

# A comparison of job satisfaction between public and private university academicians in Turkey

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the job satisfaction of public and private university academicians with respect to ten satisfaction dimensions and to determine the relative difference in job satisfaction levels between public and private university academicians. The findings indicate that while academicians appear to be fairly satisfied with their jobs, there may be aspects of their jobs from which they derive some dissatisfaction. The empirical analysis indicates that public and private university academicians differ significantly with respect to the levels of satisfaction that they derive from many aspects of their jobs. Sources of these differences are identified, and the general conclusion is that, private university academicians' job satisfaction is higher in many respects than that of academicians working at public universities.

## **1. Introduction**

It is well recognized that Turkish higher education has changed profoundly over the last decade. These changes have manifested themselves in larger and more mature student populations, new teaching and research methods (including the use of information technology to mediate and facilitate instruction), larger and more competitive arenas of operation (resulting from pressures to internationalize programs and operations), a broader range of undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education programs, including those specifically designed to meet a variety of social justice objectives (YÖK, 2001). Some of these changes have arisen from demand pressures, the cultural shift in the way

in which higher education is viewed, structural and managerial diversity, financial pressures and a variety of social, political, economic and technological forces.

Meanwhile, more and more higher education institutions are springing up, mainly as a result of these changes. Today there are 75 universities, 21 of which are privately-operated. The private institutions, which generally have a good reputation, have helped the government avoid an outflow of local currency that would have occurred from the departure of young people for overseas studies. They are also a ray of light for hundreds of thousands of high school graduates who cannot get into state-run universities. But beside the benefits, this hasty expansion of the university system has caused many problems, including greater diversity in the working conditions of academicians, which has affected their job satisfaction levels. Some talented academicians have left the public universities, while many of those who remain feel increasingly worn out and dissatisfied. These discouraged and unhappy academicians simply stay on, maybe doing a poor job and feeling helpless, negative, and overwhelmed. They are not bad academicians; most do what they can under the circumstances. But they're not doing the best that they can. And in the gap between what they are doing and what they are capable of doing - if the working conditions were less onerous and if they felt valued and respected - lies a huge waste of talent and an even greater loss of possibility for our children. If one were to name a lira value to these losses, the total would be staggering. As Sergiovanni (1988) has pointed out, teacher job satisfaction and the conditions that produce it "are linked to improvements in student achievement... The philosophical, theoretical and empirical evidence in support of this model is too overwhelming for it to be ignored." Other researchers Csikzentmihalyi and McCormack (1986) along with Rosenholtz (1989) also indicate that if teachers are dissatisfied with their work lives and lack commitment to their organizations, not only will teachers suffer but their students will suffer as well.

Despite its importance, very little investigation has focused on the 'job satisfaction of academicians' as a subject. For example, a search of relevant articles through the YÖK (The Council of Higher Education) thesis database revealed only two thesis studies on this subject (Tosunoğlu, 1998; Öncel, 1998). One common problem with these two studies is the difficulty of generalizing their findings, since they were more or less case studies of the situations in particular universities. The search repeated through the Bibliography of Articles in Turkish Periodicals of the National Library of Turkey, also yielded no studies on this topic. This situation has prompted the present study and we believe that more studies on job satisfaction of academicians are not only justified, but also long overdue.

Some research results on elementary and secondary education

suggest that teachers working in private schools tend to be more satisfied with their jobs compared to their public sector counterparts (Kınalı, 2000: 171-176; Varlık, 2000: 125-126; Özdayı, 1990: 358). This study explores whether such general findings are applicable in academia and whether there would be significant differences in the job satisfaction levels of public and private university academicians. If the situation in elementary and secondary education is replicated, the study will explore the reasons for the differences in the job satisfaction levels of the two groups.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the job satisfaction of public and private university academicians with respect to ten satisfaction dimensions and to determine the relative difference in job satisfaction levels between public and private university academicians. Specifically, answers to the following questions sought:

1. Is there a difference between public and private university academicians when it comes to their overall level of job satisfaction?
2. Is there a difference in the level of job satisfaction between public and private university academicians on each of the following job satisfaction dimensions: academic environment, supervision / superior behavior, co-workers' behavior, the job itself, physical conditions / working facilities, current pay, teaching and research, job security, and administrative duties?

## 3. Literature review

Many studies of the job satisfaction of workers have been carried out. Behavioral scientists have studied extensively the job satisfaction and motivation of many professional and non-professional groups such as accountants, engineers, middle managers, insurance agents, research scientists, assembly workers and nurses. Locke (1976) estimated that, as of 1976, about 3,350 articles or dissertations had been written on this topic. Cranny *et al.* (1992) suggested that more than 5,000 studies of job satisfaction had been published. In a more recent estimate, Oshagbemi (1996) suggests that if a count of relevant articles and dissertations were made, the total would be 7,000. Academicians, among other groups of professionals, have been virtually ignored by researchers. As a preliminary review of the literature on job satisfaction, the researchers assessed the database held by the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) for relevant publications on the topic. Invoking the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) on 'job satisfaction' for the period 1980-2002, the findings revealed that as many as 1,178 publications were recorded in the 22 years for which data were available. When the search focused on

studies of job satisfaction where teachers were the subjects, 68 publication records were found. The review at this stage included all teachers - primary and secondary school teachers, as well as teachers in tertiary institutions throughout the world. No records relating to the job satisfaction levels of university teachers were found in the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) social sciences database. The search was repeated through the Ebsco and Emerald Databases, which together cover approximately 1,500 journals in the social sciences, and only 59 records could be found on the topic of 'job satisfaction of teachers / academicians' for the same years.

Some of these limited studies are about the job satisfaction of special education teachers (Abelson, 1986; Orhaner, 1999), school psychologists (Ehloy and Reimers, 1986), higher education faculty (Oshagbami, 1996; Hill, 1984), elementary and secondary teachers (Shann, 1998; Saad and Isralowitz, 1992; Chissom *et al.*, 1987, Kreis and Brookopp, 1986), and school custodians (Young, 1982), the relationships between job satisfaction and gender (Beliaeva *et al.* 2001; Sweeney, 1981), race (Mueller *et al.*, 1999; Davis, 1985), age (Oshagbami, 1999; Lowther *et al.*, 1985; Maşrap, 1999), and length of experience (Dorfman, 2002; Gault *et al.*, 2000; Klecker and Loadman, 1999; Avi-Itzhak, 1988), the relationships between job satisfaction and role congruence (Wiggins *et al.*, 1983), autonomy (Kreis and Brookopp, 1986), attainment of organizational goals (Knoop, 1981), organizational climate (Taylor and Tashakkori, 1995; Neumann *et al.*, 1988), technological developments (Erdoğan, 1995), the bureaucratic nature of schools (Benson, 1983; Miskel and Gerhardt, 1974), cultural differences (Niehoff *et al.*, 2001), workplace conditions (Xin and MacMillan, 1999), supervisory behavior (Evans and Johnson, 1990; Schultz and Teddlie, 1989; Fraser, 1980; Yıldırım, 1995) and job-related stress (Schonfeld, 2001; Kinman, 2001; Chaplain, 1995; Sutton and Huberty, 1984; Koçak, 1995; Ataklı, 1999). None of them, however, appear to have focused on public and private university academicians.

Fortunately, there are some studies on the comparative job satisfaction levels of public and private school teachers at the elementary and secondary school levels. These research findings, in general, suggest that teachers working in private schools tend to be more satisfied with their jobs compared to their public sector counterparts. For example, a study of 320 elementary school teachers from eight different public and private schools, using data from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, showed that teachers working in private schools were significantly more satisfied with their jobs (Varlık, 2000). A study of 804 public secondary school and 330 private secondary school teachers in Turkey also revealed that the level of job dissatisfaction was significantly higher among public school teachers (Özdayı, 1990). Finally, a study made on 173 teachers,

100 of them working in public and 73 of them working in private schools, found significant differences between the two sectors in terms of job satisfaction levels (Kıralı, 2000). As indicated, no specific studies were uncovered that deal directly with the differences in job satisfaction between public and private university academicians. Motivated in part because of the lack of studies in important area of study, this research was undertaken.

## 4. Research methodology

### 4.1. Sample

A questionnaire survey was conducted in August 2000. The population for this study is comprised of academicians from 26 universities in Turkey. The universities were selected to include sample institutions from all the regions of the country. A total of 346 university teachers responded to the questionnaire on job satisfaction. They represent 41.6 percent of possible respondents who were randomly selected from universities' web pages.

### 4.2. Questionnaire

To measure the job satisfaction of university teachers, a questionnaire consisting of 61 items about ten basic job satisfaction dimensions and some demographic questions were constructed by the researchers. Although several measures of job satisfaction have been developed and appropriate validity and reliability have been demonstrated, no reliable and valid measure of job satisfaction of Turkish academics was found in a review of the literature. In an attempt to conduct a study investigating the factors affecting academics' performance, the researchers needed a valid and reliable measure of job satisfaction appropriate for use in higher education. The available job satisfaction measures (e.g., Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, Job Description Index) may lack sensitivity to the unique aspects of a Turkish academic environment, such as, a centralized management structure, low and insufficient wages, promotion policies, and legal arrangements. The combination of these factors forms a very unique work environment that cannot be evaluated adequately without a measure that accounts for these factors. The lack of an appropriate instrument has led us to develop a measure of job satisfaction for Turkish academics.

For this, related job satisfaction issues relevant to academicians were identified by conducting a literature search on the Ebsco and Emerald databases up to the year 1992. The search headings 'university', 'academicians', 'academics', 'education' and 'teacher' were combined

with ‘job satisfaction’ to identify any major studies carried out in the last five years.

Interviews with focus groups consisting of academicians were also carried out. Seven separate focus groups of 3 to 10 academicians from twelve different universities were asked to describe 10 positive and 10 negative instances they experienced during their careers. These positive and negative instances were used to define the good and poor aspects of the academic environment. After interviewing with 40 people, we obtained approximately 800 statements. But since this list contained instances very similar to each other, they were grouped together. After forming clusters, we wrote a phrase for each cluster that reflected the content of the instance. This phrase was called a satisfaction item. Once all instances were categorized into their respective satisfaction items, we repeated this categorization process using the satisfaction items. We then labeled these groups with phrases or words such as ‘job security’, ‘pay’, ‘co-worker relationship’ to describe the content of the satisfaction items.

A list of items, compiled through the literature review and focus group interviews were then presented to several academicians. These academicians were asked to answer the questions and then discuss any issues of confusion or ambiguity. Each individual evaluated the items and made recommendations for improvement.

The resulting questionnaire consists of 61 items relating to ten basic job satisfaction dimensions (see the Appendix) and several demographic questions. The job satisfaction dimensions are;

- (1) *academic environment* – all the surrounding conditions which influence teaching and research activities (18 items);
- (2) *supervision/superior behavior* – the abilities of the superior to provide assistance and behavioral support (8 items);
- (3) *co-workers’ behavior* – the degree to which fellow workers are technically proficient and socially supportive (5 items);
- (4) *job itself* – the extent to which the job provides interesting tasks for the individual (7 items);
- (5) *physical conditions/working facilities* – aids, circumstances that make working or doing things easier or simpler (7 items);
- (6) *current pay* – the amount of financial remuneration that is received (3 items);
- (7) *teaching and research* – opportunities for imparting skills and knowledge, and for undertaking investigations to discover new facts or to get additional information (5 items);
- (8) *job security* – protection against lawbreaking on employment rights (2 items);
- (9) *freedom* – condition of being free and without constraints (4

items);

- (10) *administrative duties* – all duties apart from academic ones (2 items);

Respondents were asked to check their responses for these ten major job satisfaction dimensions, which were placed on a five point Likert type scale of measurement weighted as follows: 1 = “Completely satisfied, i.e., very much supporting the case described”, 2 = “Satisfied, i.e., feeling all right with the case described”, 3 = “Indifferent, i.e., uncertain with the case”, 4 = “Unsatisfied, i.e., not satisfied with the case described”, 5 = “Completely unsatisfied, i.e., very much dissatisfied with the case described”.

#### 4.3. Analysis

The criteria were equally weighted and quantitative values were attached to the responses in the questionnaire as indicated above. The means of responses were computed for each satisfaction dimension using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. A t-test was performed to determine the difference between the job satisfaction levels of the two groups. In addition to overall satisfaction, the satisfaction differences of the ten dimensions were also investigated. Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction for each dimension.

### 5. Background of respondents

Table 1 shows the breakdown of university teachers who responded to our questionnaire. The table shows the distribution of respondents by age, rank, sex, length of service in present university, and their leadership or management responsibilities.

The distribution of the length of service spent in current universities shows that respondents included relative newcomers who had spent less than five years (about 38%) to academicians who had spent more than 15 years in the university system (about 17%). As would be expected, perhaps, a large percentage of academicians (almost 44%) fall between the newcomers and the academicians with a much longer service period.

Table 1 also shows that, as expected, the majority of the respondents were assistant professors (about 56%). Only about 22.2% of the respondents were females. However, considering the estimated proportion of females in the academic staff, the percentage of those who responded to our questionnaire can be considered low.

It was observed from the results of the data analyses that a majority of respondents were between 36-45 years of age. It was further observed

that the percentage of respondents who were less than 35 years old was about the same percentage as those who were older than 46 years.

About 15% of the respondents held managerial posts as head of department or division, director of school, dean of faculty, provost or head of unit, e.g., an institute or centre. The percentage of those who held other management posts, such as year tutor, chairperson of a research group, project coordinator, director of undergraduate programs, etc. was about 14%.

**Table 1**  
Background of Respondents

	<b>Percentage</b>
<b><i>Age</i></b>	
Less than 36 years	30.6
36-45	37.8
46-55	19.6
55+	12.0
<b><i>Rank</i></b>	
Assistant Professor	55.8
Associate Professor	22.6
Professor	21.6
<b><i>Sex</i></b>	
Male	77.8
Female	22.2
<b><i>Length of service in present university</i></b>	
Less than 5 years	38.3
5-10	24.8
11-15	19.5
15+	17.4
<b><i>Leadership or management responsibility</i></b>	
Head, Director, Dean, Provost, etc.	15.4
Holding other managerial posts	13.5
Not currently in charge of academic unit or group.	71.1

## 6. Overall satisfaction with aspects of the job

Table 2 summarizes the mean scores of respondents' ratings on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction derived from aspects of their jobs and gives the percentages of respondents who were satisfied, dissatisfied, or indifferent to various aspects of their jobs. The mean scores for each of the ten job aspects identified ranges from 4.1 for co-worker behavior to 2.4 for job security. It can be observed from the table that there is a high correlation between the mean scores of respondents and the percentages of respondents who were satisfied or dissatisfied with different aspects of their jobs.

Academicians appear to be generally satisfied with their jobs; the mean scores in five of the ten identified aspects of the job are greater than 3.5. More than 50% of the respondents also indicated that they were satisfied with each of the following six aspects of their jobs – supervision / superior behavior, co-workers behavior, the job itself, teaching and research, freedom and administrative duties. In fact, the percentage of respondents satisfied with co-worker behavior was as high as 85%.

However, there are aspects of the university teachers' jobs where the respondents indicated that they were not satisfied – current pay and job security. For each of these the mean score was less than 3. For current pay, the percentage of the respondents who were satisfied was only about 28 while as much as 52% expressed dissatisfaction. Almost one out of every five respondents indicated indifference. It would appear that university teachers are the least satisfied with job security. The mean score of respondents was less than 2.4. In addition, more than 55% of the respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with job security, while less than 22% expressed satisfaction with this aspect of their job.

While it would probably be true to say that academicians appear to be generally satisfied with their jobs, the information on Table 2 shows aspects of their jobs with which they are dissatisfied. An appropriate summary would therefore, perhaps, be that overall; academicians enjoy only a moderately high level of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, our research findings imply that overall measures of job satisfaction should, always be accepted with some caution, as they may be deceptive or they may hide some important information. In addition, while general measures of job satisfaction are very useful for comparing the satisfaction of workers at different times, in different occupations, at different levels of hierarchy, and in different demographic groups, they may be problematic in providing correct estimates of absolute levels of satisfaction (Oshagbami, 1997).

**Table 2**  
Some Statistics on Respondents' Satisfaction or  
Dissatisfaction with Various Aspects of Their Jobs

Aspect of job	Mean score	Percentage satisfied <sup>a</sup>	Percentage dissatisfied <sup>b</sup>	Percentage indifferent
Academic environment	3.199	37.9	24.7	37.4
Supervision/superior behavior	3.594	57.9	21.7	20.4
Co-workers' behavior	4.149	84.6	5.2	10.2
Job itself	3.871	72.4	4.9	22.7
Physical conditions / working facilities	3.251	42.3	21.4	36.3
Present pay	2.692	28.6	51.8	19.6
Teaching and research	4.015	75.6	4.3	20.1
Job security	2.360	21.7	56.8	21.5
Freedom	3.345	49.7	19.1	31.2
Administrative duties	3.915	77.4	10.3	12.3

*Notes:* <sup>a</sup> incorporates respondents whose satisfaction score  $\geq 3.5$ ; <sup>b</sup> incorporates respondents whose satisfaction score  $\leq 2.5$ .

## 7. Public and private university academicians

The discussion in this paper is focused on differences between public and private university academicians on job satisfaction. The group designated as public university academicians were in total 236: 187 males, 35 females, and 14 n.a. (no answer). The group comprised 124 assistant professors, 61 associate professors, 40 professors, and 11 n.a.. The average age of this group was 40.5, and their average length of service in their current university was 10.7 years. The group designated as private university academicians were in total 110: 72 males, 37 females, and 1 n.a.. The group consisted of 56 assistant professors, 12 associate professors, 30 professors, and 12 n.a.. The average age of this group was 46, and their average length of service in their current university was 2.7 years.

## 8. Comparison of job satisfaction levels

Comparative data on public and private university academicians are provided in Table 3. The table shows, among other things, the percentages of academicians who were satisfied with the various aspects of their jobs, the mean scores of the academicians showing the ratings on the different aspects of their jobs, and a significance test of the differences between the mean scores of the two groups.

From Table 3, it can be seen very clearly that, except for job security and physical conditions / working facilities, the mean scores of the private

university academicians were higher than the corresponding mean scores of other public university academicians. Similarly, again with these two exceptions, the percentages of the public university academicians were lower than the corresponding percentages of the private sector ones.

**Table 3**  
Comparisons of Public and Private University Academicians  
on Various Aspects of Their Jobs

Aspect of job	Percentage satisfied <sup>a</sup>		Mean scores		Standard deviation		t-value	Result
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private		
Academic environment	25.1	65.4	2.947	3.739	0.808	0.772	8.59	p<0.001
Supervision/superior behavior	42.7	90.1	3.247	4.333	1.079	0.789	10.50	p<0.001
Co-workers' behavior	82.2	89.3	4.008	4.447	0.788	0.712	6.58	p<0.001
Job itself	67.7	81.7	3.737	4.157	0.654	0.678	5.47	p<0.001
Physical conditions / working facilities	42.8	41.4	3.282	3.175	0.767	1.103	0.96	insig.
Present pay	9.3	70.1	2.139	3.878	1.016	1.257	12.65	p<0.001
Teaching and research	69.4	88.3	3.858	4.350	0.790	0.741	5.60	p<0.001
Job security	24.5	15.2	2.421	2.231	1.177	1.165	1.39	insig.
Freedom	48.7	55.5	3.288	3.468	0.772	0.864	1.94	insig.
Administrative duties	79.2	80.3	3.862	4.031	0.881	0.884	1.66	insig.
<b>Overall job satisfaction</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>3.256</b>	<b>3.861</b>	<b>0.532</b>	<b>0.552</b>	<b>9.73</b>	<b>p&lt;0.001</b>

Note: <sup>a</sup> Incorporates respondents whose satisfaction score  $\geq 3.5$ .

One conclusion from Table 3, therefore, is that, in general, public university academicians are less satisfied with their jobs in comparison to private university academicians. It is, however, useful to examine the test of statistical differences provided in Table 3 to determine the job characteristics that are significantly different between the two groups.

A look at Table 3 will show that there are six characteristics of the university teachers' job, in which significant statistical differences exist between the mean scores of the public and private university academicians. These aspects are academic environment, supervision / superior behavior, co-workers' behavior, teaching and research, job itself and current pay.

It can be seen from the Table 3 that, less than 10% of public university academicians are satisfied with their pay and this reveals the seriousness of the degree of pay dissatisfaction in Turkish public universities. Over 64% of academicians indicate that they are dissatisfied or absolutely dissatisfied with their pay, while about 12% reported indifference. With a mean of 2.1, the message from public university academicians is clear: they are dissatisfied with their pay. Thus, consistent

with Tosunoğlu's (1998) findings, current pay accounted more for public university academicians' dissatisfaction than it did for their satisfaction. Furthermore, it is not surprising to know that the private university academicians are more satisfied with their 'present pay' than public university academicians, since their wages are considerably higher than their public sector counterparts. This result confirms the earlier findings by Varlık (2000), Kınalı (2000) and Özdayı (1990) that teachers working in private schools are more satisfied with their pay compared with teachers working in public schools.

Regarding 'supervision / superior behavior', significant statistical differences exist between public and private university academicians in their level of satisfaction with this aspect of their job. While this finding is contradictory to Varlık's (2000) research, which found no significant difference between public and private school teachers, it is consistent with Özdayı's (1990) findings that public school teachers have lower satisfaction with their superiors' behavior and the difference is significant. Actually, the academicians in public universities may see their managers as less sympathetic and ignorant because of paper work and procedural tasks resulting from the bureaucratic structure. This difference can, therefore, be accepted as normal. In addition, when it is considered that the 'Peter Principle' is effective in public universities as much as in other public institutions, the difference can be attributed to the management quality between the two sectors.

Private university academicians also derive more satisfaction from 'teaching and research' when compared with public university academicians. We do not imply that private university academicians are better researchers compared to public university academicians. But, that in fact, some academicians prefer to work for private universities for better teaching and research opportunities. Additionally, when the highly selective recruiting process of private universities is taken into consideration, this outcome should not be surprising. In addition to this, it is probable that the private university academicians do not teach as many hours as their public sector counterparts. So, since the fewer amount of teaching hours in private universities would not cause boredom regarding the subject, the academicians working in private universities may be feeling higher satisfaction for this dimension. Finally, since private universities assign more resources for both teaching and research, the difference between the satisfaction levels of public and private university academicians can be understandable. These explanations may also account for the significantly higher job satisfaction that private university academicians derive from the 'academic environment' as compared with public university academicians.

The job satisfaction derived from 'co-workers' behavior' is another aspect of academicians' occupation where significant differences exist

between the mean scores of the two groups. The reason for this result may be that the academicians working in private universities do not have to struggle for restricted amount of resources in contrast to their public university counterparts. In addition, political and ideological groupings, which are fewer in private universities compared to public universities, can cause this difference. It should also be pointed out that, although there is some measure of interdependence in performing academic responsibilities as a whole, some academicians may and do exhibit some level of independence in executing their functions. However the findings show clearly that academicians are generally satisfied with the behavior of their co-workers. About 80% of the survey respondents expressly stated in their questionnaires that they were satisfied. The reported level of dissatisfaction was less than 20% and such level of dissatisfaction is not uncommon in human behavior in any organizational setting.

The private university academicians are also more satisfied with ‘the job itself’ in their universities. Perhaps the explanation is that satisfaction with physical conditions, working facilities, co-worker behavior, teaching and research all account for and cause private university academicians to derive greater job satisfaction from their academic environment. Some possible explanations of this finding may be found in the training efforts of the private universities included in this study. Most of these organizations have implemented quality-related training programs that may well have had an effect on their job culture. Although Özdayı’s (1990) findings agree with this result, the difference in satisfaction levels between public and private schools is not significant.

There were four aspects of their jobs where the statistical test of differences between the mean scores of the academicians in public and private universities did not prove significant – physical conditions/ working facilities, job security, freedom, and administrative duties.

It is interesting to note that the private university academicians did not derive significantly greater satisfaction from ‘physical conditions/ working facilities’ compared to public university academicians. Similarly, Özdayı (1990) notes that while public and private school teachers satisfaction with ‘physical conditions / working facilities’ is low, the difference between them is not significant. These findings are interesting, because there is a considerable gap between the physical conditions and working facilities of public and private educational institutions. However, the same gap is present in expectations of the two groups.

Academicians in private universities feel a greater level of dissatisfaction from ‘job security’ compared with their public university counterparts. This finding also completely agrees with Özdayı’s (1990) findings. What seems interesting is that the mean scores from this aspect of their jobs were relatively low for both groups, signifying that the two groups feel a high level of dissatisfaction from job security. It may be that

the answer to the question, “Where has the security of public service gone?” is this: There will be no secure place from now on. The similarity between public and private university academicians may be due to the uncertain and frequently changing personal policies that are applicable in both sectors.

There is also no significant difference between the mean scores of the public and private university academicians with respect to ‘freedom’. Both groups of academicians were about equally dissatisfied with this aspect of their jobs. This finding also corresponds to the other results in the literature (Özdayı, 1990 and Varlık, 2000).

Surprisingly, both public and private university academicians expressed a high level of satisfaction for ‘administrative duties’. Public and private university academicians rate the satisfaction derived from ‘administrative duties’ highly but there was no significant difference in the mean scores on this aspect of their jobs. Perhaps the satisfaction that academicians derive from administrative duties stems from the belief that administration and management, notwithstanding the relative high proportion of time spent on those duties was one of their primary functions. However this finding is contradictory with Özdayı’s research in which it was found that teachers working in private secondary schools have lower job satisfaction with respect to administrative duties compared with their public sector counterparts. Hence, we can suggest that perceptions between teachers and academicians differ significantly for administrative duties.

## 9. Summary and conclusions

The results of our research show that private university academicians are more satisfied with most aspects of their jobs than public university academicians. The aspects of their jobs where there were no significant differences between the mean scores of the public and private university academicians are physical conditions / working facilities, job security, freedom, and administrative duties. However, the two groups showed significant differences in the level of job satisfaction that they derived from the following aspects of their jobs: academic environment, supervision / superior behavior, teaching and research, co-workers’ behavior, the job itself and current pay.

Since, except for the two dimensions mentioned, the mean scores obtained by the private university academicians in all aspects of their jobs were higher than the mean scores in the corresponding aspects of the public university academicians’ job satisfaction scores, and since significant differences exist in the majority of these mean differences, we conclude that overall, academicians in private universities derive greater job satisfaction from their jobs than their public sector counterparts. Even

the two-dimensional differences in supervision/superior behavior and job security in which private university academicians have lower scores are not statistically significant.

One of the implications of our findings is that, since private university academicians appear to be significantly different from the other academicians in a number of considerations, it would be useful for public universities to review their personnel policies.

Arguably this knowledge could assist higher education administrators and policymakers to improve the efficiency of academicians and enhance their performance. These authorities need to consider the implications for job satisfaction as various reforms and management techniques find their way into the workplace.

As pointed out by Bogg and Cooper (1995), there is much about the nature of public sector employment that sets it apart from work in the private sector. But in spite of these differences there should be one common goal for both public and private universities. This goal is to contribute to the development of community, its values and the individual's experience as a member of that community. Private universities, as distinct from the rest of the private sector are not merely concerned with customer retention and reputation, but are uniquely associated with service to the community. In order to achieve this, the conditions that undermine the power and effectiveness of our higher education need to be identified and promptly rectified. This includes, above all, creating a work environment that will continue to draw the bright, committed new academicians we need – and keep them enthusiastic, energetic, and productive throughout their careers.

This study does not explore the relationship between job satisfaction and other important outcomes affecting organizational success. However, understanding the levels and dynamics of job satisfaction in higher education is an important first step for further exploration. Perhaps as a direction of future research, more extensive studies can be carried out to examine the correlation of job satisfaction with demographic properties such as age, gender, length of service and its influence on performance, accountability and public trust.

## **Appendix**

### Questionnaire

#### *Academic environment*

- a1. All academicians benefit from the sources of the university equally.
- a2. There is a merit promotion system in my university.

- a3. New ideas are given opportunity in my university.
- a4. The problems of the academicians are solved immediately in my university.
- a5. The job related suggestions of the academicians are taken into consideration in my university.
- a6. The activities are executed as scheduled in my university.
- a7. I can easily transmit my problems to the upper management.
- a8. I am informed about all subjects, which are relevant to me.
- a9. I am conferred with all of the activities that might affect me.
- a10. My university is prestigious for me.
- a11. I believe that my university is a respected one among others.
- a12. The behaviors and manners of students dispirit my teaching.
- a13. My teaching performance isn't appreciated.
- a14. Attendance to scientific congresses and symposiums is encouraged in my university.
- a15. My university sponsors all my scientific research expenses.
- a16. Being an academician is a second priority in my university
- a17. The authority and responsibility in my job is well defined.
- a18. I can see the contribution of my job to my university.

#### *Supervision/superior behavior*

- 11. I believe that my superior has enough worth to do his job sufficiently.
- 12. I think that my superior is performing his duties exactly.
- 13. I believe that my superior is judicious.
- 14. I believe that my superior is honest.
- 15. I believe that my superior is selfish.
- 16. I have no doubt that my superior is going to support me in every condition.
- 17. My superiors' behaviors and manners annoy me.
- 18. Most of the activities contribute to the personal objectives of my superiors.

#### *Co-workers' behavior*

- c1. I can do collective work with my co-workers.
- c2. My co-workers help me when I have a problem.
- c3. My co-workers esteem my thoughts.
- c4. I have good relations with my co-workers.
- c5. All my co-workers are experts in their areas of study.

#### *Job itself*

- n1. I can use my full potential in my job.
- n2. My job fits my abilities and knowledge.
- n3. My job contributes to my personal development.
- n4. I am only dealing with activities necessitated by my own job.
- n5. I am doing my job willingly.
- n6. My job meets my expectations.
- n7. I can utilize my creativity in my job.

#### *Physical conditions/working facilities*

- z1. Catering services
- z2. Medical services
- z3. Transportation

- z4. Internet access
- z5. Photocopy and printer amenities
- z6. Your office
- z7. Sports centers

#### *Present pay*

- p1. I am paid less than I deserve.
- p2. Financial problems keep my mind.
- p3. I have to struggle to make my living.

#### *Teaching and research*

- t1. I am giving lectures of my superiors instead of them although I do not want to.
- t2. My lecture schedule is very busy.
- t3. I have to give lectures, which are out of my expertise.
- t4. I have no time for my academic studies.
- t5. The credit for my scientific studies is taken by others.

#### *Job security*

- v1. I don't worry about losing my job.
- v2. The possibility of not signing a new contract makes me nervous.

#### *Freedom*

- f1. I'm free except for my lecture schedule.
- f2. I can get permission whenever I need.
- f3. I am allowed to give lectures in other universities.
- f4. Library services

#### *Administrative duties*

- d1. Non-academic activities are taking so much time.
- d2. I am doing an administrative job that I don't want to.

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## Özet

### Türkiye’deki kamu ve vakıf üniversitelerinde çalışan akademisyenlerin iş tatmin seviyeleri açısından karşılaştırılması

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