



Research Paper

Applicability of Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model in analyzing Job Satisfaction among the Academic Staff at Makerere University: A conceptual Paper

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Abstract. Employees, who are satisfied, tend to care more about their quality of work, they are more committed to the organization and they are more productive as well (Bakotic, 2016). At Makerere University, efforts to enhance job satisfaction among the academic staff have been expended in terms of improved remuneration internet connections in offices, improved avenues for human resource development, and establishment of health insurance schemes (Nakkazi, 2015; Muhindo, 2016), among others. Despite these increased measures towards job satisfaction, strikes have persisted within the University in recent years (Nalubega, 2016; Angulo&Walubiri, 2013; Okoth, 2015). Could it be that the wrong interventions are being used to address job dissatisfaction at Makerere University? If proper job satisfaction analysis is not done, Makerere University will continue using interventions that do not address the root causes of job satisfaction. This paper proposes the applicability of Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model dimensions in the analysis of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University. Specifically, the study seeks to establish whether intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, job characteristics and personal characteristics respectively, are predictors of JS. This paper is derived from a PhD proposal that highlights the introduction, theories, problem, objectives, significance, framework, related literature and the corresponding hypotheses to be tested. It also proposes the methodology to be used in the study. The PhD monograph and future articles to be generated from the proposed study will give the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

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I. Introduction

The term job satisfaction has been defined by Hoppock (1935) one of the classical writers on job satisfaction as a combination of psychological, physiological as well as the circumstances of the environment which cause the employee to say: "I am happy with my job". Locke (1969) in his article "What is job satisfaction?" defined it as an emotional-affective response to a job or specific aspects of the job. Locke (1969) conceptualized job satisfaction in terms of; work it 'self, pay, promotion, supervision and relationship with co-workers. Therefore in this study, job satisfaction means a multi-dimensional variable that denotes a pleasurable or positive emotional state of workers, attitudinal responses that measures how a person feels about one's job as well as an affective reaction to one's job. In this study Job, satisfaction will be operationalized in terms of whether a job meets one's expectations, whether one is close to the ideal job and the level of contentedness with one's job.

The significance of job satisfaction has been captured by authors such as Bakotic (2016) who stressed that when employees are satisfied, they tend to care more about their quality of work and they are more committed as well. Paul and Phua (2011) also noted that when an employee is satisfied with the job, then such an employee will be more productive and creative and is more likely to be retained by the organization. However, some scholars have devoted effort to the study of JS since the early 1930s. The study sought classical writers (e.g. Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Herzberg, Mausner&Snyderman, 1959; Hoppock, 1935; Locke 1969) that established the predictors of JS. Other scholars (e.g. Alvez&Raposo, 2009; Chumney&Agucci, 2006; Demirtas, 2010; Gu& Chi SenSiu, 2009; Ho& Au, 2006; Huang & Van de Vliert, 2003) have constructed and validated instruments for measuring JS in educational institutions. Several studies in the recent past (e.g. Manas, Salvador, Boada, Gonzalez &Agullo, 2007; Niklas&Dormann, 2005; SSesanga& Garrett, 2005; Yang, 2010) have acknowledged the major predictors of JS. However, as put forward by the above studies, there has been a

bias towards the Western World, such as China (e.g. Ho & Au, 2006; Gu & Chi SenSiu, 2009; Huang & Van de Vliert, 2003); the UK (e.g. Demirtas, 2010); and Spain (Alvez & Raposo, 2009). This calls for further research on JS in other contexts such as the developing world.

II. Theoretical Review

The study was underpinned by Smerek and Peterson's (2007) Assessment Model of job satisfaction. The Assessment Model of job satisfaction was proposed by Smerek and Peterson (2007). The model proposes that to achieve job satisfaction in an organization there should be job characteristics as well as intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Smerek and Peterson (2007) suggested that there is a significant relationship between personal characteristics and job satisfaction. Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model was employed by Hagos and Abrha (2015) in the study aimed at examining the factors affecting job satisfaction among the academic staff of Mekelle University Ethiopia and found out personal characteristics, job characteristics were the most important predictors of job satisfaction. Almed, Nawaz, Igbal and Ali (2010) adopted the conceptual framework of Smerek and Peterson in testing hygiene and motivational factors and their impact on personal and job characteristics on work perceptions and job satisfaction at the University of Punjab Pakistan. The study findings indicated that the majority of the employees were satisfied with motivational factors. It is also assumed that job satisfaction among academic staff at Makerere University could be better explained using Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model.

Problem Statement

Employees, who are satisfied, tend to care more about their quality of work, they are more committed to the organization and they are more productive as well (Bakotic, 2016). At Makerere University, efforts to enhance job satisfaction among the academic staff have been expended in terms of improved remuneration internet connections in offices, improved avenues for human resource development, and establishment of health insurance schemes (Nakkazi, 2015; Muhindo, 2016), among others. Despite these increased measures towards job satisfaction, strikes have persisted within the University in recent years (Nalubega, 2016; Angulo & Walubiri, 2013; Okoth, 2015). Frequent strikes give an impression of dissatisfaction among the academic staff. Could it be that the interventions are not addressing the root causes of job dissatisfaction? If proper job satisfaction analysis is not done, Makerere University will continue using interventions that do not address the root causes of job satisfaction. Therefore this study aims to understand job satisfaction among the academic staff using a more comprehensive and holistic intervention of Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to apply Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model dimensions in the analysis of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University. Specifically, the study seeks to establish whether intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, job characteristics and personal characteristics respectively, are antecedents of the JS.

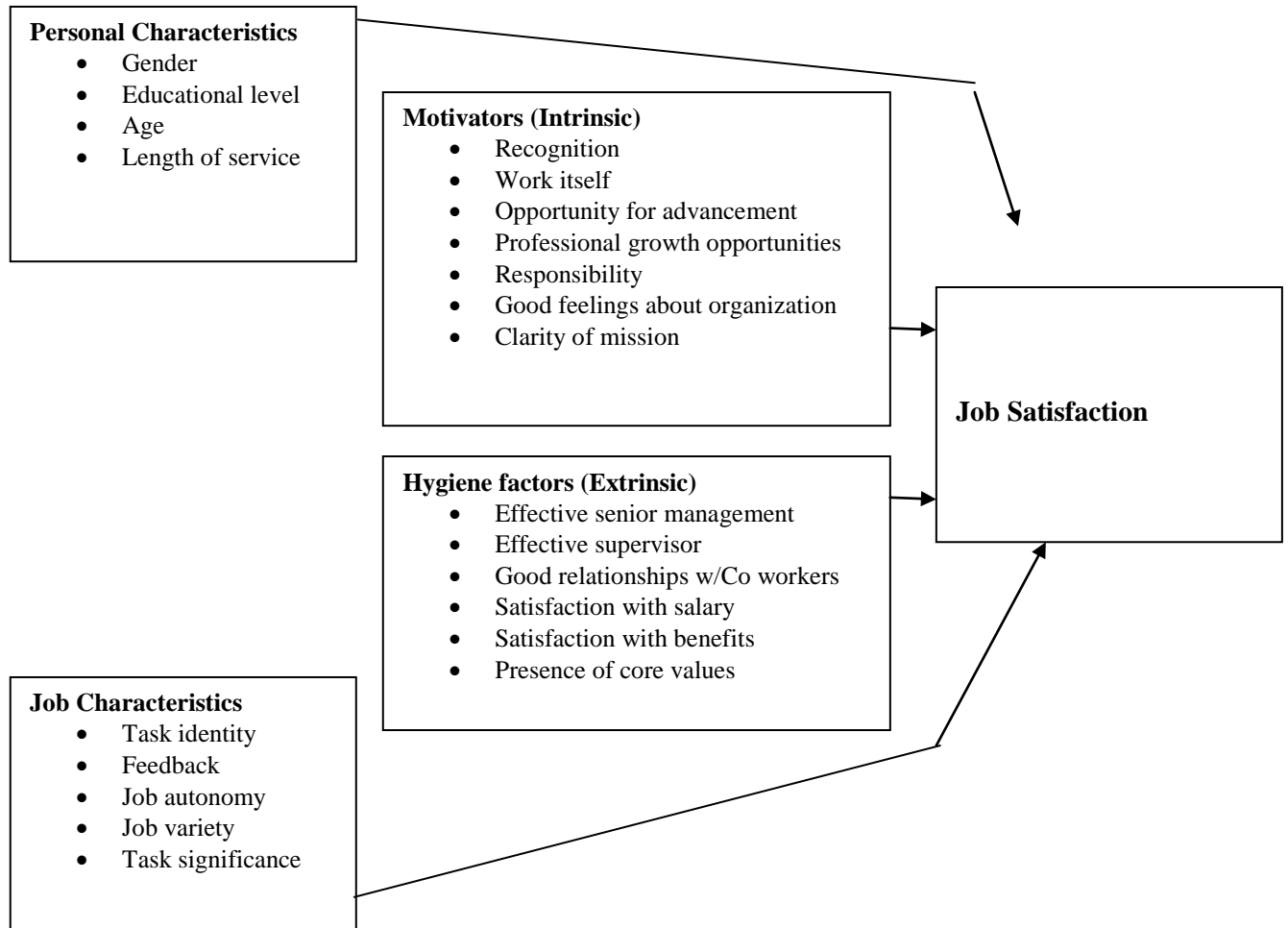
Significance

The study could help Makerere University administrators to be aware of the main dimensions that contribute to job satisfaction at the University. The government, policy-makers and other stakeholders might utilize the findings of the study to formulate, revise and implement appropriate policies that could enhance job satisfaction in private and public universities in Uganda. The Uganda National Council for Higher Education could particularly help review the University's organizational frameworks such as the triple helix, to capture and re-emphasise the notion of employee job satisfaction in universities. The study may also add to the existing body of knowledge by stimulating new areas for further research through the findings.

Framework

Based on Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model of job satisfaction reviewed earlier. Figure 1 provides a framework relating job satisfaction (JS) to its dimensions. The dimensions of Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Models are categorized as intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, job characteristics and personal characteristics. The intrinsic factors are conceptualized as; recognition, work itself, the opportunity for advancement, professional growth opportunities, responsibility, good feelings about the organization and clarity of mission. The extrinsic factors are effective senior management, effective supervisor, good relationships with co-workers, satisfaction with salary, satisfaction with benefits and presence of core values. The job characteristics are also conceptualized as; task identity, feedback, job autonomy, job variety and task significance as denoted by Hackman and Oldham (1975). The personal characteristics identified are namely, age, gender, educational level, marital status, and job experience (Smerek & Peterson, 2007).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Postulating that Intrinsic Factors, Extrinsic Factors, Job Characteristics and Personal Characteristics are Predictors of Job Satisfaction.



Sources: Concepts adapted from existing literature: Smerek& Peterson (2007); and Hackman and Oldham (1975).

Related Literature

7.1 Intrinsic Factors and Job Satisfaction. Numerous scholars (e.g. He, Yan, Rizal, Kuwang&Fei, 2018; Jiang, Lambert, Jin & Xiang, 2016; Lien, 2017; Rasool, Zhao, Samma&Memon, 2016; Yang, Brown & Moon, 2011) have studied the relationship between intrinsic factors and job satisfaction (JS). He et al. (2018) studied the factors that contribute to job satisfaction to help identify the reasons and areas that employees are not satisfied with. Using qualitative data analysis, it was discovered that employee responsibility and communication are some of the factors contributing to low employee satisfaction in Malaysia's various universities.

Jiang et al. (2016) carried out a study to reveal the extent to which Chinese community correctional officers were satisfied with their job. They used a clustered random sample of 255 community correctional officers from 15 counties in Hubei, China in 2013 who filled in a questionnaire and a standardized regression coefficient for analysis. Their results indicated that perceived promotional opportunities were a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Lien (2017) examined the factors affecting lecturer job satisfaction in selected Universities in Vietnam. He collected data using a questionnaire survey of 167 respondents and a simple linear regression for analysis. His results indicated that recognition and communication had influential relationship with lecturer job satisfaction in the selected Universities in Vietnam.

Rasool et al. (2016) analysed Job related rewards plus recognition on job satisfaction and employee motivation among the banking sector employees in China. They used a clustered random sample of 220 employees from the banking sector that filled in a questionnaire, and a Pearson correlational co-efficient technique for analysis. Their results indicated that reward and recognition had a positive and significant relationship with job-satisfaction and motivation. Yang et al. (2011) carried out a study to explore the determinants of job satisfaction

of corrections officers. They used a clustered random sample of 40 South Korean correctional officers who filled in a questionnaire, and an ordered logistic regression analysis for analysis. Their results indicated that employee promotion was a significant factor that led to job satisfaction. However, as the studies above suggest, researches have been biased towards Asia such as Vietnam (Lien (2017); China (Rasoolet al., 2016; Jiang, et al., 2016); Malaysia (He et al., 2018) and South Korea (Yang et al., 2011). These gaps make it necessary for this study to evaluate whether in the context of the academic staff at Makerere University in Uganda, the following hypothesis holds:

H₁: Intrinsic factors are predictors of JS.

7.2 Extrinsic Factors and Job Satisfaction. Several scholars (e.g. Bawafaa, Wang & Laschinger, 2015; Choudhury & Gupta, 2011; Hwang and Ramadoss, 2016; Tlaiss, 2013; Yarbrough, Martin, Fred & McNeill, 2016) have studied the relationship between extrinsic factors and job satisfaction (JS). For instance, Bawafaa et al. (2015) carried out a study to examine the influence of manager's resonant leadership on nurses' structural empowerment and job satisfaction. They used a cross-sectional survey design of 1216 registered nurses from nine Canadian provinces, and a structural equation model for analysis. Their results indicated that, structural empowerment partially mediated the relationship between resonant leadership as well as employee job satisfaction. Choudhury and Gupta (2011) carried out a study aimed at contributing insight into the relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intention as well as between job satisfaction and turnover intention amongst young Indian professionals by segregating the respondents into two groups based on the median age. They used a sample of 230 working Indian executives having a median age of 25, who filled in a questionnaire and analyzed data using a simple linear regression model. Their results indicated that there was a negative relationship between turnover intention and pay satisfaction. Hwang and Ramadoss (2016) studied gender differences regarding the simultaneous impacts of job demands- control-support model variables (job demands, job control, supervisor support and co-worker support) on job satisfaction via work-family conflict in the United States. They used a stratified random sample of 1092 male and 1367 female employees who filled a questionnaire, and a multiple group structural equation modelling for analysis. Their results indicated that supervisor support and co-worker support were significantly associated with an increase in job satisfaction in both male and female employees.

Tlaiss (2013) carried out a study to fill a gap in the literature of job satisfaction in the Middle East, reflecting on the experience of women managers from Lebanon. They employed a clustered random sample of women managers from Lebanon who filled in a survey questionnaire, and used ANOVA technique for analysis. Their results indicated that work-related factors such as employee benefits seemed to better explain the job satisfaction of women managers in the banking industry in Lebanon. Yarbrough et al. (2016) carried out a study to explore relationships of professional values, orientation, career-development, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in recently hired mid-career and early-career nurses in a large hospital system. They used a convenience sample of 245 nurses from a mid-sized hospital in a metropolitan area in the South Western United States who filled in a questionnaire and also employed inferential statistics for analysis. Their results indicated that there was a strong correlation between professional values and career development and that both job satisfaction and professional values correlated positively with retention. However, the contexts of the studies reported were predominantly from the Western World with only two studies in Asia (Tlaiss, 2013; Choudhury & Gupta, 2011). Besides, some of the studies had controversial results. Whereas the study by Yarbrough et al. (2016) indicated that there was a strong correlation between professional values and career development and that both job satisfaction and professional values correlated positively with retention, this was not so in USA. These gaps make it inescapable for the proposed study to test whether extrinsic factors predicted JS. Thus the following hypothesis is proposed with respect to academic staff at Makerere University in Uganda:

H₂: Extrinsic factors are significant predictors of JS.

7.3 Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction. Many scholars (e.g. Azah, Safari, Thirupalu and Subhan, 2012; Lambert, Qureshi, Hogan, Klahm, Smith & Frank, 2015; Raina & Roebuck, 2016; Riasuden & Vankatesakumar, 2014; Voet & Walles, 2015) have studied the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction (JS). For instance, Azah et al. (2012) studied job characteristics as a predictor of work motivation and job satisfaction in both public and private sector banks in Andhra Pradesh. They collected data using a questionnaire survey administered to banking officers and analysed them using a Pearson Correlational Technique and multiple regression analysis. Their results revealed that task identity and significance were negative predictors of job satisfaction. Lambert et al. (2015) examined how the job variables of job autonomy, job variety, training and supervision were associated with involvement job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Indian police officers from Sonapat and Rohtak districts of the state of Haryana in republic of India. They used a sample of 827 police officers who filled in a questionnaire, and analysed them using an ordinary least square regression analysis. Their results indicated that job variety had a positive significant relationship with job satisfaction. Raina and Roebuck (2016) examined the critical importance of effective

downward communication in its relationship to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and the employees' propensity to leave an organization. They used a sample of 105 employees who filled in a questionnaire, and analysed them using a stepwise regression analysis. Their results indicated that feedback was a significant predictor of job satisfaction.

Riasuden and Vankatesakumar (2014) identified the relationship of task characteristics with life satisfaction having job satisfaction as a variable. They used a sample of 440 employees who filled in the questionnaire in the service sector in India, and employed a Pearson correlation co-efficient for analysis. Their results indicated that task significance had an important but inverse relationship with job satisfaction. Voet and Walles (2015) examined the relationship between the implementation of cutbacks and job satisfaction of top-level managers in European central government organizations. They used a sample of 230 top level administrators who filled in a questionnaire and analysed data using a stepwise regression analysis. Their results indicated that job autonomy may function as a mechanism to explain decreased job satisfaction as a result of cutbacks implementation. However, the contexts of the studies reported were carried out in Asia (Lambert et al. 2015; Azahet al., 2012). Besides, some studies raised controversial results. For instance, Azah, et al. (2012) results revealed that task identity and significance were negative predictors of job satisfaction, yet Lambert et al (2015) found out that task variety was a positive predictor of job satisfaction. These gaps make it incumbent for the proposed study to test whether Job characteristics were predictors of JS. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed with respect to academic staff at Makerere University in Uganda:

H₃: Job characteristics were significant predictors of JS.

7.4 Personal Characteristics and Job Satisfaction. Innumerable scholars (e.g. Bang, 2015; Mamiseishvilli, 2011; Okpara, 2016; Spencer, Deal, Pruthi, Gonzalez, Kirby & Langston, 2015; You, Kim & Lim, 2015;) have studied the relationship between personal characteristics and job satisfaction (JS). For instance, Bang (2015) examined the moderating role of age in the relationships between leader-member exchange dimensions and job satisfaction and between job satisfaction and intention to stay among volunteers in non-profit sport organizations. He used a clustered random sample of 214 volunteers in 22 non-profit sport organizations and analysed data using a moderated hierarchical regression analysis. His results indicated that age moderated the relationship between professional respect and job satisfaction. Mamiseishvilli (2011) carried out a study that was aimed at shedding some light on foreign-born faculty members' characteristics, job satisfaction, and workplace perceptions at public-2 year institutions in the United States of America. He used a sample of 44 employees who filled in a questionnaire and a chi-square technique for analysis. His results indicated that foreign born faculty members consistently reported lower satisfaction.

Okpara (2016) carried out a study to investigate the extent to which personal characteristics such as gender, age, education income and experience predict IT managers' job satisfaction in Nigeria. He used a simple random sample of 360 IT managers selected from business organizations in Nigeria who filled in a questionnaire and utilized a structural modelling equation for data analysis. Their results indicated that highly educated employees were dissatisfied with their pay and promotion systems in Nigeria. Spencer et al. (2015) carried out a study aimed at analyzing female work force in Urology compared to that of men with regard to income, workload and job satisfaction. They used a clustered sample of 6511 domestic members practicing Urologism who filled in a questionnaire and utilised a linear regression model for data analysis. Their results indicated that gender was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction among the workforce in Urology. You et al. (2015) carried out a study that applied a multilevel modelling to examine how individual characteristics such as gender and teaching experience, and contextual characteristics such as principal leadership and perceived colleague support, influenced Korean secondary school teachers' sense of job satisfaction. They used a stratified random sample of 2908 teachers from 150 middle schools who filled in a questionnaire and a structural equation model for data analysis. Their results indicated that teaching experience had a significant effect on teacher job satisfaction. However, the context of the studies reported were in different contexts for instance in Korea (You et al. 2015); USA (Mamiseishvilli, 2011); Nigeria (Okpara, 2016). These gaps make it incumbent for the proposed study to test whether personal characteristics were predictors of JS. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed with respect to academic staff at Makerere University in Uganda:

H₄: Personal Characteristics were significant predictors of JS.

8. Methodology

8.1 Paradigm and Design. The proposed study will adopt the positivist or quantitative paradigm because it will involve the testing of hypotheses to establish the predictors of job satisfaction (JS). In particular, the proposed study will be a survey based on correlational and cross-sectional designs. The study will be a survey in that it will involve a large number of respondents to facilitate generalization. The correlational design will help in relating each of the four dimensions of Smerek and Peterson Assessment Model (intrinsic factors, extrinsic

factors, job characteristics and personal characteristics) to JS. The cross-sectional design will permit the collection of data in a relatively shorter period of time.

8.2 Data Collection Instrument. Data will be collected from a sample of academic staff from Makerere University in Uganda. The data collection instrument will be a self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) developed basing on instruments already used by other scholars (see Table 1). The use of these earlier instruments will be based on the premise that their reliabilities and validities can be taken for granted initially. The guarantee of validities will be based on the ground that an instrument cannot be valid unless it is reliable (Tavakol&Dennick, 2011). In other words, since reliabilities of the variables are already guaranteed from earlier instruments, the variables are likely to be valid too. As Table 1 illustrates, the first independent variable (IV1) happens to be Intrinsic factors (IF) with 7 constructs namely; recognition, work itself, opportunity for advancement, professional growth, responsibility, good feelings about organization and clarity of mission, each with a number of items adapted from reliable instruments. The second independent variable (IV2) is extrinsic factors with six constructs namely; effective senior management, effective supervisor, good relationship with co-workers, satisfaction with salary and satisfaction with benefits and presence of core values also having a number of items adapted from reliable instruments. The third independent variable (IV3) is job characteristics with five constructs namely; feedback, autonomy, job variety, task significance and task identity also having a number of items adapted from reliable instruments. The fourth independent variable (IV4) is personal characteristics with 4 constructs namely; age, gender, educational level, marital status and job experience. However, because most of these personal characteristic are categorical, reliability is not applicable to them. Job satisfaction (JS) which is the dependent variable (DV) with a number of items adapted from a reliable instrument.

Table 1: Variables in the Instrument

Variable	Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Source of instrument
Personal characteristics	• Gender	1 item each	N/A	
	• Minority – status			
	• Age			
	• Length			
Intrinsic factors	• Recognition	5	0.823	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Work itself	4	0.920	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Opportunity for advancement	4	0.893	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Professional growth	5	0.870	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Responsibility	5	0.946	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Good feelings about organization	5	0.913	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Clarity of mission	5	0.913	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
Extrinsic factors	• Effective senior management	3	0.955	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Effective supervisor	4	0.970	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Good relationship with co-workers	5	0.933	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Satisfaction with salary	6	0.833	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Satisfaction with benefits	7	0.840	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
	• Presence of core values	4	0.756	Smerek& Peterson (2007)
Job characteristics	• Feedback	3	0.841	Hackman & Oldham (1975)
	• Job autonomy	5	0.745	Hackman & Oldham (1975)
	• Job variety	4	0.834	Hackman & Oldham(1975)
	• Task significance	4	0.765	Hackman & Oldham (1975)
	• Task identity	4	0.865	Hackman & Oldham(1975)
Job satisfaction	-	5	0.874	Smerek& Peterson (2007)

8.3 Data Management. The data collected will be processed and analysed. Data processing will involve coding the data and entering them into the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS),

summarising them using frequency tables and editing them to remove errors. Whereas the reliabilities of the constructs are already guaranteed by earlier studies (see Table 1) and their validities implied (Tavakol&Dennick, 2011), after the collection of data, the reliabilities of the constructs will be retested using Cronbach Alpha method provided by SPSS. Similarly, the validities of multi-item constructs still will be tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis. This retesting will be done because differences in samples call for retesting of instruments (Tavakol&Dennick, 2011). The data analysis will be done at different levels, namely uni-variate, bivariate and multivariate. The data analysis at uni-variate level will be based on percentages from the frequency tables and descriptive statistics, specifically the mean. At the bivariate level, the dependent variable (DV), job satisfaction will be correlated with each of the dimensions of the Assessment Model of Smerek and Peterson. At the multivariate level, four regression models will be run, with each regressing the DV on a particular dimension of the model.

9. Conclusion

This conceptual paper is intended to examine the applicability of Smerek and Peterson's Assessment Model dimensions in the analysis of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University. The paper is derived from a PhD proposal that will lead to a monograph and future articles. The paper has highlighted the introduction, theories, the problem, objectives, significance, framework, related literature and the corresponding hypotheses to be tested. The PhD monograph and future articles to be generated from the proposed study will give in greater details the introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

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