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Faculty Members' Satisfaction with the Executive Processes of Educational, Research and Administrative Units of Kermanshah Medical School in 2018

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Abstract

Background: The management of educational organizations is particularly sensitive since it deals with the professors and students who play a strategic role in the community.
Objectives: The present study aimed to determine the satisfaction level of the faculty members with the current status of executive processes and performance of medical school departments regarding service provision.
Methods: This cross-sectional, descriptive study was conducted at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2018. The sample population included the faculty members of the clinical and basic sciences departments. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire based on the previous studies. Data analysis was performed using *t*-test and chi-square, and the data were expressed as mean, standard deviation, numbers, and percentages.
Results: Among 187 faculty members, 55 (29.4%) were in the basic sciences department, 132 cases were in the clinical departments, and 65.24% were male. The mean age of the professors was 42.84 ± 5.52 years (range: 30 - 60 years). The mean work experience was 10 years (range: 1 - 30 years), and the academic rank was mainly assistant professor (65.8%) and associate professor (27.3%), with the majority (45.6%) having formal and formal-experiential employment. Management experience at the faculty or university level was 34.6%, while it was 28.9% at the department level. The satisfaction of the faculty members with the performance of the medical school units was favorable, with the highest satisfaction rate belonging to the research units and the lowest belonging to the service units.
Conclusions: According to the results, the satisfaction of the faculty members with the provided services in the educational, research, and administrative-financial units of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences was favorable despite the difference between these units in this regard.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Medical School, Faculty Members, Kermanshah

1. Background

Higher education is an inherent element of human development in every country, representing an important human resource investment that provides and enhances knowledge and skills and plays a pivotal role in the advancement of societies and organizations (1). Universities are one of the most valuable resources for the progress and development of societies, which are highly regarded in terms of expertise and technical knowledge and considered to be the major factors of social changes (2). The missions of universities are to respond to the needs and expectations of the key stakeholders (especially students) and to constantly improve the quality of educational and research processes in the country (3). Therefore, higher education is increasingly interested in the quality of service delivery, which is a major constituent of their agenda (4).

The efficiency of every organization depends on the behavior and performance of the human resources, which must be directed toward the organizational goals (5), so that every service-presenting organization would be constantly required to provide feedback to improve the clients and eliminate the shortcomings (6).

Satisfaction is an important issue in academic and non-academic settings (7). In a competitive environment, satisfaction is a key element in the superiority and success of an

organization (8). In knowledge-based organizations, the satisfaction of the clients is considered to be an essential management mechanism as it drives the dynamics and excellence of the organizational goals (1).

A customer-centric perspective has a history of 2 - 3 decades in various healthcare, medical, and educational fields. Today, the view of service recipients is the basis for the measurement of executive processes, planning, and approaches to the empowerment of service providers, as well as the participation of service recipients in decision-making (9). Globally, education (training) is considered to be stressful (10), and numerous studies have shown that tension adversely affects the physical and mental health of educators and their job satisfaction (11).

Universities play a key role in community development, and professors are the pillar of these institutions. Evidently, disruption in their activities leads to the decline of the quality of education and service delivery. The analysis of mental and physical strength has three basic factors, including attitude, physical, and emotional burnout (12). Faculty members are a key component of the structure of higher education, and their efficiency as the principal human resources in this structure has been well established. Considering the role of faculty members in the training of specialized and efficient human resources and national development, it seems that recognizing and responding to these needs in order to increase their motivation and job satisfaction is a priority of the higher education process.

The critical role of faculty members in the productivity and performance efficiency of universities, institutions, and research centers inevitably puts academic officials and managers in the forefront of their demands and attempts to plan with the aim of obtaining higher satisfaction in order to avoid the adverse effects of their dissatisfaction with the education and research system of the country (13). Several variables affect job satisfaction, the most important of which are organizational, environmental, and individual factors and the nature of the occupation (14).

Higher education comprises of the three main components, including the curriculum, educational environment, and faculty members, who play a key role in the development of the two other components (15). Considering the position of faculty members and their prominent role in the improvement of policymaking, reviewing the opinions and perspectives of faculty members is beneficial as the provision of educational services below expectations consistently reduces the credibility of the providers and diminishes their trust (16).

Descriptive data on the status and satisfaction of faculty members as the most important stakeholders within an organization are essential to the constructive changes in an organization with an educational structure; such examples are the improvement of the positive factors and correction of the negative factors affecting the efficiency of organizational activities, thereby optimizing achieving goals. As such, numerous studies have been focused on the satisfaction of the students and staff of medical universities, as well as the job satisfaction of the faculty members. However, no data are available regarding the job satisfaction of the academic members of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences.

2. Objectives

The present study aimed to investigate the satisfaction of the professors of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences with the executive processes and performance of the medical school units.

3. Methods

This cross-sectional, descriptive study was conducted at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Iran on the faculty members of the clinical and basic sciences educational departments, who were selected via convenience sampling based on the Cochran's formula (d = 0.05). In total, 55 basic sciences faculty members and 132 clinical sciences faculty members were enrolled in the study.

Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire based on the previous studies (1, 3, 4, 17, 18), which consisted of two sections. The first section included the demographic data, and the second section measured the satisfaction of the faculty members with the executive processes and performance of various medical education units through 116 items in the form of six questionnaires. Satisfaction with the executive processes and functions of the educational, research, and office of financial services was assessed by 24 items each. The service and audiovisual units were evaluated with eight and 12 separate items, respectively.

The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed based on the opinions of several management professors and experts. To confirm the reliability, a questionnaire was used in a trial run and completed by some of the faculty members twice at a 10-day interval, and the reliability was confirmed at the Cronbach's alpha of approximately 0.85. The items in the questionnaire were scored based on a five-point Likert scale (Completely Undesirable = 1, Undesirable = 2, Moderately Desirable = 3, Desirable = 4, Totally Desirable = 5). The minimum and maximum scores of the questionnaire were 116 and 580, respectively.

Data analysis was performed in SPSS version 16, and the data were described using frequency distribution tables

in terms of number, percentage, numerical indices, mean, and standard deviation. In addition, *t*-test and chi-square were used for data analysis.

4. Results

In total, 187 academic professors were enrolled in the study, including 55 basic sciences (17 females, 34 males) and 132 clinical sciences professors (45 females, 88 males), with the ratio of 2.5-fold of the clinical sciences faculty members to the basic sciences faculty members, which was proportional to the number of the professors in the medical schools. Notably, 65.24% of the faculty members were male. The mean age of the professors was 42.84 ± 5.52 years (range: 30 - 60 years), and the mean work experience was 10 years (range: 1 - 30 years). The academic ranks included assistant professor (65.8%), associate professor (27.3%), professor (3.7%), and instructor (1.2%). The employment status was mostly formal and formal-experiential (45.6%; n = 85), while 34.6% of the faculty members had college or university management experience, and 28.9% had department management experience.

Although the overall satisfaction was generally favorable, the research unit received the highest score in this regard, while the service unit had the lowest score (Table 1). Based on demographic characteristics, satisfaction was observed to be higher in the faculty members of basic sciences, female faculty members, and associate professors (Table 2).

Table 1. Satisfaction of Faculty Members of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences with Executive Processes and Performance of Medical School Units

Units	Mean ± SD (1 - 5)	Rank
Research Unit	4.05 ± 0.61	1
Education Unit	3.99 ± 0.71	2
Official Services	3.74 ± 0.68	3
Financial Affairs	3.66 ± 0.79	4
Audiovisual Field	3.47 ± 0.76	5
Service Affairs	3.38 ± 0.79	6
Total	3.73 ± 0.59	-

In the field of education, satisfaction was higher in the professors of basic sciences, female faculty members, and professors without department management experience, while it was not considered significant. Furthermore, the faculty members with more university/college management experience had higher satisfaction, and the difference in this regard was considered significant (P = 0.008). A significant difference was also observed in the satisfaction of the instructors with the faculty member and number of the professors.

Table 2. Satisfaction of Faculty Members of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences with Executive Processes and Performance of Medical School Units Based on Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Mean ± SD (1 - 5)
Faculty members of departments	
Basic sciences	3.80 ± 0.64
Clinical sciences	3.68 ± 0.56
Gender	
Male	3.69 ± 0.54
Female	3.81 ± 0.73
Academic rank	
Assistant Prof.	3.69 ± 0.60
Associate Prof.	3.92 ± 0.55
Professor	3.64 ± 0.17
Instructor	3.45 ± 0.61
University management experience	
Yes	3.77 ± 0.56
No	3.80 ± 0.69
Department management experience	
Yes	3.66 ± 0.62
No	3.83 ± 0.66
Total	3.99 ± 0.71

In the research area, satisfaction was higher in the professors of basic sciences, male professors, and the faculty members without management experience, while it was not considered significant. On the other hand, satisfaction significantly increased from the instructors to the associate professors (P<0.05), and a significant difference was observed between the professors with more management experience at the school or university level (P = 0.02).

In the administrative field, satisfaction was higher in the professors of basic sciences, male faculty members, and those without management experience, while it was not considered significant. In addition, satisfaction significantly increased with academic rank of the instructors to the associate professors (P<0.05).

In the field of finance, satisfaction was higher in the professors of basic sciences, female professors, and the faculty members without management experience, while it was not considered significant. According to the findings of the current research, the assistant professors had the lowest satisfaction in this area, and their difference with the associate professors was considered significant (P < 0.05). In the scope of services, satisfaction was higher in

the professors of basic sciences, female professors, and faculty members without management experience, while it was not considered significant. In this regard, satisfaction increased from the academic rank of assistant professors to the professors, while the difference was not considered significant.

In the audiovisual field, satisfaction was higher in the professors of basic sciences, female faculty members, and those without management experience, while it was not considered significant. In this domain, the associate professors had the highest satisfaction level, while the difference was not considered significant (Table 3).

5. Discussion

In the present study, the mean overall satisfaction in all the executive affairs was 3.73 $\pm$ 0.59, which was considered favorable regarding the performance of the executive departments of the schools of medicine (score 4). Satisfaction was higher in the research and education fields, while it was comparatively lower in the visual and service domains albeit relatively desirable. Overall, the professors of basic sciences were more satisfied compared to the clinical professors. The faculty members with prior management experience were also more satisfied compared to those without such experience at the college or university level. Furthermore, the academic rank contributed to the satisfaction of the participants, so that the associate professors would be more satisfied.

Most of the studies regarding the satisfaction of university professors have been focused on job satisfaction, while others have only addressed their views regarding faculty promotion and teaching/research issues. Some studies regarding satisfaction with the performance of various university units have only assessed the viewpoints of students, and no similar studies could be found to explain the satisfaction of different units of a college from the perspective of the faculty members.

The results obtained by Siadat et al. regarding the satisfaction of graduate students and professors with the performance of educational service management showed that the postgraduate professors and students were satisfied with none of the four domains of educational performance, administration, accountability quality, and management guidance/supervision. In the mentioned study, the participants were not satisfied with the university education services (1), which is inconsistent with the results of the present study. The discrepancy could be due to the differences in type of the surveys and time of the studies as many services are currently electronic, which accelerate service delivery and reduce the frequency of the required referrals.

Another research in this regard was conducted by Haresabadi and Bibak in North Khorasan University of Medical Sciences (Iran) to evaluate the quality gap of educational services, and the findings were indicative of significant differences between the status of the students and desirable educational services in the five dimensions of assurance, accountability, empathy, assurance, and physical and tangible dimensions. In the mentioned study, the majority of the students believed that there was a negative quality gap (19), which is inconsistent with the current research since the mentioned study was focused on the students, only measuring educational services, while we measured all the provided services to the faculty members.

The results of the study by Mohammadian and Khanbabazadeh regarding the satisfaction of students with the performance of various units of Ardabil University of Medical Sciences (Iran) indicated that none of the units achieved higher scores than the average, while the two units of faculty education and educational management of students achieved an average score (6). In the present study, all the units scored above average although the expectations of the faculty members differed from the students.

According to the findings of Ghalavandi et al. regarding the quality of the educational services at Urmia University of Medical Science (Iran) using the SERVQUAL questionnaire, the expectations of postgraduate students were far beyond their understanding of the existing status in the dimensions of service quality, remaining unmet (20); in the current research, some of the items achieved a desirable score.

Similarly, Haghdoost et al. evaluated the satisfaction of the postgraduate students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences (Iran) with the educational services and facilities, and the obtained results showed that the students were less satisfied with the current situation, and the efforts of the university authorities to improve their satisfaction was reported to be inadequate (17); however, our findings indicated that the provided services were effective in increasing the satisfaction of the faculty members.

One of the limitations of the present study was the lack of cooperation on behalf of some of the faculty members in completing the questionnaires.

5.1. Conclusion

Considering that the programs and processes are interoperable in the university system and structure of various departments, improving the quality of the services depends on the recognition of the problems and shortcomings from the perspective of the target groups. According to the results, the satisfaction of the faculty members

Table 3. Satisfaction of Faculty Members of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences with Executive Processes and Performance of Medical School Units in Different Fields

Demographic Characteristics	Audiovisual	Service Affairs	Financial Affairs	Official Services	Research Unit	Education Unit
Faculty member						
Basic sciences	3.59 ± 0.76	3.83 ± 0.75	3.73 ± 1.04	3.83 ± 0.75	4.18 ± 0.67	4.02 ± 0.76
Clinical sciences	3.40 ± 0.77	3.71 ± 0.66	3.63 ± 0.67	3.71 ± 0.66	4 ± 0.59	3.98 ± 0.7
Gender						
Male	3.41 ± 0.76	3.75 ± 0.62	3.61 ± 0.8	3.75 ± 0.62	4.06 ± 0.55	3.98 ± 0.73
Female	3.66 ± 079	3.73 ± 0.86	3.80 ± 0.8	3.73 ± 0.86	4.04 ± 0.75	4.03 ± 0.7
Academic rank						
Instructor	3.29 ± 1.12	3.40 ± 0.47	3.82 ± 0.88	3.40 ± 0.47	3.88 ± 0.82	3.93 ± 0.71
Assistant Prof.	3.47 ± 0.77	3.70 ± 0.71	3.59 ± 0.82	3.70 ± 0.71	4.01 ± 0.6	4.31 ± 0.53
Associate Prof.	3.53 ± 0.77	3.99 ± 0.56	3.89 ± 0.7	3.99 ± 0.56	4.26 ± 0.61	4.37 ± 0.65
Professor	3.33 ± 0.87	3.77 ± 0.6	3.90 ± 0.61	3.77 ± 0.6	3.86 ± 0.26	2.87 ± 0.56
University management experience						
Positive	3.37 ± 0.85	3.80 ± 0.64	3.67 ± 0.84	3.80 ± 0.64	4.24 ± 0.44	4.29 ± 0.52
Negative	3.62 ± 0.78	3.76 ± 0.83	3.79 ± 0.89	3.76 ± 0.83	3.98 ± 0.73	3.96 ± 0.77
Department management experience						
Positive	3.46 ± 0.66	3.75 ± 0.67	3.67 ± 0.7	3.75 ± 0.67	3.97 ± 0.66	4.02 ± 0.68
Negative	3.56 ± 0.95	3.83 ± 0.82	3.70 ± 1.0	3.83 ± 0.82	4.12 ± 0.57	4.16 ± 0.71
Total	3.38 ± 0.79	3.74 ± 0.68	3.66 ± 0.79	3.74 ± 0.68	4.05 ± 0.61	3.99 ± 0.71

was favorable with the performance of the educational, research, and administrative-financial service units of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, while in some units, further research may be required to identify and resolve these issues.

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Footnotes

Authors' Contribution: Study concept and design: Mohammadrasool Khazaei; analysis and interpretation of data: Elham Niroumand and Sara Hossaini; drafting of the manuscript: Mazafar Khazaei; statistical analysis: Mohammadrasool Khazaei

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