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The relationship between internal service quality and physical education faculty members' job satisfaction in dist. 10 of Islamic Azad University, Iran

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between Internal Service Quality and Physical Education Faculty Members' Job Satisfaction in Dist. 10 of Islamic Azad University (IRAN). The research method in this study was descriptive and correlation. Physical Education Faculty Members of Dist. 10 of Islamic Azad University (IRAN) have established statistical population of research that they all participated in the study (N=38). For this purpose, Dixie's Internal Service Quality questionnaire (2005) and Visoci and Chrom's Job Satisfaction questionnaire (1998) was used. Reliability of questionnaires after a pilot study using Cronbach's alpha test, respectively ($\alpha=0.81$) and ($\alpha=0.76$) were obtained. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods for data analysis were used. The findings showed that between internal service quality and job satisfaction, there is significant positive correlation ($r=0/432$, $p<0/001$). Also among internal service quality levels, positive relationship between internal service quality in organizational level and job satisfaction was significantly ($r=0/627$, $p<0/001$). Since the internal service quality positively related to job satisfaction in Faculty Members recommended that leaders and managers of universities and especially in Physical Education group in order to improve the internal service quality work.

Keywords: Internal service quality, Job satisfaction, Faculty members.

INTRODUCTION

Universities are one of the most important centers for research and training activities in every country and in this regard, faculty members are supposed to be one of the most important components of educational system and also one of the most essential elements of development and advancement in each and every country [1]. Since the function of this group is directly related to the function of educated people in the community, so the key factors in increasing the efficiency of faculty members should be recognized [2]. Hereof, *Smith, et al.* (2006) have expressed that the maximum use of knowledge and capabilities of faculty members in educational centers depends on the building of a good working environment for these people, increasing their job satisfaction and supporting them [3].

One of the most important factors affecting the satisfaction and function of faculty members is the provided service quality to this group within the universities. Providing suitable and high quality services to faculty members could affect the function of this educated class of society and finally could affect the function of universities. It is the same for the faculty members of physical education as well, and availability of sports facilities and providing services to

faculty members of physical education could have an impressive role on their teaching process in the universities [4]. Quality is a subject matter that attracts too much attention towards itself in industry and business, and nowadays its importance in other fields such as service sectors and educational sectors has been drawn to attention too. In this regard, the internal service quality has become important as well. The term “Internal Service Quality” was first introduced by *Sasser and Arbeit* (1976). They considered the employees as internal costumers and they expressed that maintaining the internal customers’ satisfaction and offering high quality services among these employees lead to offering high quality services to external costumers [5]. In definition of internal service quality, *Di Xie* (2005) expresses that the internal service quality is a level at which an employee is satisfied with the received provided services from internal service providers [6]. Furthermore, the internal service quality refers to the employees’ emotions in an organization about service quality that they provide for their colleagues or vice versa [7]. According to Service Profit Chain (SPC) by *Heskett, et al.* (1994) the provided service quality within an organization works as a link and connects the employees’ satisfaction and loyalty to the customer’s loyalty and satisfaction, organization’s growth and earning profits [8].

Hallowell, et al. (1998) believed that organizations tending toward providing high quality services to their external customers should promote their service quality within the organization [7]. According to *Zhen You* (2003) an important part of internal service quality is that how the employees of a sector in an organization provide services to their other colleagues. Based on this, the condition and quality of the provided services within the organization affects the satisfaction of other employees [9]. *Meng Xia* (2003) expressed that providing high quality services within the organization increases the employees’ satisfaction and finally results in satisfaction of customers outside of the organization and also improves the organization’s function [10]. *Liang Wang* (2010) believes that paying attention to the internal service quality is the starting point for satisfaction of employees, shareholders, external customers and finally improvement of organizational function [5]. *Davis* (1994) declares that the quality of provided services within the organization is assumed as one of the most important parts of service quality strategy in organizations and paying attention to this part in a long time results in cost reduction and profitability of the organization [11]. As it was mentioned, the internal service quality can affect the employees’ satisfaction of the services received from other colleagues or different parts of the organization.

Hereof, research results of *Smith, et al.* (2006) performed on two great universities in Florida showed that the increase in quality of provided services among employees and professors affected their satisfaction and resulted in increasing satisfaction of university students from professors, staff and finally the whole university [3]. Research results of *Yue Xia* (2009) also showed that the internal service quality and internal customers’ satisfaction have a positive effect on the external customers’ satisfaction and eventually they affect the growth and profitability of the organization [12]. Furthermore, research results of *Qin Nan* (2009) on Taiwan insurance companies showed that there is a positive, meaningful relation between different levels of internal service quality, employees’ job satisfaction and these companies’ functions [13].

As it was mentioned, one of the most important variables in affecting the employee’s function in an organization and eventually function of the whole organization is the employees’ job satisfaction in that organization. Job satisfaction is referred to the general attitude of an individual toward his/her job. The one whose job satisfaction is in a higher level has a positive attitude toward his/her job and vice versa [14]. Researches show that employees’ satisfaction about the method of providing services, management function, job physical condition and etc., result in employees’ job satisfaction, and definitely this satisfaction results in increasing efficiency and cooperation in the process of serving duty [15]. Professors’ job satisfaction results in increasing efficiency of this educated class of society and accelerate the scientific advances in the country. Tension and lack of job satisfaction among faculty members could be a threat for physical and mental health, life and work quality and also a barrier for access to individual and social goals [16]. So, one of the important subjects in each and every organization or institute is to focus on its employees’ job satisfaction and the key factors of that. Broadly, the success of an organization depends on the effort and job satisfaction of the employees of that organization [17]. In this regard, one of the most important issues leading to job satisfaction and motivation among faculty members of physical education is access to facilities and suitable sports equipments and receiving high quality services from other colleagues. Surely, obtaining these facilities and areas of upgrading job satisfaction can be effective in increasing the efficiency of faculty members, and internal/external efficiency of the university. But the issue that which one of these factors is more effective on the faculty members’ job satisfaction has always been the problem of researches and one of the important concerns in upgrading the quality in higher education system and specially in Islamic Azad University educational system. Although, in our country, there have been conducted some studies in this field in other sectors, the difference among educational sectors, business and industrial sectors and also the necessity for more comprehensive studies than those

few conducted studies in this field, made the researchers to survey the connection between internal service quality and physical education faculty members' job satisfaction in Dist. 10 of Islamic Azad University.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the research is descriptive and correlational, which is conducted as a field study. The population of the study consisted of all Physical Education Faculty Members in Dist. 10 of Islamic Azad University (IRAN). The sample size was considered equal to the population (N=38). The data was collected using Internal Service Quality Questionnaire developed by *Di Xie* (2005) and Job Satisfaction questionnaire (1998) developed by *Visoci* and *Chrom's* (1998). The data was collected in three steps. First, a demographic data sheet was used to collect the data on personal information including age, level of education and work experience. Second, internal service quality questionnaire was administered to the participants. The scale consists of 21 items on a 7-point *Likert* scale and examines learning at individual, team and organizational levels. Third, job satisfaction questionnaire was administered to the participants. The scale comprises 39 items on a 5-point *Likert* scale. The reliability of the questionnaires was also calculated using Cronbach alpha formula, which yielded a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.81$ for internal service quality questionnaire and $\alpha=0.76$ for job satisfaction questionnaire. As to the statistical measures, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and tabulations were used to describe the data. Inferential statistics including Pearson correlation formula was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

The results showed that the participants were 36 years old on average. 84.2 percent of the participants had M.A degrees and 73.7 percent had more than 5 years of work experience. As shown in Table 1, the mean scores of internal service quality were 5.882 at the individual, 5.704 at the division and 4.526 at the organizational levels. internal service quality average was 5.438 out of 7.

Table 1. Description of internal service quality based on Faculty' opinions

Statistic variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Internal Service Quality at the Individual Levels	5.882	0.432	2.5	6.3
Internal Service Quality at the Division Levels	5.704	0.446	2	6.75
Internal Service Quality at the Organizational Levels	4.526	0.563	2.40	5.38
Total Internal Service Quality	5.438	0.456	2	6.33

As shown in Table 2, the mean score of Job Satisfaction was 4.248 out of 5.

Table 2. Description of Job Satisfaction based on Faculty' opinions

Statistic variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Job Satisfaction	4.248	0.586	1.25	5

Table 3. Relationship between the levels of internal service quality and Job Satisfaction

	Job Satisfaction		
	N	r	P
Internal Service Quality at the Individual Levels	38	0.368	0.001
Internal Service Quality at the Division Levels	38	0.462	0.001
Internal Service Quality at the Organizational Levels	38	0.627	0.001
Total Internal Service Quality	38	0.432	0.001

Since the data show a normal distribution, Pearson correlation test was run to analyze the data. As illustrated in Table 3, the results of correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between internal service quality and Job Satisfaction from the viewpoint of Physical Education faculty members ($r=0.432$, $P<0.001$). In other words, there is a significant positive correlation between increased internal service quality and Job Satisfaction of the faculty members. The results, however, revealed there was a significant correlation between internal service quality at the individual level and Job Satisfaction ($r=0.368$, $P<0.001$). There was also a significant relationship between internal service quality at the division level and Job Satisfaction ($r=0.462$, $P<0.001$). A significant positive correlation was also found between internal service quality at the organizational level and Job Satisfaction ($r=0.627$, $P<0.001$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One of the most important challenges that organizations and specially service organizations encounter with is the subject of quality. The quality of provided service is often examined by the customers from outside of the organization. By bringing up the two terms of internal marketing and internal service quality, employees of organizations are also participated in the evaluation of service quality. Internal service quality is assumed as one of the important factors in efficiency of modern dynamic organizations such as training centers and specially universities, which focusing on that leads to the job satisfaction of the internal employees of an organization and improvement in their function. Therefore, in this research we are going to examine the connection between internal service quality and job satisfaction from the perspective of faculty members of physical education in Dist. 10 of Islamic Azad University.

The results showed that generally, there is a meaningful connection between internal service quality and job satisfaction of faculty members and this result matches the research results of *Meng Xia* (2003), *Smith, et al.* (2006) and *Qin Nan* (2009). Nowadays from the researchers' perspective, the service quality within the organization is one of the most important dimensions in service quality which in long time causes cost reduction and profitability for the organization. Building connection and providing high quality services among the employees play an important role in interactions of these employees with the external customers. The internal customers of the organization constitute a part of a cycle that eventually affects the external customers' satisfaction and leads to success or failure of the organization. Focusing on the internal service quality which affects the other effective variables of provided service quality to the external customers relies on the support of leaders and managers of the organization, specially the human resource managers. With regard to the position of the universities in development of physical and psychological dimensions of society from one side and the scientific progress of the country from the other side, there is an essential need for focusing on the service quality of such organizations. Hereof, *Smith, et al.* (2006) declares that the training centers should upgrade the provided service quality to the students and university students in order to be successful in their work and scientific development, and the requisite for gaining this goal is focusing on service quality in these centers and maximizing the employees' satisfaction [3]. Given the importance of internal service quality and the role of facilities and sports equipments, recommend that the managers and human resources officials in Dist.10 of Islamic Azad University should put their endeavors in supporting and institutionalizing of internal service quality as a part of culture of those universities. Also making suitable changes in different parts of these organizations such as the organizational structure and reward and promotion system can help the improvement of internal service quality and finally results in the employees' satisfaction and upgrading the functions of these centers.

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