

# Perceived Job Satisfaction and its impact toward employee loyalty at new higher institution in the Sarawak Corridor Renewable Energy (SCORE) Region

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**Abstract:** Job satisfaction and employee loyalty are Human resource management concepts that significantly contribute to individual and organizational performance. Both job satisfaction and employee loyalty represents one of the most critical challenges faced by the managers in organization today when it comes to managing their employees. Employees are the most valuable resource for all organizations; the longer an employee works for a company the more valuable it becomes. The aim of the study was to examine the impact of job satisfaction on employee loyalty in case of higher education sector. Descriptive analysis, independent-samples t test and bivariate correlation were employed to analyze a sample of 129 employees from one new higher institution in the middle region of Sarawak. The empirical results showed that career development, reward and compensation, job security and workplace environment have positive significant relationship with job satisfaction and loyalty among the new employees at the private institution. We have also examined the interaction among job satisfaction and employee loyalty among different groups of employees. The analysis revealed that most of the new employees between 21-30 years old (1 year working experience) have the highest job satisfaction and loyalty indices while workplace environment is the most important factor toward job satisfaction and loyalty among the employees. In this regard, the management of the institution should develop a long term human resource strategies in order to retain the young employees in the long term. This would ultimately contributing to the high performance and productivity of the institution in the future as well as economic and social development in Sarawak.

**Keywords:** *Job Satisfaction, Loyalty, Sarawak*

## 1. Introduction

The era of globalization and the knowledge economy brought into focus the importance of Sarawak positioning itself in the international arena. In connection with this, Sarawak government has been gearing a full efforts to transform the economy in the next few years in order to bring the state to a high level of industry growth and therefore, the development of strong and productive manpower is primarily important to support the government effort to

achieve the direction. The manpower will be skewed towards the skilled and semiskilled including those in the managerial levels. Hence, the state's emphasis on human capital development, which is also in consonant with the national agenda, is to prepare the local people to play meaningful roles in the process of development, the development of Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE) in particular. In this connection, university and colleges, polytechnics and specialized training centres play a very important part to initiate development of strong human

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capital and skill development activities. The education industry is becoming one of the major players in the high level of industry growth in line with Sarawak's vision and commitment in establishing a world class institutions of higher learning to spearhead the development and production of technical human resource for SCORE. With SCORE, it is able to attract around an estimated RM25 billions of investment to the state. Therefore, more academic and technical qualifications would be needed to meet the demand of state industries by year 2030. The research is mainly focus on higher institutions in middle region of Sarawak since it is one of the main gateway to SCORE. Therefore, a good human capital development are important component of the production factors of an organization which ultimately generate a high level of job satisfaction and loyalty workforce to complement the growth and fulfill the human resource and industrial needs of SCORE.

## 2. Problem Statement

According to Malaysia in the Global Competitiveness Report (2015-2016) [1], Malaysia currently lists among 20 top economies on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) and will need to embrace solutions that will help them address challenges to include, skill shortages; talent mobility and talent retention. As reinforced in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, "An efficient and effective labour market is necessary for local, regional and global competitiveness which will attract foreign direct investments and propel Malaysia toward economic growth." As the state is gearing towards transforming economy to a high level of industry growth, a good human capital development are important component of the production factors of an organization Storey [3]. In order to increase high retention of local talents to work in Sarawak, the state government has been putting a strong effort to develop and retrain its local workforce to ensure a competent and productive young employees can be retained in the organization and become a core competence which can sustain organization competitive advantage in the long term. Moreover, employees are important resource for all organizations since they represent a significant investment in terms of locating, recruiting, and training let alone salaries, healthcare plans, bonuses, etc. Therefore, the management of the organizations should look into a long term human resource development strategy perspective, ensuring their organizational policies are aimed at developing loyal employees because it will lead to a more lengthy tenure. The longer an employee works for a company the more valuable they become. Hence, all the local organizations in Sarawak should emphasis strong concern on their employees' level of job satisfaction to increase good employee retention and reduce turnover.

## 3. Research Objectives

The main objective is to examine the factors influencing job satisfaction and loyalty at new higher

institution in middle region of Sarawak and suggesting for more conducive working environment and increased productivity.

1. To investigate factors influencing job satisfaction and loyalty of the higher institution at the middle region of Sarawak.
2. To examine how each factor (career development, reward and compensation, job security, workplace environment) is respectively correlated with job satisfaction and loyalty.
3. To investigate any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and gender.
4. To investigate any significant difference between organization job satisfaction levels and age of the employees.
5. To investigate any significant difference between organization job satisfaction levels and years of working experiences.
6. To investigate any significant difference between organization job satisfaction levels and current job in the organization.

### 3.1 Research Questions

1. What are the factors influencing job satisfaction and loyalty of the higher institution at the middle region of Sarawak?
2. How is each dimension of factor (career development, reward and compensation, job security, workplace environment) is respectively correlated with overall level of job satisfaction and loyalty?
3. Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and gender?
4. Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and age of the employees?
5. Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and current job in the organization?
6. Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and years of working experiences?

## 4. Significance of the study

This study can benefits several areas of the new higher institution in Sarawak. First of all, the study would be able to benefit the development of the education because promoting job satisfaction among the new employees can enhance the productivity of the organization in the long term. In this regard, employees are primarily responsible for providing a sustainable competitive advantage amid the high competition among private higher institutions in Sarawak. Moreover, employee who are loyal will stay in the organization and will become the core competence of the organizations and has a competitive advantage amid high

competition among private higher institutions in Sarawak. Therefore, organization should find effective ways to promote job satisfaction among employees in order to reduce absence and turnover rate of employees and at the same, to attract young generation to work in education sector. In addition, this study will provide insight to several factors which can influence the job satisfaction while it will also benefit the organization to focus ways to attract, developing and retaining a good manpower.

## 5. Research Methodology

Qualitative methods were employed to carry out the research through questionnaire and interviews with employees of the identified institutions. This study involved one new higher institution in the middle region of Sarawak. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for quantitative analysis.

After seeking approval from the management level of the institution, the researcher administrated questionnaires to the employees of the organizations. Data obtained from the survey questionnaires were then analyzed with SPSS version 23. For this purpose data was collected from the academicians and non-academicians working in the institution. The research was based on primary data. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire which was administered personally to the employees working in the organization to collect data. The questionnaire was based on 5-point (Likert) scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. In this study, a total of 129 set of questionnaires were collected for the analysis. The demographic profile of the respondent are stated in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Category	%	Frequency
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	56.6	73
Female	43.4	56
<b>Nationality</b>		
Malaysian	96.9	125
Non Malaysian	2.3	3
Missing	0.8	1
<b>Role</b>		
Managerial role	18.6	24
Non Managerial role	80.6	104
Missing	0.8	1
<b>Age</b>		
21-30 years	51.9	67
31-40 years	26.4	34
41-50 years	12.4	16
Above 50	9.3	12
<b>Years of working</b>		
Below 1 year	37.2	48
2-3 years	45.7	59

Above 3 years	16.3	21
Missing	0.8	1
<b>Job position</b>		
Academic	56.6	73
Non Academic	42.6	55

## 6. Literature review

Organization today must acknowledged that job satisfaction plays a major role in employees' job performance and productivity. Employee are very concerned on job satisfaction for their enhancement of their self-esteem which leads to employees' loyalty and reduce labour turnover in the long term. With the increasing of education quality and more affordable education opportunity, employee, particularly young generation always perceive organization is only a place to and sense of loyalty are decreasing towards the organization. Therefore, many organizations are trying to find an effective ways to attract young generation of employees and increase the employee loyalty.

### 6.1 Job Satisfaction

According to Locke [4], job satisfaction has been the most commonly definitions as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experiences. Li et al [5] also stated that job satisfaction can impact employee performance, which means that satisfied employees tend to have a higher performance at work compared to others. Therefore, organization development and profit are influenced when employees achieve high satisfaction.

### 6.2 Loyalty

Logan [6] mentioned that loyalty is the strong relationship that ties an employee to his or her particular organization even when it may not be monetary considerably to stay there. Numerous empirical studies have shown that job satisfaction have positive correlation with employee loyalty and employee satisfaction is the strong determinant of organizational loyalty in Matzler [9]. Hence, job satisfaction and loyalty are considered as one of the most key factors in productivity and it also post many challenges to organization today when it comes to retaining their employees. Likewise, job satisfaction can increases employees' sense of accomplishment, productivity, intention to stay, and loyalty. Satisfied employees are more loyal to their organization, which they demonstrate by working hard to provide customers with high-quality services Borzaga and Tortia,; Yee et al. [7,8]

### 6.3 Career Development

According to Mehta [10], career development is a most important determinant of employee loyalty. Career

development is a place in organization where people can find a place in an organization to express excellence and contribute to the goals of the organization and respected position. Career development consists of concerted efforts directed towards assessing workers' performance identifying likely career paths for that employee, designing and implementing different forms of training and experience to prepare that person for more advanced job. Besides that, career development created a direction for employees to prepare them for more advanced jobs through systematic planning and implementation. In organizational level, it is a long term planned program designed to match individual and organizational needs.

#### 6.4 Reward and Compensation

According to Steers & Porter [11], compensation is a link between the rewards of a company offers and those individuals that attracted by the compensation to working in the firm, and those employees who willing continue to work for the business. In addition, Hassan et al [12] also highlighted that compensation was the most important factor for job satisfaction.

#### 6.5 Job security

Pfeffer [13] discovered that job security can help to generate an environment of confidence along with employees which will reinforce their loyalty to the company. Companies that provide job security can create a positive impact on the company's performance. The finding was further echoed by Nohria et al [14] in which, job security can increases an employee's commitment, and has an important effect on an employee's rank of enthusiasm. Therefore, employers must ensure job security to the employees. In return, employees will become loyal to their company because their jobs are secure.

#### 6.6 Workplace environment

Workplace environment is where an employee's working surrounding environment can affects the employees' productivity and psychologically as well as safety and health. Frempong et al [16] revealed that there is a significant relationship between workplace environment and job satisfaction. Therefore, one should recognize that workplace environment can make impact on employee satisfaction towards the job and affect the loyalty to organization. Furthermore, Andarsari [15] also found that work environment has a strong influence on employee job satisfaction. A work environment that can make employees develop optimally with appropriate rewards can increase worker satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is very influential in increasing employee loyalty to the company. Employees with high levels of satisfaction will give their energy and time for the success of the organization.

## 7. Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the factors influencing job satisfaction and loyalty of the higher institution at the middle region of Sarawak?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation between types of variables

Variables	N	Average Mean	Std Deviation
Career Development	129	3.85	0.591
Reward & Compensation	129	4.04	0.550
Job Security	129	3.76	0.581
Workplace Environment	129	3.92	0.578

Cronbach alpha = 0.756 - 0.904 (high) ; Mean = 0-1.66 (low); 1.67 – 3.32 (moderate); 3.33 – 5 (high)

From the table, it shows that all the employees perceived all the variables at a high mean which are above 3.33.

In regard to career development, majority of the respondents agreed that their organization provided all sorts of supportive roles to ensue employees maximize their career potential. Moreover, most of the respondent believe that career development reinforce their individual value from high educational process. According to Mehta et al [10], career development is an important determinant of employee loyalty.

While most of the respondents also agreed that reward and compensation is very important for those employees who want to stay long term in organization. Hassan et al [12] believe that, if employees receive suitable compensation and benefits, their satisfaction and loyalty will both increase.

In addition, job security is another important factor to influence employee job satisfaction in an organization. According to Nohria et al [14], job security increases an employee's commitment, and has an important effect on an employee's rank of enthusiasm. Therefore, employers must ensure job security to the employees. In return, employees will become loyal to their company because their jobs are secure.

Most of the employees also agreed that satisfying workplace environment with suitable work conditions and good workmates, feeling comfort and security needed to work daily are also important. Likewise, Andarsari [15] also stated that workplace environment has a strong influence on employee job satisfaction. Therefore, workplace environment is the important determinant of employee loyalty.

Research Question 2: How is each dimension of factor (career development, reward and compensation, job security, workplace environment) is respectively correlated with job satisfaction and loyalty?

The Pearson correlations are employed to indicate the strength of relationships between the type of variables with job satisfaction and loyalty, whether they are significant at 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This is illustrated in the following table 3.

Table 3: Correlations between type of variables with job satisfaction and loyalty

Dimensions/Pearson Correlation	Overall
Career Development	0.554
Reward and Compensation	0.465
Job Security	0.658
Workplace Environment	0.631

Table 3 indicates that each factor (career, reward, job security and workplace environment) are significantly correlated with job satisfaction and loyalty. This implies that all the four dimension factors are of importance in determining employees' loyalty and while workplace environment has the highest correlation.

Research Question 3: Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and gender?

Using independent T-Test, the results indicates that there is no significant difference between gender ( male and female ) and the overall organization job satisfaction and loyalty as shown in table 4 with  $P = 0.762 > 0.05$ . Male employees have higher job satisfaction and loyalty indices (Mean =3.80, SD = 0.73) than female employees (Mean = 3.77).

Table 4: significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig
Loyalty	Male	73	3.8048	.73745	.08631	0.762
	Female	56	3.7723	.47261	.06315	

Research Question 4: Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and age of the employees?

By using ANOVA analysis, table 5 indicates that there is no significant difference between age of the employees and the overall organization job satisfaction levels and loyalty with  $P = 0.175 > 0.05$ ,  $F(12,116) = 0.976$ .

Table 5 : significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and age of the employees

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.498	12	.958	.976	0.175
Within Groups	113.851	116	.981		
Total	125.349	128			

Research Question 5: Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and current job in the organization?

Using independent T- Test, the results indicates that there is no significant difference between current jobs in the organization (Academic and Non-Academic) and the overall organization job satisfaction levels and loyalty as shown in table 6 with  $P = 0.091 > 0.05$ . Academic have higher job satisfaction and loyalty indices (Mean =3.87, SD = 0.64) than non-academic (Mean = 3.68).

Table 6 : significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and current job in the organization

	Job	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.
Loyalty	Academic	73	3.8733	.64968	.07604	0.091
	Non-Academic	56	3.6830	.60206	.08045	

Research Question 6: Is there any significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and years of working experiences?

By using ANOVA analysis, the result shows that there is significant differences between years of working experiences and the overall organization job satisfaction levels and loyalty with  $P = 0.003 < 0.05$ ,  $F(2,126) = 5.923$ .

Table 7a: significant difference between the organization job satisfaction levels and years of working experiences.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.423	2	2.212	5.923	.003
Within Groups	47.050	126	.373		
Total	51.474	128			

Table 7b: Mean Differences between years of working experiences and organization job satisfaction levels using Post Hoc Test.

(I) Years	(J) Years	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound

Below 1 year	2 - 3 years	.38294*	.11878	.005	.1012	.6647
	Above 3 years	.38352*	.15733	.042	.0104	.7567
2 - 3 years	Below 1 year	-.38294*	.11878	.005	-.6647	-.1012
	Above 3 years	.00058	.15265	1.000	-.3615	.3626
Above 3 years	Below 1 year	-.38352*	.15733	.042	-.7567	-.0104
	2 - 3 years	-.00058	.15265	1.000	-.3626	.3615

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 7b shows that there is significant difference between overall organization job satisfaction levels and loyalty between below 1 year and above 3 years at  $P = 0.04 < 0.05$  and also 2-3 years at  $P = 0.05$ . However, there is no significant difference on overall organization job satisfaction levels and loyalty between 2 – 3 years and above 3 years. Analysis of mean indicates that employees below 1 year experience has the highest mean (4.03) of job satisfaction and loyalty indices follow by employees with 2 – 3 years experiences and above 3 years experiences which all fall under high levels of job satisfaction and loyalty.

## 8. Limitations

This study is also subjected to some limitations. First of all, this study is based on a small sample size since it involved only one private institution in Sarawak. There are other new institutions which didn't participate in the survey. Second, several other factors which may impact on employee job satisfaction may have not been considered in the study. Given these limitations, further research might need to carry out in these directions. First, other private institutions in Sarawak to be included in the near future. Second, future studies could look into the possible inclusion of other related factors such as superior support, communication, task variety in relation to employee satisfaction.

## 9. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the objective of this study, the following conclusion has been derived. First, the findings have shown that employees' job satisfaction at the private higher institutions were high. This implies career development, rewards and compensation, job security and workplace environment are important factors for employees to increase job satisfaction and loyalty.

One way Anova also shows that there is significant differences between job satisfaction levels among different years of experiences. Detail analysis using Post Hoc test show that there is significant difference for overall organization job satisfaction levels between below 1 year and above 3 years at  $P = 0.04 < 0.05$  and also 2-3 years at  $P =$

0.05. However, there is no significant difference on overall organization job satisfaction levels between 2 – 3 years and above 3 years. Analysis of mean indicates that employees with less than 1 year experience has the highest mean of job satisfaction indices follow by employees with 2 – 3 years experiences and 3 years experiences which all fall under high levels of job satisfaction and loyalty. It also concluded majority of these employees are young adult who are in the range of 21-30 (51.9%).

According To Deloitte Millennial survey 2017 [2], the generation that in 2020 is projected to make up about one-third of the global workforce This also implies that young employees are very important group in this institution and management must develop effective human resource long term strategies to retain high capable and productive young workforce. It is suggested organization can develop mentor relationship between young employees and senior employees. Both can help one another by providing regular job feedback. With a mentoring program, an organization pairs someone more experienced in a discipline with someone less experienced in a similar area, with the goal to develop specific competencies, provide performance feedback, and design an individualized career development plan.

Using independent T- Test, the results indicates that there is no significant difference between current jobs in the organization (Academic and Non-Academic) and the overall organization job satisfaction levels as shown in table 6 with  $P=0.091 > 0.05$ . Academic staff have the highest job satisfaction indices (Mean = 3.87) than the non-academic staff (Mean = 3.68). This implies that academic staff are putting their efforts to increase the job satisfaction more than non-academic staff.

The analysis also indicated that workplace environment shows highest factors toward job satisfaction and loyalty. According to Andarsari [15], the workplace environment has a strong influence on employee job satisfaction. A work environment that can make employees develop optimally with appropriate rewards can increase worker satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is very influential in increasing employee loyalty to the company. Employees with high levels of satisfaction will give their energy and time for the success of the organization.

On the other hand, education sector is a growing industry in Sarawak with high demand for young employment. With strong support and supportive ongoing education development policy from state government, it provides confidence to young employees to embark on academic field. Education field adopt flexible time working system and conducive environment where academicians are able to plan for their works at most flexible way. Besides, the office of the employee is near to each other and they have more chances to mix and interact with their colleagues. It is

also suggested that institution should continue to maintain the existing flexible working system and continue to improve workplace environment which can decrease some of the productivity barriers such as complaints and absenteeism Andarsari [15].

It is also suggested management of the institution should conduct intensive training and development programs for new institution. Technology and skill training is very important to enhance the employee productivity while developing talented employees should be a strategic priority in organization and training and development can assist organization to ensure that good talents are recruited, developed, rewarded and retained in the long run Karen et al [18].

A highly reliable two ways communication also very important in the new institution to ensure young employee develop trust on their employer who is really to listen and responds to their problems. Trust between employer and employees is the most important quality in which institution needs to develop Krithika et al [17].

In addition, recognition and appreciation via reward and compensation still important for employees. Besides competitive salaries, management can also consider others like bonus programs, pension, health plans and paid time off for young employees to attract them to stay in the organization. The rewards given to employees must be meaningful in order to impact their perception of the organization and therefore have a marked influence on its retention efforts.

The study concludes that the job satisfaction and loyalty indices for the private institution located in the SCORE area are high at both academicians and non-academicians. This also indicate that willingness of the employees to continue to increase their performance, enhance job satisfaction, increase loyalty and reduce their intention to leave the organization which would ultimately contributing to the economic and social development of the SCORE region in Sarawak.

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