

http://ijssrr.com editor@ijssrr.com Volume 6, Issue 2 February; 217-229

Employee Satisfaction of Ten-Year Service Awardees in One Private Philippine University

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http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v6i2.801

Abstract

Employee Satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted concept which can mean different things to different people. This qualitative research utilized the responses of eight (8) service awardees with 10 years' length of service to the university through open-ended questions. Result showed that work-life balance is what made the employees last longer in the company while human relationship is one of the sources of satisfaction and positive work environment can enhance the employees' work experience. Interpersonal relationship is considered an important aspect of immaterial satisfaction. Cognitive development is the most evident aspect of personal and professional development. Health and financial security are what employees still wanted to ask from the institution to make them more satisfied. The findings of the study may be utilized by the institution in strengthening its program for human capital development to have more engaged, satisfied and productive employees.

Keywords: Financial Security; Family Health Security; Work Life Balance; Work Environment; Interpersonal Relationship

Introduction

Employee satisfaction is an important measure of how people in the organization feel about their job, the people within the organization and their work environment. It is all workers' emotional responses towards their organization and job, when their expectations and realization of these expectations are considered. It is constituted by the workers' behaviors, and positive and negative feelings in their organizational environment. Berry (2005) describes it further which demonstrates enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. Gregory (2011) believed that employee satisfaction is essential to the success of any business.

Identifying other aspects and dimensions of satisfaction makes its description more diverse and specific. Diverse in such a way that new constructs will be uncovered according to nature of people, cultural background and identity. It could be more specific to address certain issues that are explicit to the identified group of people.

Employee satisfaction is a worker's sense of achievement and success on the job. It is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal well-being. It represents a combination of positive or negative feelings that workers have towards their work. Aziri (2011) noted that employee satisfaction represents the extent to which expectations had been met and matched the real awards and it is closely linked to that individual's behavior in the workplace. Chaudhry (2011) noted that wage, salary or pay is considered a significant reward to motivate the workers and their behavior towards the goals of employer. Piccolo et.al. (2010) likewise concluded that while pay may help to determine if an applicant accepts a job offer, salary has little effect on one's job satisfaction.

It can be influenced by a person's ability to complete required tasks, the level of communication in an organization, and the way management treats employees. It is not always easy to measure job satisfaction as the definition of satisfaction can be different for different people. Stoetzer (2010) cited that company seeks to establish an open working environment and a maintained organizational climate. In order for them to balance organizational environment, organization should seek the ways to have engage with employees and have an open communication.

This study would be beneficial to specific group of people wherein better understanding on how people change and appreciate the value of relationship and camaraderie as well as the character of people within the workplace is the major consideration in looking for new approaches of satisfying employees.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the emerging themes from the employee satisfaction based on the respondents' sources of satisfaction, work experience, immaterial satisfaction, personal and development and expression of more wishes for better satisfaction.

Review of Literature

Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for one's efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. Job satisfaction is the key ingredient that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of fulfilment (Kaliski, 2007). Job satisfaction is usually linked with motivation, but the nature of this relationship is not clear. Satisfaction is a human psychological characteristic that contributes to a person's degree of commitment (Tella et al., 2007). The term "job satisfaction" is understood to mean everything from "making all aspects of a job easy for employees" to "making the job meaningful, significant and challenging." (Scheid, 2011).

Employee satisfaction has something to do with motivation and quality of working condition. Kabir et al. (2011) emphasized that satisfaction of human resource finds close links to highly motivated employees which basically, based on the results for the standardized values, the researchers were able to see that work conditions, fairness, promotion, and pay, are key factors affecting pharmaceuticals companies' employees' job satisfaction. Parvin et al. (2011) on the other hand described satisfaction as how content an individual is with his or her job. There are a variety of factors that can influence a person's level of job satisfaction which include 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). According to Mullins (2006), satisfaction is not the same as motivation. Job satisfaction is more of an attitude, an internal state. Singh (2010) posited that job satisfaction is the realization level of people's expectations from their job and organization.

Having a reward and recognition is another factor that contributed to the employee satisfaction. According to Chaudhry (2011), pay is perhaps striking good to most individuals because it offers them a corresponding level of purchasing power. The findings of the study of Gathungu (2013) have reaffirmed that remuneration and fair reward generates a culture of efforts and achievements within an organization. Higher remuneration implies higher status and recognition of individual worth. Khan (2009) conducted a study on job satisfaction and incentives and found that pay levels and other material benefits must be sufficient to meet basic human needs. Thus, it somehow affects the level of satisfaction of employees. Maximum efficiency is achieved when working environment is conducive for everyone. Effective workplace climates ensure that employees are clear about their purpose in the larger realm of the company and know exactly what is expected of them. In this way, companies can better function as a whole to meet their goals. A work climate that works with employees to set and achieve clear goals can be very successful.

Highly satisfied and involved employees deliver high quality of job performance. It is central to modern organizational concepts such as involvement management and job performance work. This is according to study conducted of Hasanzadeh (2013) about job satisfaction as a mediator in relationship between involvement management and job performance. Effective workplace climates ensure that employees are clear about their purpose in the larger realm of the company and know exactly what is expected of them (Stoetzer, 2010). Musau (2013) conducted research regarding organization working condition. The results are consistent with those of surveys conducted by Society for Human Resource Management (2011) which revealed that employees value relationships with their supervisors more than benefits and compensation. Supervisors are always keen to develop a positive relationship with their subordinates to enable them to learn their employees' strengths and weaknesses, making it easier for them to use the benefits of their employees' talents for the good of the organization. Gathungu (2013) stated that job satisfaction factors that affect performance, management or administration are the guidance, leadership, and control of efforts of a group of individuals towards some common goal.

Many evaluations indicate that employees are becoming unhappy about their work, and that many are looking to change jobs as the economy progresses. However, even with the unemployment situation being what it is, engaging and retaining employees should be a top concern as it results to job satisfaction (Butcher, 2010). Arekar et al. (2012) emphasized that many measures purport that employee satisfaction is a factor in employee motivation, employee goal achievement, and positive employee morale in the workplace. Employee satisfaction was measured on parameters like financial benefits, work environment, role clarity, employee relations, employee welfare and work stress. Gregory (2011) emphasized that happiness in the workplace leads to much higher levels of productivity. It increases employee morale; therefore, employees are more willing to work harder to improve the company and its goals.

Methods

The qualitative research method was utilized in the study. The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured [if measured at all] in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Participants

The participants of the study are eight (8) 10-year service awardees from the recently concluded Award Convocation 2019 of one private university in the Philippines. They were purposively selected because they manifest one of the characteristics of satisfied employees because they have stayed in the university for 10 years already and their experiences would be a good source of information.

Instrument

A structured open-ended questionnaire was utilized as instrument. Due to time constraint, participants were just asked one by one to answer the instrument. The instrument is crafted based on the following thoughts: sources of satisfaction, work experience, immaterial satisfaction, personal and professional development and expression of more wishes.

Procedure and Ethical Considerations

The researchers informed first the participants regarding the purpose of the study and asked directly their permission to be one of the participants for the study. Only those respondents who are willing to participate in the study were given the questionnaire. Upon the approval and giving consent to participate, they were given the option whether if they wanted to record their responses for an interview or they will just write their responses in the open-ended questions. All of them chose to write their responses and leave them for a week and retrieve their responses for analysis. The participants are ensured of the confidentiality of their responses and their anonymity as one of the participants. They were also informed that their responses will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilized in the study using deductive way of data analysis where the coding and theme development are directed by existing concepts or ideas; After identifying the significant statements from the responses, emerging concepts were formulated, assigning sub-categories and categories thus leading to themes.

Findings

Table 1. Emergence of the Concept Work-Life Balance that Made the Employees Last Longer in the Company

	Company
Theme	Work-Life Balance
Category	Family Connection
Sub-category	Family Attachment
Emerging Concept	Proximity
Significant Statements	Close proximity of LPU to my house as I don't have too commute everyday [1]
Emerging Concept	Location of the workplace
Significant Statements	I chose to stay for the sake of being near them than to work outside the country
	or in other companies that are farther in location. [10]
Emerging Concept	Immediate Family Concern
Significant Statements	My source of satisfaction comes from the needs of my family. They are the
	reason for my being able to overcome all the challenges during the ten years of
	working here in LPU.[10]
Category	Work Appreciation
Sub-category	Passion for work
Emerging Concepts	Familiarity of work
Significant Statements	My current job/duties is like a continuation of my previous job. It is more of
	transaction/dealing with industry partners [6]
Emerging Concepts	Love of Work
Significant Statements	I learned to love my job because I need to stay longer and satisfied [10] and
	enjoying my work [2]
Category	Organizational Culture

Sub-category	Family Culture
Emerging Concepts	Acquaintances
Significant Statements	The family oriented culture. This makes me stay here for almost 10 years [7]
Emerging Concepts	Feeling of acceptance from the community
Significant Statements	The management treats the employees not just only a worker but as a family [7]
	and family culture I received in my office and in the entire LPU community [2]
Category	Company Commitment
Sub-category	Adherence to company policy
Emerging Concepts	Return Service Agreement
Significant Statements	Service I need to render due to my master's scholarship [2]

The emergence of the concept of work-life balance in Table 1 is evident from the response of participants when they were asked regarding what made them stay longer in the institution. It reveals that proximity of the university from their residence is one of the reasons because they can still live with their families every day without commuting long hours wherein the workplace is just a walking distance. They can still serve the needs of their families after working eight (8) hours in the university. Other source of this satisfaction is the familiarity of work as the current job is related with the previous assignment from other company. Relevance of the previous job can give them satisfaction that they don't need to devote more time just to familiarize with the operation but they will just improve whatever learning and technique they had. They also start loving their job that keeps them satisfied. The passion for work leads them to appreciate work no matter how hard their responsibilities in the department.

They also have the feeling of acceptance from the community. The family culture is evident on how the management treat them well most especially their department heads. Through considering their needs in the family, their welfare as employees is being given emphasis on whatever situation that would make them happy. The organizational culture is important that would make them last longer in the company.

Table 2. Emergence of the Concept Human Relationship in the Aspect of Sources of Satisfaction

Theme	Human Relationship
Category	Employee Interaction
Sub-category	Work behavior
Emerging Concepts	Social Rapport
Significant Statements	good camaraderie with my workmates [1]; It made me satisfied of
	thepeople I work with [3]
Category	Work Values
Sub-category	Institution - Management Support
Emerging Concepts	Social Engagement
Significant Statements	And the kind of relationship with the co-workers that builds in every day
	work [8]; I feel the support from the management [6]
Category	Self-less service
Sub-category	Personal Obligation
Emerging Concepts	Giving assistance to clients
Significant Statements	use to help students in need especially those irregular [5]
Category	Interpersonal Relationship
Sub-category	Aspiration
Emerging Concepts	Being part of student success
Significant Statements	To finish their [students] studies was a huge honor for me [3]; I am grateful
	for being part of the success of students' life. [6]
Category	Significant Others
Sub-category	Aspiration

Emerging Concepts	Having Family-benefits
Significant Statements	gave my children the best education they should have [3]; discounts that are
	given to my children [3]
Category	Personal Aspiration
Sub-category	Aspiration
Emerging Concepts	Sense of pride
Significant Statements	As alumni, I am very proud with my alma mater for providing me a 'quality
	work' which gives me a quality source of income to earn a living [8]

Some of the identified sources of employee satisfaction on Table 2 as emerging concept are social rapport and engagement, institutional support, giving assistance to clients and being part of students' success, having family-benefits and sense of pride as well as professional growth.

Employees' work values really made a significant contribution to satisfaction as well as work behavior. The way people interact and do business transaction with other work units and co-workers is based on positive values and camaraderie. They work in harmony based on common values where they learn to be satisfied from co-workers.

Giving selfless assistance to customers also brings them positive feeling of fulfillment where they consider being part of students' present and future successes. They see these students from the first day in school and they have some personal level of engagement that brings them connection with the students. They consider this service towards students as personal obligation.

They have also a sense of pride on their alma mater where the university is offering good source of income. Providing them with the professional growth also served as source of satisfaction. The human capital development program of the university gives a better view of enhancing the personal aspiration of employees.

The concept of human relationship emerges from employee interaction and selfless service of employees to customer. Their personal aspiration to grow through graduate programs helped them gained confidence and more opportunities to learn and meet more people that joined with them in their career development journey.

Table 3. Emergence of the Concept Positive Work Environment in the Aspect of Work Experience

Theme	Positive Work Environment
Category	Family Treatment
Sub-category	Conducive work place
Emerging Concepts	Second Family
Significant Statements	I have found my second family in LPU [1]
Emerging Concepts	Finding comfort
Significant Statements	God is so good that He made me stay in an office where people are
	friendly, open minded, flexible and treated me as family.[10]
Category	Positive Thought in the workplace
Sub-category	Enjoyable workplace
Emerging Concepts	The joy of helping other people
Significant Statements	(There is no equivalent joy than to help the students and good relationship with each other) [1]
	I am happy dealing with my heads and co-workers. [6]
	I am happy because the students have great internship experiences through the help of our department. [6]

Category	Enjoyable workplace
Sub-category	Inspiration
Emerging Concepts	Treating students a source of inspiration
Significant Statements	I am inspired when I am dealing with students[6].
	my encounter with students savor the length of stay, they served as an
	inspiration to strive and give my best service as an employee
Category	Engaging Environment
Sub-category	Unity
Emerging Concepts	Confidence about the group
Significant Statements	There may be conflicts and challenges along the way, but I am confident
	that we are all working towards one goal [1]
Category	Engaging Environment
Sub-category	Trust with the superior
Emerging Concepts	Learning experience
Significant Statements	My satisfaction in terms of work experience in LPU dealing with the
	heads and co-workers are the things that I learn from them towards my
	work and personality development. [8]
Category	Engaging Environment
Sub-category	Living Outside the Borders
Emerging Concepts	Knowing the Limitations
Significant Statements	Dealing with co-workers and students is not that difficult as long as you
	know how to balance and know your limits [3]
Sub-category	Living Outside the Borders
Emerging Concepts	Having Sense of Balance
Significant Statements	My superiors served as guides who pushed me to the verge of my
	limitations [10]
Sub-category	Convenience
Emerging Concepts	Having conducive workplace
Significant Statements	Convenience - I have a conducive office to stay and work for the whole
	day [3]

The work experience of the employees can be described on the emerging concepts in Table 3 related to finding comfort with the second family, the joy of helping other people and treating students a source of inspiration; learning experience; knowing the limitations and having sense of balance. It is important for them to feel the comfort of the workplace as a second home. There is an enjoyable workplace where they feel inspired and confident with the group while working with them.

God is so good that He made me stay in an office where people are friendly, open minded, flexible and treated me as family. [10]

It is part of their learning experience to be entrusted with their superiors. Living outside the borders has given them enough space to perform their duties and responsibilities with sense of balance in the work place. The family treatment they felt in the work environment also gives them positive thought where like-mindedness is the essence of having positive work environment.

Participants were asked regarding their immaterial satisfaction as showed in Table 4 which include encouraging good acts from people; feeling of belongingness, enjoying work with colleagues; having full support with one another and having conducive workplace. The trust and respect gained by the employees from their superiors and colleagues in the organization make them feel valued and important. Where they also feel some sort of empowerment in performing their duties and responsibilities. Their



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suggestions are also being heard and considered for decision making of the department. The relationship formed within the workplace served as strong ties among the employees.

Table 4. Emergence of the Concept Interpersonal Relationship in the Aspect of Immaterial Satisfaction

Theme	Interpersonal Relationship
Category	Empowerment
Sub-category	Trust and Respect
Emerging Concepts	Encouraging good acts from the people
Significant Statements	

Satisfaction comes from the trust and respect that I have gained from my workmates, especially in my department [1]

The trust given by my superior

Category	Kinship
Sub-category	Sense of Family
Emerging Concepts	Feeling of belongingness
Significant Statements	

...my work which I enjoyed dealing with students and parents. Another is my superior and co-workers, we are practicing the feeling of belongingness and we are fostering the spirit of community and sense of family in our workplace [6]

My relationship with my colleague is what made me satisfied which cannot be measured.[10]

Category	Companionship
Sub-category	Peer-Support
Emerging Concepts	Enjoying work with colleagues and Having full support from
	one another
Significant Statements	

Co-workers - the camaraderie and laughter despite of many paper works; priceless [3]

Magandang samahan (*Good Relationship*) [5]

I am happy and satisfied in the office because I can feel the support of my staff [6]

happiness and joy that my co-workers brought by in everyday work. [8]

I am happy that we build a good teamwork. We work passionately to give quality service to our customers [6]

...my work which I enjoyed dealing with students and parents. Another is my superior and coworkers, we are practicing the feeling of belongingness and we are fostering the spirit of community and sense of family in our workplace. [6]

The sense of family is also being exercised and felt within the community and it brings satisfaction to them as they work together toward the achievement of their goals in the department. Helping oen another makes the job lighter and easier for them to accomplish. The idea of kinship is evident among the members of the organization through peer-support being given to them. The companionship is important aspect of maintaining good working interpersonal relationship which improves the physical environment in order for the people to become convenient in dealing with customers and other work units.

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Table 5. Emergence of the Concept Cognitive Development in the Aspect of Personal and Professional Development

Theme	Cognitive Development
Category	Cognitive Ability
Sub-category	Knowledge and skills enhancement
Emerging Concepts	Acquisition of knowledge from seminars and training
Significant Statements	

I was able to finish my MBA degree in LPU and have attended several trainings and workshops which are all essential in my professional development [1].

My MBA degree and the training and seminar [7]

...in terms of professional development are the seminars that the university offered for the administrative personnel [8].

...I also undergo different seminars and training. [6]

Category	Cognitive Ability
Sub-category	Acquisition of knowledge from advanced studies
Emerging Concepts	Opportunity for Graduate Studies
Significant Statements	

For my professional development - I am currently taking my Doctorate degree as got the chance as well to study for free in my master's degree. [6]

The university provides benefits for educational growth and development of its employees which I have availed when I was still new in this university. This benefit provides an avenue for all employees to enhance their professional and educational levels. There is also a way to achieve additional learning and training by attendance to seminars which the university is investing a large of money for all employees to be given a chance to enjoy in to avail. [10]

They give me a chance to be enrolled for graduate school with transportation allowance (scholarship) [8]

Benefits - tuition fee discounts for my children and my free post graduate courses [5]

Category	Learning Experience
Sub-category	Interpersonal Skills
Emerging Concepts	Gaining self-confidence from working relationship
	Handling various responsibilities
Significant Statements	

The good working relationship has developed my interpersonal skills and has helped me lessen my self-doubt and personal apprehension [1]

Experience. Assigned in different offices within my 10 years stay taught me different responsibilities. The opportunity to handle the admin and teaching position is rewarding;

Category	Career Development
Sub-category	Professional growth
Emerging Concepts	Learning Opportunities
Significant Statements	benefits I gained - my free MA to PhD grant [3]; different opportunities
	and learning [3];
	motivation for me to grow [1]

Satisfaction of employees on personal and professional development in Table 5 comes from acquisition of knowledge from seminar and training; opportunity for graduate studies and gaining confidence from working with colleagues. The University provides free tuition fee and miscellaneous fee for all regular employees, who would like to enrol for advanced studies. They were being given every Saturday to attend classes as one of their privileges as being regular employee. Most of them are availing this benefit. They believe that enhancing their cognitive ability will help them improve their job performance and will also enhance their way of serving the customers. The learning experience they had through advanced studies provide them the opportunity to keep them updated of the current trends in their respective field of discipline and they are hoping that this will also help them increase their salary in case the classification system for administrative personnel will be approved. They will also be given the opportunity to teach courses in college.

The university provides benefits for educational growth and development of its employees which I have availed when I was still new in this university. This benefit provides an avenue for all employees to enhance their professional and educational levels. There is also a way to achieve additional learning and training by attendance to seminars which the university is investing a large of money for all employees to be given a chance to enjoy in to avail. [10]

They believe that enhancing their cognitive ability is an important aspect in the life of employees working in the academic institution whether they are faculty members or administrative personnel. The University is supporting the idea of improving the knowledge of its people through giving free education for regular employees.

Table 6. Emergence of the Concept Health and Financial Security in the Aspect of Expressing More Wishes

Theme	Health and Financial Security
Category	Financial Security
Sub-category	Clarity on the management and structure of compensation and wages
Emerging Concepts	Establishing salary structure for admin personnel
Significant Statements	

It would also be more satisfying if a well-structured ranking/paygrade system for Admin employees will be established [1]

I hope the management can review our salary structure based on our additional duties and responsibilities [6]

I wished to have an increased in salary not only for myself but also for my co-workers. This is the main reason of resignation of my previous co-workers, while we are asking the other school, we noticed that we have the smallest salary received [2]

...and I wish that the admin employees will also have a classification for salary increase like faculty members [3]

Category	Health Security
Sub Category	Assurance of Family Health Security
Emerging Concepts	Additional benefits and incentives
Significant Statements	

I would love to have additional fringe benefits like free HMO for family members, birthday leave credits, higher separation/retirement pay etc.

I hope that the university can give more benefits to its employees like inclusion of family members in the health card of employees[10],

Category	Financial Security
Sub Category	Assurance of Financial Security



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Emerging Concepts	Having additional benefits and incentives
Significant Statements	

Having mid-year bonus, 14th to 16th month pay just like other companies; Free medical insurance to all my family members especially children; mandatory 14 days leave for all tenured employees aside from the 10 days VL; quarterly incentives - One (1) sack of rice for all tenured employees; cash incentives for those who stayed in LPU for 5-10-15-20 and so on. [3]

More benefits like: free uniform and 14th month pay [3]

...additional Christmas bonus so the family as the employees can spend Christmas with enough resources to enjoy and the uniform benefit as stated in the DOLE. [10]

Employees are still looking for a well-established salary structure for administrative personnel and additional benefits and incentive like free HMO for family members, having mid-year bonus, 14th to 16th month pay as well as free uniform. Admin personnel needs clear classification system so that they would know how they will be given salary increases based on their performance and achievement. Assurance of health care extended to the family is also being asked by the employees.

It would also be more satisfying if a well-structured ranking/paygrade system for Admin employees will be established [1]

Conclusion And Recommendation

Work-life balance is what made the employees last longer in the company while human relationship is one of the sources of satisfaction. Positive work environment can enhance the employees' work experience. Interpersonal relationship is considered an important aspect of immaterial satisfaction. Cognitive development is the most evident aspect of personal and professional development. Health and financial security are what employees still wanted to ask from the institution to make them more satisfied.

The Human resource department may provide programs that promote family- friendly atmosphere that will understand the situation every family member in dealing with absenteeism and tardiness. Department heads may develop a positive work environment in terms of coaching and mentoring to improve individual job performance and the achievement of work unit's operational target. The University may strengthen the function of quality circles that gives empowerment to people in addressing the concerns and some issues of the institution. The Top Management may reconsider the approval of the classification system for the administrative personnel to let them know what they can do to increase their salaries. The Human resource department may also revisit the fringe benefits being provided by the university to improve employee satisfaction.

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