Job Satisfaction and Employee Creativity and Innovation for Student Affairs Practitioners

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Abstract

Student affairs and services play an important role in the success of educational institutions most especially in carrying out students' holistic development and as a support to academics in order to facilitate learning. The student affairs administrators and practitioners contribute a lot in ensuring the delivery of dynamic programs and services that are responsive to the needs of the students. Because of this, the student affairs practitioners are expected to be creative and innovative in the field in order to provide and assure the quality of programs and services that addresses the ever-changing needs of their clientele. This paper examined the relationship of job satisfaction and employee innovation and creativity among student affairs practitioners. The descriptive-correlational design was employed to describe the relationship between the variables. The data were collected using validated pre-existing survey instruments. The data gathered was analyzed using Chi-Square test of independence and Pearson product moment correlation. The methods confirmed that there is a strong relationship between the variables job satisfaction and employee innovation and creativity as perceived by the respondent student affairs practitioners.

Keywords: Employee Creativity, Employee Innovation, Job Satisfaction, Student Affairs, Student Services

Introduction

Student Affairs and Services plays a significant role in ensuring student development in various areas: from academic to personal, socio-cultural, and in some instances, even in areas of political participation and citizenship (UNESCO, 2002). In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education describes student affairs and services as the unit tasked to ensure that meaningful non-academic experiences and efficient services are abundantly available, to provide every student various opportunity for total development (CHED, 2013). Because of this, the student affairs practitioners are expected to be creative and innovative in the field in order to provide and assure the quality of programs and services that addresses the ever-changing needs of their clientele. The relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation of the administrators and employees working in the field of student affairs has been somewhat neglected or not given much attention. Student affairs administrators and practitioners are, most often than not, expected to have the ideal leadership and management skills in order to run the office. Their job satisfaction is a concern that is often times set aside and not considered in the field. The opportunity to innovate is also a not so popular topic. The leaders in the field are expected to understand the factors that have an impact on the adoption of innovation as they manage their institutions (Thomas, 1989). Many studies have already determined job satisfaction as a significant predictor that result to organizational innovation but there are very few researches that explored the relationship between employee job satisfaction, and organizational innovation (Palmer, 2016) most especially in the student affairs work.

The Student Affairs and Services Practitioner

Taking into account the background of the administrators and their educational preparations, which is mostly in education and psychology, many are not familiar with the management process more so management innovations. Many of the practitioners and administrators would just research and study on their own just to strengthen their background on managing the student affairs office that is assigned to them. Because of this, the administrators utilize different leadership styles and the employees have different views and appreciation of these styles that could also be related to their job satisfaction and determination to be innovative in the field. According to De Poel, Stoker, and Van der Zee (2014), an empowering or transformational leadership style supports the creation of innovation among its members by facilitating idea creation. The demonstrated effect of leadership style on innovativeness purportedly is the cultivation and the enhancement of performance outcomes. Student affairs administrators and practitioners often find themselves focusing on what is wrong with their organization rather than what is right. Most are guilty of criticizing their organization and their leadership about what needs to be done differently. Many are coming from the experience where they felt that the student affairs work is not that important for the educational institution and they only receive little or no attention and support. De Jong and Hartog (2007) found out that studies that examine the definite link between leadership style and innovation have been limited and researchers disagree on the importance of leadership styles in prompting employee innovation. Previous studies have concentrated on the relative importance of determinants of job satisfaction (Ashraf, Joarder, & Al Masum, 2008).

The student affairs practitioners are carrying out the big responsibility of holistic development. There is always the pressure to be ideal, a model, and exemplary in all their dealings. Despite all these expectations, student affairs practitioners find joy and satisfaction in the work that they do. Bender (1980) examined the job satisfaction of student affairs professionals. The emphasis of her research was on demographic features and their effect in predicting overall job satisfaction. She focused on percentages of her sample satisfied with their work, differences in satisfaction between age groups, and implications of these findings on productivity. Majority of her respondents indicated enjoying their work with students. However, job satisfaction cannot fuel the improvements on student affairs management alone. Innovation in the field is also necessary and that the student affairs administrators and practitioners (employees) should be kept abreast of the latest trends in handling students and their concerns. The best way for this to happen is for the student affairs administrators and practitioners to learn how to be champions of innovation. Recent studies determined management style and job satisfaction is related to creativity and innovation (Voon et al., 2011). Organizationally, centralization findings confirm that, even in an administrative core operation such as student affairs, innovation is linked with decentralization more than with centralization. This supports the organic organization as being one that innovates (Thomas, 1989).

This study examined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation. Specifically, this study addressed the question: Is there a relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation in the field of student affairs?

The hypothesis tested for this study was: There is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation in the field of student affairs. The theoretical framework of this study was grounded in Herzberg's Two Factor Theory and the Idea Generation and Idea Implementation framework of Magdeley & Birdi (2012). Motivational theories and innovation theories were not able to tackle how job satisfaction among employees establishes a relationship with innovation in organization. The strategic literature highlights employee job satisfaction as a markedly relevant influencer of organizational innovation (Palmer, 2016). The variables in this study were based on these referenced theories.

Job Satisfaction and Student Affairs and Services

Job satisfaction has been heavily researched in many fields and has led to a better understanding of the factors that increase worker satisfaction, their productivity, and their retention. Studies on job satisfaction that address student affairs professionals have provided important information but do not comprehensively examine position level of the participants from a nation-wide perspective; available literature presents an incomplete picture of job satisfaction in student affairs. (Davidson, 2009) No single study has attempted to examine job satisfaction and its relationship with employee innovation in the field of student affairs.

Another important factor considered that determine job satisfaction is the kind of supervision given and received by the student affairs administrators and practitioners. It is a known fact that student affairs work values the importance of mentoring because of the direct supervision provided by the administrators and practitioners to

the students. However, it will be very hard for the administrators and practitioners to mentor and positively influence the students if they themselves are not satisfied with the kind of "mentoring" that they get from their supervisors. Researches also indicated that the supervision received was a satisfying construct of this work (Nestor, 1988). One interesting insight to the supervision concern is that of Burns (1982) where he reported that those student affairs officers who valued independence were satisfied with their work and would remain in the field. Supervisors should examine the balance between student interaction and administrative responsibility they are placing on midlevel managers. This balance could be a source of strain for individuals who hold these roles. Is their administrative workload appropriate in conjunction with the expectations placed on them for contact with students? Supervisors should also work to create an environment where student contact is valued, even for mid- and senior-level professionals (Lombardi, 2013).

The logical approach to understanding job satisfaction with student affairs professionals involves application of validated instruments for global and facet satisfaction while exploring differences based on age, ethnicity, gender, job tenure, position level, and institutional type. In addition, it is useful to understand if student affairs satisfaction is similar to the national norms for satisfaction with nonprofit companies. This information will enable the construction of recommendations and implications for practice that enhance the work experiences of student affairs staff and help promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Davidson, 2009). Professional development should be considered a part of a total rewards package related to benefits, educational support, etc. This finding also supports the desire for opportunities for promotion, as the two are clearly linked. If employees are provided appropriate monetary support for professional development along with opportunities for promotion and growth within an organization, positive outcomes will likely result for both the employee and organization (Lombardi, 2013).

Employee Creativity and Innovation and the Field of Student Affairs

Shipton et al. (2014) investigated the link between job satisfaction and organizational innovation based on a sample of manufacturing companies in the UK. It was concluded, collective job satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of organizational innovation. It was further determined in Shipton et al. (2014), the firms who are able to produce sustained innovation will likely increase their chances of long-term survival and growth. Past research on job satisfaction had been focused on investigating the situational factors affecting the job satisfaction of workers and has neglected to regard individual based and age-related factors (Hosseini et al., 2014).

Chen et al. (2012) performed research to explore the mechanism through which conflict management behavior affects job satisfaction and innovation-linked performance. Findings indicated the integration of conciliatory conflict management behaviors were correlated positively to job satisfaction. The integration of conflict management behavior was positively correlated to innovation-linked job performance and conflict management avoidance behavior was inversely related to innovation performance (Chen et al., 2012). Few studies have explored the relationship between employee job satisfaction and organizational innovation (Shipton et al., 2014). Relatively fewer studies have focused on job satisfaction and organizational innovation within the automotive industries. Nonetheless, most of the recent literature

converged on the relationship between organizational performance and job satisfaction.

The employees of every job could be creative (Bhatt, 2001). So the organizational researchers must determine variables that caused to the encouragement of creativity so that the organizations can enjoy the creativity and the managers must know how to support these creativities (Duffy, 2000). According to Kong (2012), high success rate of today organizations is based on creativity, innovation, discovery and invention. According to the existing needs, the organization are encouraged to efficiently change the behavior of individuals and organizations functions so that can survive, it seems the changes lead to the increasing emergence of new and benefit ideas rapidly. Among the organizations that have an important role in human life, are institutional organizations especially education system. In each country, the education system is one of the important social systems. The mission of this system is to transfer the cultural heritage and human experience to the next generation, to make desired changes in knowledge, attitudes and the behavior of children, adolescents and young adults (Taherkhani, 2015).

Job Satisfaction and Creativity and Innovation for Student Affairs Practitioners

The main purpose of this study determined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation in the field of student affairs. Job satisfaction (intrinsic, extrinsic, and general job satisfaction) served, as the independent variables while employee creativity/innovation (idea generation and idea implementation) was the dependent variable. The descriptive-correlational design was employed to describe the relationship between the variables.   These variables were measured and operationalized using a cross-sectional survey design. A cross-sectional study obtains the profile of the respondents allowing conclusions to be drawn on a wider populace. The use of a cross-sectional survey design with applied quantitative procedures can provide greater accuracy in the analysis of the data. Quantitative approach is chosen as the preferred method for analysis for the following reasons: (1) to facilitate comparison and statistical accumulation of data, (2) to allow generalizability of the findings to the extent allowed by the source of participant recruitment, (3) to determine prediction through deductive reasoning, and (4) to test the hypotheses (Agarwal, 2014).

This study utilized the purposive sampling technique. It is the sampling technique where the subjects are selected based on a certain criteria or limitation set by the researcher. This technique gives each member of the population that falls fit in the identified category a chance to be selected as subject or respondent. The target population of this study was the student affairs administrators and practitioners in the Department of Student Life of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde. At present, there are about forty-five (45) student affairs practitioners working as regular employees in the Department of Student Life of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde. All of these student affairs practitioners were sent email information about the research to be conducted and were invited to partake in the survey process. A link to the online survey will also be included in the content of the email. The target is to gather forty (40) complete survey responses from the identified sample population as determined by the online sample calculator considering a 95% level of confidence and a margin of error of 5.

The data were collected using validated pre-existing survey instruments. The survey instrument was drafted online via Google form in which the online link was shared to the target population as part of the content of the email.

The data gathered was analyzed using Chi-Square test of independence and Pearson product moment correlation. The Chi-Square test of independence was used to determine if there is a significant relationship between two nominal variables. The frequency of one nominal value was compared with the different values of the second nominal variable. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least an interval scale. Pearson product moment correlation was used to explain the relationship between job satisfaction and employee innovation.

In order to constrain issues on validity, a pre-existing survey instruments was used. The independent variable job satisfaction was measured with the use of another pre-existing survey questionnaire, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). This survey instrument was just previously validated and was originally developed by Weiss et al. (1976). The scores from this questionnaire measure the intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction. The items were rated on a five-point Likert Scale ranging from (5) very satisfied to (1) very dissatisfied.

The dependent variable employee innovation was measured using the recently validated corporate innovation survey questionnaire developed by Magadley and Birdi (2012). For purposes of this study, the items on organizational support for innovation, idea generation and idea implementation was measured. The respondents rated each question in a five-point Likert Scale ranging from (1) not at all to (5) a great deal.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Innovation

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship of the independent variable job satisfaction with the dependent variable employee innovation in the field of student affairs. The data was gathered and analyzed using the chi squared method. The strength of the relationship of the two variable was also tested using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

The average rating of all the respondents (see Table 1) were plotted on a graph in Fig. 8 to examine linearity of the two variables. It can be directly observed from the scatter plot that the two variables, job satisfaction and employee innovation, have strong uphill linear pattern, depicting strong correlation between them. To measure how strong their positive correlation is, the correlation coefficient, r, was computed using Data Analysis function of Microsoft Excel. Results were shown in Table 2.

Respondents' Average Rating of Job Satisfaction and Employee Innovation

Respondent number	Job satisfaction	Employee innovation
1	4.50	4.00
2	4.90	4.71
3	4.50	4.71
4	3.80	3.71
5	4.10	3.71
6	4.00	4.00
7	4.60	4.00
8	3.70	3.29
9	4.00	4.43
10	4.70	4.57
11	4.20	4.14
12	3.05	3.43
13	3.95	3.86
14	3.95	3.71
15	4.90	5.00
16	4.80	4.86
17	4.90	5.00
18	4.15	4.29
19	3.05	3.57
20	4.65	5.00
21	4.50	5.00
22	3.50	4.00
23	4.80	4.71
24	3.40	3.14
25	4.65	4.57
26	4.00	4.00
27	4.00	4.00
28	3.70	4.00
29	4.65	4.14
30	3.15	3.00
31	4.80	4.00
32	4.55	4.71
33	4.90	5.00
34	3.90	4.00
35	4.90	3.86
36	4.70	4.00
37	4.75	5.00
38	3.75	3.86
39	4.65	4.29
40	4.15	3.86

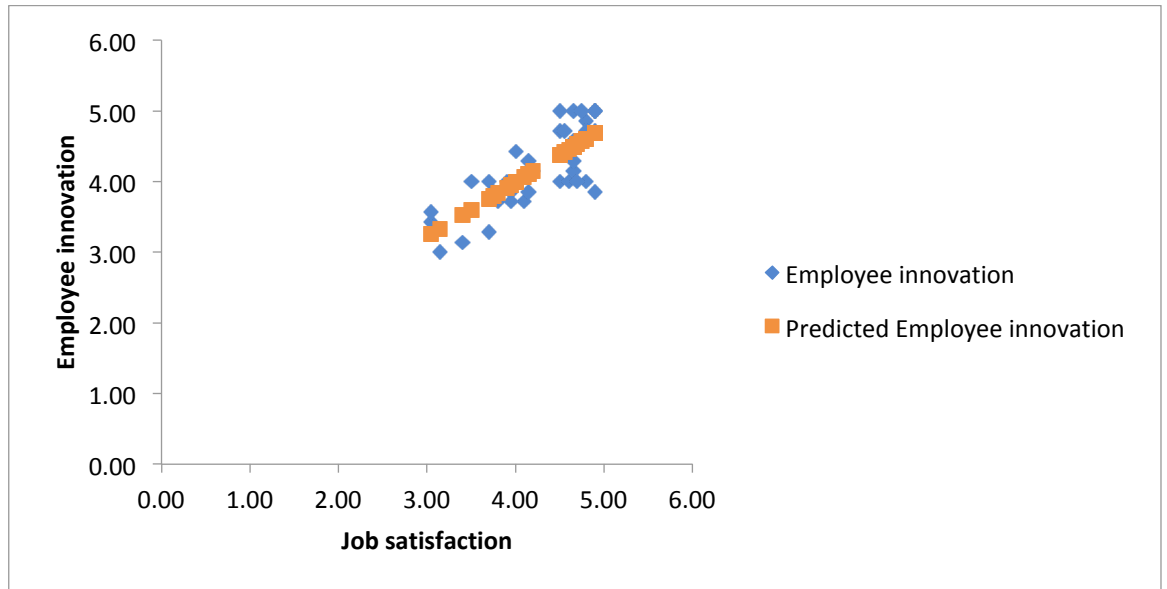Table 1. Average Rating of Job Satisfaction and Employee Innovation

Figure 1: Line fit plot of job satisfaction versus employee innovation

The computed correlation coefficient (see Table 2) is 0.777682328. This value affirms the strong linear relationship obtained in Fig. 8. This only means that there is a very strong positive correlation, given that the coefficient is greater than 0.70, between job satisfaction and employee innovation.

Value of the correlation coefficient r

	Job satisfaction	*Employee innovation*
Job satisfaction	1	
Employee innovation	0.777682328	1

Table 2. Value of Correlation Coefficient r

Chi-square test for independence was used here to assess whether there is an association existing between the two variables, job satisfaction and employee innovation by comparing the observed responses and the expected responses if the said two variables were actually independent of each other. Computed chi-square statistic was compared against the critical value. Also, chi-square p-value was obtained to confirm results of the previously-discussed statistical tool.

Data for Chi Square Statistic Test for Independence

Observed

Job satisfaction	Employee innovation		Total
	Average rating of 4 and above	Average rating below 4	
Average rating of 4.35 and above	19	1	20
Average rating below 4.35	9	11	20
Total	28	12	40

Expected

Job satisfaction	Employee innovation		Total
	Average rating of 4 and above	Average rating below 4	
Average rating of 4.35 and above	14	6	20
Average rating below 4.35	14	6	20
Total	28	12	40

Table 3. Data for Chi Square Test for Independence

Since the computed Pearson chi-square value, which is 11.9047619 is greater than that of the critical value that is 3.84145882 (from Chi-square distribution for degrees of freedom equal to 1), the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is an association between job satisfaction and employee innovation. The chi-square p-value of 0.00056 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 for a 95% confidence level affirms that the variables are not independent of each other and that there is a statistical relationship between job satisfaction and employee innovation.

Summary of Findings

The descriptive method was used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents and clustered them according age, gender, position level, civil status, and educational attainment. The chi-squared analysis method was used to answer the research question and the related hypothesis. This method confirmed that there is a relationship between the variables job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation as perceived by the respondent student affairs practitioners. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was employed to validate and to determine the strength of relationship among the identified variables. The results confirmed that there is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation and that the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation is rejected.

Conclusions

This study was conducted to determine the relationship of job satisfaction and employee innovation among the student affairs practitioners employed in the Department of Student Life of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde. Practical applications focused on using the results to innovate management styles, policies, processes, and systems to ensure job satisfaction among the student affairs practitioners.

The results derived in this study can be utilized to pursue the current body of knowledge and provide practical applications to the student affairs practice and administration. Further research should also be piloted which targets other industry or profession using a longitudinal study. This kind of study will prove to be beneficial in evaluating changes in job satisfaction and employee creativity/innovation over time. Future studies should also be directed to include other countries and cultures to determine if similar findings would be revealed and to assess generalizability of the research findings. It could also prove interesting to conduct a similar study using the qualitative or mixed method to find out if the same findings will occur.

Personally, the administration and handling of student affairs practitioner or personnel should be taken seriously and be given enough consideration in order to ensure their job satisfaction. The function of the student affairs practitioners is crucial not only in the development of themselves but more so in the development of the students that are entrusted to their care. The management of the educational institutions must ensure that the needs of the student affairs practitioners pertaining to their job function is met and satisfied before they can promote and insist movements for innovation. This study could also help the top management of the educational institutions in innovating their management styles, policies, systems, and processes, in order to ensure that the concerns of the student affairs practitioners are addressed and that they are in the same page in terms of encouragement for creativity and innovation.

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