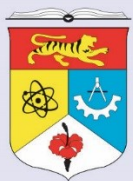


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## **THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR STAFF SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

(Sokongan Teoretikal bagi Kepuasan Kakitangan di Institusi Pengajian Tinggi:  
Suatu Kerangka Konseptual)

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### *ABSTRACT*

In this paper, the theoretical foundation for staff satisfaction in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) conceptual framework is discussed. Several constructs are identified based on the evidence from previous studies. This framework has been developed based on the relationships of these constructs and staff satisfaction as evidence from past studies that have been supported by three theories in the field of psychology. Seven salient constructs of the framework are: (1) leadership, (2) staff involvement, (3) workload, (4) self-development, (5) working environment, (6) communication, and (7) job satisfaction. All constructs have been found to be inter-related and contributed to overall satisfaction of HEI members of staff in the organisations which could possibly enhance their intention to stay or to leave their respective workplace. The framework is potentially useful for future testing and validation in the context of higher education setting.

*Keywords:* staff satisfaction; turnover intention; higher education institutions

### *ABSTRAK*

Dalam makalah ini, asas teoretikal kepada kerangka konseptual bagi kepuasan kakitangan di Institusi Pengajian Tinggi (IPT) dibincangkan. Beberapa konstruk telah dikenal pasti dan disokong daripada kajian lepas melalui kajian kepustakaan. Kerangka ini telah dibina berdasarkan hubungan konstruk-konstruk dengan kepuasan kakitangan dalam kajian-kajian lepas yang disokong oleh tiga teori dalam bidang psikologi. Tujuh konstruk penting dalam kerangka ini adalah: (1) kepimpinan, (2) penglibatan kakitangan, (3) beban kerja, (4) peningkatan diri, (5) suasana pekerjaan, (6) komunikasi, dan (7) kepuasan bekerja. Semua konstruk tersebut didapati berkait antara satu sama lain dan menyumbang kepada kepuasan kakitangan secara menyeluruh di IPT yang berkemungkinan boleh meningkatkan niat kakitangan untuk kekal bekerja atau sebaliknya di organisasi tersebut. Kerangka ini mempunyai potensi untuk digunakan bagi tujuan pengujian dan pengesahan dalam konteks persekitaran pendidikan tinggi pada masa akan datang.

*Kata kunci:* kepuasan kakitangan; niat berhenti kerja; institusi pengajian tinggi

## **1. Introduction**

Satisfaction towards working environment is mostly needed by everyone in order to excel in the position held and for career development. Although staff satisfaction in organisation has long been studied, this issue still prevails and worth-researching. This is because staff dissatisfaction would negatively affect the organisational well-being, productivity and performance. In other words, whenever members of staff are not satisfied, they would feel compelled to search for other jobs (Gregory & Shaw 2001) which would lead to the intention to leave the organisation. Long *et al.* (2012) have remarked that members of staff who have the intention to leave their workplace are considered leaving the organisation as they no longer have any spirit to do their job and at the same time would exert negative behaviour at the workplace.

In 2016, it was reported that only 13 percent of staff throughout the world were engaged in their jobs and that rate would be a concern as the value remained the same as it had been since 2013 (Mann & Harter 2016; McGregor 2013). Hence, this clearly indicates the issue of staff satisfaction at the workplace is a pertinent and global issue. According to Ong *et al.* (2014), in Malaysia, the turnover rate in 2011 increased two-fold within a year from eight percent in 2010 which can be interpreted as 20 out of 100 employees could be contemplating leaving the workplace. This signals that there are problems with employee satisfaction in the workplace which consequently lead to employees leaving their employment.

Therefore, staff satisfaction is a major issue that affects many organisations world wide including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). There has been a tremendous rise in the total of Malaysian HEIs for some years. The competitions among the newly established institutions and the existing ones are indeed stiff as every institution is responsible for gearing up towards excellence in the aspects of teaching and learning, research, publications, citations, and commercialisation in the pursuit of world ranking and globally acknowledged status at the expense of numerous problems and challenges faced by members of staff as their universities continue to compete which ultimately put the burden on them thus affecting their satisfaction (Ahsan *et al.* 2009). An alarming rate of staff with turnover intention in HEIs in Malaysia has also been revealed as a result of low satisfaction at their respective institutions (Hashim & Mahmood 2011).

Nevertheless, although job satisfaction has been studied extensively, there is still a dearth of research on staff satisfaction in HEIs (Mustapha & Yu-Ghee 2013; Machado-Taylor *et al.* 2011; Santhapparaj & Alam 2005). Most studies have revolved on profit-making industries and service organisations rather than using HEIs as the study setting (Kusku 2003). Therefore, this paper aims to study the related literatures of staff satisfaction in order to propose the variables in the conceptual framework with the theoretical underpinning three theories in psychology.

## **2. Review of Literatures**

### **2.1. The Level of Satisfaction among Employees**

The level of satisfaction among members of staff in an organisation is an essential part that determines the success of the organisation (Rizwan & Mukhtar 2014). Since decades ago, the study of job satisfaction has been an interesting topic in the field of social sciences, which is still being actively discussed until now (Memon *et al.* 2016; Masood *et al.* 2014; Santhapparaj & Alam 2005).

The term of *job satisfaction* is wide and varies. It can be described as happiness of staff at work (Sageer *et al.* 2012). Members of staff who are satisfied tend to do their job properly as their moral and motivation is uplifted (Raziq & Maulabakhsh 2015). In addition, job satisfaction could also mean positive things that happen at work (Kusku 2001). It can also refer to both good and bad feelings that the employees have about their current employment or employer (Masood *et al.* 2014). Employees who feel happy and contented at work are usually an indication that they are satisfied in the workplace (Sageer *et al.* 2012). In this regard, Arokiasamy (2013) and Mullins (2005) similarly defined job satisfaction as the personal feeling of achievement which is more about the inner feeling of employees towards their job.

Meanwhile, Mallikarjuna (2012) regarded this as the sense of intrinsic fulfilment and pride in doing the job. Employees feel that their jobs have the values that deserve recognition; therefore, they are happy and joyous in completing their given task at work. Likewise, Statt

(2004) has conceptualised staff satisfaction as the extent to which members of staff in the organisation are content with the intrinsic rewards they get from their jobs.

Many scholars have conceptualised and defined job satisfaction as how employees perceive their employment (Mafini & Pooe 2013; Lin & Lin 2011; Sempene *et al.* 2002; Schneider & Snyder 1975). Mullins (2005) has noted that the scope of the satisfaction of employees has widened and it is also strongly connected to their performance. This has been supported by Mustapha (2013) who has stressed the importance of staff satisfaction in enhancing the organisational performance and competitiveness of the staff. Staff satisfaction can also be viewed as a positive feeling that is felt by employees about their employment (Islam & Siengthai 2009). This definition is also in line with that of Robbins and Judge (2013) who concluded that staff positive evaluation about their job is their satisfaction with the job.

Additionally, Hoppock (1935) as cited in Aziri (2011) stated that job satisfaction could be understood as the combined circumstances of psychological, physiological and environmental factors leading to the employees feeling satisfied at work. In other words, it is the feeling that employees have about their job despite different and various issues and nature of their employment (Lu *et al.* 2005). Thus, it can be said that there are numerous internal and external factors affecting members of staff in the organisation (Raziq & Maulabakhsh 2015). Therefore, several factors measuring staff satisfaction within educational institution were identified from relevant literatures. These factors have led to the theoretical support for the variables in conceptualising the framework proposed in the present study which will be discussed in the following sections of this paper.

## **2.2. Leadership**

One of the major factors linked to staff satisfaction is leadership, which is associated with the process of communication, interpersonal behaviour and motivation (Gregory 2014). Leader is the central feature in any organisation in the world; therefore, a good leader is vital as he or she has the influence in determining organisational effectiveness (Mullins 2005). The leader is also responsible in motivating members of staff in the organisation to achieve organisational excellence (Kumari 2011; Jawahar 2006). According to Crainer (1995), there are more than 400 definitions of leadership globally and different fields of study may have different meaning. Scholars have convergently agreed that leadership is about guiding staff towards organisational goal (Gregory 2014; McMullen & Group 2013; Kumari 2011; Kim 1984). McMullen and Group (2013) have stressed that an organisation should ensure that its employees share the vision and mission of the organisation in order to have a good understanding of what they are pursuing for (Gregory 2014) and this would guide them to be on the right track towards achieving the organisational goal.

In addition, a good organisation is an organisation where the leader-subordinate relationship is at a high level (Yuliarini *et al.* 2012; Mullins 2005). This has been supported by Zabarauskaite (2012) who has noted employees in organisations are motivated by the way leaders are treating them. Therefore, it is essential for leaders to provide feedback on the performance of employees (Branham 2005). The feedback on performance makes employees become aware of their contribution to the organisation (Branham 2005) and gauge their performance level so that they can improve in the future (Gregory 2014). Providing feedback would instill staff motivation as this would make employees realise that their leaders are evaluating them, which lead them to feel that their effort is being appreciated by their leaders (Kaye & Jordan-Evans 1999). By contrast, leaders who fail to provide feedback would leave employees wondering whether or not they should improve and feeling unappreciated by their leaders (Gregory 2014; Branham 2005).

Furthermore, it is crucial for a leader to give support to the members of staff (Memon *et al.* 2016) such as developing their potential and increasing their level of confidence by instilling good values and beliefs (Yuliarini *et al.* 2012). This would not only minimise the shortcomings in the organisation but also motivate the staff (Memon *et al.* 2016; Yuliarini *et al.* 2012). A leader in the organisation must also be fair and unbiased towards employees (Irawanto 2015). This is because whenever employees are treated fairly, they would feel satisfied with their job (Witt & Nye 1992). This has also been echoed by Egan (2004) who has noted employees who feel that promotion opportunities are fair would tend to be more satisfied. Moreover, a good leader is also a leader who is trusted by members of the staff (Mcmullen & Group 2013). In an organisation, there should be core values that are strong and solid for employees to embrace (Sundaray 2011). Therefore, a leader should gain the trust of the members of staff so that they would feel confident that they are in good hands in achieving organisational success (Mcmullen & Group 2013). Employees tend to feel satisfied if they know that there is a bright future for them in the employment at the workplace (Volkwein *et al.* 1998).

Additionally, a good leader in an organisation would always attempt to build a strong bond and interpersonal relationship with the employees (Lin & Lin 2011). This is because it is normal for human beings to respond to the way they are being treated (Mullins 2005); therefore, it is vital for a leader to build good relationship with members of staff so that they would have more enthusiasm in their job at the workplace. According to Gregory (2014), employees come to work with a strong desire to do their job well and give their best for the organisational success; nevertheless, the way they are treated by their leaders at work would determine whether the burning desire would extinguish or continue to burn more vigorously. This is because employees who are treated well by their leaders at the workplace would not hesitate to go the extra mile in their work while those who are badly treated would react otherwise.

### **2.3. Staff Involvement**

The second construct linked to staff satisfaction is their involvement in their job which can be described as an attachment that members of the staff have towards their employment due to their commitment and loyalty (Mullins 2005). It is also believed that the participation of employees in organisation would contribute to better productivity and performance in the organisation (Mullins 2005). This is because when members of staff are involved in the organisation, they would certainly put more effort into their work (Mcmullen & Group 2013; Porter *et al.* 1973), which can also be associated with empowerment (Harmon *et al.* 2003), engagement (Sundaray 2011; Harter *et al.* 2002) and motivation (Kim 2002). Members of staff who are involved in their organisation would feel that they are valuable and would strive for organisational success (Macey 2006). In addition, Irawanto (2015) has noted that an involved member of staff who is committed to the job would perform better at work. In another study, it was observed that the involvement of members of staff in the organisation's key activities such as goal-setting and planning had certainly enhanced their level of satisfaction (Kumari 2011). This would also lead to a challenging environment that would enhance their enthusiasm in contributing towards the organisation (Mallikarjuna 2012; Sundaray 2011). Brownell (1982) has discovered that members of staff who are involved in the organisation are aware of their contribution and responsibility towards the organisation; hence, this would motivate and make them become engaged with organisational activities and goals. Kim (2002) has added that organisations that encourage the involvement of members of staff in their organisation would enhance organisational effectiveness and also staff motivation.

In other words, members of staff who are involved at work would feel that they are a part of the organisation (Vlosky & Aguilar 2009) as they would feel that they have a sense of ownership in the organisation and thus would give their undivided commitment for organisational success (Hashim & Mahmood 2011). By contrast, organisations that ignore the needs of employees, their ideas and opinions would leave their employees feeling unworthy and useless. This has been further elaborated by Gregory (2014) who has suggested that staff would feel that there is no more future in their employment and would almost surely consider a turnover. In addition, members of staff who are not involved would certainly feel bored with their job as it is monotonous and practically unchallenging (Mullins 2005). Initially, employees may put their best effort at work; however, their motivation would gradually decrease as there is no motivation or catalyst that is igniting their spirit and the worst case is that they do not bother to show up to work anymore (Gregory 2014).

#### **2.4. Workload**

Workload is another factor which is connected to staff satisfaction. It can be defined as the amount of job given at workplace (Shah *et al.* 2011). Having too much workload would cause stress to the individual member of staff (Shah *et al.* 2011) as it is associated with negativity at work; hence, too much stress would have a deteriorating effect on productivity, performance and efficiency (Memon *et al.* 2016; Branham 2005). Stress is a situation which would divert members of staff from their normal performance whether positively or negatively (Beehr & Newman 1978). Stress is also a tension, whether emotional or mental, which occurs when there is too much workload to cope within a short period of time (Mansoor & Ali 2011). However, Mullins (2005) also pointed out that sometimes stress is needed at the workplace as it also exerts the urgency among employees to do their job well in the organisation to avoid unfinished assignments. However, too much stress would also give undesired outcome for their well-being (Jain 2013; Mustapha 2013; Mullins 2005). Thus, it is crucial for the organisation to weight proper amount of workload to their employees (Mustapha 2013).

Job stress has been linked to undesirable impact towards satisfaction of employees in their respective jobs (Rehman *et al.* 2012). Employees who experience job stress resulting from their workload would hesitate to come to work and would feel under pressure as their effort may seem to be inadequate to cope with the increasing workload which never seems to stop (Rehman *et al.* 2012). In addition, a large number of members of staff may even opt for early retirement as their last resort because they can no longer withstand the stress at work (Jain 2013). Therefore, Gregory (2014) also stated that the distribution of workload in the organisation should be made fairly so that employees would not have any dissatisfaction over their co-workers who are paid the same amount of salary or wages but with lesser workload as compared to theirs.

#### **2.5. Self-development**

The fourth construct which has been identified to be linked to staff satisfaction is training. This construct is related to the development and upskilling of the skills that would consequently exhibit good performance and productivity (Faisal Azeem *et al.* 2013; Mullins 2005). Training and development are vital in any organisation as these elements help members of staff to be more prepared and well-equipped with the job (Chahal *et al.* 2013; Kulkarni 2013). Any error in the organisation can also be reduced when employees are well-trained for the job (Kulkarni 2013). The staff self-development is also associated with the increase in motivation, confidence and commitment (Mullins 2005). Organisations should view their employees as an important asset; therefore, there is a need for staff development in

order to tap the best potential (Salunke 2015; Mullins 2005). In short, employees who are trained and developed tend to be more loyal compared to those who are not provided with the training opportunities. This is because they would be led to feel that they may have a bright and better future (Wan Ahmad & Abdurahman 2015) as they could be many opportunities awaiting if they stay longer in the organisation (Mullins 2005).

In addition, Memon *et al.* (2016) has noted that even the leaders in the organisation should not be excluded from training as they can adapt with the new environment in the future and blend in. This is becoming the source of satisfaction for the members of staff as they are always learning something new and acquire new skills in the workplace (Chahal *et al.* 2013). According to Igbaria and Greenhaus (1992), there should be a path for employees to be promoted and to advance in the organisation. In similar vein, Sundaray (2011) has remarked that staff would be more satisfied and loyal if they know how their career paths would develop. Additionally, McMullen and Group (2013) have suggested that an organisation should provide the connection needed by employees with their future by providing the training opportunities and career development.

By contrast, failing to provide staff with the much needed training opportunities would lead to multitude negative effects towards the organisation. Organisations that fail to provide proper training to their employees are actually hindering the potential of their staff to be fully developed and this may impede staff development in the organisations as there would be little progress (Branham 2005). Gregory (2014) has asserted that organisations are doing themselves a disservice if they fail to provide training opportunities to their employees. Furthermore, it has been observed that one of the primary reasons of staff turnover is due to lack of training at work (Sundaray 2011). This would disengage them at work as they lack adequate skills and knowledge on how to do their job (Sundaray 2011).

## **2.6. Working Environment**

The fifth construct is working environment. This construct is vital to ensure organisational success and would definitely affect staff satisfaction (Mullins 2005). Working environment can also mean the connection between the members of staff and their environment which can be divided into dimensions such as organisational culture, management style or hierarchy in the organisation (Salunke 2015). Rizwan and Mukhtar (2014) view working environment as the location of the workplace of the employees and also the location in the organisation where they are doing their job and work. Jain and Kaur (2014) have categorised working environment into one that is physical and the other that is mental. Both of these categories of environment are crucial in enhancing staff satisfaction. Therefore, organisations should have a conducive and comfortable environment at the workplace for their employees in order to boost their morale and increase their performance at work (Raziq & Maulabakhsh 2015; Chandrasekar 2011).

In addition, issues of safety and security of the employees are also crucial in determining that the working environment is good (Sundaray 2011). Hence, the organisation is responsible to provide a suitable working atmosphere for their employees to do their job. Convergently, scholars have unanimously agreed that good working environment would cultivate staff satisfaction, motivation and retention (Rizwan & Mukhtar 2014; Egan *et al.* 2004). In short, an organisation would risk staff dissatisfaction should it fail to create a suitable and comfortable working atmosphere for its employees as they may find themselves having to work under intense pressure which would lead to failure to cope with such stressful working environment (Kaye & Jordan-Evans 1999).

## **2.7. Communication**

Communication is the sixth construct which has also been highlighted in the literature of staff satisfaction. Communication is crucial in any organisation in the world (Kamasak & Bulutlar 2008) as it is theoretically peculiar for an organisation to exist without communication, without which information cannot be sent or received. For example, members of staff would feel at a loss if they do not know what to do at work as a result of no or little communication between them and their top management (Winska 2010). This shows how important communication is as the driving force of the existence of the organisation (Tugimin *et al.* 2011) and its function. Saari and Judge (2004) have defined communication as the exchange of information and thought at work. The main functions of communication are to implement control, give motivations, express feelings and make decisions (Robbins & Judge 2013). Therefore, good communication at work such as giving motivations to staff (Kumari 2011), influencing good behaviours (Byrne & Lemay 2006; Amos *et al.* 2005) and building interpersonal relationship (Kaye & Jordan-Evans 1999) would be much needed.

According to Robbins and Judge (2013), there are two types of communication in organisations, namely, formal and informal. Formal communication is the interaction between leaders and members of staff regarding work while informal communication is the normal communication such as the interaction between employees and their co-workers. In addition, through communication, an organisation can also build closer relationship between leaders and members of staff. Employees would feel happy when their leaders are taking good care of them (Kaye & Jordan-Evans 1999). In short, as noted by Rizwan and Mukhtar (2014), an organisation that has high level of communication in it would give its members of staff the empowerment and also create enthusiasm in their work.

In this study, seven variables (predictors), which had also been studied by past researchers, are considered important and with proper measurement would be able to predict staff satisfaction in the organisation especially higher education institutions. The definition of each variable is summarised in Table 1.

Thus, the factors discussed in this paper i.e. job satisfaction, leadership, staff involvement, workload, self-development, working environment, and communication are the determinants of staff satisfaction for which any of the variables being ignored would lead to dissatisfaction that result in turnover intention at the workplace.

## **2.8. Turnover Intention**

In general, it is not an easy task to achieve and retain staff satisfaction over time as the needs would depend on specific organisational issues and situations as well as the types of organisation. As time progresses and with the emergence and rapid development of technology, members of staff in the organisation would express their feelings of dissatisfaction in many ways that may sometimes tarnish the organisational image. In reality, it is not an easy task to meet everyone's needs and it is certainly a challenging and difficult task to retain staff in the organisation (Noor & Zainuddin 2015; Long *et al.* 2012; Porter *et al.* 1973). Numerous factors may lead to staff satisfaction at work (Jurini 2013) which could determine whether the employees would stay or quit their jobs in the organisation; thus, turnover intention is a good indicator to be used as a measure whether employees feel happy or otherwise, at work (Medina 2012).



Table 1: Predictors of staff satisfaction from previous studies

Constructs	Definitions	Authors
Job Satisfaction	The overall perception an individual has at work.	Memon <i>et al.</i> (2016), Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2015), Rizwan & Mukhtar (2014), Masood <i>et al.</i> (2014), Arokiasamy (2013), Mustapha (2013), Robbins & Judge (2013), Mafini & Poee (2013), Mallikarjuna (2012), Sageer <i>et al.</i> (2012), Lin & Lin (2011), Aziri (2011), Islam & Siengthai (2009), Mullins (2005), Lu <i>et al.</i> (2005), Santhapparaj & Alam (2005), Statt (2004), Sempene <i>et al.</i> (2002), Kusku (2001), Schneider & Synder (1975).
Leadership	The ability of leaders to lead to changes to a group of people towards organisational success.	Memon <i>et al.</i> (2016), Irawanto (2015), Gregory (2014), McMullen & Group (2013), Yuliarini <i>et al.</i> (2012), Zabarauskaite (2012), Kumari (2011), Lin & Lin (2011), Sundaray (2011), Mullins (2005), Branham (2005), Egan <i>et al.</i> (2004), Kaye & Jordan-Evans (1999), Volkwein <i>et al.</i> (1998), Crainer (1995), Witt & Nye (1992).
Staff Involvement	The commitment, engagement, motivation and empowerment of staff towards organisation.	Irawanto (2015), Gregory (2014), McMullen & Group (2013), Mallikarjuna (2012), Hashim & Mahmood (2011), Kumari (2011), Sundaray (2011), Vlosky & Aguilar (2009), Mullins (2005), Macey (2006), Harmon <i>et al.</i> (2003), Harter <i>et al.</i> (2002), Kim (2002), Brownell (1982), Porter <i>et al.</i> (1973).
Workload	The intensity of job assignment given at workplace.	Memon <i>et al.</i> (2016), Gregory (2014), Jain (2013), Mustapha (2013), Rehman <i>et al.</i> (2012), Mansoor & Ali (2011), Shah <i>et al.</i> (2011), Mullins (2005), Branham (2005), Beehr & Newman (1978),
Self-development	Learning experience that develops staff at work.	Memon <i>et al.</i> (2016), Salunke (2015), Wan Ahmad Abdurahman (2015), Gregory (2014), Chahal <i>et al.</i> (2013), Faisal Azeem <i>et al.</i> (2013), Kulkarni (2013), McMullen & Group (2013), Sundaray (2011), Mullins (2005), Branham (2005), Igbaria & Greenhaus (1992).
Working Environment	Physical environment and mental environment towards the work.	Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2015), Salunke (2015), Jain & Kaur (2014), Rizwan & Mukhtar (2014), Chandrasekar (2011), Sundaray (2011), Mullins (2005), Egan <i>et al.</i> (2004), Kaye & Jordan-Evans (1999).
Communication	The exchange of thoughts, messages, signals, writing or interpersonal rapport.	Rizwan & Mukhtar (2014), Robbins & Judge (2013), Kumari (2011), Tugimin <i>et al.</i> (2011), Winska (2010), Kamasak & Bulutlar (2008), Byrne & Lemay (2006), Amos <i>et al.</i> (2005), Saari & Judge (2004), Kaye & Jordan-Evans (1999).

In fact, turnover intention can be defined as the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and also the feeling of the urge to leave the current employment in the near future (Medina 2012; Gregory & Shaw 2001). This relates to situations which normally happen because there are other work alternatives for members of staff to turnover (Narimawati 2007). Long *et al.* (2012) and Lambert *et al.* (2001) have also described turnover intention as members of staff who are actually quitting their jobs and exhibit different attitudes at work. This is further explained by Medina (2012) who has added that prior to leaving the organisation, the behaviour of the members of staff would also tend to change either positively or negatively. Therefore, it can be stated that there can be either positive or negative turnover in the organisation as it may depend on the reason of quitting from the current employment.

Thus, the turnover intention can be regarded as the manifestation of staff satisfaction level in the organisation. In other words, it is the consequences of the impact of the predictors (job satisfaction, leadership, staff involvement, workload, self-development, working environment, and communication) onto overall staff satisfaction, that would be the indication for the staff to remain or leave the organisation.

### **3. Theoretical Underpinning for Staff Satisfaction Framework**

Many theories can be used for supporting the conceptual framework especially in the context of higher education. In this article, three theories are used to explain the proposed conceptual model in the next section, namely, Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Expectancy Theory of Motivation.

#### **3.1. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**

In his theory, Herzberg identified two factors that would lead to staff motivation. They are known as the hygiene factors or the extrinsic factors and the motivation factors or the intrinsic factors. As described by Robbins and Judge (2013), the former refers to the factors that would not motivate members of staff in their respective jobs but only keep them from being dissatisfied while the latter refers to the factors that would lead to staff motivation at work.

The extrinsic factors are important as without these factors members of staff in the organisation would be dissatisfied. Hence, these hygiene factors can be defined as the basic needs for employees to do their jobs, for example, favourable working environment and supervision from their respective supervisors. If the hygiene factors are fulfilled, the feelings of the members of staff in the organisation remain unchanged and would be in a neutral state (Yusoff *et al.* 2013).

Meanwhile, the motivation factors or intrinsic factors would provide meaning to the members of staff in the organisation in relation to their jobs, for example, feeling of recognition, achievement and growth opportunity (Robbins & Judge 2013). Undeniably, both the hygiene or extrinsic factors and the motivation or intrinsic factors are mutually exclusive. Therefore, both factors are needed in providing motivation towards staff. In short, the hygiene factors would eliminate staff dissatisfaction at work while the motivational factors would provide staff with motivation and satisfaction at work (Yusoff *et al.* 2013).

#### **3.2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the needs of staff are aligned in hierarchical order and form a structural pyramid. In an organisation, the lower needs have to be satisfied first before moving up the hierarchical order. The pyramid is divided by two types of needs. The first type refers to the basic needs such as physiological, safety, and social needs while

the second type refers to the higher order needs such as needs for esteem and self-actualisation (Maslow 1954; 1943).

Naturally, the main priority is given to the basic needs. These type of needs should be addressed first before addressing other needs in the upper level of the hierarchy. These basic needs at the bottom of the hierarchy are a necessity for the members of staff, as dissatisfaction may emerge as a result of the lack of such needs. If these needs have been satisfactorily addressed, only then can the move towards the stage of self-actualisation which is the peak of the hierarchical structure of the pyramid (McLeod 2007) begins. This hierarchical structure is explained in the following table.

Table 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Beck 2014)

Needs	Job
Self-actualisation	Training, advancement, growth, creativity
Esteem	Recognition, high status, responsibility
Social	Co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, team
Safety	Work safety, job security, insurance
Physiological	Salary and stable employment

### 3.3. Expectancy Theory of Motivation

Expectation theory is the projection whether there is a certain outcome of employees in their certain acts at work (Robbins & Judge 2013). In other words, members of staff in the organisation would feel motivated if their effort leads to organisational performance and be rewarded (Lunenburg 2011). This theory can be summarised in the form of an illustration as can be seen in Figure 1.

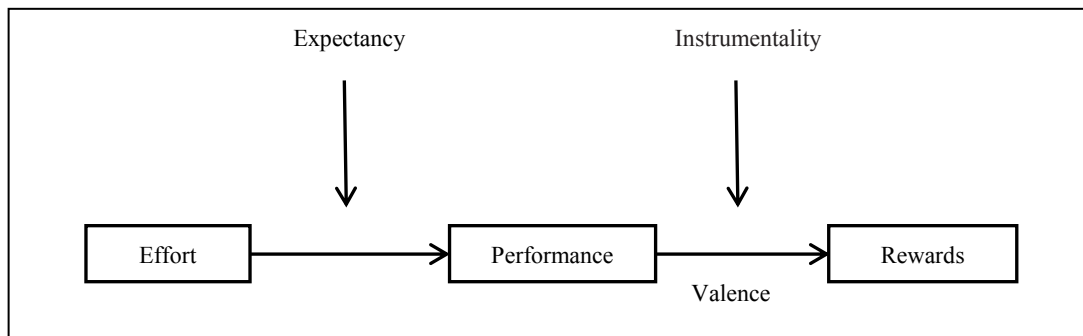


Figure 1: Basic expectancy model (Lunenburg 2011)

Expectancy refers to the expectation of members of staff in the organisation of their efforts towards good performance. If the members of staff feel that their effort would get the desired outcome, the expectancy value would be positive. By contrast, if they think that their effort would lead to nothing, they would not put any effort in doing it.

Instrumentality is the estimation of the members of staff of their performance that would be rewarded. If employees feel that their hard works are rewarded, they would feel happy and become engaged in their respective jobs at the workplace. Otherwise, if they feel that they are not rewarded for their hard work, they would not be motivated to work.

While, valence can be defined as whether or not the reward obtained has given satisfaction to the members of staff in the organisation in terms of recognition, bonus or promotion and this would depend on the individual preference, that is, which type or types of reward the individual member of staff is looking for. If the type of reward is not what that is desired, the individual member of staff would feel dissatisfied with it.

Therefore, it can be seen that all of the three aspects of motivation, i.e. expectancy, instrumentality and valence are important to each other. This is because if one of them fails to meet staff expectation, there would be no motivation for them to do their job. In addition, if the reward fails to satisfy the members of staff in the organisation although other aspects have given them the satisfaction that they need, the motivation would be negative and this would demotivate the staff at work.

#### **4. Proposed Model and Discussions**

From the literatures, several constructs for measuring staff satisfaction in HEIs have been identified. Figure 2 presents authors' proposed conceptual framework. As shown in Figure 2, it is hypothesised that six constructs (leadership, staff involvement, self-development, working environment, communication and workload) would determine staff satisfaction of HEIs which would have implications on staff turnover intention and their intention to stay in their respective organisations in the higher education setting. The six constructs are exogenous factors which can also be identified as the independent variables while staff satisfaction and turnover intention which are endogenous factors, can also be identified as the dependent variables. Three theories of motivation as briefly discussed in this article, i.e. Herzberg's two-factor theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Expectancy Theory of Motivation have formed the basis of this proposed conceptual framework.

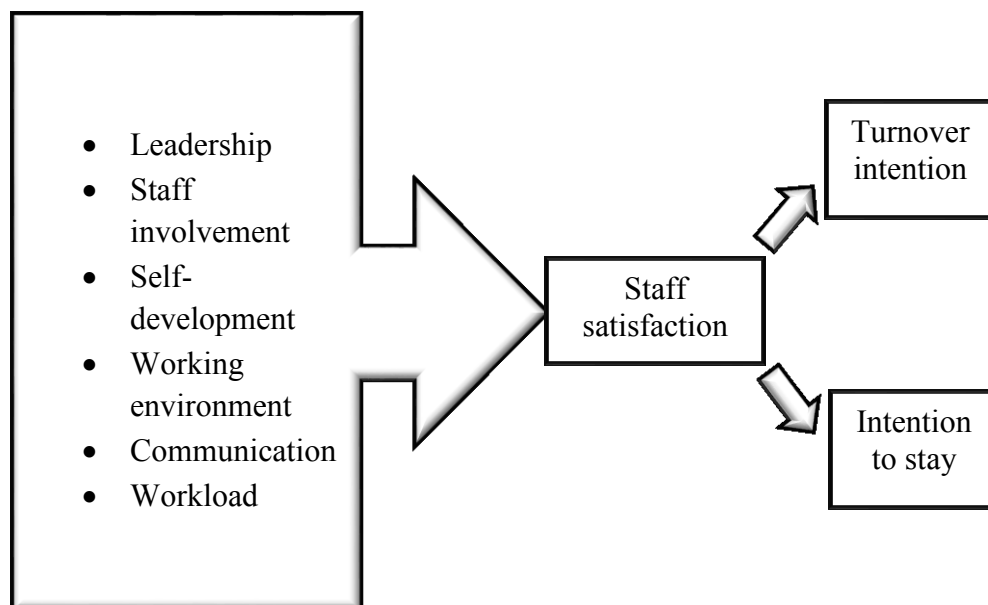


Figure 2: Conceptual model for measuring staff satisfaction at HEIs

Maslow's theory has suggested that the six constructs, i.e. leadership, staff involvement, self-development, working environment, communication and workload would be among the most important aspects in determining staff satisfaction as illustrated in the model. Accordingly, Herzberg's two-factor theory posits that a good leader would give motivation to the members of staff in the organisation so that they would do their job well (Yusoff *et al.* 2013; Ball 2003). Meanwhile, Expectancy Theory of Motivation emphasises that a good leadership is crucial in instilling motivation to the members of staff in doing their respective jobs (Lunenburg 2011).

Furthermore, these three theories also place an emphasis on other aspects such as staff involvement and self-development in determining staff satisfaction. For example, Herzberg's two-factor theory states that the following intrinsic factors would give satisfaction to the members of staff in the organisation: achievement, responsibility, advancement or opportunity for growth (Robbins & Judge 2013; Ball 2003). Moreover, Maslow's theory also suggests that the peak of the hierarchy of needs is the need for self-actualisation which includes training, advancement and growth. In addition, Maslow's theory also identifies training and development as the best way to give motivation and ensure that members of staff would feel satisfied (McLeod 2007; Maslow 1954; 1943). Apart from that, it is apparent that staff involvement is essentially a vital element as suggested by the Expectancy Theory of Motivation as this element would make members of staff in the organisation feel motivated and that their effort would contribute and make a difference to their workplace (Robbins & Judge 2013; Lunenburg 2011).

Working environment is also another key predictor for determining the satisfaction of members of the staff and their motivation, which is in tandem with Herzberg's two-factor theory (Robbins & Judge 2013; Yusoff *et al.* 2013). In similar vein, this has also been echoed by Maslow who asserted the importance of the needs for safety, which refer to the safety of the working environment and also the work or the job, as one of the basic needs (McLeod 2007; Maslow 1954; 1943).

To sum up, the three theories are based on the factors that motivate members of staff in the organisation at work and it is believed that members of staff who are motivated are the employees who would be satisfied with their jobs (Robbins & Judge 2013). In this regard, this is in agreement with Herzberg's two-factor theory which states that leadership, staff involvement, workload, self-development, working environment, and communication are motivational factors that would determine the satisfaction of members of staff at the workplace (Robbins & Judge 2013; Ball 2003). Ultimately, staff satisfaction can be concluded as either the members of staff would intend to quit from or stay with their respective organisations. This is explained by the hygiene factors in Herzberg's two-factor theory which pointed out that the outcome of staff satisfaction would lead to the intention to stay in the organisation. Likewise, if the variables fail to meet the staff satisfaction level, it would lead to staff turnover intention. Similarly, the aspect of valence in the Expectancy Theory of Motivation has also suggested that the level of staff satisfaction would determine the positivity or negativity of the intention. In other words, if the organisation manages to provide the satisfaction to their members of staff, it would lead to positive motivation for them in their respective jobs at the workplace.

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, staff satisfaction is an essential factor which cannot be neglected in any organisation as the employees are the prime movers for organisational excellence. Therefore, meeting and fulfilling their needs are of great importance for continuous improvement of

organisational productivity. Although staff satisfaction is not a relatively new issue and has been widely studied, the rapid changes that are taking place in this world would require organisations to respond quickly and wisely towards staff satisfaction. In this regard, HEIs are of no exception. Thus, this article has proposed the conceptual framework for determining staff satisfaction at HEIs which is supported by three theories. This framework argues that employees have to be managed accordingly as the predictors of staff satisfaction would determine the satisfaction level and eventually trigger them to stay or leave. It also posits that members of staff who stay in the organisation might feel satisfied or contented with what they have and would continue to do their job as usual. By contrast, employees who feel dissatisfied would react by applying for other jobs which results in staff turnover. In this respect, turnover can be, as discussed earlier, an indicator for job dissatisfaction and inevitably, also a good indicator whereby turnover can be seen by the members of staff as the opportunity for career development expansion outside of the current organisation. This is indicated by the new organisation which employs people based on the recognised expertise, skills and competency that they have. Through staff satisfaction, future researchers embarking on the issue of turnover may also benefit from this proposed conceptual framework. It is recommended that future research should also empirically validate the framework proposed in this study.

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