 2. Summary of the structural model results

Relationship	Hypothesis	Path coefficient	t-value
Nature of the job → Job Satisfaction	H ₁	0.01	0.28
Management → Job Satisfaction	H ₂	0.05	1.38
Payments → Job Satisfaction	H ₃	0.04	1.19
Work conditions → Job Satisfaction	H ₄	0.01	0.25
Organizational performance → Job Satisfaction	H ₅	0.78	3.24*
Improve conditions → Job Satisfaction	H ₆	0.35	3.17*

Table 3. Overall model fit indices

Fit index	Scores	Recommended cut-off from literature
Absolute fit measures		
$\chi^2/d.f$	1.66	$\leq 2^{**}; \leq 3^*; \leq 5^*$
GFI	0.90	$\geq 0/90^{**}; \geq 0/80^*$
RMR	0.091	$\leq 0/05^{**}; \leq 0/08^*$
Incremental fit measures		
NFI	0.90	$\geq 0/90^{**}$
AGFI	0.90	$\geq 0/90^{**}; \geq 0/80^*$
CFI	0.91	$\geq 0/90^{**}$
Parsimonious fit measures		
PGFI	0.66	The higher, the better
PNFI	0.72	The higher, the better
The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.075	≤ 0.08 is better

constructs of organizational performance and improve work conditions were valid measures of their respective constructs based on their parameter estimates and statistical significance. Table 2 shows the results of hypothesis testing of the structural relationships among the latent variables. Figure 2 describes the final results of the measurement and structural models to assess the model fitness; we applied seven measures from three perspectives: absolute fit measures (evaluated using $\chi^2/d.f.$), goodness of fit index (GFI), and root mean square error (RMR); incremental fit were measured by the normal fit index (NFI), the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), and the comparative fit index (CFI); and parsimonious fit measures were evaluated by the parsimonious goodness of fit index (PGFI). Table 3 shows the overall fit indexes of our model. It shows that our model resulted in good results at the $\chi^2/d.f.$, GFI, RMR, AGFI, CFI and marginal fitness levels for the indexes of NFI, PGFI, and RMSEA. It is concluded that the findings reached an acceptable level and could be used to explain our hypotheses. Hypothesis H₁, H₂, H₃, and H₄, was not supported in this study ($t \leq 1.96$). Hypothesis H₅ was confirmed and it was shown that organizational performance contributed to the job satisfaction in AREEO in Iran ($t=3.24$; Path coefficient=0.78). Also, results supported hypothesis H₆ ($t=3.17$; Path coefficient=0.35) implying that improve work conditions has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Employee's job satisfaction plays a vital role on the performance of an organization. It is essential to know how can be satisfied and motivated employees in achieving results of organization. Target and achievement in organizations depends on employee's satisfaction and in turn contribute for organizational success and growth, enhances the productivity, and increases the quality of work. Therefore, this research study related to employee's job satisfaction in 66 institutes and centers in agricultural extension, education and research organization in Iran with considering the factors affecting on. According to the review of literature, theories and models of job satisfaction (Eagly and chaiken, 1993; Lawler, 1973; Herzberg, 1976; Tosi *et al.*, 1986) six affecting factors identified. These factors included that: nature of the job, management, payments, work conditions, organizational performance, and improve condition job. The results of structural equation modeling showed that among six factors, organizational performance and improve work conditions of job, had a positive impact with job satisfaction in AREEO. According to (Gavrea *et al.*, 2011) organizational performance is one of the most important variables in the management researches and the most important indicator in satisfaction of employees in each organization. Also, Bakotic and Babic (2013) have shown a link between working conditions and job satisfaction. They believe that difficult working conditions influence employees' performances. It is therefore necessary to take measures to eliminate uncomfortable working conditions or, if not possible, to take appropriate safety measures.

Nature of the job in this study did not have positive effect on job satisfaction. In this regard Naderi (2013) believed that if employees are satisfied of their nature of the job in their organizations that offers service, the employees observes great respect for organization. He also states that having successful

company depends on having employees behaving based on advancing goals of organization and strong determination for improving company. In this study, management did not have positive effect on job satisfaction. The results of the studies conducted by (Tansel, 2013) showed that a good management-employee relationship is necessary for the satisfactory organization and performance of any firm and for the employees to feel engaged. (Marlow and Ram, 2004) in his research expressed that today's organizational structures and the role of the managers are important in the success of the organization. Furthermore Marlow and Ram (2004) in his research stated that quality of management-employee relations can provide safe spaces for employee with more satisfaction.

In this study, payments to employee did not have positive effect on job satisfaction in AREEO. Pay is an imperative factor for job satisfaction (Tansel, 2013) believed that the judgment of satisfaction related to job can be made with the help of wage payment system. Job satisfaction level is less for employees, who receive less amount of pay whereas higher amount receiving employees have high level of satisfaction (Sloane and Word, 2001). Also, other results of this study showed that work conditions, did not have positive effect on job satisfaction. Bakotic and Babic (2013), believed that working conditions as a factor of job satisfaction shows that employees prefer working conditions which are not dangerous and unpleasant. They like working conditions which are similar to the conditions that they have in their homes. Our study tried to identify some effective components on job satisfaction among employees of agricultural research, extension and education organization. Future studies could identify additional factors and model. Accordingly, the following suggestions can be made:

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