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## Job satisfaction of Turkish academics according to a set of occupational and personal variables<sup>\*</sup>

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze job satisfaction of Turkish academics based on certain occupational and personal variables. The research was conducted on 2073 academics at total working at 73 different universities in Turkey, out of which 776 (37.4 %) were female and 1297 (62.6 %) were male. Data collection instruments were Job Satisfaction Scale for Academics (Kelecioğlu, Bilge and Akman, 2006) and the accompanying questionnaire developed by the researcher. Results showed that job satisfaction of academics did not differ significantly according to weekly course load, place of graduate schooling (Turkey or another country) and level of proficiency in English. On the other hand their levels of job satisfaction differed significantly according to type of university, perceived academic competence, level satisfaction from family life and time allocated to personal hobbies.

*Keywords:* Job satisfaction, academics, faculty

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### 1. Introduction

The prominence of universities in the information era of today is an unquestionable fact. Universities are institutions where individuals of professions are trained, scientific and technological research is conducted, information is produced and disseminated. Providing solutions for the problems of academics and universities is sine qua non for a country aiming to advance in education, science and technology. In this context, job satisfaction of academics stands out as an important subject. Job satisfaction is defined as attitudes adopted towards the job based on meeting the requirements of wage-earners (Çetinkanat, 2000).

There are several studies focused on the job satisfaction of academics conducted both in the world and in Turkey. In their study based on international findings, Lacy and Sheehan (1997) found that the atmosphere of the university, sprits, sense of togetherness and relations with colleagues are the major variables that predict the job satisfaction of academics. In another study conducted on academic and administrative staff at university, Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua and Stough (2001) specified that lack of financing, resources and support, work load, inadequacy regarding leadership and management, promotion and awarding and job insecurity are the five main causes of occupational stress for both groups. In a review study, Kinman (2001) stated that job satisfaction and psychological well-being of academics is lower in comparison with other occupational groups. According to the study in question, strains that academics suffer from mainly stem from the length of working hours, striking and preserving the balance between occupational and private life, increase in mechanical/bureaucratic administrative practices. In a study on the job satisfaction of Nigerian academics, Egbule (2003) particularized that payment, promotion potentiality, leadership style of the administrator, physical surroundings, academic freedom and interpersonal relationships are the main agents of job satisfaction. In another study, it was discerned

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that payment satisfaction of academics has an effect on job satisfaction (Terpstra and Honoree, 2004). A study for the academic and administrative staff working at university is the perception of justice during certain processes as performance evaluation, appointment and promotion (Winefield, Boyd, Saebel and Pignata, 2008).

In studies conducted in Turkey, Baş and Ardiç (2002) found that academics working at private universities derive more satisfaction than those working at state universities in terms of general satisfaction level and various aspects of the job. Job satisfaction of academics was found to be associated with cooperation with colleagues and payment (Karaman and Altunoğlu, 2007); while emotional exhaustion level was found to be associated with course load (Murat and Çevik (2008). In her study conducted on the academics of a state university, Kızıltepe (2008) classified the factors which reduce the motivation of academics as "students", "economic status", "structural and physical properties", "research" and "working conditions".

The purpose of this study is to research whether job satisfaction of academics differs significantly based on certain variables, namely, type of university, weekly course load, place of graduate schooling (Turkey or another country), level of proficiency in English, perceived level of academic competence, level of satisfaction from family life and time allocated to personal hobbies. It is assumed that manifesting the variables associated with job satisfaction of academics may provide significant data in amelioration practices to be followed and precautions to be taken.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

Research was conducted on 2073 academics at total, 776 (37.4 %) of which are female and 1297 (62.6 %) of which are male, working at 73 different universities. Among all academic staff selected as the sample, 210 of them (10.1 %) are professors, 227 (11 %) of them are associate professors, 532 (25.7 %) of them are assistant professors, 349 (16.8 %) of them are lecturers, 613 (29.6 %) of them are research assistants, 99 (4.8 %) of them are instructors and 43 (2.1 %) of them are specialist. Age range of the academics participated in the research is 21-64 and average age of is 36.72 (Sd=8.64).

### 2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Job Satisfaction Scale for Academics (JSSA): JSSA was developed by Kelecioğlu, Bilge and Akman (2006) to specify job satisfaction level of academic staff. The scale is composed of 25 items. The factor structure of the scale is combined in two dimensions being internal and external and selected 25 items elucidate more than half of the total variability. Similar scale validity as Minnesota Satisfaction Scale (MSS) was established (Weiss et al., 1967; cited in Kelecioğlu, Bilge and Akman, 2006). Correlation coefficients between the subscales of JSSA and MSS were found to be 0.52 for internal structure and 0.61 for external structure and the values were found to be significant by 0.01. Internal consistency coefficients of the scale are 0.94 for internal dimension and 0.91 for external dimension. Correlation coefficient between the internal and external factors of the scale is 0.70. Higher points in the scale refer to lower job satisfaction (Kelecioğlu, Bilge and Akman, 2006).

2.2.3. Questionnaire: Data regarding independent variables of the research were collected via the questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire includes questions on perceptions and evaluations of academics with regard to their socio-demographic, occupational and private life.

### 2.3. Data Collection

Data collection tools were applied on the sample in January 2007 and March 2007. The research was conducted on the web environment by sending e-mails to academic staff explaining the research and the concerned link within the text. Answers of the participants were saved by Hacettepe University Computer Center on [http://yunus.hacettepe.edu.tr/~mtuzgol/anket/veri\\_listele.php](http://yunus.hacettepe.edu.tr/~mtuzgol/anket/veri_listele.php).

### 2.4. Data Analysis

Multidimensional analysis of variance was performed in order to analyze multiple independent variables based on one dependent variable. Main effects of independent variables on the dependent variable were analyzed.

Scheffe's test was administrated to identify the sources of the differences between more than two groups. Furthermore, effect size (eta-squared) values of independent variables over the dependent variable were analyzed. Effect size was considered as "low" if  $0.01 \leq \eta^2 < 0.06$  and as "moderate" if  $0.06 \leq \eta^2 < 0.14$  and "high" if  $\eta^2 \geq 0.14$  (Cohen, 1988). Data were analyzed using SPSS 15.0. Level of significance was set at .05.

### 3. Findings

Multidimensional analysis of variance was performed in order to analyze whether there exists a significant difference between the job satisfaction points of academics based on certain variables, namely, type of university, weekly course load, place of graduate schooling, level of proficiency in English, perceived level of academic competence, level of satisfaction from family life and time allocated to personal hobbies. Homogeneity of variances was analyzed with Levene's F test and it was observed that homogeneity condition regarding variances was established for all groups. n values, mean values and standard deviations regarding job satisfaction points of academics based on the variables of type of university, weekly course load, level of proficiency in English, perceived level of academic competence, level of satisfaction from family life and time allocated to personal hobbies were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. n values, mean values and standard deviations regarding job satisfaction points of academics based on the independent variables

Independent Variables		Job Satisfaction		
		n	$\bar{X}$	s
Type of University	State	1915	38.70	18.82
	Private	158	28.30	18.73
Weekly Course Load	Between 0-20 hours	1601	37.74	20.03
	20 hours and over	472	38.47	19.61
Place of graduate schooling	Abroad	238	36.16	20.95
	Turkey	1835	38.14	19.79
Level of proficiency in English	N/A or limited knowledge	150	38.06	20.14
	Intermediate or advanced level	1923	37.90	19.92
Perceived level of academic competence	Insufficient	100	45.76	19.89
	Moderately sufficient	402	41.07	19.12
	Sufficient	1571	36.60	19.94
Level of satisfaction from family life	Low	375	46.66	20.03
	Moderate	711	38.80	19.33
	High	987	33.94	19.18
Level of time allocated to hobbies	Low	1024	41.84	20.20
	Moderate	904	34.99	18.75
	High	145	28.37	18.95

Results of multidimensional analysis of variance regarding the job satisfaction points of academics based on the variables of type of university, weekly course load, place of graduate schooling, level of proficiency in English, perceived level of academic competence, level of satisfaction from family life and time allocated to personal hobbies were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. -Results of multidimensional analysis of variance regarding the job satisfaction points of academics based on the independent variables

Independent Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial Eta-Squared
Type of University	11351.05	1	11351.05	31.637	.000	.015
Weekly Course Load	122.61	1	122.61	.342	.559	.000
Place of graduate schooling	1.52	1	1.51	.004	.948	.000

Level of proficiency in English	.15	1	.15	.000	.984	.000
Perceived level of academic competence	6820.83	2	3410.42	9.505	.000	.009
Level of satisfaction from family life	21831.94	2	10915.97	30.424	.000	.029
Level of time allocated to hobbies	18817.74	2	9408.87	26.224	.000	.025
Error	739828.013	2062	358.79			
Total	3802068.00	2073				
Corrected Total	823078.59	2072				

As seen in Table 2, there does not exist a significant difference between job satisfaction of academics based on the variables of weekly course load, place of graduate schooling, level of proficiency in English. However, job satisfaction points differentiate based on the variables of type of university, perceived level of academic competence, satisfaction from family life and time allocated to personal hobbies. Scheffe's test was administrated to specify the sources of the significant differences between more than two groups.

When the results are analyzed, it is observed that job satisfaction points of academics differ significantly as per the type of university ( $F(1, 2073) = 31.637, p < .001, \text{Eta-squared} = .015$ ). According to eta-squared values, type of university has a low effect on job satisfaction. When average points of the groups are analyzed (see Table 1), it is observed that job satisfaction points of academics working at private universities are higher than those of the academics working at state universities. The results point that academics working at private universities have higher job satisfaction; since higher points in JSSA used in this study refer to lower job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction points of academics differ significantly as per perceived level of academic competence ( $F(2, 2073) = 9.505, p < .001, \text{Eta-squared} = .009$ ). As per eta-squared values, perception of academic competence has a very low effect on job satisfaction. As per the results of Scheffe's test, job satisfaction points of academics who perceive themselves as academically sufficient is lower than those of academics who find themselves academically insufficient or moderately sufficient ( $p < .001$ ), therefore, their job satisfaction is significantly higher.

Job satisfaction points of academics differ significantly as per level of satisfaction from family life ( $F(2, 2073) = 30.424, p < .001, \text{Eta-squared} = .029$ ). As per eta-squared values, level of satisfaction from family life has a low effect on job satisfaction. As per the results of Scheffe's test, job satisfaction points of academics who derive high satisfaction from family life are lower than those of academics who derive moderate and low satisfaction from family life and job satisfaction points of academics who derive moderate satisfaction from family life are lower than those of academics who derive low satisfaction from family life; therefore, their job satisfaction is significantly higher.

Job satisfaction points of academics differ significantly as per time allocated to personal hobbies ( $F(2, 2073) = 26.224, p < .001, \text{Eta-squared} = .025$ ). As per eta-squared values, time allocated to personal hobbies has a low effect on job satisfaction. As per the results of Scheffe's test, job satisfaction points of academics who allocate a lot of time to hobbies are lower than those of academics who allocate moderate and low time to hobbies and job satisfaction points of academics who allocate moderate time to hobbies are lower than those of academics who allocate low time to hobbies; therefore, their job satisfaction is significantly higher.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Results suggest that job satisfaction of academics do not differ significantly based on the variables of weekly course load, place of graduate schooling, level of proficiency in English. Previous studies demonstrated that work load is associated with occupational stress of academic and administrative staff (Gillespie et al., 2001) and course load is associated with emotional exhaustion. (Murat and Çevik, 2008). While increase in weekly course load and inadequacy in level of English were expected to have an adverse effect on the job satisfaction of academics, results did not support this expectation. Effect of these variables on the job satisfaction of academics may be analyzed with further studies as well. Thus, the importance of the effect of concerned variables on the job satisfaction of Turkish academics can be interpreted in a clearer manner.

On the other hand, significant differences were observed in job satisfaction levels of academics based on the variables of type of university, perceived level of academic competence, level of satisfaction from family life and time allocated to personal hobbies. Job satisfaction levels of academics working for private universities are higher than those of working for state universities. This finding is in consistency with the research results of Baş and Ardiç (2002) and Kılıç (2002). Job satisfaction of academics working for private universities may be higher as they have higher payments and work under better physical conditions.

When eta-squared values are analyzed, it is observed that type of university has a low effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, the difference arises from the type of university in terms of job and life satisfaction may not be regard-

ed as a significant one. Since the effect level is low, it may also be assumed that the difference stemmed from the research group.

According to the results, job satisfaction of academics increase with the increase in perception of academic competence. Academic have various roles as teaching, research and advising, each of which requires specific knowledge and competence. As a result, sense of competence may be expected to be an important variable effecting job satisfaction; however, perception of academic competence has a very low effect on job satisfaction as per Eta-squared values found in this study. Therefore, differences arising from the perceived academic competence may not be important and may have only stemmed from the research group.

Levels of job satisfaction of academics increase with the increase in level of satisfaction from family life. As per Eta-squared values, satisfaction derived from family life has a low effect on job satisfaction. As family satisfaction is a variable within private life, it is expected to have a more significant effect on life satisfaction. According to Diener (1984), marriage and family satisfaction are important predictors of subjective well-being. The results of this study support the effect of family satisfaction on general satisfaction as well.

Level of time allocated to hobbies makes difference in job satisfaction albeit with a low effect level. With this regard, job satisfaction of academics increase with the increase in level of time allocated to hobbies. This finding may be interpreted as hobbies affect psychological health of the individuals positively. Furthermore, personality traits of individuals, who spare more time for their hobbies than the others, may become dissimilar. These individuals may be more energetic and multi-faceted. Hence, the difference arising from allocating more time to hobbies in terms of job satisfaction may be associated with other traits of the individuals in question. On the other hand, academics, who spare more time for their hobbies, may manage to diminish occupational stress by this way.

Findings of this research suggest that variables regarding private life have more effect on job satisfaction when compared with the occupational variables. Variables of weekly course load, place of graduate schooling, level of proficiency in English may be analyzed with further studies as well. Evaluating results obtained from various studies may lead to more valid conclusions. Reasons of lower job satisfaction of academics working for state universities when compared to academics working for private universities may be researched. Variables affecting perception of academic competence of academics may be studied in detail. The results of this study and similar studies may be evaluated together and hence, practices aiming to increase job satisfaction of academics may be adopted.

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