

Job Satisfaction of Elementary Education Graduates: The Case of a Philippine State University

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Abstract

When it comes to tackling the complicated nature and new difficulties of the 21st century, higher education is one of the most crucial elements. The investment in higher education is seen as "wasted" if graduates do not take up positions of prominence in society that generate sufficient revenue to sustain a government. This paper uncovered the job satisfaction of a state university graduates utilizing a descriptive survey and case study design. The data were gathered through a researcher-made survey questionnaire and interview protocol. The quantitative data were statistically treated and analyzed using percentages, mean, and frequency, while the qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. The research findings indicated that the BEED graduates are satisfied with their jobs with a grand mean score of 4.19. The qualitative data support the quantitative findings. The researcher recommends the inclusion of more BEED graduates to participate in the succeeding surveys.

Keywords: job satisfaction; preservice elementary education; state university; case study; Philippines

1. Introduction

Despite its broad application in research and daily life, opinions still need to be more balanced on whether or not having a job is a source of satisfaction. In reality, there is no one encompassing concept of "work." Before defining job satisfaction in terms of the nature and significance of labor, it is necessary to consider the nature and significance of work as a universal human activity. Even though there is no universally acknowledged definition of "job satisfaction," numerous authors have provided their perspectives on the subject.

As a multifaceted and nuanced concept, job satisfaction may mean various things to various people. Job motivation and enjoyment are frequently linked. However, it needs to be made apparent what precisely this connection entails. Satisfaction is not equivalent to happiness. "Job satisfaction is more of an attitude," an emotional state that might be associated with achieving a specific objective, a sense of achievement, whether quantitative or qualitative "In recent years, there has been a greater focus on job satisfaction strongly linked to larger efforts to better job design and work organization, as well as work-life quality movement (Buchanan, 2006). When referring to an employee's happiness at work, "job satisfaction" is typically employed. It is widely regarded to have a causal relationship between success at work and satisfaction in one's life. To be happy in one's job, one must be able to do something that they find rewarding, perform that work competently, and be rewarded for it. Enjoyment and enthusiasm for one's work are other indicators of job satisfaction. It is crucial to get promoted, compensated fairly, and respected by superiors (Kaliski,2007).

Because it influences productivity, job satisfaction is an essential welfare indicator. Individuals profit from job happiness, but companies and coworkers also benefit. Happy employees are more invested in their job and more likely to go above and beyond to do their best. Employees who are content with their work are more likely to put in long hours and produce high-quality work, reducing a company's operating costs. Moreover, they tend to be faithful advocates for their organizations (Sessa & Bowling, 2020). This study aims to determine the level of job satisfaction of BEED graduates in a Philippine state university. The study is deemed essential to monitor the university's products and to establish the university's relevance in the supply chain of teaching-related services, particularly at the elementary level.

1.1. Review of Related Literature

Managerial leadership style influences employee job satisfaction. Participatory management, on the other hand, is only sometimes considered to be an effective management style (Mosadeghrad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). Employment satisfaction refers to a worker's feelings about their job as measured on a hedonic scale. This measures how people like or dislike the job itself; like or dislike the pay, benefits, and perks; like or dislike the opportunities for advancement and recognition; and so on (Corsini, 1999, cited by Tillman, 2008). Various studies have shown various factors contributing to job satisfaction (Singer, 1995); Protheroe et al., 2002; Morice & Murray, 2003). A company's success hinges on the satisfaction of its employees (Wagner & Gooding, 1987; Wright & Crapanzano, 1997). An appraisal of one's work or employment experience might lead to a mood of happiness or satisfaction (Ayeni & Popoola, 2007). Teachers who like their work are less likely to experience classroom burnout, stress, and anxiety (Greenglass & Burke, 2003; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Caprara et al., 2003; Caprara et al., 2006). Although many educators take great pride in their work, classrooms are always open to more critical social and cultural contexts (e.g., Yetim & Yetim, 2006; Huang & Van de Vliert, 2004).

Teachers' job satisfaction was identified as a "decisive element" by Caprara et al. (2003) as one of the factors that influence teachers' attitudes and performance in educational settings. Both teachers' self-efficacy and teachers' collective efficacy are factors that contribute to teachers' work satisfaction. In spite of this, teaching may be a demanding profession due to factors such as work overload, policy changes, and inadequate recognition of teachers' efforts (Greenglass & Burke, 2003).

Job satisfaction is vital in education because it helps schools keep their best administrators and instructors. "Job satisfaction" is defined as "the affective reaction an employee has to his or her job as a result of weighing the job's actual versus desired outcomes" (Mosadeghrad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). An individual's positive or negative opinion of their employment or work environment is known as job satisfaction (Garza, 2011). The perception that one's employment satisfies one's material and psychological needs is at the root of the experience of job satisfaction (Aziri, 2008). Despite widespread recognition of the value of teachers' efforts in improving student outcomes, questions of whether or not teachers are happy in their jobs are occasionally overlooked (Bascia & Rottmann, 2011; Liang & Akiba, 2017). This study also emphasized the importance of monitoring and evaluation studies to improve the curriculum for BEED education students.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

This research aims to learn how contentedly BEED graduates from a Philippine public university are with their current employment situations. The research aimed to provide answers to the following questions in particular:

1. What is the respondents' profile in terms of:
 - a. year graduated from the university;
 - b. program of study;
 - c. present job; and
 - d. Length of time to land their first job?
2. What is the job satisfaction level of the BEED graduates?
3. What themes emerge associated with the job satisfaction of the BEED graduates?

2. Theoretical Framework

Locke's (1976) Value Percept Theory was employed in this study to explicate the possible connection between public and private education and job satisfaction. According to Locke (1976), one is happy in their career if their work reflects their ideals and unhappy if it does not. Researchers employed this formula [$S = (V^e - P) \times V_i$] based on this principle to measure client happiness explained as [satisfaction = (want – have) x importance] (Judge et al., 2001). This notion backs up the idea that satisfying one's intrinsic needs is essential. The degree to which one is pleased or sad depends on the importance of the fundamental need rather than on whether or not their work meets or exceeds their requirements.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This descriptive survey and case study aim to determine how satisfied the Bachelor of Elementary Education (LNU-BEED) alumni are with their jobs. The goal of descriptive research is to provide a detailed and systematic description of a given group, set of conditions, or phenomena. What, where, when, and how questions can be answered, but why questions cannot (McCombes, 2019). A case study was conducted to substantiate the quantitative data derived from the survey. Themes were identified that qualitatively describe the job satisfaction level of the BEED graduates.

3.2. Participants

This study looked into the work satisfaction of the BEED graduates with specializations in Content Courses (BEED-Content), Early Childhood Education (BEED-Preschool), Special Education (BEED-SPED), and BEED-BSED. The participants were randomly chosen through FB Messenger and Google Forms. One hundred BEED graduates from 2006 until 2021 responded to the survey.

Four participants were purposively selected from the 100 respondents to participate in the series of interviews. The inclusion criteria consisted of the following: (1) must be a graduate of the BEED program within the SY 2006-2021, (2) must be willing to be interviewed several times as needed through face-to-face modality, online or phone calls, and (c) must agree to the provisions stated in the Informed Consent Form. The first two male and two female participants who met the criteria were subjected to a series of interviews. The following text is a brief description of the participants of the case study. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants to hide their identities.

Beth

Beth graduated in 2007 and is currently a Grade 3 teacher in a public elementary school in Leyte. She started teaching in a public school three years after she graduated from the university. She has been teaching for 11 years and is considered a senior faculty member in her station.

Beth is single in marital status and a serious type of teacher. She comes to school on time or even earlier, considering that her current station is just a walking distance from home. On average, Beth renders over eight to nine hours a day, depending on the bulk of work she plans to accomplish for the day. She shows passion for teaching and loves to interact with children. She enjoys teaching the younger ones, particularly those in Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Ronald

Ronald is a young, dynamic faculty member of a private school in a city. He was hired eight months ago and has been assigned to teach Grade 5 pupils. He landed his current job just three months after he graduated from the university. He graduated with Latin honors, cum laude, which made him easy to get the job.

The school where Ronald teaches provides some materials and facilities to aid his teaching. He is required to render eight hours of service a day, but he serves, on average, nine to ten hours. He makes good use of his leisure and spare time by preparing lessons for the upcoming school week. Since he is also pursuing a master's degree at an institution in the exact location, he had to put in extra time for preparation.

Albert

Albert considers himself an average student in college. He took BEED-Content eight years ago. It took him five years after graduation to land a teaching position in a public elementary school. Prior to teaching, he worked for two years as a merchandiser in a local company.

As a teacher, Albert finds disciplining pupils his most challenging task. He handles Grade 3 learners in a large elementary school in the city; he describes many pupils as hard-headed and rude. Moreover, he finds room structuring as another challenge because, aside from his lack of artistic prowess, he often spends much, which compromises his financial stability. Being the only working member of the family, he is burdened by the finances required to structure his classroom, especially during assessment periods.

Marie

Marie shows the most assertive personality among all four participants in the case study. She admits that she is often misunderstood due to having a straightforward attitude. As a Grade 6 teacher, she finds it an advantage because she feels that a strong teacher is needed to guide the relatively "oldest" learners at the elementary level and to carry out the routine tasks of a teacher of a graduating class. She sees to it that the plans lined up for the year are promptly implemented; she openly speaks up whenever pupils, colleagues, and even administrators fail to accomplish the tasks expected of them.

Marie has been in service for over ten years and has been handling Grade 6 classes for seven years. She experienced teaching Grade 2 pupils for three years, but she found teaching the Grade 6 pupils to be more fulfilling. She explained that they tend to be "more mature" whom she easily connects with.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. Job Satisfaction Survey Instrument

A researcher-made survey questionnaire was utilized to gather the quantitative data. The items in the instrument were modeled from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Abugre, 2014; Hirschfeld, 2000) and the Job Satisfaction Survey of Paul E. Spector (1994), Department of Psychology, University of Florida. The statements were contextualized based on the cultural orientation of the participants in the research locale.

The survey instrument was distributed through various methods, including sending personal messages on Facebook Messenger and filling out a Likert-scale questionnaire. It was pre-tested for a week, which revealed a Cronbach's Alpha of .821. The reliability index is more significant than .70, suggesting that the instrument is "acceptable" for social science research.

3.3.2. Job Satisfaction Interview Guide

The Job Satisfaction Interview Guide was used to gather qualitative data that may support the quantitative data related to the job satisfaction of the BEED graduates. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of educational research. Each validator has at least one published research article in education in reputable international research journals.

The questions in the interview guide were ensured to draw substantial information relative to the satisfaction of the BEED graduates in their current job. These were asked of the participants at least twice through phone calls, videoconferencing mode, or face-to-face interviews, depending on their availability and preference.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data. These necessitate the use of means, frequencies, and percentages to describe and evaluate findings.

Meanwhile, the thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework was utilized to analyze the qualitative data. It adhered to the following procedure: (1) familiarizing the data, (2) generating codes, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing the themes, (5) defining themes and nomenclature, and (6) locating exemplars (Mihás, 2023).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Profile of the BEED Graduates

The profile of the Leyte Normal University graduates includes: the year graduated at LNU, the course taken from LNU, the date of employment, and the number of years taken to be employed from the date of graduation.

Year Graduated from the University

Figure 1 shows that among the 100 respondents, 46% (46) graduated in the year 2019. This is followed by those who graduated in 2015, with 15% (15) respondents. Meanwhile, 14% (14) of the respondents graduated in the year 2021, 8% (8) graduated in the year 2020, as well as in the year 2017 (8%, 8). The lesser number of respondents was recorded for the year 2006 accounting to 5% (5), then 2% (2) for the class of 2009, 1% (1) for the year 2016, and another 1% (1) for the year 2010. Overall, majority of the respondents graduated two to six years back (76%), that is, from 2017 until 2021.

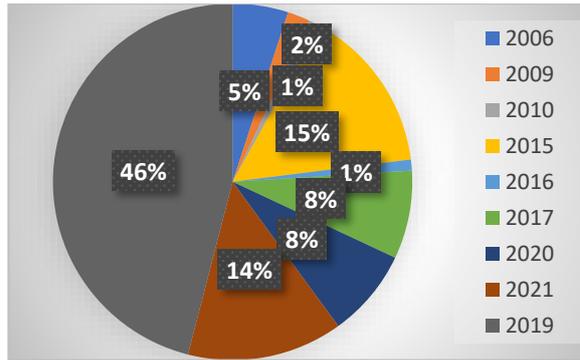


Fig. 1. Year Graduated

Program of Study of BEED Graduates

Figure 2 presents the distribution of respondents based on specialization. Data show that 63% (63) or majority of the respondents took Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) - Content. Meanwhile, 21% (21) of the respondents earned a degree of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) - Preschool Education. This is followed by those who took Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) - SPED with a total of 13% or 13 respondents. Lastly, 3% (3) took a double degree (BSED-BEED) program.

It must be noted that this trend is true to the BEED population in the university based on annual enrollment. Many students in the program take BEED-Content while only few apply for and are admitted to the double degree program, BEED-BSED.

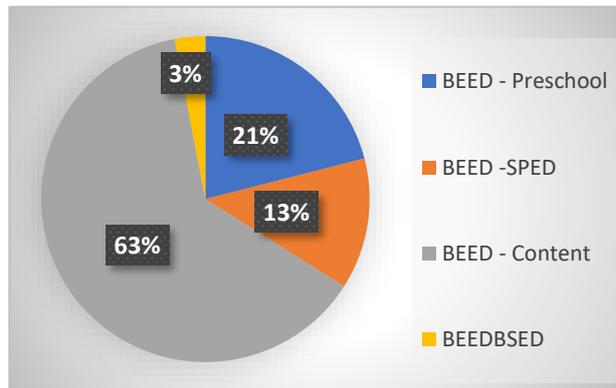


Fig. 2. Program of Study at LNU

Present Job

Figure 3 presents the nature of the current job of the respondents. It can be deduced that 68% (68) are presently in teaching-related jobs while 32% (32) are in non-teaching jobs. For non-teaching jobs, they take positions as Project Control Executive, Internal Auditor, Manager, and Secretary. Meanwhile, some graduates disclosed that they are self-employed.

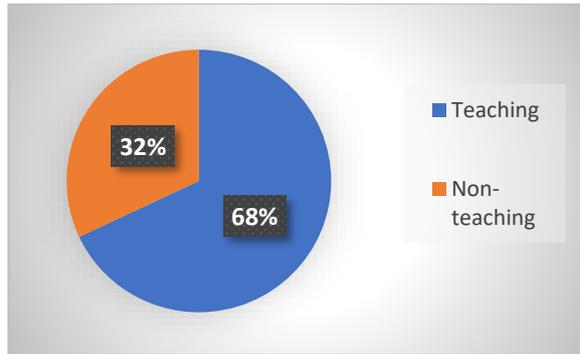


Fig. 3. Present Job

Length of Time to land on their First Job

When asked how long they have acquired their job after graduation, varied responses were recorded. Figure 4 shows that among 100 respondents, 16% (16) landed on their job in less than a month, 14% (14) got their job in 1-6 months, and 11% (11) within 7-11 months. Further, 4% (4) got their job in 1-2 years while 3% (3) landed on there within 3-4 years after graduation. Meanwhile, 33% (33) have not responded on how long they got their first job. Conversely, 19% (19) are presently unemployed or self-employed.

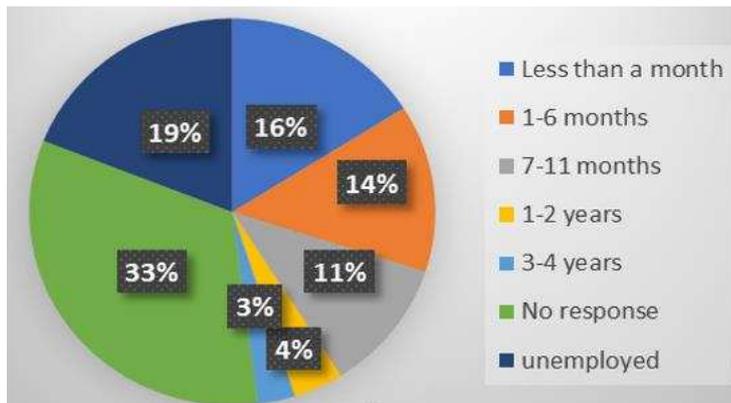


Fig. 4. Length of Time to Get the First Job After Graduation

4.2. Job Satisfaction Level of the Respondents

Table 1 exhibits the interpretation of the mean scores on the overall job satisfaction and its components.

Table 1. Interpretation of the Mean Scores

Score	Interpretation
1.0 - 1.82	Highly Dissatisfied (HD)
1.83 - 2.65	Dissatisfied (D)
2.66 - 3.48	Mildly Dissatisfied (MD)
3.49 - 4.31	Mildly Satisfied (MS)
4.32 - 5.14	Satisfied (S)
5.15 - 6.00	Highly Satisfied (HS)

The mean scores from 1.0 to 1.82 can be interpreted that the BEED graduates are highly dissatisfied on a specific aspect of their job while the mean scores of 1.83 to 2.65 mean that the BEED graduates are dissatisfied. Moreover, the BEED graduates are mildly dissatisfied if a mean score from 2.66 to 3.48 is obtained. Meanwhile, mean scores from 3.49 to 4.31 indicate that the BEED graduates are mildly satisfied, while the mean scores of 4.32 to 5.14 suggest that the BEED graduates are satisfied. Further, the respondents are highly satisfied when mean scores from 5.15 to 6.00 are acquired. It should be noted that the Grand Mean is interpreted as the overall job satisfaction of the BEED graduates.

Table 2 shows the job satisfaction level of the BEED graduates of a state university in Leyte, Philippines. The respondents are mildly satisfied with the payment they receive for their work, as shown by the mean score of 4.21. Likewise, it can be gleaned from the table that the respondents are mildly satisfied regarding their chance of promotion in their jobs, with a mean score of 3.59.

It can also be reckoned from the data in Table 2 that the respondents are satisfied with the competence of their supervisor in doing his or her job, having a mean score of 4.42. They attest that they are led by competent superiors who are productive in their respective functions. It is also presented in the table that a mean score of 4.06 is acquired for the item on the benefits they receive from their job, indicating that the respondents are mildly satisfied with them. Likewise, it can be deduced that the respondents are satisfied with the recognition they receive whenever they do a commendable job, as a mean score of 4.38 is acquired.

The table likewise presents that a mean score of 3.51 is obtained in statement number 6, which is interpreted as mildly satisfied. This suggests that the respondents somehow perceive that the policies are in consonance with the job expected of them. Furthermore, the respondents are satisfied with the people they work with, as a mean score of 4.77 is obtained for this item. Similarly, the respondents perceive that they find meaning in their current job as it is consistent with their professional ideals, reckoning a mean score of 4.62. The respondents, likewise, are satisfied with the communication within the organization as a mean score of 4.58 is resulted.

Table 2. Mean Score per Statement

Statement	Mean Score	Interpretation
1. Fair payment for the amount of work done	4.21	Mildly Satisfied
2. Chance to get promoted	3.59	Mildly Satisfied
3. The competence level of my supervisor/superior	4.42	Satisfied
4. The compensation received from the current job	4.06	Mildly Satisfied
5. Recognition received for a job well done	4.38	Satisfied
6. Consistency of policies to my job description	3.51	Mildly Satisfied
7. Working with colleagues	4.77	Satisfied
8. Finding the meaning of my job to my professional ideals	4.62	Satisfied
9. The communication system within the organization	4.58	Satisfied
10. The impact of salary increase	3.32	Mildly Dissatisfied
11. Recognition of individual accomplishments for promotion	3.96	Mildly Satisfied
12. Fairness of the supervisor to constituents	4.80	Satisfied
13. Comparability of the benefits received with other organizations' employees	4.23	Mildly Satisfied
14. Appreciation of the work I do	4.63	Satisfied
15. The implementation of procedures between offices within the organization	2.16	Dissatisfied
16. The competence of my colleagues in their respective tasks	4.42	Satisfied
17. The fulfillment derived from work	4.85	Satisfied
18. Clarity of goals of my organization	4.90	Satisfied
Grand Mean	4.19	Satisfied

Interestingly, Table 2 further presents that the respondents are mildly dissatisfied in terms of the impact of salary increase as a mean score of 3.32 is gained. This indicates a slow movement of monetary compensation in contrast with the efforts that they expend on their respective jobs. This aspect must be given ample attention to prevent the decline of performance of workers. Inayat and Khan (2021) reported in their recent research that employees who are satisfied and motivated in

their job tend to have a better performance, thus, optimizing their contribution to the progress of the organization.

Conversely, the respondents are mildly satisfied as a mean score of 3.96 is gained regarding the promotion given to those doing well on the job. Meanwhile, the respondents find their supervisor fair as a mean score of 4.8 is garnered for the item.

Further, the respondents are mildly satisfied with the comparability of the benefits they receive from the employees of other organizations. A mean score of 4.23 is obtained for this statement. Likewise, it is reflected in the data that the respondents are satisfied with their appreciation for their work. This is reflected by the mean score of 4.63 on the statement.

Interestingly, the respondents would like to be more satisfied with implementing procedures between offices within the organization. A low mean score of 2.16 resulted in this statement. This is the lowest score that was obtained among all items. This suggests that the respondents need more clarity of the procedures that are implemented between offices to provide absolute guidance on how to bridge or relate their functions with the rest of the units of the organization. Employees tend to perform better when they understand the interlinked processes between offices within the organization (Inayat & Khan, 2021). On this note, consistent and firm implementation of procedures and policies must be established to initiate satisfaction of job performance.

The respondents also show that they are satisfied (4.42) with the competence of their colleagues. This indicates that they are not burdened by their colleagues when it comes to the completion of their group tasks. Similarly, the respondents are satisfied (4.90) with their organization's goal clarity. They tend to understand where their efforts will bring them as these goals prompt them consistently.

Lastly, the grand mean of the responses of the participants is 4.19, which is interpreted as satisfied, making it safe to infer that the BEED graduates are satisfied with their current jobs.

Themes Relative to the Job Satisfaction of BEED Graduates

1. Colleagues' and Superiors' Competence Leverages Employees' Job Satisfaction

One important theme that emerged in this study is the role of colleagues' and superiors' competence in employee job satisfaction. When the co-teachers and administrators of the teacher-participants display a high level of competence in their respective functions, the teacher tends to be satisfied with his job as the working environment facilitates the smooth implementation of his job. For instance, Ronald feels effective at performing his tasks as a teacher because his immediate supervisor is sensitive to their needs and efficient at addressing them.

“Our administrators definitely perform their job well. They know to empathize with and support their teachers. Last year, our department requested more projectors and digital instructional implements; they were delivered within six months!”. (Ronald)

“My principal is a well-trained administrator. She knows the know-how of running the school. She has recently completed a degree in educational management, and her knowledge in the field is evident in her dealings with her colleagues and us " ... "I look up to her and am very satisfied with her service to our school." (Albert)

On the other hand, Marie stated that her colleagues share the same level of commitment to their job as hers.

“When leading them in activities such as Graduation Ceremonies, they need little guidance since they all perform their tasks responsibly and accurately. It makes my task as a chairman for the activity light and easy”. (Marie)

While organizations have a unique structure and a set of processes, performing well of the duties of each member of the organization alleviates difficulties that support the improvement of other employees’ performance (Trivellas et al., 2015), leading to career satisfaction. This implies that capacitating employees with relevant skills required for their work can generally improve the organization’s performance.

2. Compensatory Benefits are a Crucial Component of Job Satisfaction

The benefits received by the participants from their job consistently appeared in the interview responses. They all mentioned that they want a salary increase and allowances for some activities, such as home visitations and room structuring, to compensate for the added work and associated risks. One participant shared:

“I spend much on beautifying my room because I want to have a good rating on assessments. As such, I want us, teachers, to be compensated for all our expenses and efforts”. (Albert)

“When pupils do not attend classes for two or more days, we are expected to visit them in their homes. Some of my pupils live in a remote barangay which is difficult to reach using a motorcycle. It requires me to walk a distance over two kilometers”. (Beth)

“We are given a salary increase per year and a performance bonus when we obtain an ‘Outstanding’ rating. These motivate us to work well and stay with the institution”. (Ronald)

These results imply that looking into the needs of the employees and providing compensation for their "extra mile" can boost their motivation to perform well and be satisfied with their job. This is consistent with the study of Bawoleh et al. (2015), which contends that motivated and compensated workers tend to be satisfied with their jobs. On a similar note, Trivellas et al. (2015) assert that job satisfaction is related to job performance with mediating effects of general competencies.

3. Clear Organizational Goals Steer Employees to be Satisfied with their job

The organization’s transmission of its goals to its workers is vital to employees’ job satisfaction. This may be due to the explicit expectations from each member of the organization that guide them toward the direction in which the organization is heading. For instance, Ronald shared that their school head envisions the school as a leading institution in the city’s academic excellence. As such, he expects that he shall conduct remedial and advanced classes, participate and win in quiz shows or any academic competition, and more.

“From the start, I know that I may be asked to coach in academic competitions. Thankfully, I love challenges and competitions, so it is not much of a concern. I also know that I must help the school maintain its reputation as an excellent institution”. (Ronald)

Another participant shared a similar response.

“We, Grade 6 teachers, are challenged by our principal to produce at least one qualifier in the Philippine Science High School competitive examination. I am satisfied with my service as my class consistently produced two to five qualifiers within five years since our principal told us of her plan”. (Marie)

These results suggest that understanding organizational goals necessitates workers to align their vision to these goals and feel good about their performance when they attain them (Jung, 2013). Moreover, workers foresee what efforts and results are expected of them, hence, monitor their performance relative to these goals. Eventually, this prevents frustration towards their job, supervisors, and colleagues.

5. Conclusions

Job satisfaction is one of the most challenging issues confronting today's leaders when it comes to employee management. Even though job satisfaction has been the subject of thousands of papers and research worldwide, it is one of the least studied research fields, specifically at universities and other learning institutions. Many studies have shown that job satisfaction has a disproportionately large impact on motivation.

The level of motivation of employees has an impact on productivity and, thus, on the performance of an organization. The employee's perception of the nature of his work significantly impacts his overall job satisfaction. More specifically, administrative and collegial support plays a vital role in the employee's fulfillment of his job. Findings also provide evidence that financial compensation and other forms of motivation have an essential impact on employee job satisfaction, as well as the understanding of the organization's goals. It is imperative to keep an eye on these factors to optimize the organization's overall productivity.

6. Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that more BEED graduates be invited to participate in the survey. Moreover, periodic or regular job satisfaction surveys can be conducted in educational institutions to closely monitor their needs and the quality of their performance.

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