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FEATURE

**Job Security and Satisfaction Experiences
of Former Working Students Turned
Employees of a Private University**

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Abstract. *Continued gainful employment is a highly desirable goal for a university graduate. For working students to land jobs in their universities on graduation, is a package with not only the attraction of continuity but other benefits that deserve analysis and understanding. In this single case study, the factors that promote feelings of job security and satisfaction among staff who were working students in various parts of a private university in Cebu City, Philippines, are explored. Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory is used as the framework for analyzing the data from the study. Codes, categories and themes are identified from the transcripts of the individual interviews and focus group discussions. In general, the tangible and intangible conditions made the participants stay in the university for ten years or more. The research findings and recommendations serve as the basis for a plan of the Human Resource Department of the university.*

Keywords: job security, job satisfaction, university employees, working students, Central Visayas, Philippines, Southeast Asia, case study

Introduction

Completing a college degree and finding a stable job after graduation is the aspiration of most parents in the Philippines for their children. Even before the implementation of free college education in the state colleges and universities in

the Philippines to qualified and deserving students in the school year 2018-2019, the private universities and colleges across the country dominated in the delivery of college education. However, high tuition fees and school maintenance costs remained the significant barriers for many Filipinos to pursue higher education. As a way of helping those individuals aiming for a college degree who are financially incapable, the colleges and universities in the country began to offer work scholarships to candidates who are qualified for admission into a college degree program. Such a scenario became the origin of the term “working students” for the resultant category of students who work instead of the tuition fee they cannot afford plus some monetary benefits to defray other expenses.

After graduation, the former working students have to find regular employment with better pay and working conditions. Although many of them landed jobs in the colleges or universities in which they studied and worked, their employment was sometimes temporary. However, some of these individuals stayed in such jobs for over ten years. Whether the experience of job satisfaction, job security, or employment stability accounts for the tendency of this category of workers to keep their jobs in the colleges or universities for such prolonged periods constitutes some of the questions which the researcher set out to find answers.

In the global perspective, job satisfaction and job security are strictly related aspects that are directly influenced by employment stability (Wilczyńska, Batorski, & Sellens, 2016). As explained by Islam and Saha (2016), exposing employees to better facilities and a supportive work environment manifest higher levels of job satisfaction. The essential aspects that ensure job satisfaction include salary, work efficiency, fringe benefits, supervision, and relationship among co-workers. Meanwhile, Muindi, Muindi, and K’Obonyo (2015) advanced that employees’ job satisfaction and competencies are essential aspects of assessing work performance in an organization. Both elements must go hand-in-hand for an organization to achieve its goals.

The categories of organizational commitment include affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Furthermore, significant predictors of affective commitment include cognitive trust, type of managers, excellent communication among colleagues, work structure, gender, and work environment. Significant predictors of continuance commitment include income, cognitive trust, work structure, and other opportunities. Moreover, significant predictors for normative commitment comprise cognitive trust, promotion, type of managers, work structure, educational attainment, emotional confidence, and gender (Tekingündüz, Top, Tengilimoğlu, & Karabulut, 2017). Employers are encouraged to monitor the work-life balance of their employees, for it is closely related to organizational pride and employee satisfaction (Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent, & Alegre, 2016). The productivity of a company is profoundly affected by the employees’ job security and job satisfaction. Appropriate measures

adequately targeted would yield positive results (Imran, Majeed, & Ayub, 2015) in the workforce and the goal of the organization.

In Cebu City (the capital of the Province of Cebu, which is in Central Philippines), there is a higher education institution identified as the University of Cebu, which employs a good number of former working students. In this study, the term former working students turned university employees refers to regular employees of the university who used to be students and were working at the same time in the university in exchange for free tuition and a modest monthly allowance. These former working students turned employees are working in this particular university of the study either as a faculty member, program chairs/coordinators, or office staff in various colleges/departments. A good number of this category of workers has been working in the university for more than ten years. This scenario caught the attention of the leading researcher considering the presence of such employees as an extreme manifestation of transforming the lives of those who lack the financial capacity to obtain a college education although eager to gain one. Such an indication is the fulfillment of the vision statement of the university in giving hope and transforming lives.

A visiting accreditor asked me (the leading researcher) if there had been a study conducted on this matter. Since there had been none, she encouraged me and reinforced my intention to conduct a study on the phenomenon. After that encounter, the idea of doing in-depth research on the experiences of these former working students turned employees of the university never faded in my mind. It took me some months to observe carefully but directly the day-to-day activities of some employees who were former working students of the university. It became clear that their employment in the university is far from a perfect condition, but I could feel the sense of contentment in what they do. This observation led me to the idea of exploring further the thoughts on job security and the satisfaction of this group of employees. Upon narrowing down, I focused on the experiences of those individuals who had worked for ten years or more in the university. Such length of service would strongly manifest their feeling of being secure and satisfied with their employment. To carry out the study, I asked three other personnel in the university who possess a certain degree of expertise in planning, personnel administration, and conducting qualitative research to collaborate with me.

Searches of the online resources, university records, and research collections revealed that there seems to be no study conducted on job security and satisfaction among university employees who used to be working students and had stayed in their employment for more than ten years. However, there are literature studies on job satisfaction and job security among employees in general (Bakr, Jarrar, Abumadani, Al Sultan, & Larbi, 2019; Kambayashi & Kato, 2017; Wilczyńska et al., 2016). Hence, this scenario prompted me (the leading researcher) together with my three collaborators to conduct this study to fill the gap in the literature and

eventually give voice to the participants of the study to share their experiences with a broader perspective.

Specifically, this single case study delved into the precise conditions responsible for the continued employment of a group of former working students turned employees of the University of Cebu in Cebu City, Philippines. Considering that these employees had been working in the university for more than ten years, the study looked into the participants' feelings of being former working students turned employees of the university, their job security and satisfaction, and their reasons for staying on their job for 10 years and beyond. Herzberg's two-factor theory served as the guiding principle in understanding the experiences of the participants. Furthermore, the revelations from this study can be a paradigm for other institutions of higher learning in setting up a program for needy but deserving college entrants to complete a college degree and open opportunities for future employment within the university and in the industrial sector.

Review of the Literature

This review of the literature was conducted to gain background knowledge, which is needed in the understanding of the voices of the participants as they revealed their experiences in one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. The review of literature includes the topic of being a former working student employee, choosing to stay in one's job, and job security and satisfaction among employees.

On Being a Former Working Student

Former working students who find a job outside of the university have some degree of advantage from others. Students who used to work in universities indicate positive results in their academic performance than those who work outside the university. They attributed their competence, and positive attitudes in their present work to their training and experiences gained as working students in the university (Fede, Gorman, & Cimini, 2018).

Looking closely at the experiences of working-class students, Crozier, Reay, and Clayton (2019) explained that most working-class students underwent emotional struggles to gain recognition from their peers. Despite all the challenges they encountered, they became resilient and courageous enough to face challenges in life. As a result, working-class students have high chances of achieving high academic performance and eventually complete a college degree. Also, Thiele, Pope, Singleton, Snape, and Stanistreet (2017) revealed that family background characteristics and schooling are sources of disadvantage for some working-class students. However, the adverse effect of the identified factors has a significant influence on this group of individuals to engage better academically and motivates them to overcome challenges.

Meanwhile, Cheng and Alcántara (2007) enumerated the benefits of working outside of the university while attending school. These benefits include financial gain, sense of financial independence, job-searching skills, awareness of the job market, access to the realities outside the school premises, social skills in the workplace, disciplining one's self, better time management, shaping academic and career interests, and enhanced self-confidence. Although they explained that student employment is sacrificing one's time socializing among peers, the social skills and competencies learned by working students in the workplace are more helpful in preparing themselves for their future careers.

Choosing to Stay in One's Job

A harmonious working environment and consistent management decisions are aspects that promote a high retention rate among productive employees. Proper motivation among employees is essential to enhance their job satisfaction. In other words, satisfied workers are productive workers, and they will want to stay and work for the success of the organization (Idiegbeyan-Ose, Aregbesola, & Owolabi, 2019).

Lu, Liu, and Zhao (2017) explained that employees usually engage in territorial behavior in the workplace. This behavior refers to employees' manifestation of being motivated in establishing and maintaining territories to things which they perceived they owned. Such engagement enhances employees' attachment to their work, increases one's motivation, and reduces one's intention to quit. Furthermore, the harmonious relationship among employees can strengthen the bond among co-workers and the entire organization. Aside from mutual support, trust, understanding, and perspective-taking to one another, employees bind and commit themselves together toward a common goal, which is beneficial for the organization.

Furthermore, strong resilience among employees helps decrease one's intention to quit but increases the motivation to engage more. The excellent working environment promotes harmonious interaction between employees and managers, which reduced the chances of conflicts and misunderstandings (Dai, Zhuang, & Huan, 2019). Meanwhile, autonomy satisfaction is essential in motivating good employees to engage positively and prevent them from leaving their job. On the contrary, containing any employee to express himself or herself according to his or her role in the organization will increase the chances to quit (Rothmann & Fouché, 2018).

Job Security and Satisfaction among Employees

Job security is a feeling of assurance for an employee for continued employment. In the case of a group of employees in Germany, job security is adversely affected by rising labor market demands but cushioned by training and

educational qualifications (Krause, Obschonka, & Silbereisen, 2018). Whereas in a group of private-sector employees in China, a higher level of trust in management and job security resulted in a favorable employee-employer relationship. As a consequence, it enhances employee productivity (Newman, Cooper, Holland, Miao, & Teicher, 2019). Furthermore, performance-based dismissal barriers influence higher employee productivity and long-term employee-employer relationship (Charness, Cobo-Reyes, Jiménez, Lacomba, & Lagos, 2017). Dismissal barriers may include tenure, union-negotiated provision, the time it takes to process dismissal due to legal requirements, and the cost associated with dismissing an employee. Additionally, unwillingness to confront employees, emotional damage to the immediate head, and lack of training in performance evaluation by the supervisor are possible barriers too (Grauf, 2015).

Job satisfaction is a feeling of fulfillment or enjoyment in one's job. In the case of young faculty members in universities in Turkey, Cerci and Dumludag (2019), revealed that university faculty's life satisfaction and overall job satisfaction were strongly correlated with mobbing, time for research, formal and informal pressure and individual job security. Moreover, there is a significant difference in overall job satisfaction among male and female employees. They reveal further that employees' low income at present negatively influences their satisfaction while having a higher income in the future indicates a positive impact on their achievement. On the other hand, workplace supports positively influence job satisfaction among academic staff in Malaysia. As manifested by this group of employees, they are sufficiently motivated to work hard because of the company/management support they received (Ebrahim, Mustapa, Mustakim, Mokhtar, & Sauid, 2019). In a medical college in Saudi Arabia, faculty and teaching staff showed a higher level of overall job satisfaction. This positive manifestation of job satisfaction is the result of supportive leadership and a harmonious working environment (Bakr, Jarrar, Abumadani, Al Sultan, & Larbi, 2019).

The literature review shows the positive impact of the working students' experiences and training in their job outside of the university. On the staying in one's position, job security, and satisfaction among employees, there seems to be no study conducted about job security and satisfaction of university employees who were former working students in the same institution. Hence, the researchers gained the interest of giving voice to a particular group of former working students turned employees of a private university in Cebu City, Philippines.

Theoretical Framework

The experiences of the participants were analyzed and interpreted based on the principles of Herzberg's (2003) two-factor theory, which describes the differences between motivation and hygiene factors that relate to a person's job satisfaction. As advanced by this theory, there are aspects in one's job that would result in

satisfaction. Likewise, there are other aspects of one's job that prevent dissatisfaction. The motivation aspects of the theory cover the following: recognition, sense of achievement, growth and promotional opportunities, responsibility, and meaningfulness of work. Meanwhile, the hygiene aspects of the theory include fringe benefits, company and administrative policies, working environment, the status of the employee, interpersonal relationship, and job security (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Research Questions

To explore the experiences of the participants, the following are the research questions:

1. How does it feel to be a working student turned employee of a university?
2. What made the participants feel secured and satisfied with their present jobs?
3. Why do participants choose to stay in their respective jobs at the university?

Methodology

This section deals with the research design and the setting of the study. It also shows the sampling used, the data collection procedure, and data analysis. Furthermore, it presents the ethical considerations and the researchers' reflexivity.

Research Design

This qualitative study utilized the single case study research design in exploring the experiences of selected faculty and non-teaching employees of a university who were former working students and have served for ten years or more. Furthermore, this study is a single case in nature, considering that the researchers are focusing their attention on the experiences of a group of employees who used to be working students in a private university and have served for more than ten years. A single case study is the appropriate qualitative research design when studying a specific group or a single group of people, such as the group of former working students turned employees in a private university.

Research Setting

The researchers conducted the study at the main campus of the University of Cebu in Cebu City, Philippines. This particular university has other school campuses situated in strategic locations in Cebu City and Mandaue City. The site of the main campus is near Colon Street (the oldest street in the Philippines) and

other historical landmarks of the city. The university has been serving the people of Cebu and surrounding provinces for more than fifty years already. To note, it started from its humble beginning and strived over the years to achieve its present status. This particular institution of higher learning aimed to provide a quality education that is affordable for the general populace. In its vision statement, a phrase tells about the university's desire to give hope and transform for the better the lives of its students regardless of their economic status.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study were all former working students turned employees of the university, which were selected purposively to gather salient information. To Creswell and Poth (2018), purposive sampling is appropriate in selecting participants for a study to elicit a clear understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. For the individual interview, two college teachers, one junior high school teacher, and two non-teaching staff underwent the process. Furthermore, The researchers utilized two focus groups in triangulating the responses from the one-on-one interview. In the first focus group, four junior high school teachers were involved. In the second focus group, two non-teaching staff and two department heads were involved. Triangulation is employed in this study to come up with a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Wa-Mbaleka, 2017) by using multiple sources/participants (Patton, 1999) to analyze various situations to form a vivid picture of the phenomenon.

Data Collection

In collecting the data from the participants of this study, the leading researcher employed separate interview sessions and focus group discussions. English and Cebuano languages were the media of the one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. The participants were encouraged to speak in Cebuano or mixed with English, whichever they were comfortable in, for them to expound better their views on the research topic. To note, Cebuano is the spoken language of the whole province of Cebu and surrounding provinces. The mixture of English and Cebuano conversation is observable among the residents.

The researchers pre-scheduled the interview sessions and focus group for the convenience of the participants. The researchers used a semi-structured interview guide to gather the data from the participants. Before the actual interview session, the interview guide was presented to two qualitative researchers in the university, who held doctoral degrees and administrative functions, to review and provide suggestions to enhance its contents. Subsequently, the recommendations of these researchers were the basis in finalizing the contents of the interview guide.

After collecting the data, the researchers transcribed the interviews of focus group discussions. Afterward, the researchers conducted the coding and recoding

of data to form categories, then grouped further to create the final themes. The researchers used DocTools in coding and extracting the statements from the participants. DocTools is a freeware add-in application for word applications and downloadable from the World Wide Web. Videos on how to use DocTools in coding and extracting statements for qualitative research are available on YouTube.

The transcripts of interviews are in mixed languages (English and Cebuano). The researchers presented the transcript to the participants for comments and validation of its content. Since the transcripts were in mixed languages, the researchers translated only those statements in Cebuano into English, which are useful in supporting the themes for the benefit of non-Cebuano speakers. Hence, back translations were done to respective participants to check the accuracy of the translations.

Data Analysis

Since this study is qualitative, the researcher had to search the transcript of the individual interviews and focus group discussions for the significant statements. These meaningful statements would describe the participants' feeling of being working students turned employees. Likewise, it would reveal the participants' sense of being secure and satisfied in their jobs and the underlying reasons for staying in one's job for more than ten years. Furthermore, since the researchers employed a single case study research design, the researchers had to look for the context of the participants' revelation about the research questions in this study. The description of categories was carefully made to reveal common ideas found in various statements of the participants. After several coding stages, the researchers generated several sub-themes that were regrouped further to form the final themes.

Ethical Considerations

Before the actual gathering of data, a letter was sent to the school administrator asking permission to conduct the study. After getting the approval, the primary researcher approached the identified former working students turned employees and invited them to become one of the participants of the study. The principal researcher explained to the participants what the research is all about, and they were enthusiastic and willing to participate. However, some of the prospective participants declined due to time constraints. A schedule for the one-on-one interviews and focus group discussion was set-up for those who were available. Upon their arrival at the venue of their respective schedules, the researchers asked the participants to sign the consent forms. The principal researcher had explained to the participants the confidentiality of their identity.

Furthermore, the principal researchers explained to the participants the non-existence of any compensation or benefits arising from the study. Moreover, the researchers explained to them that they could withdraw their consent anytime

within the duration of the study. To signify their willingness to participate in the study, they signed the prepared consent forms.

Researchers' Reflexivity

The leading researcher of this study is someone new to qualitative research. His background knowledge and skill in conducting qualitative research may affect the quality of analyzing the information gathered from the participants. Also, his personal experiences as a former working student, who landed a job in the same university after working for 11 years in other private companies, may affect the analysis of data. However, his co-researchers serve as counterweights for any biases that may arise, considering that they graduated from other universities and were not a working student when they were in college. The primary researcher served as a facilitator for his co-researchers in extracting the significant statements during the coding process until the development of the final themes. Such a process helped the principal researcher detached himself from his biases.

Results

The researchers of this study underwent several stages of coding and recoding. The succeeding sections present the themes in the following order: (a) the feeling of being happy and grateful, (b) job security is an outcome of one's work attitude and company attributes, (c) sense of achievement and professional growth translate to job satisfaction, (d) job satisfaction is not absolute and (e) tangible and intangible conditions encourage employees to stay. Theme 1 answers Research Question 1 about how it feels to be a working student turned employee in a university; themes 2, 3 and 4 address Research Question 2 about what made the participants feel secure and satisfied with their present jobs; and theme 5 responds to Research Question 3 about why participants choose to continue to work in the university.

Theme 1: The Feeling of Being Happy and Grateful

The feelings of being happy and grateful are the collective manifestation of the participants of the study. This set of feelings may not be completely present in other employees who are not former working students of the university. On the part of the participants, being happy and grateful is the combined outcome of the privileges, opportunities, and recognition they received from the institution as working students and eventually as employees for more than ten years.

Being happy. The participants felt overwhelming happiness on the day when they were accepted as a working student at the university, considering that there were so many applicants. That opportunity paved their way to attain a college degree; thus, they have a better life in the present. The happiness of the participants

was also manifested when they were hired right after graduation from college. Such an event is a recognition of their capabilities and experiences during their term of service. In the interview, participant 1 explained how happy and privileged she was for the opportunity she received from the university as she said,

I am privileged to be chosen as a working student since there were many applicants. My family could not afford to send me to college; that is why I am happy for the opportunity to continue with my education until I graduated and became one of the employees.

On the part of participant 2, she was so happy when she was hired immediately after graduation, for it was a rare opportunity for a person like her to be given such recognition for her work capabilities. She narrated,

I am happy and amazed because it is seldom for a working student to be taken in immediately as an employee of this school. It is because the school recognized my capabilities and experiences during my term of service.

Being grateful. Gratefulness is always in the minds and hearts of the participants. Although their working condition is not perfect for others, they feel comfortable with what they have as they tried their best to be a good employee in their day-to-day activities in the university. Their feeling of being grateful is their priceless manifestation of recognizing the university's contribution to their transformation from a mere high school graduate to an employed professional. Participant 8 shared her feeling about the help she received from the school in the past and her way of returning the favor she received. She said,

I find myself fulfilled and grateful for the help that the school has given in the past. I am returning the favor the school gave me by not being late and not being absent in my work.

Moreover, participant 10 revealed how grateful and proud she is and her feeling of being at home while at work as she said,

I am grateful to the school and proud of myself to be asked to work after graduation as a telephone operator in the university president's office and later on as a high school teacher. I feel at home serving the school and being able to earn my salary and benefits.

Furthermore, participant 13 explained her feelings about her job over the previous one. She narrated her gratefulness for the opportunity she received from the university. She said,

I am grateful to have been offered a job to teach at the university. . . . I am proud that my sacrifices paid off. I stayed in my present job to give back to the university the grant of education, and I encourage the working students in the university to do their best they can. Whenever I see the university president, I feel grateful to him for giving me the opportunity to attend school.

The revelations of the participants established the positive impact of being a working student on one's employment opportunities. As experienced by these individuals, their competencies honed over the years as working students paved their way to be employed in the university. This scenario is supported by (Fede et al., 2018) when they said that former working students enjoy some degree of advantage in finding jobs because of the competencies and positive work attitudes gained from their experiences at work. On the part of the participants, the opportunity of earning their respective college degrees and eventually hired for a job in the university makes them happy and proud of their achievement.

Theme 2: Job Security is an Outcome of One's Work Attitude and Company Attributes

Being secure in one's job is very important in the labor sector. However, it entails various aspects, depending on the situation. For the participants of this study, the sense of being secure in their job is based on work attitude, adequacy of compensation, company benefits, support from the administration, and stability of the institution.

Work attitude. The conscious effort of the participants to be diligent and dedicated in their work is their response to the employer's assurance that they will not be removed from their job as long as they do their tasks properly. There are retired employees who are re-hired and are still working productively in the university. Hence, a positive work attitude is an attribute they kept in mind to maintain their job. Participant 4 explained,

I feel secure in my job since I know that the university will not abandon me as long as I do not violate its rules, and I perform my work well. I have co-workers who have been faithful in their work and have been rehired after retirement.

Adequacy of compensation and company benefits. Adequacy of compensation, as meant by the participants, does not mean that they could buy everything they need. What they are referring to is that the compensation they received from the university made them able to finance their essential and immediate needs. Moreover, the company benefits extended by the university to the employees are highly appreciated by the participants because they go beyond what is mandated by law. The most prominent benefit acknowledged by participants is the tuition fee discount for their children and health insurance. The tuition fee discount and the staggered manner of paying the remaining amount through salary deductions made the participants feel secure in preparing the future of their children through education. Participant 10 narrated,

I cannot deny that salary is important for me. In terms of salary offered, the rates offered by the university are comparable to other universities in the city. Aside from the growing population of enrollees in the university that makes it stable and secure, I feel secure about the education of my three children since the university is giving tuition fee discounts to employees' children.

Support from the administration. A variety of support from the administration is readily available. The one that was highlighted in the study is the support for professional growth among employees. A good number of them had received financial assistance and completed their master's degrees through the Graduate School Financial Assistance Program of the university. Moreover, the administration's support extends to other professional training, which is necessary for employees to perform their tasks effectively. By having the required credentials, the participants feel the sense of being highly qualified for their respective jobs. Thus, they would say that they are confident enough to maintain their employment. Participant 12 shared her experience,

I am an IT graduate teaching in Basic Education. The university gave me the opportunity to grow in terms of obtaining the needed certification to teach specialized courses, education units, and a teacher's license as required to teach in junior high school. I strive for excellence. Now I know my path where I am going. Hence, I feel secure with my job.

Moreover, diligence, obedience, and dedication to one's work are the qualities that must be manifested by the employee to gain the attention and support of the administration. Participant 11 stated,

As long as an employee is diligent, obedient, and dedicated to his/her work, he/she would get the support of the administration. It makes me feel secure in my job.

The support of the administration to the professional growth of the employees led the participants to feel secure in their job. As explained by Krause et al. (2018), the feeling of being secure to one's job refers to the assurance for continued employment. Although job security is prone to the adverse effect of rising labor market demands, the educational qualifications and professional training of the employees would be their safety nets.

Stability of the institution. The institutional stability is an essential aspect for the employees to feel the security of their employment. The ever-increasing number of enrollees makes the university stable. In fact, from its humble beginning of a four-story building, the university has four campuses already. This manifestation of institutional growth made the participants feel secure with their job. In other words, the participants have the confidence that their employment will not be terminated quickly as long as the institution is doing well financially. Participant 8 shared his thoughts, *"The university is growing, and it indicates financial stability."* Likewise, participant 9 said, *"The university is stable and secure...that makes me feel secure."* Lastly, participant 7 confided his observation and said, *"The university is stable. Hence, my employment is also stable. The university president promised that no one would lose his job during uncertain periods."*

As revealed in the study, job security is an outcome of the positive work behavior of the participants, coupled with the favorable attributes of the institution. The participants' feeling of being secure with their job is the result of the convergence of two complimenting sets of attributes, which is internal and external. The internal qualities refer to the participants' diligence, obedience, and dedication to their job. Meanwhile, the external attributes refer to adequate compensation, company benefits, supportive administration, and perceived company stability. In the day-to-day activities in the workplace, the conditions stated above influence the participants to serve the clients satisfactorily.

Theme 3: Sense of Achievement and Professional Growth Translate to Job Satisfaction

Being satisfied in one's job is essential for employees to continue in the jobs and minimize the chance of quitting. Various aspects can cause satisfaction to an employee, depending on the person and the nature of his/her work. According to Cerci and Dumludag (2019), an employee can feel satisfaction upon experiencing a sense of fulfillment or enjoyment of his or her career. In the case of the participants, the following aspects influence their sense of job satisfaction, namely: love for work, sense of fulfillment, adequate compensation, comfortable working environment, and professional growth. The impact of these aspects on job satisfaction varies from person to person depending upon the nature of their experiences.

Sense of achievement. As a human being, the participants of the study naturally have positive and negative thoughts about their job. They feel their job tiring already at some point, but the sense of fulfillment overpowers that feeling upon witnessing the favorable results of their labor. On the part of the teacher-participants of this study, they find joy and satisfaction when their students graduate or attain a milestone in the educational ladder. Moreover, the teacher-participants are delighted every time a former student acknowledged the contribution of the former to the latter's success. This simple act of gratitude from former students makes the participants feel satisfied with their job. Participant 1 explained her feelings,

I am satisfied with my work here in the school in spite of much chattering from some of my colleagues. Although I find my job tiring at some point, I am happy. I can feel a sense of fulfillment when I see my students graduate and realize that I am part of their transformation. I find joy when I meet them years later, and they greet me asking how I am doing, and recall how I handled them as a teacher with happy thoughts.

Meanwhile, participant P8 attributed her job satisfaction on the success of her young students for passing the National Certification on Computer Servicing. The chances of her students passing the said certification are dependent on her effort in teaching them well to the extent of compromising her health condition. However, she strived hard to recover and became more productive. She narrated,

I derive great satisfaction in teaching Grade 10 students to be NC II holders (this refers to the level 2 National Certification on computer skills) which other schools do not provide. My

students have a high passing rate for the said national certification. Due to my strong passion for teaching, my health condition was compromised. When I was sickly, the performance of my students declined. Now that I have recovered, I have become more productive.

For the non-teaching-participants, they experienced job satisfaction when they accomplish their day-to-day assignments and see their clients happy with their services. Participant 3 shared her thoughts, *“I am satisfied with my work, although there is a lot of paper works. I have to prioritize them and practice good time management”*. Likewise, participant 4 shared his source of job satisfaction and the way he viewed his work as he said,

There is a sense of job satisfaction when clients and students are happy with my services. That is why I prioritize my tasks and accomplish my work well. I feel satisfied with my job when I accomplish something related to my job.

Professional growth. There are instances that teachers are tasked to prepare lessons that are outside of their comfort zone. In this case, the teacher who was challenged to learn and apply new concepts and skills accomplished the task and yielded positive results. As such, the teacher expressed job satisfaction over the accomplishment. For participant 12, her assignment in preparing the lessons of the 2D animation classes for four grade levels required her dedication and passion for conducting research and studying the requirements of the new lessons. Her positive attitude towards her job and her desire to grow professionally led to her completing the assigned task and felt satisfied. She said,

For two years, I did all the preparations for the 2D animation classes from Grade 7 to Grade 10 when it was initially introduced in the Junior High School. I am happy and pleased by drawing forth the skills exhibited by my students. The teaching-learning process has helped me and my students grow and evolve.

Similarly, participant 13 shared her struggle, learning experiences, and satisfaction in doing something at work. She said,

It was a big struggle preparing for the offering of the 2D animation courses, including the Front Office Services courses. I did a lot of research on these courses to prepare myself and my co-teachers to teach these courses. I

learned from the experience, and I find it very satisfying when my students pass the national certification.

As revealed by the participants, the sense of achievement and professional growth plays a vital role in attaining job satisfaction. On the part of the teacher-participants, their satisfaction centers on their students' achievements, which is long term in nature. They felt greatly rewarded upon seeing their students graduate, pass the national certification, and expand their competencies. Meanwhile, the job satisfaction of the non-teaching participants centers on short term matters, which is to accomplish their tasks and satisfy their clients of the day. Although this group of participants draws their job satisfaction on short term matters, they find it rewarding and satisfying for continued gainful employment.

Theme 4: Job Satisfaction is Not Absolute

Although the participants have manifested satisfaction with their jobs, they have also expressed their struggles, which need to be addressed by the school administration. In this case, job satisfaction is not absolute but carries along with its specific conditions that need to be met. Job satisfaction has no boundaries, as new needs will arise. These needs refer mostly to the multimedia equipment the participants felt necessary for them to perform better in their daily activities. Although the university is trying its best to provide multimedia equipment as a teaching aid, it cannot be denied that everyone cannot use it simultaneously. Considering the high cost of acquiring such material, the university only provides a certain number of this equipment for teachers to take a turn in using them. As a result, those who were not able to use the material on his/her desired time have bad feelings.

Nevertheless, their desire to teach effectively never fades. On the other hand, the requisition process and provision of equipment on other campuses are more favorable than on the main campus, as observed by one of the participants. Hence, there is a need for the administration to revisit this aspect.

Provision of adequate teaching aids. On the part of the teacher-participants of the study, the use of multimedia in delivering the lesson is an effective way to gain the attention of their students and motivate them to learn effectively. Participant 9 expressed her desire to be provided with a projector as a teaching aid. She believes that using such kind of teaching tool will enhance the teaching-learning process. In her mind, she believes that she would be more effective if provided with such a device, as she said,

I teach Values (one of the courses in Junior High School). I am happy. I get support from my co-teachers and school principal. However, I and my co-teachers need DLPs as

a teaching tool to enable us to teach more effectively.

Moreover, Participant 11 explained that there are existing smart TVs and DLPs in the school, but the number of this equipment cannot accommodate all teachers. She said,

I am happy in teaching my Grade 7 students, but I wish that our classrooms shall be provided with smart TVs or DLPs as an additional tool for teaching because there are not enough available for the teachers to use.

Disappointment on the requisition process. Since the university has four campuses and managed by their respective campus administrators and department heads, variation in some processes exist. This variation catches the attention and causes the disappointment of participant 10, who happens to be a chairperson in one of the units in the university. Participant 10 expressed her disappointment over the process of requesting additional teaching equipment as compared to other campuses. She wished for consistent decision-making from the administration in providing instructional material. She said,

It takes so much time to requests additional equipment, unlike in other campuses. I hope for fair and consistent decision-making in allocating equipment and facilities. Nevertheless, I am happy with my work. For if not, I cannot work beyond office hours with a smile, especially when preparing for accreditation visits.

Among the participants, the teaching-participants have expressed job satisfaction together with their desire for improvements. As revealed by them, their expressed needs center on the provision of instructional tools that will make them more effective in delivering their lessons. Their desire to have adequate audio-visual equipment is intended to captivate the attention of their students and transform the teaching-learning process into a meaningful and productive classroom event. Likewise, the intention of the teacher-participants manifested their passion for teaching as they are willing to learn and adopt new strategies to deliver the lessons effectively.

Theme 5: Tangible and Intangible Conditions Encourage Employees to Stay

Staying in one's job for more than ten years is something interesting to investigate. In the case of the participants, they have been working in the university for more than ten years. Scouring the transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions, the participants attributed their continued stay in the university on

tangible and intangible conditions. The tangible conditions refer to adequate compensation and company benefits. Meanwhile, the intangible conditions apply to a harmonious employee-employer relationship and a home-like working environment.

Tangible conditions. Adequate compensation and company benefit matters among employees. These tangible conditions were the primary purpose of the participants to stay in their job. For them, the salary and benefits they received from the university enable them to sustain their daily needs as well as the needs of their immediate families. Hence, they stayed in their job for more than ten years. As revealed by participant 1, her thoughts on staying for 27 years without any plan to transfer to another post lies on her contentment on salary and benefits. She believes in the stability of the institution, and she is confident about the continuity of her employment. She said,

I am employed at the university for 27 years already. I think the benefits and the salary are just enough. I have observed that no school has gone bankrupt; meaning, the school is stable and so are we. I do not have any plans for finding another job elsewhere, and I did not even think about it before. I prefer to stay at least I have a job. Compared to some of my friends, I have a better job (thumbs up). When people ask where I work, I would see in their faces an expression of admiration when I say I'm teaching in this school.

Furthermore, participant 8 considered the health insurance benefits and the support from the administration as her reasons for staying in her job. The tangible support she received from the school administration during the time of her financial difficulty never ceased from her mind. Her experiences caused her to feel secure in her employment, which led her to stay in her job. She said,

My main reasons for staying with the school since the year 1996 are the health insurance and the support from the school administration provided to me. When I had a premature delivery of my first child, the university president himself extended his support during that time of financial difficulty.

Intangible conditions. There are non-material things enjoyed by the participants that lead them to stay in their job. Explicitly, the participants acknowledged the harmonious employee-employer relationship and home-like atmosphere contributed so much to their decision to stay in their job. The participants' encounter with the school owner and the generous act offered to them

made them loyal employees. Likewise, the home-like atmosphere among co-employees in their respective units or assignment made them feel the burden of their work lighter and comfortable. Participant 5 confided his experiences when the university hired him in 1969, retired in 2000, and re-hired as a part-time employee in 2010 onwards. His experiences manifest his excellent relationship with the owner of the school. He narrated,

I was employed right after graduation in 1969. I am happy. I am doing specialized work. Before that, I was a working student for three years (1966-1969) handling records related to the maritime program. I did not apply for the job, but my immediate head recommended me to the management for employment. I was immediately employed with regular status. I retired at the age of 60 in the year 2000 and re-hired in 2010 until now. The university president re-hired me to help me out with my wife who was undergoing dialysis. He made me feel important and needed. I continue to give importance to my job.

Similarly, participant 11 revealed the reasons for staying in her job for 32 years. Her revelation highlighted the generosity of the school owner when she delivered her first child. Her experience is a manifestation of the good employee-employer relationship, which led the participant to stay in her job. She narrated,

I have been employed in this school for 32 years already. I have remained in this school as I have established my work and my married life here since my husband also works at the university. The university president financially supported us during my firstborn delivery. Over the years, I have grown to love the school as it helped me in my financial difficulties.

Moreover, the participants' good working relationship among co-workers became one of the reasons for staying in their respective jobs. The home-like working environment is necessary for employees to perform their tasks effectively. As described by the participants, a home-like working environment refers to the feeling of being at home while at work. In this condition, the pressure is hardly felt; they can work beyond their paid working time, and still enjoy doing their job while serving their clients and interacting with co-employees. Participant 3 shared her observation about the ease and comfort in the workplace as she said, *"I feel at ease and comfortable with my co-workers. Our relationship and working environment make me feel secure."* Meanwhile, participant 4 said, *"I can work with ease, and*

there is no pressure. I put in more work without the need for overtime pay to get the work done especially during enrolment.” Also, participant 6 revealed her experiences in this aspect as she said, *“My co-workers and working space are okay. I enjoy my work serving the students, and I don’t have any problem as long as I am up to date with my work.”*

By looking at the experiences of the participants, tangible and intangible conditions naturally complement one another. The tangible conditions are their motivation to stay in the institution to provide the needs of their respective families. Meanwhile, the intangible conditions are their driving force, which animates their inner self to enjoy their jobs. The convergence of the tangible and intangible conditions motivates the participants to stay in their job.

Conclusion

Continued gainful employment is the ultimate goal of any graduate from a university. In any work, job security and satisfaction are the main concerns of every employee. In the case of these former working students turned employees, the hygiene aspects and motivational aspects advanced in Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation are present in the thinking of the participants. The hygiene aspects include compensation, company and administrative policies, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, status, interpersonal relationships, and job security. Meanwhile, the motivational issues include management recognition, sense of achievement, professional growth, sense of responsibility, and meaningfulness of the work (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Based on the testimonies of the participants, the tangible and intangible conditions made them stay in the university ten years or more. The tangible conditions (adequate compensation and company benefits) enabled the participants to support their respective families and provide education to their children. Meanwhile, the intangible conditions (harmonious employer-employee relationship and home-like environment) invigorate the participants’ inner self to perform their respective tasks effectively. Moreover, the personal background of the participants as former working students of the university influenced their feeling of a home-like working environment. Furthermore, the sense of being grateful for the opportunity to complete a college degree, for being hired as a regular employee, and for the generosity of the school owner in personal emergency cases added to their feelings of being secure and satisfied in their jobs.

Recommendations

Teachers and non-teaching staff play a vital role in fulfilling the mission of any educational institution in delivering quality education. As they strive hard to satisfy the needs of the students, they also have their own needs to be satisfied. Some individuals are capable of bringing forth their needs directly to the school administrators, but some would want to be silent or keep it at their level as if they are satisfied. Although the school administration is extending all possible support to the employees, some areas need to be revisited. The school administration may find ways to monitor the well-being of the employees through a functional feedback mechanism. Consistency and fairness in executing decisions would create a stable work environment. Such an initiative would encourage the employees to continue their employment and be more productive. Future research may explore the experiences of former working students turned employees in the university who have been employed for less than ten years. Furthermore, one may conduct qualitative studies on the experiences of school administrators in light of Herzberg's two-factor theory.

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