

**What is it that satisfies faculty?:
Rank as a consideration in factors
related to job satisfaction**

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Presentation Outline

- Review of the literature
- Background of PULSE survey
- Research objective
- Research methodology
- Research results
- Discussion and implications
- Considerations for the use of survey data

“Faculty members are rarely satisfied with their own institutions. They see administrators as incompetent, communication as poor, and their influence as declining. This discontent with their institutions is in stark contrast to their satisfaction with their intellectual lives, the courses they teach, and their collegial relationships.”

(Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002, p. 518)

Review of the Literature

- Faculty are generally satisfied with their work
- Administration concerns:
 - Decline in supply (STEM, Nursing, Special Ed)
 - Budget issues (AAUP annual report)
- Faculty concerns:
 - Salary
 - Relations with administration
 - Strength of chair and department relations

Factors Related to Satisfaction

Demographic Factors

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Years at Institution
- Tenure status
- Salary

Work Life Factors

- Pay
- Department chair
- Coworkers
- Job security
- Impacts of job on life outside of work
- University characteristics
- Student quality

Calls for Further Research

- Olsen, Maple, and Stage's (1995) suggestion to conduct a faculty satisfaction study in a homogeneous environment, such as a doctoral-degree granting institution
- Johnsrud and Rosser's (2002) suggestion for an institution to conduct its own measure of faculty members' perceptions of their satisfaction with their institution

Background of PULSE Survey

- PULSE began as an initiative to better understand whether faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota generally like their jobs
- PULSE measures multiple facets of satisfaction to provide data that support actionable changes to improve satisfaction
- Many of the questions are based on indices created by human resources professionals
- Other survey items were added to answer specific queries of interest to the group.

Research Objectives

- Build on the previous body of research by exploring the differences in factors related to overall job satisfaction by faculty rank
 - Relatively homogeneous faculty at one university
 - Further understand differences between ranks, including instructors and academic professionals
- Purposefully designed for use by the administration of the University of Minnesota to inform policy and practice related to faculty job satisfaction

Research Methodology

- **Data source:**

1,253 faculty members at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Campus who completed the PULSE survey in the spring of 2008

- **Variables:**

DV : **overall job satisfaction**

IV's : - demographics

- satisfaction with **benefits**

- satisfaction with **pay level**

- satisfaction with **pay raise**

- satisfaction with **pay structure**

- satisfaction with **support from department chair/supervisor**

- satisfaction with **coworkers**

- **job security**

- **work-family conflict**

- **university characteristics**

Research Methodology, cont.

- **Analytical method** –

stepwise regression analyses conducted separately for each group

- **Limitations** –

- 34% response rate to PULSE survey

- Smaller sample of instructors compared to other groups

- Variables included are limited to questions asked on the PULSE survey and data available from human resources

- Job security index not included on all surveys

Research Results

- **Academic Professional**
 - Department Chair support
 - Pay level
 - Work-family conflict
- **Instructor**
 - Pay level
 - Job security
- **Assistant Professor**
 - University characteristics
 - Coworkers
 - Department Chair support
 - Work-family conflict
- **Associate Professor**
 - University characteristics
 - Coworkers
 - Pay level
- **Professor**
 - University characteristics
 - Pay benefits
 - Pay level
 - Work-family conflict
 - Coworkers

Means for PULSE Survey

	All Faculty	Academic Professional	Instructor	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	4.02	3.88	4.10	4.10	3.91	4.09
Coworkers	2.67	2.65	2.64	2.71	2.63	2.70
Job Security	N/A	.77	.58	N/A	N/A	N/A
Benefits	4.00	4.03	4.02	4.03	4.00	3.97
Pay Level	2.98	2.92	3.10	3.06	2.93	2.97
Dept. Chair Support	3.38	3.46	3.38	3.42	3.34	3.35
University Characteristics	3.77	3.73	3.88	3.82	3.70	3.78
W-F Conflict	4.88	4.95	4.80	4.59	4.97	5.00

Academic Professionals

- Difficult to generalize given the variety of duties performed by this group
- Perhaps more similar to tenured/tenure-track than instructors
- Importance of department chair/supervisor support
- Similar lack of job security as instructor, but perhaps not as important a predictor

Instructors

- Two predictors – pay level and job security
- Administration might consider the importance of a balance between the two, but security generally not an option given tenure system
- Currently show average satisfaction with pay level, but very low level of job security

Assistant Professors

- Similar to tenured/tenure-track colleagues in value of university characteristics and satisfaction with coworkers (but not pay level)
- Importance of department chair support – perhaps due to being new to the field and/or the University of Minnesota
- Work-family conflict both associated with overall job satisfaction and shown to have a moderately high mean – likely due to adjustment to life as a faculty member

Associate Professors

- Again, similar to tenured/tenure-track colleagues in value of university characteristics and satisfaction with coworkers
- Satisfaction with pay level only other predictor to enter regression equation – mirrors literature that pay is a factor for mid- and late-career faculty

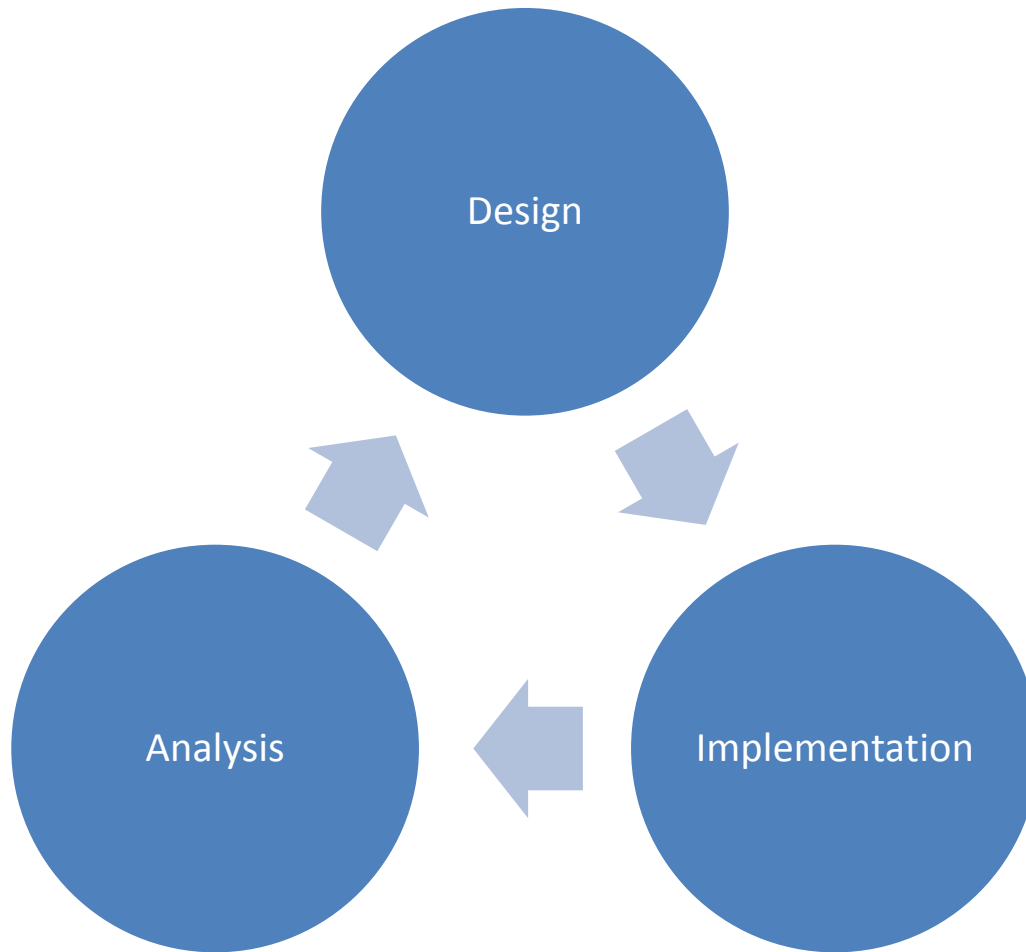
Professors

- Largest and most diverse group due to length of time one stays in this rank - possibly translates to most variables entering equation
- Concerned with pay level, but also benefits, perhaps due to changing needs
- Work-family conflict possibly due to increased administrative and other duties expected of this group

General Implications

- Tenured/tenure-track faculty concerned with the characteristics of the University of Minnesota and are generally satisfied with these characteristics
- Pay level is important for most groups, so administrators must seek a balance when budgets are tight
- While all groups indicated higher than average levels of work-family conflict, only three of the groups related this factor to their overall satisfaction, indicating different levels of acceptable conflict
- Job security should be measured for all groups to provide true comparison, but it appears to be more of a concern for instructors than academic professionals though both groups express low levels of security

Survey Data Considerations



Survey Data Considerations

- Constantly seeking to improve design
 - Given every 2 years, so change is possible
 - Balance of longitudinal analyses and improvements
 - Realization of important differences between faculty and staff
- Limitations of analysis will inform both design and implementation
 - Possible inclusion of variables from literature
 - Possible removal of variables not shown to relate to overall job satisfaction
 - Inclusion of variables that can be affected by change

Survey Data Considerations, cont.

- Goal of increased response rate
 - Design improvements, including possible reduction of questions
 - Reduction informed by analysis
 - Publication of analysis of previous survey results shows potential respondents that their participation matters
 - Cannot wait until you have “perfect” data

Questions and Comments

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