

# *Psychosocial Factors and Organisational Culture Influencing Academic Staff Job Satisfaction at University of Cape Coast, Ghana*

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## **Abstract**

*The study examined the influence of psychosocial factors and organisational culture on academic staff job satisfaction at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, using the concurrent triangulation mixed method as a design. A multistage sampling technique involving a combination of purposive and stratified sampling approaches were employed to select 268 academic staff (241 respondents and 27 participants) from a population of 811 academics. Data was gathered through structured questionnaire and an interview guide which were analysed using descriptive statistics and verbatim quotes of participants. Findings revealed that academic rank is not significant in determining academic staff level of job satisfaction. However psychosocial factors and organizational culture variables such as work environment, promotion, role culture, and achievement culture registered significant positive influence on academic staff job satisfaction. It is therefore recommended that management of the University in conjunction with the Counselling Unit ensures that psychosocial interventions such as orientation, information and vocational counselling services are periodically offered to the academic staff to enhance their job satisfaction and consequent boosting of their productivity.*

**Keywords:** Academic Staff, Job Satisfaction, Organisational Culture, Psychosocial Factors

## **Introduction**

Job satisfaction has become a sensitive issue in vocational/career counseling as evidence mounts on the critical role it plays in determining the total well-being of an employee. Therefore, it is important for counsellors and other professionals to help staff understand themselves and their environment so as to make informed decisions leading to their job satisfaction. As a result, investigating the influence of organisational culture and psychosocial factors on staff job satisfaction is a paramount concern not only to management literature but also to vocational counsellors and industrial psychologists.

Psychosocial factors and organisational culture within institutions on the other hand, can influence the level of job satisfaction of employees. However, much attention seems not to have been paid to the development of psychosocial factors in academic institutions (Oyewole & Popoola, 2013). Since the Hawthorne studies, which argued that paying attention to overall work needs of employees would improve their productivity, there have been several studies on the nature, causes and correlates of job satisfaction (Agile, 2012; Lang, 2014; Reukauf, 2018; Yiğitol & Balaban, 2018). These studies have been based on the argument that job satisfaction affects employees' productivity, absenteeism, turnover rate, and performance (Bently, Coates, Dobson, Goedegebuure, & Mark, 2013).

In examining employees' job satisfaction, most of the researchers touched on only organisational culture variables and without due consideration to psychological, social and demographic factors such as the work itself, work environment, salary, co-worker relationship, work-family conflict, gender, age, rank, and marital status (Kyeremeh, 2014; Lang, 2014; Yiğitol & Balaban, 2018). Giving consideration to these psychosocial factors is important because these factors can influence the level of job satisfaction of employees (Azim, Haque & Chowdhury, 2013; Bernal & McDaniel, 2014). Most of the previous studies on this subject have also been situated in organisational or corporate

settings, with the academic circles largely been ignored, particularly universities, (Fuudia, 2017; Kim, 2017).

The few studies conducted on job satisfaction and its predictors, like organisational culture and psychosocial factors in academic circles, looked at organisational culture, social and psychological factors separately; and the influence they have on staff satisfaction, commitment or performance (Reukauf, 2018; Lang, 2014). It appears that only a few studies (Reukauf, 2018; Suleman & Hussain, 2018) have actually examined the influence of both psychosocial factors and organisational culture on staff job satisfaction of academics, as in the case of this current study. It is also not clear the extent to which theoretical models of psychosocial factors, organisational culture and job satisfaction developed in advanced and industrialised nations apply to the Ghanaian context since there are cultural variations among the various countries and for that matter, institutions. All these create a real knowledge gap to be filled.

Contextually, significant changes have taken place in the operations of University of Cape Coast (UCC), since its migration into the collegiate system in August, 2014. On the part of academic staff, changes in operations may influence their work itself, work environment, promotion, co-worker relationship, and work-family conflict positively or negatively (Nyberg, Leineweber & Hanson, 2015). Apart from these psychosocial influences, these changes may also lead to the creation of new cultures (Crispen & Bulelwa, 2017) which may in turn affect psychosocial factors and the level of job satisfaction. Kyeremeh (2014) revealed that prior to the collegiate system at UCC, academics at the University reported on the need for the University to adopt and nurture strong and conducive organisational culture that pays attention to psychosocial issues of staff to improve their levels of job satisfaction. It remains unclear as to whether the university has been able to create a strong culture that boost academics psychosocial factors to influence their job satisfaction after the collegiate system. In spite of this, it appears no empirical study has been conducted in UCC since the study of Kyeremeh

(2014) on the issue of how psychosocial factors and organisational culture influence the job satisfaction of employees. In this sense, the study was considered pertinent.

The study focused on examining the influence of psychosocial factors and organisational culture on job satisfaction of full-time academic staff of UCC, Ghana. Psychosocial factors considered in the study were the work itself, work environment, promotion, co-worker relation, and work-family conflict while control, role, orientation and achievement formed the variables under organisational culture. Findings from this study will contribute to literature, in the area of organisational culture and their influence on job satisfaction of workers in organizations. The findings would also present valuable information for policy makers with regards to formulating appropriate policies and implementing interventions that would enhance job satisfaction of academic staff of the university to enhance productivity. University Management will understand the needs, expectations and desires of employees and create an organisational culture that supports the psychosocial factors of academic staff by offering those rewards that lead to their job satisfaction and consequently, enhanced productivity. The study will also enlighten researchers and other practitioners in the area of counselling.

## **Hypothesis**

The study is guided by the following hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub>. Academic rank will have no statistical significant influence on Job Satisfaction of academic staff at UCC, Ghana.

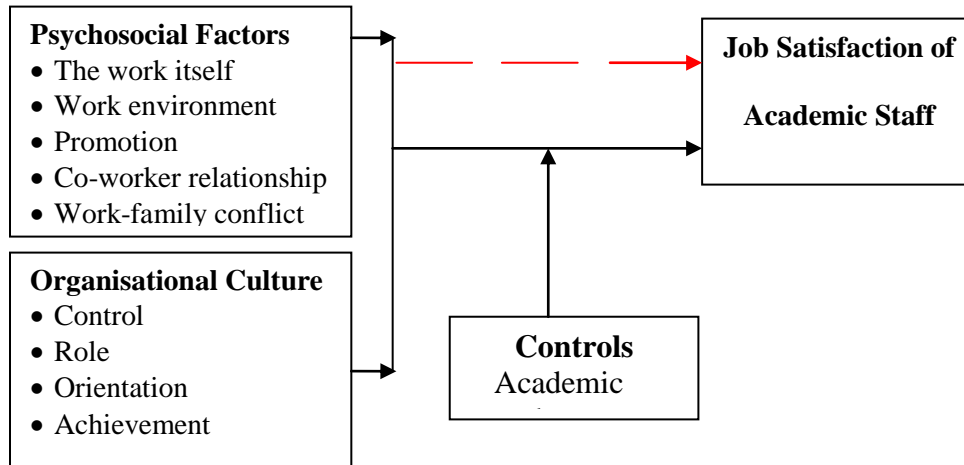
H<sub>02</sub>: Psychosocial factors and organisational culture collectively have no statistically significant influence on job satisfaction of academic staff of UCC, Ghana.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned by the theory of Holland (1966), to explain antecedents that make academic staff of UCC, Ghana satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. Holland's (1966) theory is based on the premise that career choices are expressions of the total personality of an individual, and that people tend to search for a working environment that will match their personality types. Thus, the satisfaction derived from a career chosen depends on the compatibility of a person's work situation and personality style. Holland believed that job satisfaction and achievement are highest when personality types are matched with compatible work environment and that career success largely depended on the congruency between the person's personality and the work environment (Holland, 1973). The implication of the theory to this study is that every academic staff at UCC has a work environment with which he or she is compatible with based on their personal orientation, values, interest, goals, preferences and expectations. If the organizational culture such as the role, control, achievement, orientation and the psychosocial factors such as the work itself, promotion, co-worker relationship and work family conflict are congruent with their personal characteristics, then it will translate into job satisfaction of academic staff at UCC.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The assumption behind this study was that psychosocial factors of academic staff and the organisational culture of the University has predictive effects on academic staff job satisfaction.



**Figure 1:** Influence of psychosocial factors and organisational culture on job satisfaction of academic staff at UCC

It is conceptualized therefore, that when academic staff perceive the organizational culture of the university (the set of norms, beliefs, principles and ways of behaving that together give UCC a distinctive character from other public universities and institutions) and their intrinsic and extrinsic psychosocial factors positively, the two situations together will enhance academic staff job satisfaction. That is, these situations together will boost the emotional response defining the degree to which academic staff like their job. However, academic rank categorisation of staff can affect their job satisfaction level irrespective of the fact that they perceive psychosocial and organisational culture positively.

**Methods**

The study adopted the concurrent triangulation mixed methods design which is characterised by two or more methods used to confirm, cross-validate, triangulate, or corroborate findings within a study (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently and later compared with the aim of determining

convergence and differences. The population comprised all the academic staff of UCC. Current records show that there are 811 academic staff in UCC (UCC, 2019). A sample of 268 was obtained using Slovin’s recommended formula which has been tested and used for most survey and case studies and has the ability to specify the precision of estimation desire for a population (Kelly, 2016). The formula is  $n = N \div [1 + N (e^2)]$ , where  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$ , the population size, and  $e$ , the level of precision.  $n = 811 \div [1 + 811 (0.05)^2] = 811 \div 3.0275 = 267.88 \approx 268$ .

Out of the 268 academics sampled 27 participants involving Provosts, Deans, Directors, and Head of Departments of the University were selected purposive and interviewed while 241 respondents were sampled using stratified random sampling procedure for the quantitative data. The sample distribution is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample Distribution of Academic Staff of UCC, Ghana**

Colleges within UCC	Academic Rank of Respondents						Total
	P	AP	SL&SRF	L&RF	AL	Part	
College of Humanities and Legal Studies (CHLS)	4	9	28	25	20	7	93
College of Health and Allied Sciences (CHAS)	1	2	12	12	13	5	45
College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences (CANS)	3	7	23	18	7	4	62
College of Distance Education (CoDE)	1	1	2	5	6	4	19
College of Education Studies (CES)	3	6	14	9	10	7	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>268</b>

Source: UCC, Ghana (2018) *P = Professors, AP = Associate Professors, SL&SRF = Senior Lecturers and Senior Research Fellows, L&RF = Lecturers, Research Fellows, AL = Assistant Lecturers, and Part = Participants*

Two main instruments, a questionnaire for respondents and an interview guide for participants were used to gather data. Responses to the various items in the questionnaire, were measured numerically using unilinear scale such that one

represents the strongest disagreement while five represents the strongest agreement to the items.

Face and content validity of the instruments were determined by experts and professionals in the field of counselling and education. The questionnaire was again subjected to factor analysis to ensure its construct validity. The pre-test data obtained from 27 academic staff of University of Education, Winneba (UEW) main campus was analysed using Cronbach's alpha techniques that yielded a reliability coefficient of  $r=0.857$ , which was deemed appropriate according to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) because UEW lecturers share similar characteristics with UCC. The administration of the questionnaire and interview guide, were done concurrently. With the consent of each participant, all interview sessions were audio recorded. The questionnaire had a retention rate of 100% while only 20(74.1%) of the interviewees were covered.

The quantitative data were analysed by means of descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, one-way analysis of variance and linear multiple regression analysis. The axial coding system was applied in analysing the qualitative data. After transcribing the data, the researchers sifted and sorted them to generate the key issues and themes that emerged. Verbatim quotations of participants were also used to buttress the findings and to enhance understanding of issues as they emerged.

## **Results and Discussion**

The first hypothesis aimed at examining the influence of rank on academic staff job satisfaction. To test this hypothesis the academic staff sampled were first classified according to their ranks, as depicted in Table 2, to ascertain the trend in their job satisfaction levels in the university.



**Table 2: Academic Rank of Staff and their Level of Job Satisfaction**

Rank	N	M	Std. Dev.
Assistant lecturer	56	4.311	0.728
Lecturer	69	3.993	0.937
Senior lecturer	79	4.010	0.949
Associate professor	25	4.240	0.759
Professor	12	3.750	0.921
Total	241	4.085	0.931

Source: Field survey, 2018

(N = 241)

Results in Table 2 depicts that academic staff were satisfied in their job (M = 4.085, Std. Dev. = 0.931). However, assistant lecturers (M = 4.311, Std. Dev. = 0.728), senior lecturers (M=4.010, Std. Dev. =0.949 and associate professors (M = 4.240, Std. Dev. = 0.759) were found to be more satisfied than those in the other categories. Staff at the professorial rank (M = 3.750, Std. Dev. = 0.921) and lecturers (M= 3.993, Std. Dev. = 0.937) were the least satisfied staff of the University.

In order to ascertain whether academic rank had any statistically significant influence on their level of job satisfaction, ANOVA was performed at  $p > 0.05$ . Rank of the academic staff was treated as independent variable while the dependent variable was job satisfaction. The results presented in Table 3 reveals that there was no statistically significant difference among the five groups regarding their levels of job satisfaction [F (4, 236) = 1.705  $p = 0.150$ ]. This means that rank is not a factor in terms of job satisfaction of academics at UCC, Ghana.

**Table 3: ANOVA on Rank of Academic Staff and their Level of Job Satisfaction**

Job Satisfaction	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.849	4	1.462	1.705	0.150
Within Groups	202.430	236	0.858		
Total	208.279	240			

Source: Field survey, 2018

(N = 241)

Interestingly, the qualitative data presented a different picture of the situation as evidenced in the following statements from participants:

*I must admit that rank has a strong effect on levels of job satisfaction because in UCC rank is used to determine ones position, salary and even ability to hold responsible or key positions in the university. It is also a strong factor that can be used to influence important decisions in the University (AP2)*

This was corroborated by another participant thus:

*I strongly agree that rank has significant impact on job satisfaction in academia all other things being equal. This is because academia in Ghana is highly stratified in terms of academic rank. For instance, apart from salaries and allowances which are determined by rank, ability to influence top level decision is determined by academic rank where the views of professors are more respected than that of assistant lecturers. (SL8)*

These statements from the interviewees seem to negate the findings of the quantitative data which established no significant effect of rank on academics level of job satisfaction. In literature these two conflicting results are found. For example Bentley et al. (2013) established in their study that the level of job satisfaction of academics did not increase with rank. Similarly, Kyeremeh (2014) found that academic rank had no significant effect on faculty job satisfaction. However, the findings of Lang (2014) found a significant effect of rank on job satisfaction of employees of board industrial and cruise ships. The general trend in this study seem to suggest that higher rank academics report higher levels of job satisfaction because they see their jobs to be more complex and have better working conditions such as pay and promotion prospects.

The second hypothesis was tested to determine whether psychosocial factors and organisational culture have significant influence on job satisfaction of academic staff of UCC. To test this hypothesis, a regression analysis was performed to determine the contribution of each variable in job satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Influence of Psychosocial Factors and Organisational Culture on Job Satisfaction of Academics**

Variables	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value		Tolerance	VIF
The work itself	-0.038	0.053	-0.039	-0.722	0.471	0.527	1.878
Work environment	0.144	0.060	0.131*	2.406	0.017	0.501	1.899
Promotion	0.150	0.061	0.123*	2.448	0.015	0.626	1.599
Co-worker relationship	0.005	0.034	0.006	0.148	0.883	0.913	1.095
Work-family conflict	-0.204	0.060	-0.217**	-3.371	0.001	0.377	2.655
Control culture	0.093	0.053	0.095	1.756	0.080	0.540	1.853
Role culture	0.098	0.031	0.143**	3.142	0.002	0.754	1.326
Orientation culture	0.026	0.028	0.037	0.910	0.364	0.928	1.078
Achievement culture	0.354	0.059	0.357**	6.019	0.000	0.446	2.243
(Constant)			0.354				
R			0.799				
R Square (R <sup>2</sup> )			0.638				
Adjusted R Square			0.624				

Source: Field survey, 2018      \*\*p<0.01; \*p<0.05      (N = 241)  
 Dependent variable: Academic staff job satisfaction

The multiple regression analysis involved testing of two models. In the first model, the dimensions of psychosocial factors and organisational culture were entered as independent variables. As depicted in Table 4, the variables that significantly predicted academic staff job satisfaction in order of importance were achievement culture [ $\beta = 0.357$  (0.059),  $p < 0.01$ ], role culture [ $\beta = 0.143$  (0.031),  $p < 0.01$ ], work environment [ $\beta = 0.131$  (0.060),  $p < 0.05$ ], promotion [ $\beta = 0.123$  (0.061),  $p < 0.05$ ], and work-family conflict [ $\beta = -0.217$  (0.060),  $p < 0.01$ ]. The results show that achievement and role cultures, promotion and work environment contributed positively to academic staff level of job satisfaction while work-family conflict contributed negatively. It is however, interesting to observe that psychosocial factors and organisational culture of the University were able to explain 63.8 percent of the variance in job satisfaction, indicating that these factors collectively has significant influence on academic staff job satisfaction in the

university. Content theorists of job satisfaction such as Lang (2014) are of the view that academic staff job satisfaction occurs when their need for growth and self-actualisation are met by their job. These theories have for long established controls as variables that can work to influence the job satisfaction of employees. Lang (2014) identified rank as one of the key variables that can influence the consequences of staff level of job satisfaction thereby producing an effect. Therefore, in the second model, rank of academic staff, which was considered as control, was entered into the equation. The argument here is that the influence of the independent variables can be thwarted or boosted by the control. The result is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Second Model on Influence of Psychosocial Factors and Organisational Culture on Job Satisfaction of Academics**

Variables	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
The work itself	-0.037	0.053	-0.039	-0.700	0.485	0.514	1.945
Work environment	0.139	0.061	0.126*	2.274	0.024	0.515	1.943
Promotion	0.152	0.062	0.124*	2.454	0.015	0.622	1.608
Co-worker relationship	0.008	0.035	0.009	0.217	0.828	0.867	1.154
Work-family conflict	-0.203	0.061	-0.217**	-3.309	0.001	0.369	2.713
Control culture	0.088	0.054	0.089	1.631	0.104	0.535	1.870
Role culture	0.105	0.032	0.155**	3.287	0.001	0.716	1.397
Orientation culture	0.032	0.029	0.046	1.104	0.271	0.894	1.119
Achievement culture	0.349	0.060	0.351**	5.835	0.000	0.437	2.291
Academic rank	-0.033	0.036	-0.040	-0.930	0.353	0.869	1.151
(Constant)			0.267				
R			0.800				
R Square (R <sup>2</sup> )			0.641				
Adjusted R Square			0.620				

Source: Field survey, 2018      \*\*p<0.01; \*p<0.05      (N = 241)

Dependent variable: Academic staff job satisfaction

Table 5 shows that with rank as a control variable, the beta coefficients of some of the independent variables shrank while others increased. It must be pointed out that

academic rank was non-significant when it was entered into the model. This implies that academic rank has no influence in determining the level of job satisfaction of academic staff. The total contribution ( $R^2$ ) of the variables when academic rank was introduced increased slightly from 0.638 to 0.641, while the adjusted  $R^2$  also reduced from 0.624 to 0.620. This shows that academic rank has no significant positive influence on academic staff level of job satisfaction at the University. It also implies that 35.9 percent of the variances on academic staff level of job satisfaction are likely to be the contribution of other variables that were not considered in this study. The study, thus rejects the hypothesis that psychosocial factors and organisational culture collectively have no statistically significant influence on job satisfaction of academic staff of UCC, Ghana. Nonetheless, the findings of the qualitative data support the quantitative results as evidenced in the following statements advanced by participants:

*The University's refurbishment of some offices of academics and the enhancement of resources such as books, internet facilities, software, computers and others to the benefits of academic staff I think has helped in enhancing academics job satisfaction. To academics, promotion to the highest rank is the main focus because promotion opportunities are important aspects of a worker's career and life. (AP4)*

Another participant stated that

*Issues that affect the work environment, promotion, role and achievement of university academics strongly predict their levels of job satisfaction because these factors influence the desire and satisfaction of academics. However, I think work-family conflict when not managed well can affect one's job satisfaction. (SL11)*

Another participant echoed that

*I think background characteristics of academic staff do not influence their level of satisfaction in the University. This is so because academics are more satisfied when they are promoted, when they achieve high or when their students assessed them high. These factors are evaluated based on merit in this university. (AP1)*

This finding is consistent with that of Kyeremeh (2014) who found achievement culture and promotion as the strongest predictors of job satisfaction among employees. Looking

at the results, with specific reference to the statistical significance of achievement as a variable, it shows that academic staff of UCC, Ghana are satisfied with the standards and criteria that are used in determining or measuring their achievement within the University. Again the results suggest that one's achievement as a professor, associate professor or senior lecturer is not a guarantee for one to be satisfied in academia but it must be accompanied with conducive work environment and effective management of work-family conflict. This will ensure academic staff security and feeling of a sense of belongingness at the work place.

It can be pointed out that organisational culture stands as the pivot from which all other factors of human resource management derive. Kyeremeh (2014) and Lang (2014) are of the view that for faculty members to be more satisfied in the institution, they must develop a positive view on the organisational culture of the University. This is because organisational culture which has strong norms for control, role, outcomes, internalisation and identification are likely to generate high levels of job satisfaction.

## **Conclusion**

Among university academics in UCC, significant differences do not exist in their levels of job satisfaction in terms of rank. However, assistant lecturers, senior lecturers and associate professors are more satisfied than lecturers, and professors. The conclusion therefore is that, irrespective of one's rank, as long as management of the University are able to enhance academic staff work environment, promotion, and work-family conflict, and also the role and achievement cultures of the University, it will translate into academic staff satisfaction in the job they do which in the long run may improve productivity.

## **Recommendations for Counselling and Educational Practice**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Management of the University in conjunction with the Counselling Unit ensures that psychosocial interventions are put in place to enhance academic staff job satisfaction and consequently boost their productivity. They can do this by providing orientation, information and vocational counselling services periodically to the academic staff, (especially newly appointed academic staff, and newly appointed head of colleges, faculties, institutes, centres, and departments) to help them internalise the set of norms, beliefs, principles and ways of behaving that together give the University a distinct character.
2. The fact that academic staff perceive their psychosocial factors and organisational culture of the University in positive terms calls for management support and encouragement. This is so because organisations that empower management of career are more likely to enhance employee's job satisfaction. Nearly, all employees look for fulfilments in their performance such that, if a person becomes involved in performance that suits his-her work-related options, he/she is likely to encounter satisfaction of job. This implies that, the University can put in place measures that will help enhance staff job satisfaction through guidance and counselling. With effective counselling, staff psychosocial problems and challenges can be reduced meaningfully, to help boost their job satisfaction and consequent productivity.

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