



Assessment of Person-Job Fit Perception and Work Adjustment of New Academics in Tamilnadu

S. Muralidharan^{1*}, N. Santhosh Kumar

¹Research Scholar, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.

*Associate Dean, Faculty of Management, SRM University, Chennai.

*Corresponding author's E-mail: muralidharans86@yahoo.com

Accepted on: 10-04-2016; Finalized on: 31-05-2016.

ABSTRACT

A blended quantitative and qualitative study was conducted to examine the relationship between person-job fit perception and work adjustment of new academics in Tamilnadu universities. Respondents of the survey consisted of 167 new academics from Tamilnadu universities. The Person-Job Fit Perception and Work Adjustment Scales were used to measure respondents' person-job fit perception and work adjustment. Descriptive analysis showed high levels of person-job fit perception and work adjustment. Correlation analysis proved positive and significant relationship between person-job fit perception and work adjustment. Partial correlation analysis highlighted the influence of work experience and other demographic factors such as age, gender, and field expertise on the relationship. Twenty three new academics were involved in conducted in-depth interviews. Responses from the twenty-three subjects in a qualitative study proved the essence of perceived person-job fit onto work adjustment. Through constant comparative analysis, the following sub-themes of perceived work experience importance; perceived ability to meet job requirements; and perceived suitability of knowledge, skills and training levels were identified under the theme of person-job fit perception. Recommended actions at both individual and organizational levels are proposed.

Keywords: Person-job fit perception, In-depth interviews and Comparative analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher learning are the most suitable institutions to act as organizational models that uphold professional integrity and responsibility. However like many other organizations, they are still not problem-free from various unpleasant issues related to relationship conflicts, imbalance rewards system, performance deficiency as well as inconsistencies in policies and technology conducts¹⁴. Most new academics are usually affected by these conflicts due to several reasons such as the lack of leadership authority and ineffective development or preparation programs. Perhaps the general perception that most new academics are usually familiar and prepared to perform all the academia job aspects such as teaching, research, supervision, publishing, consultancy as well as community works led to the negligence of continuous improvement of developmental programs for them. Consequently, many of them ended up alone in the process of juggling between new job demands, new norms and culture of the organizations. To some extent, it also require a lot of effort for the academe newcomers to adapt to the organizational system, job design, formal and non-formal communication networks persisting in their new work environment. Researches like Lucas, Murray has even proven that new academics who are experts of their own field could not necessarily demonstrate effective, efficient and excellent performance. The same situation applies to new academics of Tamilnadu public universities. As mentioned in 'National Higher Education Plan 2007-2010', being part of the tertiary educational system, talented new academics face the challenges to

achieve several goals such as generating first class human capital, to promote the banner of lifelong learning and to create new knowledge as well as innovations.

Review of Literature

An organization's ability to recruit and retain a sufficient number of high-quality employees is a major source of competitive advantage¹ and the skills these employees bring to the organization -- that is, their human capital -- are key organizational assets². As Pil and Leana mentioned, "public schools are organizations in which both intellectual and informational processes are important drivers of performance"³. Emerging evidence on teacher "value-added" suggests that teachers are the most important in-school factor in student achievement gains⁴. Consequently, efforts to improve public education must necessarily address the human capital teachers bring to their classrooms³, in addition to any types of changes that alter the organizational or informational processes of schools. One way to do so is to ensure that strong teachers are retained in the classroom.

When studying teacher recruitment and retention, educational researchers have typically emphasized economic perspectives such as labor market effects or supply and demand (for extensive reviews of these perspectives⁵, and to a lesser extent, relied on explanations based on school organizational or social structures⁶. Perhaps surprisingly, framing such as person-environment fit theory, which grows out of industrial organizational psychology, is less commonly used in contemporary explorations of teacher turnover.



Research Objective

- To identify the work adjustment and person-job fit perception levels of the new academics in Tamilnadu.
- To determine the relationship between person-job fit perception and work adjustment of the new academics in Tamilnadu.
- To investigate what contributes to the formation of person-job fit perception.
- To look at the implications of person-job fit perception onto work adjustment from the perspectives of the new academics themselves in Tamilnadu.

Methodology

Questionnaires were sent to new academics serving in three universities in Tamilnadu. The sample was drawn from a reference list of new academics who were appointed in the years of 2011, 2012 and 2013. Convenience sampling was applied onto a group of 337 new academics of the distributed questionnaires, 167 were returned. The relatively poor return rate can perhaps be attributed to the fact that several new academics were busy and the questionnaires were returned too late to be included in the study. Seventy-six of the respondents were male and 91 were female. All of them were appointed between 2011 and 2013. From the total number, 82.9 % were new academics with several years of work experience. Only 19.8% of them were classified as new academics with no work experience at all. The mean and mode for the respondents " age was 33.74 (standard deviation = 5.134) and 32. The youngest was 25 and the oldest was 54. A cover letter was attached together with each questionnaire to inform the nature,

significance and objectives of the study. Confidentiality of the information was also emphasized. The questionnaires contained measurements of work adjustment, person-job fit perception and demographic data.

Work adjustment

Defined as new academics subjective evaluation on their ability to adjust to job demands, performance standard and rewards in the work place. It was measured using a work adjustment scale adapted from the Work Adjustment Scale developed by Black and friends⁷. It consisted three items. Conducted factor analysis confirmed one dimension and subscale. The KMO (.697) and Bartlett (.000) values indicated the validity of the factor analysis⁸. The alpha cronbach of this scale was 0.781.

Person-job fit perception

Defined as subjective evaluation of new academics on the suitability of their knowledge, skills and ability to the job responsibilities. It was measured using the Person-Job Fit Scale⁹. It consisted four items. The alpha cronbach of this scale is .794. Demographic data such as age, gender and duration of work experience before serving the public universities were also measured.

Table 1: Work Experience of the New Academics

Work Experience	Percentage (%)
Less than 2 years	34.8
Between 2 to 5 years	21.7
Five years and above	43.5
Total	100

Table 2: Work Adjustment and Person-Job Fit Perception of New Academics

	n	High	Moderate	Low	Mean
Work Adjustment	167	67.7%	22.8%	9.6%	2.58
Person-Job Fit Perception	167	80.8%	16.8%	2.4%	2.78

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, all the findings were parallel to the congruence principle suggested by scholars of organizational psychology. They have dictated the effects that congruence has on employee "job performance, where higher congruence between job requirements and abilities is said to lead to higher performance¹⁰. On the other hand, lower congruence between the two would in the end lead to stress due to difficulty in job implementation, non-efficiency and low work quality¹¹. When such non-fitness is perceived, an employee usually has the tendency to seek for other jobs that seemed to fit and reestablish his or her self-esteem. In the process of detaching the job as part of his or herself identity, the employee would already be less focused and less committed to the job. This is how the employee usually

ended up demonstrating lower level of job performance. These findings also supported the principles of Work Adjustment Theory¹² and Person-Environment (P-E) Perspective. Work adjustment will be purported when a harmonious fit between the individual and work environment is perceived by the individual. An employee who feels that he or she fits to the new job is usually happier with the job. The positive evaluation of such fit could create higher level of self-confidence, professionalism and initiatives in one's job delivery¹³.

The fact that previous work experience is crucial in shaping the right fit perception and work adjustment of new academics signaled two important interventions that could be adopted by managements of the three universities in Tamilnadu. First is to allow new academics to have several months of industrial practices in



organizations, where their core businesses are related to the academics areas of specializations. The experience gained during the industrial practice will not only help new academics to learn the practical aspects related to their field of disciplines, it also serve as a maturing platform as they deal with work-life situations at the organizations. The practical experiences are actually bonuses that could aid new academics in their teachings. By relating to their own industrial practical experiences, new academics could deliver their instructional materials and lectures more meaningfully. Networks established during the industrial practices would also provide wider channels for new academics to market their expertise to the industries and gain consultancy projects which are useful for university, organizational as well as community benefits. Second is to provide more comprehensive induction course at the beginning of new academics services. University managements need to prepare new academics with relevant teaching, administrative, research, supervision and publishing knowledge and skills at the early stage of their career. The showcased importance of person-job fit perception upon the work adjustment of new academics indicated that new academics should be more self-initiated to seek for career development opportunities as to enhance the job-related skills such as teaching, research and supervision. Besides being reactive, they should engage themselves to various in-house as well as external career development training programs. New academics should not solely rely on the organizations to upgrade all the skills, knowledge and competencies required to perform as excellent academics. Heads of departments should also spend more time with their new subordinates to discuss on their career path. This will enable the new ones to see whether or not their current skills, knowledge and expertise are in line with organizational expectations. This could then avoid the formation of under-qualified perception among them. Besides that, the awareness on required knowledge and skills for future roles will help them to prepare for the upcoming responsibilities.

The management such as heads of departments and deans are also encouraged to clearly specify the key performance indicator and provide continuous feedbacks to new academics on their level of performance.

This could be done either verbally or even better in documentation form. Continuous feedbacks on their status of performance could actually increase their level of confidence and develop more positive person-job fit perception from time to time.

REFERENCES

1. Rynes S., & Barber A. Applicant attraction strategies: An organizational perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(2), 286–310.
2. Wellman B., & Frank K. Network capital in a multi-level world: Getting support from personal communities. In R. Burt, N. Lin, & K. Cook (Eds.), *Social capital: Theory and research*: 1-33. Chicago: Aldine de Gruyter
3. Pii F., & Leana C. Applying organizational research to public school reform: The effects of teacher human and social capital on student performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(6), 1101-1124.
4. Hanushek E., Kain J., & Rivkin S. Why public schools lose teachers. *Journal of Human Resources*, 39(2), 2002, 326-354.
5. Borman G., & Dowling N.M. Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(3), 2008, 367-409.
6. Baker-Doyle, K. Beyond the labor-market paradigm: A social network perspective on teacher recruitment and retention. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 18(26), 2010, 1-17.
7. Black, J.S & Stephens, G.K. The influence of the spouse on American expatriate adjustment and intent to stay in Pacific Rim overseas assignment. *Journal of Management*, 15, 1989, 529-544.
8. Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. (2nd Ed.). London: Sage Publications.
9. Saks A.M. & Ashforth B.E. Is job search related to employment quality? It all depends on the fit. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(4), 2002, 646-654.
10. Cable D.M. & DeRue D.S. The convergent and discriminant validity of subjective fit perceptions, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(5), 2002, 885-893.
11. Schuler, R.S. Definition and conceptualization of stress in organizations. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 25, 1980, 184-215.
12. Dawis R.V & Lofquist L.H. (1984). *A psychological theory of work adjustment*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
13. Cable, D.M. & Gilovich, T. Looked over or overlooked? Prescreening decisions and post interview evaluations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(3), 1998, 501-508.
14. Keith-Spiegel P., Whitley Jr., B. E. Balogh, D. W. Perkins, D. V., & Wittig A. F. (2002). *The ethics of teaching: A casebook* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None.

