Prevailing Organizational Culture and Effect on Academic Staff Satisfaction in the Malaysian Higher Education Institutes

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the dimensions of organizational culture and employees’ job satisfaction among academic staff in the Malaysian higher education institutes. Organizational culture is deeply rooted within the organizational system, as it is a process, which evolves over a long time. An organization’s culture determines the way the organization conducts its business, and as a result also influences its processes. Because of its deep-rooted nature, the culture of the organization is difficult to change, as there is often resistance against giving up something, which is valued and has worked well in the past. Overall, this study will explore the effects of organizational culture dimensions on job satisfaction and to assess which organizational culture dimensions have a greater marginal impact on job satisfaction. This study attempts to improve the managers' understanding on how to improve organizational culture dimensions that may have a critical impact on employees’ satisfaction. A sample of 310 respondents that were selected randomly from four higher education institute participated in this study. Data were collected by survey questionnaire. Both descriptive and influential statistic namely frequency, mean, and multiple regression were used to analyze the data. The result shows that there is no significant relationship between emphasis of reward and performance oriented and job satisfaction. Results also showed that a significant relationship exists between organizational supportiveness, innovation, stability and communication and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Job satisfaction, Higher education institute, Malaysia
1.0 Introduction
Organizations represent the most multifaceted social structures known today because of their active nature. Employees are one of the role players in the organization, and it is through their involvement and commitment that the organization becomes competitive. The relationship between the organization and people is however interdependent in nature (Boeyens, 1985; Kerego & Mthupha, 1997; Sempane et al., 2002), and both parties may impact on one another’s ability to achieve positive results.

Organizational culture has been an important theme in management and business research for the past few decades due to its effect and potential impact on favorable outcomes such as commitment, loyalty, intent to turnover and job satisfaction (Chow, Harrison, McKinnon, & Wu, 2001). As a result, numerous of articles being devoted to organizational cultural issues (Lund, 2003). In today’s business environment, organizational culture is used as a powerful tool that portrays the many facets of a workplace as well as to quantify the way a business functions (Gray, Densten, & Sarros, 2003). Research has confirmed that organizational culture is not only able to change, guide and display but also give significant contributions by influencing the thought, feeling, interacting and performance in the organization (Yusof & Juhary, 2000). Despite the considerable body of organizational literature that has been conducted to examine the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction in various countries (e.g. Chow, et al., 2001; Lund, 2003; Saeed & Hassan, 2000; Sheridan, 1992), literature on the relationship between organizational culture studies and job satisfaction within the context of higher learning institution is still scarce. Given the importance of job satisfaction in higher learning institutions, a better understanding of the predictor of job satisfaction becomes increasingly relevant.

Harris and Mossholder (1996) point out that organizational culture stands as the center from which all other factors of human resource management derive. It is believed that culture influences individuals’ attitudes such as commitment, motivation, morale, and satisfaction. Wallach (1983) suggested that individual job performance and favorable job outcomes, including job satisfaction, propensity to remain with the organization, and job involvement, depend upon the match between an individual’s characteristics and the organization’s culture.

A disappointed lecturer cannot produce healthy and satisfied minds (Pirzada et al., 2011). According to Peters (1982) success of the organization depends on the radiance or excellence of the culture. A supportive organizational culture of higher education institutes would play its role in two dimensions. On one hand it would increase the satisfaction level of teachers which may be helpful for teachers to give good performance. On other hand when students would observe cooperation and mutual trust among teachers and between teachers’ community and management they would try to perform in the same manner after joining their professions. This study aims to determine the impact of organizational culture on job satisfaction of the teachers of higher education institutes in Malaysia.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction among academic staff.
2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Job Satisfaction

Scholars and researchers have been examining different ideas and approaches in order to develop ways to increase the commitment of employees to their organizations. Most of the results have fallen short of providing a comprehensive understanding and approach to accomplishing this valuable mission. In 1927, the Hawthorne research examined the value of “human relations, leadership supervision, and worker morale in worker performance and productivity” (Nkomo et al., 2005, p. 1). Researchers came to the conclusion that job attitudes, personalities, and organizational variables were the three factors that inspire employee behaviors (Borman, Penner, Allen & Motowidlo, 2001).

Employee commitment is necessary to accomplish the vision, mission, and goals of an organization, and employees need resources, technology, and marketing in order to succeed. Leaders and committed employees are the core of the process and journey of success. It takes much effort and wisdom to reach the level of having committed employees, though the rewards are certainly worth the expenditures.

It is vital to distinguish between employing the human capital approach, which focuses on establishing the necessary environment that encourages followers’ development, personal progress, and skill improvement to enhance employee productivity (Ramall, 2004), and establishing employee commitment, which focuses on touching a few materialistic needs but touching more on values such as respect, justice, caring, loyalty, and trust.

In organizational behavioral research, job satisfaction is the most frequently studied variable (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction emphasizes the specific task environment of the employee (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). It is also the individual’s affective attitude or orientations for work (Blum & Naylor, 1968; Muchinsky, 1990). In general, job satisfaction encapsulates an employee’s feeling about his/her job. However, research has revealed that job satisfaction is a multidimensional phenomenon, influenced by several internal and external factors, like the individual’s values, personality, principles and expectations and the job’s nature, the opportunities provided etc. (Dimitrios, & Athanasios, 2014).

Locke (1976) stated that job satisfaction as a pleasurable positive state resulting from one's job and job experience. Individuals show pleasurable positive attitudes when they are satisfied with their job (Jain, Jabeen, Mishra, & Gupta, 2007). Job satisfaction is a general attitude which is the result of many specific attitudes (Reddy & Rajasekhar, 1990). According to Locke’s (1984, 1976) classical definition of job satisfaction, the construct consists of evaluating how the needs of an employee are fulfilled through the presence of certain conditions, or the achievement of goals in the work setting, that are aligned to the value priorities of the subject.

Many factors affect employee’s job satisfaction. Porter and Lawler III (1968), divide the factors into the intrinsic satisfactory factors (factors that is related to work itself) and the extrinsic satisfactory (factors that is not directly related to work itself). Seashore and Taber (1975) consider that personal attributes and environment play a major role in influencing job satisfaction. Glisson and Durick (1988) indicate that
there are three main factors that affect one’s job satisfaction which is individual characteristics, job characteristics and organizational characteristics.

2.2 Organizational Culture
Culture itself is a product of a group of people living at the same place and having similar attitudes and behavior. People who belong to a certain culture share similar norms, history, religion, values and artifacts which distinguish them from others. Therefore, there are numerous national cultures and even more subcultures, providing certain types of organization and action. In modern societies, however, culture is considered to be a tangible or intangible environment in which a group of people live and work together (Gjuraj, 2013).

Organizational culture has been defined in many ways in the literature, many researchers have come to the agreement that it refers to a system of values, beliefs and behavior shared among employees (Deshpande and Webster, 1989; O’Reilly, et al., 1991; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006; Xiaoming and Junchen, 2012). Organizational culture can influence how people in an organization set personal and professional goals, perform tasks and administer resources to achieve them (Lok and Crawford, 2003). In most definitions in various combinations of assumptions, values, norms, beliefs and ways of thinking and acting are used to explain the organizational culture (McKinnon, Harrison, Chow, & Wu, 2003). According to Noorderhaven, Koen, and Beugelsdijk (2002), dimensions of organizational culture can be viewed as below:

Supportiveness
Employee satisfaction is a key attribute of the engaged employee who embodies a high degree of motivation and sense of inspiration, personal involvement and supportiveness, Organizational culture is another significant driver of employee engagement and includes management designing jobs well, providing support and setting goals for employees. Interaction between managers and employees with regards to supportiveness and goal setting, as well as job design were also key drivers of employee engagement (Sheridan, 1992).

Innovation
Innovation reflects the attitude of an organization towards risk taking, openness to new ideas and innovation (Walter, 1999). Organizations characterized by innovativeness have a high research and development intensity and are marked by high flexibility, cooperativeness and risk-taking behavior and therefore, will be expected to relate positively to relationship skills (Noorderhaven, et al., 2002). Koberg and Chusmir (1987, p. 398) stated that this culture is described by the adjectives: ‘risk taking, result oriented, creative, pressurized, stimulating, challenging, enterprising, and driving’. The most typical outcome in this culture is growth in sales, through the aforementioned characteristics (Berson et al., 2008).

Team orientation
Team orientation is concerned with the extent to which people are able to cooperate and coordinate within and across units within an organization (Noorderhaven, et al.,
2002). This dimension is expected to contribute to the development of trust, cooperation and involvement. Teamwork among employees in an organization can stimulate team members to develop the same attitude towards external relationships.

**Performance-oriented**
Companies seek to mobilize all employees and stakeholders, notably dealers and distributors, toward clear business objectives measured by sales, profits, customer satisfaction and productivity. For these organizations, employee recognition is a vital part of continually communicating and reinforcing ever-changing goals.

**Stability and communication**
Communication generally emphasizes the ability and willingness to engage in open and critical communication. In a climate of open critical communication within an organization will enable the members to learn from their mistakes through self-reflectiveness and self-correction. Walter (1999) observed that self-reflectiveness and self-criticisms enable actors to cooperate, resolve conflicts and act responsibly. This dimension refers to the effectiveness of communication between top management and employees, and between the employees themselves.

Chow et al., (2001) conducted an empirical study to explore the association between organizational culture and job satisfaction in a Chinese cultural context found that organizational culture has a positive outcome on employees. In particular, an empirical study by Lund (2003) indicated that job satisfaction levels varied across organizational culture typology. Pool (2000) examined the relationship between organizational culture and job stress. He found that executives working in a constructive culture reduced the role stress in their working environment. The results indicate that organizational culture has significantly reduced role stress, thereby, decreasing job tension and increasing job satisfaction, job performance and job commitment. Huang and Wu (2000) indicate at the organizational culture of public business agencies will cause a significant effect on organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

### 3.0  Relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction
Organizational culture expresses shared assumptions, values and beliefs, and is the social glue holding an organization together (Trevino & Nelson, 1999). A strong culture is a system of rules that spells out how people should behave (Deal & Kennedy, 2000). An organization with a strong culture has common values and codes of conduct for its employees, which should help them, accomplish their missions and goals. Work recognition and job satisfaction can be achieved when employees can complete the tasks assigned to them by the organization.

Literature review shows that job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon, which does not happen in isolation, but depends on organization variables, like structure, size, salary, working conditions and leadership, all of them constituting organizational climate and culture (Boyens, 1985).
Organizational culture can be promoted to facilitate the achievement of job satisfaction and organizational goals. The measurement of culture can serve as a starting point in diagnosing and influencing such change in the organization. The research of Kousteelios (1996) revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between employees of different types of organizational cultures and different types of institutions. In every institution, the prevailing culture seems to be the so-called culture of power, which means that there is a central source of influence and authority—either one person or a group of people. This source affects job satisfaction in terms of working conditions, colleagues, institution as a whole and promotion opportunities. Furthermore, the organizational culture of power seems to be the most appropriate for the ultimate aim of management, the identification of the goals of the employees and those of the institution. Employees who are able to work in small groups tend to be more efficient and productive, thus promoting the institution’s function and competition (Deal & Kennedy, 1988, as referred in Kousteelios, 1996).

With this, it is expected that organizational culture would have a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis - Organizational culture is positively correlated with job satisfaction.

4.0 Research Design

4.1 Survey Instrument

The questionnaire consists of 7 sections as shown in Table I. Section A of the questionnaire is to gather information about the profile of respondents such as gender, age, organizational tenure, and working college. Section B is measuring items of job satisfaction while sections C, D, E, F and G south to measure items that are related to organizational culture dimensions. Two scales were used in this study. First is a nominal scale used in section A, Likert scale used for sections B, C, D, E, F and G. Likert scale is used when responses to various items that measure a variable can be tapped on 5 points scale which can thereafter be summated across the items. Respondents are given five point Likert scale with 1 = Strong Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number Of items</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Respondent Background</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Multiple choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizational tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Sample
The unit of analysis for this study is individual. 310 academic staffs from a higher education institution were randomly selected to participate in this survey. The questionnaire was distributed to them and administered personally by the researcher.

3.3 Method of analysis
Frequency analysis was used to examine the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This was followed by the reliability analysis which is concerned with the stability and consistency measurement to access the goodness of a measure. It will answer the questions on how consistently it measures a particular concept. Additionally, a computation of means and standard deviation was done for all variables used in this study. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine which among the five dimensions of the independent variable is the most important to explain job satisfaction.

4.0 Findings
Demographic of the respondents are summarized in table II. Table II indicates that from the total of 310 respondents, 56.6% of the respondents are males while the remaining are females. In terms of age, only a minority of the respondents aged between 20-29 years (2.2%), whereas almost half of the respondents were within the age of 30-39 years (47.4%), 40.7% were within the age of 40-49 years. 9.6% of the respondents were over 50 years. Table II also suggests that, as far as education level are concerned, the majority of the respondents had PhD degree 55.6%, followed by master degree (43.7%) and (0.7%) for bachelor degree. With regard to organizational tenure, the majority of respondents have been working for 6-10 years with 49.9%; followed by 32.3% respondents have been working for 1-5 years. 14.8% of respondents have been working for more than 11 years and only 3% of respondents have been working for less than 1 year. In terms of working college, the majority of the respondents were from college of business (COB) with 44.4%, followed by 31.9% of the respondents were from college of arts and science (CAS), and the rest of respondents were from college of law, government and international studies (COLGIS) with 23.7%.
Table II: Respondents Demographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age Group</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 50</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education level</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Organizational tenure</td>
<td>Below 1yr</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 yrs</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 yrs</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 11 yrs</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. College</td>
<td>COB</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COLGIS</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III shows the Cronbach Alpha values and the number of items for both dependent and independent variables. According to Sekaran (2003), reliabilities with less than 0.60 are deemed poor while those in the range of 0.70 ranges, is acceptable and those above 0.80 is considered good. On the overall, the reliability of all the measures was comfortably above 0.70, ranging from 0.72 to 0.82. Thus the scale is satisfactory reliable for subsequent analysis.

Table III: Reliability Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Reliability Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportiveness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis of Reward</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Oriented</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Stability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive analysis which includes the mean and standard deviation for the independent and dependent variables are attained and recorded in Table IV. The results show that the mean for job satisfaction was 3.52 with SD = 0.46. While the mean for organizational supportiveness was 3.33 with SD = 0.79. As illustrated in Table IV, the mean for emphasis of reward was 3.00 with SD = 0.74, performance
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oriented (M = 3.00; SD = 0.84), innovation (M = 3.29; SD = 0.79), and the mean and standard deviation for communication and stability was 3.07 and 0.85 respectively. Emphasis of reward and performance oriented indicates that most of the respondents were neither agree nor disagree.

Table IV: Descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportiveness</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis of reward</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance oriented</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and stability</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, Multiple Regression analysis was conducted to identify which among the independent variables that explained most the dependent variable. Table V shows that only 9.2% of the R square in job satisfaction is significantly explained by the five dimensions of organizational culture: organizational supportiveness, performance oriented, innovation, emphasis of reward, communication and stability. Based on table V, only one variable in the regression equation emerged as significant predictors of job satisfaction. The predictor is supportiveness. It is evident that the most influential independent variable on job satisfaction is the culture of supportiveness $\beta = .202$. The other cultural dimensions are not significant to predict job satisfaction in this study. However, the result from regression analysis indicated that three dimensions in organizational culture (supportiveness, innovation and communication stability) are significant. The organization supportiveness is the strongest influence to job satisfaction.

Table V: Regression result for independent variables and job satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportiveness</td>
<td>.202**</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis of reward</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$ Value</td>
<td>2.603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.0 Discussion of the findings

Having measured the five dimensions of organizational culture had allowed us to understand the relationship between the dimensions of organizational culture as a whole and job satisfaction. The results of this study revealed that employees' perceptions of organizational culture were significant and positively related to employees' job satisfaction, with those perceiving a greater degree of awareness of organizational culture dimensions exhibiting the more positive reactions towards employees' satisfaction. The results also indicate that where supportiveness was perceived as dominant culture characteristics, there was a strong association with employees' satisfaction. This study also supports the findings from previous studies conducted by (Lund, 2003), and Gray, Densten and Sarros (2003), which found that organizational culture does predict employees' job satisfaction. In addition, results shows that only supportiveness and communication and stability aspects of organizational culture predict job satisfaction among academic staff.

In the empirical study by Lund (2003) examined the impact of the types of organizational culture on job satisfaction in a survey of marketing professionals in a cross-section of firms in the USA. Out of the 1,800 respondent questionnaires mailed, results indicated that job satisfaction levels varied across organizational culture typology.

In another study by Gifford, Zammuto, and Goodman (2002) investigated the relationship between hospital unit culture and nurses quality of work life within seven different hospitals, located in five Western United States cities. Data analysis showed that unit organizational culture did affect the nurse’s quality of work life and that human relation cultural values were positively related to organizational commitment, job involvement, empowerment and job satisfaction.

The results also revealed that out of the five organizational culture dimensions, namely organizational supportiveness, communication and stability, performance oriented, innovation, and emphasis of reward, organizational supportiveness was found to contribute most to job satisfaction. These results are in line with previous empirical study conducted by Gray, Densten and Sarros (2003) to examine executive perceptions of organizational culture and job satisfaction in small organizations (i.e. Less than 100 employees), data were collected using a mailed survey resulting in a final total sample of 1,918 useable responses (i.e. 39% response rate). The results indicated where emphasis on rewards and supportiveness were perceived as dominant cultural characteristics, there was a strong association with job satisfaction. The results were consistent with findings of previous research by Nystrom (1993) in which he found that employees in strong cultures tended to express greater organizational commitment as well as higher job satisfaction.

5.1 Limitations and future research

The present study had only focused on academic staff working in one of the public higher education institute in Malaysia. The results might be changed if the study looked at employees from another sector with different settings. Moreover, the sample size of this study was based on employees from academic sector. Hence, the results should not be generalized for the other sectors. Finally, the measure of job satisfaction
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comprises only a small number of items which tapped different aspects of job satisfaction behavior, and does not represent an overall view of job satisfaction; therefore this is a considerable biased view of this study. Future research may be beneficial if more items and better measures are developed in relation to this outcome variable.

It is proposed that future research should include the types of organizational culture such as consensual, entrepreneurial, bureaucratic and competitive using a similar approach. In addition, further researchers may investigate the relationship of organizational culture and job satisfaction in public and private sector. This kind of investigation would help explain the comparison among the facets of organizational culture in developing job satisfaction.

Moreover, future researchers may extend the model to examine the role and the impact of human resource management practices on organizational culture and job satisfaction.

6.0 Conclusion

This study focused on an exploratory investigation of the relationship between organizational culture and employees’ satisfaction in one of the higher education institute in Malaysia context. This study endeavors contribute most to the practicing managers and it also contains several implications for further research. The findings enhance our understanding of the organizational culture and employees’ job satisfaction within the education sector.

This study has also provided us with a better understanding of the relationship between these factors in order to enhance managerial effectiveness and organizational success. The findings stress the need to monitor organizational culture and to evolve better management practices so that employees' satisfaction is maintained at a high level. In other words, the findings could prescribe potential practical implications for managers and consultants in management development programs consistent with the training needs of the employees in the organization. Hence, employees will be likely to perform better and feel a high level of job satisfaction, and in turn will develop more commitment towards their organizations. Finally, the higher levels of employees' satisfaction in such organizations may give an advantage over other organizations in attracting and retaining employees in a competitive environment.

References


