

RESEARCH BRIEF

African American College Faculty Job Satisfaction

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September 2009

Investigating faculty concerns and work-related issues are important to the long-term success of colleges and universities (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). In light of the limited numbers of African American faculty on college campuses, across all fields of study, knowing the general dispositions and career orientations of this population may provide college administrators with useful information that may increase the numbers of African American college faculty as well as enhance their professional experiences on campus. This particular viewpoint has been advanced or considered in several studies that explored the characteristics and experiences of African American faculty (Darden, Kamel, & Jacobs, 1998; Diener, 1985; Elmore & Blackburn, 1983). Overall, while not totally consistent across all studies, this literature base has documented that African American faculty tend to have negative experiences with regard to recruitment and retention at colleges and universities (Darden et al., 1998; Diener, 1985; Elmore & Blackburn, 1983).

Because the experiences and characteristics of African American college faculty in the United States has been an issue of concern among higher education administrators and researchers in light of race-based initiatives to diversify the faculty, continual information is needed to assess the levels of job satisfaction for African American faculty.

Accordingly, this descriptive study seeks to explore this issue, using a national sample of college faculty. This study will also compare the differences between African American male faculty and female faculty with regard to job satisfaction.

METHOD

To accomplish the objectives of the study, data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty were utilized to describe the perceptions of job satisfaction for African American college faculty. Specifically, this report highlights African American job satisfaction perceptions by gender. For this study, job satisfaction was conceptualized utilizing Herzberg's two-factor model (Herberg, 1966; Herzberg, Mathapo, Wiener, & Wiesen,

1974; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1964).

Data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) were used in the present study because the NSOPF is based on a representative sample of college faculty (Cataldi, Bradburn, & Fahimi, 2005). The institutional data in NSOPF consists of a broad range of institutions including 2-year and 4-year institutions (Cataldi et al., 2005). The NSOPF faculty and staff sample represents approximately 1 million college faculty (Cataldi et al., 2005). Among all college faculty, approximately 5% are African American. Of all African American college faculty, 57% are employed full-time, and 43% are employed part-time. This study was based on data from

Table 1. *Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction with Authority to Make Decisions*

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>
Male	73.8	22.2	2.6	1.4
Female	69.7	25.2	3.6	1.5

Table 2. *Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction with Benefits*

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>
Male	32.3	50.0	13.0	3.9
Female	37.2	44.8	12.6	5.4

Table 3. *Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction with Equipment and Facilities*

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>
Male	39.0	41.7	14.6	4.7
Female	32.5	42.8	14.1	10.6

Table 4. *Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction with Salary*

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>
Male	18.5	41.7	24.2	15.6
Female	18.8	35.1	26.8	19.3

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction with Instructional Support for Teaching Improvement

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Male	33.7	42.7	16.1	7.5
Female	33.8	32.8	23.5	9.9



full-time instructional faculty. Of all full-time African American faculty, 52% are male and 48% are female.

RESULTS

The data showed that African American males were more likely to report being very satisfied with the authority to make decisions. In contrast, African American females were more likely to be very satisfied with their benefits. Based on the data in Table 3, African American males were more likely to report that they were very satisfied with the equipment and facilities. It was also shown that African American female faculty were more likely to be very dissatisfied with their salary than were African American male faculty. African American female faculty were also more likely to be somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the instructional support for teaching improvement than were African American male faculty. African American male faculty were more likely to report being very satisfied with their workload; and African American female faculty were less likely to report being very satisfied with their job overall.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

National data used in this descriptive study showed that African American male and female college faculty at postsecondary institutions differed with respect to job satisfaction. African American male faculty reported being very satisfied more than African American female faculty. Moreover, the findings of this descriptive showed that less than half of African American faculty are very satisfied with their job overall which indicates that perhaps some issues may need to be addressed to better support the retention of African American college faculty. Some approaches for achieving this goal have been advanced in the scholarly literature on this topic (Flowers, 2005; García, 2000; Stanley, 2006) and they include a variety of strategies such

as establishing a support system within departments that fosters a culture of creativity and collegiality. Also, departments may consider finding more appropriate mechanisms for helping faculty to understand the expectations of the institution. Also, promotion and merit systems need to better reflect the importance of integrating research, teaching, and service activities in a manner consistent with the vision and mission of the institution. Given the results of the study, administrators should also implement and assess the effectiveness of various approaches that may be established to improve African American male and female faculty job satisfaction at postsecondary institutions.

Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction with Workload

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Male	33.1	44.1	16.3	6.4
Female	30.7	44.4	16.4	8.5

Table 7. Percentage Distribution of Satisfaction with Job Overall

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Male	42.0	48.2	7.6	2.1
Female	39.9	44.1	13.8	2.2

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Suggested Citation: Flowers, L. A. (2009). *African American college faculty job satisfaction*. (CHHC Research Brief, September 2009, No. 7) Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Eugene T. Moore School of Education, Charles H. Houston Center for the Study of the Black Experience in Education.

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