Job Satisfaction Essay, Research Paper

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A research model for relating job characteristics and job satisfaction of university foodservice employees

Kelly Mollica Duke and Jeanne Sneed

The reason for this research is to find out why there is a high rate of job dissatisfaction in the foodservice business. Absenteeism and frequent job turnover is characterized by job dissatisfaction. The purpose is to learn ways of enhancing employee satisfaction to increase production, improve organizational functioning, and develop the employee?s personal potential. Job satisfaction defined is ?the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one?s job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one?s job values?.(1) Job satisfaction can be achieved by many factors- the job itself, the work environment, employee demographic variables, which include(age, gender, job classification, education, hourly wage, annual salary, tenure, and full-time vs. part-time). Depending on how the employee perceives characteristics to be present in his or her work environment will further influence the degree of satisfaction. Along with satisfaction comes the level of motivation, performance, promptness, and long-term employment. The study analyzed the association between job characteristics, job satisfaction and the demographic aspects of the work force. It focused on the managerial and non-managerial employees in the food service department at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The study consisted of questionnaires given to 32 managerial and 147 non-managerial employees at the University. The questions were 30 items of job characteristics (autonomy, task identity, feedback, variety of duties, friendship opportunities, and dealing with others), 6 items of job satisfaction, and 7 items of demographics. The Job Characteristics Inventory (JCI), developed by Sims et al. measures employees? perceptions of the six job characteristics. It has been found to be a very good method of research on the relationships between job characteristics and job employee attitudes in a variety of jobs and settings.

The purpose of the study was determine the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction of university foodservice employees. The study examined three hypotheses: (a) Employees who perceive a higher level of the six job characteristics will express greater job satisfaction. (b) There are no differences in job characteristics and job satisfaction between managerial and non-managerial employees. (c) There is no relationship between job satisfaction and selected demographic and employment-related variables.

Method

The sample consisted of 179 managerial and non-managerial employees of the foodservice department. A three part survey was given to each participant. The first part is the job characteristics questions (JCI) developed by Sims, second part was to determine the employees? perceptions of job satisfaction, and the third part is to determine the demographic information. A 5 point scale ?1=very little to 5=very much? and ?1=a minimum amount to 5=a large amount? were used for the job characteristics inventory. A 5 point scale, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree, was used for job satisfaction questions. Descriptive and categorical responses were used demographic items, including age, educational level, wage or annual salary, and years of employment. Non-managerial employees were asked of the job classifications and whether they were part-time or full-time employed. The questionnaire was first pilot tested at a foodservice department in a high school cafeteria. There was 1 managerial and 9 non-managerial employees examined. The results of the test were used to help clarify some questions and make sure the test would go properly among a larger group. Before the test was given out, there was a meeting held with unit managers at a departmental meeting. All employees were informed of the survey in an article in the monthly foodservice employee newsletter. The article gave an explanation for the survey and identified the researcher. It strongly encouraged the employees participation for it could only help benefit for them as well as the corporation. The unit managers helped schedule employees into groups to complete the survey during normal working hours. Employees were insured that all responses would remain confidential, and participation in the survey would be voluntary. The researcher would read each question to the group to ensure that employees with poor reading skills could participate. The answers were collected by the researcher after each administration. Of the 179 foodservice employees, 100% (32) of managerial employees and 98% (143) of non-managerial participated. Since the age variation was different, a multiple comparison was done using the Duncan?s multiple range test to determine which age group means were different. People less than 20 years old and older than 60 years of age were eliminated from the study because of the small size.

Results

Results of the Duncan?s multiple comparison indicated that employees in the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups expressed higher levels of job satisfaction than the younger employees did. A predictor of job satisfaction came from discussion. Earlier research on job characteristics demonstrated that employee satisfaction was directly related to job characteristics. Job characteristics were directly related to job satisfaction in this study. In the study with the school foodservice employees, job characteristics were not related to job satisfaction. In this study it found that dealing with others and feedback to be the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. It found that dealing with others and friendship opportunities to be the least significantly related to job satisfaction. Using the JCI, variety, autonomy, feedback, and task identity were directly related to job satisfaction. In a similar study one of the researchers purposely took out dealing with others and friendship opportunities because those two characteristics were not believed to be related to the actual task that employees perform. They do however are believed to be important in the foodservice setting. Managerial employees perceived a higher level of dealing with others than did non-managerial employees. No relationship was found between employee demographic characteristics and job satisfaction. Age has a strong connection to job satisfaction. Employees whose work experience does not meet initial expectations are likely to leave the organization, whereas employees who stay will accommodate to the work situation. Older employees will have less expectations than younger employees and are satisfied with fewer rewards, or they will be less concerned about rewards because they have gained higher financial status.

Conclusion

In order to alter satisfaction assessments should be done to understand foodservice employees perceptions of job characteristics. This can be done by giving monthly or quarterly questionnaires to the employees. These will help give feedback to the employer to help make the employees work environment more satisfying and enjoyable. This will promote better quality and a happier clean environment. Change should be done only if it suites the interest of the employees. If the employees are happy and friendly then the customers will be happy. Relationships between job characteristics and job satisfaction and between demographic variables and job satisfaction were demonstrated in a sample of University foodservice employees. Job satisfaction was more positively influenced by a higher rating of the job in the six characteristics than by employee demographic variables. Knowing this will help foodservice mangers in designing jobs that will improve employee satisfaction.