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Job Security at Isfahan University of Medical Sciences: Implications on Employees and Types of Contracts

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Medical universities are of those organizations that serve many individuals. As a result, the employees who work at medical universities should have adequate job qualifications and requisite conditions for work. Job security is one of these needed conditions. The current study aims to determine the main components of job security among the employees of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (IUMS). **Method and materials:** The study had a cross-sectional design. The sample included 300 employees which were selected from the faculties of IUMS. The sample was recruited using quota sampling. First, demographic and Job security questionnaires were completed by each employee. Then, data was analyzed by descriptive methods and ANOVA in SPSS₁₆. **Results:** The study results showed that there was no significant difference among five subscales of Job security questionnaire and as a result, job security among the employees of IUMS but there was a significant difference in job security among male and female employees and a significant difference in job security based on type of job contract. **Discussion:** Lower rate of job security among female employees with temporary job contracts has professional and psychological implication for both females and IUMS which should be considered in designing professional programs of IUMS.

Key words: Job security, Employees, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Security is one of the issues that has always engaged human's mind. It refers to a desire for maintaining the current situation and confidence in stability of events and trends of changes in future. It is a worldwide need but there is a difference in the rate of experiencing job security in different countries. Such a difference originates in culture. Borland (1999) defined job security as a freedom from fear to lose or withdraw from a job. Some jobs and professional activities have higher levels of job security compared with other jobs. Governmental jobs have higher levels of job security compared with private jobs (1). Rosenblatt (1996) reported that lack of job security happens in two aspects. The first aspect is related to the feelings that an individual has toward his or her job setting such as transferring to a lower job position in an organization, transferring to a job in the same position, firing or job stress. The second aspect of job security refers to the feelings that an individual has for the wage and salary received, job promotion, lack of decision making and emotional job setting in an organization (2). Brockner and colleagues (1992) defined job security as the feeling of power and ability in controlling events of a job setting, feeling peace and having job future. He believes that participation of employees in decision making especially about salary, job promotion, and

also giving responsibility result in job security in individuals (3). Greenhalg (2000) defined lack of job security as vagueness in job future which is associated with the vagueness of role and believed that vagueness in job future is one of the factors that evokes stress and results in job dissatisfaction, fatigue and physical and psychological complaints and damage job security (4). Individuals enter an organization with different needs and no individual owns the same abilities and job qualifications. Some individuals are satisfied with money. Some others think of satisfying security feelings.

Lawrence conducted a study on employees of oil industry. In his study, managers were asked to assume themselves as workers and were asked to rate job expectations of their workers. Workers were also asked to rate what they expected from their jobs. The results of this study showed that managers of the employees considered good salary, job security, job promotion and good job conditions as their main job expectations. Workers considered complete acknowledgment, participation in job and understanding of personal problems as what they expected. Workers in this study cared about items that managers of employees rated them as less important (5).

One of the most important components of job security is wages and salaries. Employees often consider their payments as

signs of respect that managers show to their works. As a result, many employees compare their salaries with performance and salary of other employees of the same status. Jones and Sloan (2002) indicated that individual's job satisfaction relatively depends on what others receive as payment. In other words, there is a relationship between employees' satisfaction and the salaries received. In other words, the salary that an individual receives and the salary that other employees of the same status receive influence feeling worth in a job (6).

Mirsepasi (2005) reported that salaries play an important role in job satisfaction and they have the same value for employees and workers. The most important components of salary, is the payment and benefits that an individual receives from his or her job (7).

Laver and Porter reported that the members of each organization generally compare their salaries with the salaries of other organization members and if they think that they receive more salary, they will experience more job security. If the employees feel inequity in rewards received, more job dissatisfaction will emerge. The rate of an individual's job satisfaction and job's environmental satisfaction influence the feeling of job commitment and influence an individual's job performance (8).

The second important component of job security is job setting (9). Belonchfaver (2005) indicated that the secured atmosphere of a job setting has a close relationship with job security (10).

Moskach and Lieter (1999) reported that an insecure job setting results in depression because employees who are unsatisfied with their job settings use their minimum job qualifications. In their study, they mentioned six main items influencing happiness of employees in a job setting including: a) job load; b) control and supervision; c) salary; d) relationship with colleagues; e) equity in job promotion; and f) value respectively (11).

Mousavi (1998) reported that study on job insecurity has a strong relationship with tension experience among employees of an organization.

The owners of insecure jobs experience different anxieties which originate more from the possibility of degrading and dissociation from their jobs. To some extent, job insecurity, job dissatisfaction, search for taking a new job post can be described as immediate attempts to be away from an insecure job setting (12).

Farifteh (1995) indicated that supportive programs presented by job unions and directors could contribute to lowering job insecurity otherwise employees are likely to leave an organization (13).

Fadaee Nasab (2004) reported that the supports of job unions create attachment and joint benefits which have positive effects on the employees and result in lowering job pressures (14).

Shakeriniya (2002) reported that job supports could make a balance between job insecurity and job dissatisfaction and decreases them. Farifteh (1995) reported that tensions aroused from job insecurity negatively impact life satisfaction and life environment. Feeling of job insecurity influence an individual's understanding of his or her abilities and impacts someone's feeling of his or her value. Feeling of job insecurity could impact an individual's view on life and results in life dissatisfaction (13).

Bafrani (2009) concluded that there was a relationship between job security and organizational commitment among employees and there was a significant positive relationship between components of job security and organizational commitment.

There was also a significant difference between job security and employees' commitment based on age, level of education and employment status. In other words, the highest level of organizational commitment and job security were observed in employees over age of 40. Officially recruited employees had also the highest level of organizational commitment and job security (16).

Mousavi (1998) indicated that study on job insecurity is associated with a strong relationship with tension among employees. Employees who are in instable job experience tension. These pressures originate in the possibility of degrading and separation from job. To some extent, job insecurity, job dissatisfaction, and search for a new job can be described as immediate attempts to avoid an insecure job setting (12).

Medical-related organizations such as medical universities are among of those organizations which face a considerable amount of job tensions and as a result, job security among their employees. Such job tensions could contribute to decreasing job satisfaction and as a result, lower efficacy in doing job affairs by employees within a medical organization.

Applying human resources with better performance and higher commitment makes organizations more potent in achieving the goals of an organization to exploit other resources. As a result, considering job security and the performance of human resources should be considered in medical-related settings by specialists and policy makers. A need for job security in medical-related settings is one of the factors which motivate employees towards promoting job effectiveness and better function of an organization. An individual's assurance about job future and lack of worrisome toward job firing, decrease tensions among employee and make them read to achieve the goals of an organization.

Medical universities are of those organizations which face many people. As a result, employees who are engaged in work at medical universities should have adequate job security. The rate of job insecurity in such organizations has an important effect on individuals' attitudes towards the organization and therefore, could contribute to decreasing their professional effectiveness in the organization that they work. To contribute to design professional interventions to decrease job security at IMUS, the current study was designed to study job security among male and female employees at IMUS and determines the factors that contribute to decreasing job security among them.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study was conducted during year 2011. The study had a cross-sectional design. The statistical society included all employees at IMUS. At first stage, the number of employees in each faculty was identified. (98 employees in the faculty of medicine, 83 employees in the faculty of dentistry, 51 employees in the faculty of pharmacy, 60 employees in the faculty of nursing, 55 employees in the faculty of hygiene, 27 employees in the faculty of administration, 27 employees in the faculty of rehabilitation and in total 401 employees). The final sample (n=300) was recruited from different faculties at IMUS using quota sampling.

First, a demographic questionnaire including socio-demographic details such as age, gender, education status, employment status, type of job contract, and history of work at university was applied. The Job insecurity questionnaire devised and validated by Pourbaferani (2009) was applied to assess job security among the sample.

This questionnaire includes 38 questions on a 5-item Likert scale. The questionnaire measures job security in 5 aspects including job security, showing creativity, affectivity of a job setting, lack of job stress, and financial satisfaction. Pourbaferani (2009) reported validity coefficient of 96% and 95% for this questionnaire (16).

In the current study, reliability of the questionnaire for subscales of job security, showing creativity, affectivity of job atmosphere, lack of job stress, and financial satisfaction were 63%, 79%, 81%, 68%, and 75% respectively and in total for the whole questionnaire, it was 89% which indicates that the reliability was satisfactory. Data was analyzed by performing descriptive statistics and ANOVA using SPSS16. The protocol of the study was approved by institutional review board of Isfahan Medical University in year2010.

3. RESULTS

In observed sample 41.6% were male and 58.4% were female. At the time of study, 41% had official contracts with IMUS. 11.9 % had non-official contracts. 38.8% were working based on temporary contract. 6.7% were working based on firm contract and 1.5% were working based on temporary plan contract.

The mean age of the sample was 35.1 (SD=7.48) years. The mean years of working at university were 11.1 (SD=6.9) years. The mean years of education was 11.1 (SD=6.9) years.. 85% were married. 12.9% single and the remaining participants were divorced and/or separated (2.1%).

According to the study results, the faculties of nursing and hygiene had a better situation in job security compared with other faculties but on the whole, the comparison of the 7 faculties showed that there was no significant difference in job security among faculties (P-value=0.132).

The study results revealed that faculties of dentistry and administration had a better performance in showing creativity compared with other faculties. Meanwhile, the comparison of the scores of the 7 faculties revealed that there was no significant difference in showing creativity among faculties (P-value=0.52).

According to the findings of this study, the faculties of rehabilitation, hygiene, and administration had a better performance in affectivity of job setting compared with other faculties. Meanwhile, comparison of scores of the 7 faculties revealed that there was no significant difference in affectivity of job setting among faculties (P-value=0.54).

Meanwhile, faculty of medicine had a better performance in lack of job stress compared with other faculties. Comparison of scores among 7 faculties revealed that there was no significant difference in lack of stress among faculties (P-value=0.38).

According to the study results, faculty of nursing had a better financial satisfaction compared with other faculties. Comparison of scores among 7 faculties revealed that there was no significant difference in financial satisfaction among faculties (P-value=0.32). Table1 showed that the faculty of dentistry had a better job security compared with other faculties. Comparison between scores of 7 faculties revealed no significant difference between job security among faculties (P-value=0.16)

| Faculty of Administration | Faculty of Rehabilitation | Faculty of Dentistry | Faculty of Nursing | Faculty of Pharmacy | Faculty of Hygiene | Faculty of Medicine | Variable |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 117.21 | 116.5 | 120.88 | 116.7 | 113.6 | 117.4 | 108.5 | Job security (Mean) |
| 16.5 | 17.25 | 10.9 | 21.4 | 17.9 | 17.5 | 16.1 | Job security (SD) |

Table 1. Comparison of job security among employees at IMUS (n=300)

The results of Table2 showed that job security among male employees had a better condition compared with female employees and the comparison of the two groups showed a significant difference between the two groups (P<00.5).

| p<0.05 | t-1.07 | Women | Men | Variable |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|---------------------|
| | | 122.53 | 118.6 | Job Security (Mean) |
| | | 20.26 | 17.2 | Job Security (SD) |

Table 2. Determining and comparison of job security among employees at IMUS based on gender (n=300)

The results of Table 3 revealed a significant difference among the three groups based on duration of work (P≤00.5).

| P<0.05 | F=2.05 | 21-30 | 11-20 | Since employment until 10 years | Variable |
|--------|--------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | 125.6 | 115.2 | 120 | Job Security (Mean) |
| | | 20.7 | 10.4 | 18.8 | Job Security (SD) |

Table 3. Determining and comparison of job security among employees at IMUS based on duration of work (n=300)

The results of Table 4 showed that there was a significant difference in job security among the five job groups based on employment status (P<00.5).

| P<0.05 | F=1.8 | Based on plan | Based on firm | Based on contract | Non-official | Official | Variable |
|--------|-------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------|---------------------|
| | | 103 | 113.66 | 110.26 | 120 | 125.6 | Job Security (Mean) |
| | | 2.8 | 16.4 | 17.1 | 20.4 | 19.1 | Job Security (SD) |

Table 4. Determining and comparison of job security among employees at IMUS based on employment status (n=300)

4. DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to investigate job security in a group of male and female employees at IMUS.

The study findings showed that there was no significant difference in different components of job security among the employees of different faculties at IMUS. This study finding may explain that the current executive system of IMUS with relatively same salaries and wages in different faculties induced the same attitudes on job security among all employees.

One important finding in our study was the lower rate of job security among female participants compared with male participants. There was a significant difference in job security among women and men employees of different faculties and men had a better job situation. This study finding is consistent with some previous studies which showed that women experience lower job status and as a result, more mental pressure and job insecurity in professional settings (17) and disagrees with other studies that showed men and women did not differ in

experiencing job security in professional settings (16). Women in this study had a lower level of job security compared with men because of type of job contract, and the desire of employers for hiring male work force. Type of job contract among the sample deserves further studies and should be considered as a new finding in issues related to job insecurity among females in professional settings such as IMUS. Job opportunities are less for women compared with men. Insecure types of contracts were likely to contribute to increasing mental tension among our female participants and lowered their job efficacy which is still subject to extensive studies. This issue is likely to result in social and interpersonal pressures for the female participants which should be considered in medical-related settings such as IMUS.

A study showed that different job contracts influence job security in governmental organizations (18). This issue can reflect that previous contracts which provided a basis for continual employment and finally resulted in job security could be changed by current rules and reject continual employment and contract-based employment emerges and this issue put job security of employees in risk (19). IMUS should design and implement some professional programs to improve job security among its employees especially among female ones. It is necessary that IMUS develops substitute methods to increase job security. For example; potential possibility of hiring employees must be considered. Factors such as job promotion, job transfer, education, developing job qualifications and evaluating job performance could act as effective factors in strengthening job security among employees at IMUS. It should be noted that these factors do not have a good status at IMUS and deserve extensive studies. Lack of job security has a variety of negative impacts especially on females and results in losing psychological, physical and psychological health of employees (20). This issue negatively impacts employees' performance and organizational effectiveness will decrease. This issue needs designing some strategies to solve them (21).

Suggestions for Further Studies

* The problem of job security among female employees at IMUS could be decreased with promoting educational and training courses and programs. Such courses and programs could increase job self-confidence among them and decrease mental pressure of possibility of losing a job among them.

* Future research is suggested to examine and compare the relationship between components of organizational behaviors such as job fatigue, job motivation, organization commitment, and competency with job security among male and female employees at IMUS.

* Increasing the job qualifications of employees could result in increasing job effectiveness among employees especially among female employees at IMUS. A comprehensive study for increasing job qualifications is suggested to be conducted at IMUS.

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