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*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Job motivation factors: a case study of an Iranian Medical University**

**Mohammad Amin Bahrami<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohammad Ranjbar Ezzatabadi<sup>2</sup>, Elham Jamali<sup>3</sup>, Arefeh Dehghani Tafti<sup>4</sup>, Gholamreza Ahmadi Tehrani<sup>5</sup> and Samaneh Entezarian Ardakani<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D in healthcare management, Assistant professor, Dept. of healthcare management, Public health faculty, Shahid Sadoughi university of medical sciences, Imam Hossein sq. Yazd, Iran, <sup>2</sup> Ph.D student in health policy, Tehran university of medical sciences, Tehran, Iran, <sup>3</sup> MS<sub>c</sub> student in healthcare management, Shahid Sadoughi university of medical sciences, Yazd, Iran, <sup>4</sup> MS<sub>c</sub> student in biostatistics, Isfahan university of medical university, Isfahan, Iran, <sup>5</sup> MS<sub>c</sub> in healthcare management, Shahid Sadoughi university of medical sciences, Yazd, Iran, <sup>6</sup> BS<sub>c</sub> in healthcare management, Shahid Sadoughi university of medical sciences, Yazd, Iran

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**The academic staff have a major role in achieving educational objectives. Therefore, their motivation and satisfaction is a crucial factor for the higher education achievements. This paper discusses the results of a job motivation and satisfaction factors survey in an Iranian medical university. A questionnaire-based study was conducted in 290 people (includes 77 faculty members and 213 administrative and technical staff) who work in Shahid Sadoughi university of medical sciences. Data were collected using the Lawrence Lindhal valid questionnaire. Data analysis was done through SPSS<sub>13</sub>. Research findings indicated that job security and appreciate the work (appreciation) were ranked as the most and the least powerful motivator of faculty members. Also, enough salaries and benefits (monetary motivator) and having the interesting (exciting) work were the most and least important motivation factors for staff, respectively. Faculty members and staff had the highest and lowest satisfaction level from motivational factors entitled having the interesting (exciting) work and job promotion opportunity (professional development and career advancement). The findings from this research should heighten sensitivity regarding the important issues such as job security, monetary motivation and job enrichment opportunities that need to be addressed to promote motivation and job satisfaction of academicians.**

**Keywords:** Job Motivation, Job satisfaction, University, Iran

## **INTRODUCTION**

Organizations are social systems where human resources are the most important factors for effectiveness

and efficiency. Organizations need effective managers and employees to achieve their objectives. They cannot succeed without their personnel efforts and commitment (Mosadegh rad et al., 2006). So, in this era of rapid change, organizations keep readjusting/ adapting to the environment in order to maintain their effectiveness and competitiveness. It is believed that motivating and

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\*Corresponding Author's Email: [aminbahrami1359@gmail.com](mailto:aminbahrami1359@gmail.com)

empowering employees can enhance their productivity and performance. Individuals who are motivated and satisfied would be more committed to their tasks and, hence, perform better (Liu et al., 2007). There are many definitions of motivation in the literature (Moody et al., 2006). According to Locke (1997), motivation is determined by goal directedness, human volition or free will, and perceived needs and desires, sustaining the actions of individuals in relation to themselves and to their environment (Locke, 1997). Janssen et al. (1999) have been defined work motivation as the degree to which a person wants to work well in his or her job, in order to achieve intrinsic satisfaction (Janssen et al., 1999). Also, Moody and Pesute (2006), by appraising some motivation definitions using Hind's criteria for concept clarity propose the following definition for motivation: "Motivation is a values-based, psychobiologically stimulus-driven inner urge that activates and guides human behavior in response to self, other, and environment, supporting intrinsic satisfaction and leading to the intentional fulfillment of basic human drives, perceived needs, and desired goals" (Moody et al., 2006). Motivation is believed to be the reason for why people decide to do what they do, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it (Khadir, 2011). Hence, managing motivation among employees is crucial to the successful achievement of objectives (Janus, 2010). Employee job satisfaction is an important attribute that organizations desire of their staff. Job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of job values. Job satisfaction may be linked to performance, organizational productivity and other issues, including labor turnover. However, dissatisfied employees are prone to absenteeism and excessive turnover (Toker, 2011). Numerous factors influence employee job satisfaction, including salaries, fringe benefits, achievement, autonomy, recognition, communication, working conditions, job importance, co workers, degree of professionalism, organizational climate, interpersonal relationships, working for a reputable agency, supervisory support, positive affectivity, job security, workplace flexibility, working within a team environment and genetic factors. Sources of low satisfaction are associated with working with unskilled or inappropriately trained staff, laborious tasks such as documentation, repetition of duties, tensions within role expectations, role ambiguity, role conflict, job/patient care, feeling overloaded, the increasing need to be available for overtime, relations with co-workers, personal factors and organizational factors (Liu et al., 2007). Approaches to human resources motivation have undergone substantial changes during the past century. Initially, it has been influenced by Taylor's scientific management (Taylor, 1911) who postulated that (factory) workers are solely motivated by money, maximizing production to satisfy their own work-

related monetary needs. Subsequently, Human resource management incorporated motivational aspects of the human relations approach based on findings of the Hawthorne studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Although the human relations approach focused on the importance of human interaction and social relations, it did not take individual differences of work motivation among people into account. This human side of the enterprise became the leading model of thought in the 1950s (McGregor, 1960), emphasizing that individuals are motivated by personal growth (competence), autonomy, and empowerment (Capelleras, 2005). Then Vroom's (1964, 1995) expectancy theory recognizes the forces within individuals in the environment which affect an individual's behavior. It assumes that the employee can decide how much effort he puts in, depending on his motivation, which equals the product of valence (attractiveness of a reward), expectancy (how much a person believes that their effort will result in success) and instrumentality (belief that success will lead to reward) (Hancer, 2003). Also, Schein (1980) believes the most important factor in determining an individual's motivation is the psychological contract, defined as the set of expectations between an employee and some implicit components of an organization, i.e. pay, dignity, opportunities. In return, the organization demands loyalty and commitment. Schein's research illustrates the importance of human resource planning (Moody et al., 2006). Moreover, Hackman and Oldham (1980) argued that a triad of critical internal psychological states is a necessary condition for high levels of employee motivation. These psychological states include the meaningfulness of the work, knowledge of responsibility for results of the work, and knowledge of the outcomes of the work (Locke, 1997). But, one of the better-known job motivation and satisfaction theories generally and for the objective of this research is Herzberg's two-factor theory was developed by Herzberg et al. (1959). They supposed that the phenomenon of job satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction is a function of two classes of variables named motivator and hygiene factors. The satisfaction, growth or motivator factors that are intrinsic to the job are: achievement, recognition for achievement, responsibility, the work itself, and growth or advancement. The dissatisfaction, avoidance or hygiene factors that are extrinsic to the job are: salary, status, security, company policy and administration, working conditions, supervision, and interpersonal relationships (Herzberg, 1987). Herzberg claimed that hygiene factors are not directly related to job satisfaction, therefore, these factors will not distinctly improve performance (Hancer et al., 2003). The motivators and hygiene factors of Herzberg et al. (1959) are similar to the intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction factors of other scholars. Intrinsic job satisfaction has been defined as a person's value in terms of her/his creativity, opportunities for resource mobilization, future development and stability derived

from the job; overall, it includes items related to job content (Kuo et al., 2008). The relationship between an employee's motivation and job satisfaction is now examined. A number of researchers have concluded that work motivation and job satisfaction should be treated separately, so that factors of influence can be more readily identified and to allow for better understanding (Stringer et al., 2011). Also, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory identifies intrinsic motivators (e.g. achievement, recognition, the work itself) and hygiene factors which tend to be extrinsic factors (e.g. company administration, supervision, salary). Herzberg's view is that these motivators lead to job satisfaction because they satisfy an individual's need for self-actualization (Tietjen et al., 1998). Expectancy theory, as developed by Porter and Lawler (1968), argues that a pay-for-performance system influences job satisfaction (Ferris, 1977; Igalens, 1999). Supporting this view, Pool (1997) examines the relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction and finds significant positive association indicates that as work motivation increases, job satisfaction increases (Moynihan et al., 2007; Wright et al., 2004). The primary tasks of academic staff are in three areas, namely, teaching, research, and administration and management (Oshagbemi, 2000). The objectives of higher education are to provide in-depth knowledge, educate students, seek academic development, and coordinate national development demands (Johnes et al., 1990). Academic staff of a higher education institution is a key resource and have a major role to play in achieving the abovementioned objectives (Capelleras, 2005). Moreover, the performance of the academic staff determines much of the student success and has an impact on student learning. Thus, motivation and satisfaction of the academic staff is crucial for its performance and, consequently, for the quality of higher education system (Machado, 2011). Therefore, many studies can be found in this area around the world some of them including Corina (2012), Toker (2011), Machado et al. (2011), Mehta et al. (2010), Rhodes et al. (2007), Galaz-Fontes (2002), Leung et al. (2000), Oshagbemi (2000a, b, c, d, 2001, 2003) researches. The aim of this research was to investigate job satisfaction and motivation factors in Shahid Saadoughi University of medical sciences.

## METHODS

The study on academic satisfaction and motivation within Shahid Saadoughi university of medical sciences– An Examination of Academic Job Satisfaction and Motivation - involved a quantitative cross sectional study that utilized a questionnaire. The target population was all faculty members including all sub-groups (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, part-time, full-time, etc.) and non-teaching staff (administrative and

technical staff) in the university who comprised of 584 people. The sample was consisted of 290 participator including 77 faculty members and 213 non-academic staff that obtained using stratified random method. Sample size was calculated with sample size calculation formula for limited population by assuming  $p=0.65$ ,  $d=0.055$  and  $\alpha=0.05$ . Demographic information of sample is demonstrated in table 1.

The required data was gathered by Lawrence Lindhal valid questionnaire. It was composed of three parts: I. general information that included 11 questions about demographic descriptions; II. Job motivation factors that included 10 questions related to job motivation factors intended to prioritize these factors; III. Job satisfaction that included 10 questions related to overall satisfaction in the same dimensions of motivation factors. The motivation and satisfaction dimensions considered were physical work environment conditions, the sense of belonging and participation, discipline at work and respect (institutions' prestige), appreciate the work (appreciation), managers honesty to staff (honesty), enough salaries and benefits (monetary motivator), job promotion opportunity (professional development and career advancement), managers perception and attention to employees' problems, job security and having the interesting (exciting) work. Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale for satisfaction dimensions ranging from 1 (least satisfied,) to 5 (most satisfied), and 10-point for motivation ones ranging from 1 (most potential for motivation/ most powerful motivator) and 10 (least potential for motivation/ weakest motivator). For the consistency of the tool, a test-retest method (10 days apart) was used. A total of 18 faculty members and staff participated in this test. The test-retest correlation coefficients were 0.78 for job satisfaction and 0.87 for job motivation items. After completing questionnaires, data were entered and processed by using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) software, English version 13.0. Descriptive information for all included variables was presented by frequency, mean and percent descriptive statistics. Also, T-Test and Oneway-Anova were utilized for analytical analysis of the research.

## Findings

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic information of research sample. Also, subsequent 3 tables (table2 to table4) shows the main findings about job motivators important and job satisfaction level.

As shown in table 2 Job security, physical work environment and job promotion opportunity are the most important motivators for faculty members. These motivators for staff include enough salaries and benefits, job promotion opportunity and physical work environment. Also, statistical test reveals the difference of Monetary motivator and job security motivating power

**Table1.** Descriptive information (n=290)

Variable	Faculty members	Staff	total
<b>Sex:</b>			
Male	55 (71.4%)	70 (32.9%)	125 (43.1%)
female	22 (28.6%)	143 (67.1%)	165 (56.9%)
<b>Age (years):</b>			
<30	14 (18.2%)	57 (26.8%)	71 (24.4%)
30-40	22 (28.6%)	91 (42.7%)	113 (38.9%)
>40	41 (53.2%)	65 (30.5%)	106 (36.5%)
<b>Marital status:</b>			
Single	5 (6.5%)	19 (8.9%)	24 (8.3%)
Married	71 (92.2%)	193 (90.6%)	264 (91.1%)
Divorced	1 (1.3%)	1 (0.5%)	2 (0.6%)
<b>Birth location:</b>			
Native	54 (70.1%)	196 (92%)	250 (86.2%)
Expatriate	23 (29.9%)	17 (8%)	40 (13.8%)
<b>Education:</b>			
Under diploma	0 (0%)	12 (5.6%)	12 (4.2%)
Diploma	0 (0%)	45 (21.1%)	45 (15.6%)
Associate degree	0 (0%)	28 (13.1%)	28 (9.7%)
Bachelor	0 (%)	95 (44.6%)	95 (32.7%)
Master	25 (31.4%)	24 (11.3%)	49 (16.8%)
Doctorate	14 (18.2%)	3 (1.4%)	17 (5.8%)
PhD	38 (49.4%)	6 (2.8%)	44 (15.2%)
<b>Record of service (years):</b>			
<10	33 (43.9%)	94 (44.1%)	127 (43.8%)
10-20	21 (7.3%)	81 (38.1%)	102 (35.15)
>20	23 (29.9%)	38 (17.8%)	61 (21.15)
<b>Total</b>	<b>77 (26.55%)</b>	<b>213 (73.45%)</b>	<b>290 (100%)</b>

**Table2.** Job motivators mean, standard deviation and rank

Factor	Faculty members			Staff			Total			P-Value
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	
Physical work environment conditions	4.8	3.1	2	4.8	3.07	3	4.9	3.1	3	0.913
The sense of belonging and participation	5.8	2.4	6	6.0	2.7	8	5.9	2.6	7	0.595
Discipline at work and respect (institutions' prestige)	5.3	2.7	5	5.8	2.7	6	5.7	2.7	5	0.117
Appreciate the work (appreciation)	6.12	2.4	10	5.9	2.4	7	6.0	2.4	8	0.635
Managers honesty to staff (honesty)	5.9	2.7	7	5.7	2.4	5	5.8	2.5	6	0.633
Enough salaries and benefits (monetary motivator)	5.2	2.1	4	3.4	2.9	1	3.9	2.8	1	0.000
Job promotion opportunity (professional development and career advancement)	5.1	2.8	3	4.7	2.3	2	4.8	2.5	2	0.323
Managers perception and attention to employees' problems	6.6	2.8	8	6.1	2.5	9	6.2	2.6	9	0.174
Job security	3.9	3.2	1	5.6	2.8	4	5.1	3/0	4	0.000
Having the interesting (exciting) work	6.1	3.2	9	6.4	3.2	10	6.3	3.2	10	0.456

SD: Standard Deviation

**Table3.** Satisfaction from existing situation of job motivators

Motivator	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
physical work environment conditions	2.74	0.815	4
the sense of belonging and participation	2.68	1.110	6
discipline at work and respect (institutions' prestige)	2.73	0.925	5
appreciate the work (appreciation)	2.43	1.030	8
managers honesty to staff (honesty)	3.07	1.180	2
enough salaries and benefits (monetary motivator)	2.43	0.925	7
job promotion opportunity (professional development and career advancement)	2.31	0.995	10
managers perception and attention to employees' problems,	2.43	1.140	9
job security	2.82	1.020	3
having the interesting (exciting) work	3.64	1.085	1

**Table4.** Overall satisfaction situation of faculty members and staff

Satisfaction situation	Faculty members N (%)	Staff N (%)	Total N (%)
<b>Satisfied</b>	2 (2.6%)	12 (5.6%)	14 (4.8%)
<b>Partially satisfied</b>	62 (80.5%)	129 (60.6%)	191 (65.9%)
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	13 (16.95)	72 (33.85)	85 (29.3%)
<b>Total</b>	77 (100%)	213 (100%)	290 (100%)

( $P=0.000$ ) for faculty members and staff.

As shown in table 3 study population have the highest satisfaction from motivators including having the exciting work, managers honesty to staff and job security. Although, these motivators have acquired the highest satisfaction scores but the satisfaction level of most motivators (except managers honesty to staff and having the interesting work) are "moderate" range.

Table 4 indicates that most faculty members and staff have partially satisfaction from their job. Dissatisfied academicians comprised 16.65 and 33.85 percent of faculty members and staff. These percent reveals a high rate of dissatisfaction in study population because it assumed that dissatisfaction affects the organizations' overall performance. Also, very low percent of faculty members and staff are satisfied from their job.

## DISCUSSION

Academic staff job satisfaction and motivation play an important role contributing to positive consequences to the quality of the institutions and to students learning. (20) Therefore, the results presented here are crucial and should create sensitiveness to academics preoccupations and dissatisfaction respecting their jobs, and conditions under which they work. In sum, the main objective to be attained is to create job satisfaction, motivation, and thus, the best results for institution and for students.

Results from the research indicated that in faculty members the main powerful motivators are job security, physical work environment conditions and job promotion opportunity (professional development and career advancement) followed by enough salaries and benefits, discipline at work and respect, the sense of belonging and participation, managers honesty to staff, managers perception and attention to employee's problems, having the interesting work and appreciation. These factors ranking from the viewpoints of staff include enough salaries and benefits (monetary motivator), job promotion opportunity (professional development and career advancement) and physical work environment conditions followed by job security, managers honesty to staff, discipline at work and respect, appreciation, the sense of belonging and participation, managers perception and attention to employee's problems and having the interesting work. Therefore, managers' perception and attention to employees' problems, having the interesting (exciting) work and appreciate the work (appreciation) have the least power for motivate the faculty member so they cannot play the role of important motivators. Also, the factors including the sense of belonging and participation, managers' perception and attention to employees' problems and having the interesting (exciting) work have the least motivational potential in the staff group. Viewing the findings of indicates that 2 items including physical work environment condition and job promotion opportunities have been ranked between 3

most important motivators by both faculty members and staff. This results are confirmed with some another study's findings from country and around the world. Bakhshi et al. in their study on the faculty members of Rafsanjan medical university have showed that physical work environment conditions and job promotion opportunities are among the most important motivators that can affect academic staff's motivation to work. (32) In the another study at Mazandaran university of medical sciences Ranjbar et al. have reported a same results such as Bakhshi et al. (33) The study of Safari et al. in Karaj Islamic Azad university has revealed that job promotion opportunities is among the most powerful motivators from the viewpoints of faculty members. (34) Report of Sadeghifard et al. research in Grmsar branch of Islamic Azad university, also shows that job physical work environment conditions and job promotion opportunities have important motivational potential for faculty members. (35) Another studies includes Ashtiyani et al. in Iranian teachers (Monjamed et al) in Iranian nurses working in educational centers (Rajabbeygi et al) in Iranian governmental sector employees (Timreck) in healthcare workers (Manshor and Abdullah) among Malaysian employees (Umur) in language teachers at the European university of Lefke, have been reported the importance of work physical environment condition and job promotion opportunities as powerful motivators.

The research findings showed that job security for faculty members and enough salaries and benefit for staff are the most crucial motivational factors. Studies from (Malekshahi et al., Bakhshi et al.), (Ashtiyani, Ostovar et al) in faculty members of Yasuj university of medical sciences, Hoseynian in faculty members of Hamadan university of medical sciences (Azizzadeh Forouzi et al) in an Iranian university faculty members (Ranjbar et al., Rajabbeygi et , Daneshmandi et al.) among faculty members of selected military universities (Franco et al.) among hospital workers in Jordan and Georgia have been reported the job security among the top motivational factors.

Also, Malekshahi et al., Bakhshi et al , Ranjbar et al Safari et al., Rafei et al. Kajbaf et al. in their study at Iran national petroleum company, Rajabbeygi et al., Liu et al in China township health centers workers, Ashtiyani, Ingersoll among USA teachers, Thornton et al., Franco et al., Rocca and Kostanasci among Victorian secondary school teachers, ranked salaries and benefits among high prioritized motivational factors in their studies but Mahmoudi et al in a study of job motivation factors in critical care nurses showed that salaries and benefits is the least important factor for nurses' motivating.

This research had an interesting result about motivational potential of hygiene factors. Our findings shows that, despite the Herzberg's motivational theory faculty members and staff of university believe that some hygiene factors (including job security, physical work environment conditions, enough salaries and benefits

(monetary motivator) are the important motivators in human resource context. Also, the work itself (named having the interesting (exciting) work in research) that is a motivational factor in Herzberg's theory obtained very low rating (9 in faculty members and 10 in staff) in this research in according to motivational potential. These contradictory results may be due to two reasons. first, Motivation is a complex process, there is no universal theory or approach to motivation and individuals differ in what motivates them and second, motivation is based on human needs which generate within an individual, Motivation is total, not piece-meal. Thus, an individual cannot be motivated by fulfilling some of his needs partly. Therefore, managers have to understand a diversity of needs and have to use a variety of incentives to motivate them.

This research had another objective to survey the satisfaction level of university faculty members and staff from the current situation of motivational factors.

Methodologically, job satisfaction defined as an employee's affective reaction to a job, based on a comparison between actual outcomes and desired outcomes. It is generally recognized as a multifaceted construct that includes employee feelings about a variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic job elements and can affect many job outcomes. (33) So, many researchers have been examined different aspect of job satisfaction in different human settings including educational institutions. For example, Toker (2011) examined job satisfaction of academic staff in an empirical study in turkey. (8) Lourdes et al (2011), examined job satisfaction and motivation in Portuguese higher education institutions. (18) Kiziltepe (2008) examined sources of motivation and de-motivation among teachers at a public university in Istanbul. Bilimoria et al. (2006) examined how a sample of 248 male and female professors at a Midwestern private research university constructed their academic job satisfaction. Koyuncu et al. (2006) investigated work experiences and satisfaction of female and male university professors in Turkey.

Okpara et al. (2005) also examined the effects of gender on the job satisfaction of US academicians. Tu et al. (2005) examined the age differences of job satisfaction between Taiwanese and Chinese higher education faculty. Santhapparaj's (2005) study examined the relationships between pay, promotion, fringe benefits, working condition, support of research, support of teaching, gender, and job satisfaction of academic staff in private universities in Malaysia. Santhapparaj and Ku Sku (2003) explored the differences in satisfaction dimensions between the academic and administrative staff in higher education Institutions in Turkey. (55-61)

In this research we examined faculty and staff satisfaction from motivational factors current situation in the university. Our results indicate that, the highest level of satisfaction related to having the interesting (exciting) work, managers' honesty to staff (honesty) and job

security. Also, satisfaction scores from job promotion opportunity, appreciation, discipline at work and respect and managers perception and attention to employees' problems are in lowest range. Indeed, the most faculty members and staff have moderate satisfaction from their job overly. Clearly comparing the research results shows the same findings were identified in some another studies including Malekshahi et al. (42), Aghamohammadi et al. (62), Jahani et al. among Arak hospital workers (63), Monjamed et al. (37), Rafie et al. (48) Safari et al. (34) and Rajabbeygi et al. (38) and Thoronton (52) who demonstrate low to moderate satisfaction from motivational factors in their works. However, Sadeghifard et al. (35) and Daneshmandi et al. (46) have been reported a satisfaction scores of higher than moderate in their researches.

It is notable that if we put the participator perception about motivators beside their satisfaction level can conclude maybe satisfaction from having the interesting (exciting) work and managers' honesty to staff (honesty) may not lead to higher performance because they have limited potential in motivating the university faculty and staff. Only, satisfaction from job security can improve the staff performance due to its motivational potential in this group. Also, dissatisfaction from the powerful motivational factor entitled job promotion opportunity (professional development and career advancement) can leave an adverse effect on institution performance.

There are a number of limitations with this research. First of all, we examined job motivational factors in a university, so care needs to be taken when generalizing the findings to other organizations. Also, data were collected cross sectional, so generalizing the findings across time should be done with caution. Despite these limitations, research expands our perceptions understandings about the multidimensional phenomenon of human resource motivation in organizational context.

## CONCLUSION

From a practical point of view, the findings of this research should heighten awareness, sensitivity and dialogue regarding the important issues that need to be addressed to promote and maintain job satisfaction and motivation within the ranks of the academic staff. The results of the research may be useful for university administrators who wish to decrease dissatisfaction and increase job motivation for performance improvement objectives. Findings of our study suggest that some initiatives such as setting a clear employee improvement programs and developing job enrichment innovations will be helpful. Also, presenting new methods of payments such as pay for performance and reengineering of reward mechanism will be helpful. Furthermore, this study may serve as a foundation for other researches in this area.

Moreover, the results about academic satisfaction and motivation in Shahid Sadoughi university of medical sciences may have relevance to some similar institutions but with serious caution due to the nature of the phenomenon of human motivation.

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