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The Effect of Employee Appreciation Methods on Job Satisfaction of Higher Education Support Staff

Joanna Carter
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Joanna Carter

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Walden University

2023

Abstract

The Effect of Employee Appreciation Methods on
Job Satisfaction of Higher Education Support Staff

by

Joanna Carter

MA, Walden University, 2016

BS, Louisiana State University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

February 2023

Abstract

Almost 80% of U.S. companies have an employee recognition program. Although there is a great deal of research on the factors that affect employees' job satisfaction in general, little is known about the effect of employee appreciation methods on support staff's job satisfaction within higher education institutions. The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions. The study's theoretical framework consisted of Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation, Victor Vroom's expectancy theory, Frederick Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, and Arne Kallenberg's theory of job satisfaction. Survey data provided by a sample of 241 participants were used to test the eight study hypotheses. The results of *t* tests showed that each of the seven types of employee appreciation methods significantly influenced support staff's job satisfaction. The result of the ANOVA test on all seven employee appreciation methods collectively led to a rejection of the null hypothesis, as there were significant differences between the mean job satisfaction scores for some of the employee appreciation methods, with not having an employee appreciation method having the least effect on job satisfaction and using verbal one-on-one appreciation methods having the highest effect. By implementing the findings of this study, organizational leaders and managers could demonstrate their compassion and concern for the well-being of support staff, thus creating positive social change for these employees as well as the customers and other stakeholders they deal with in higher education institutions.

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Dedication

There are many people that to whom I wish to dedicate this wonderful journey and outcome that I have accomplished. The first is my amazing husband, Carter. Though he did not completely understand the world of academia, he supported me and still does, as I accomplish remarkable goals in my life. I could not have done this without you, Captain.

The second person to whom I wish to dedicate this accomplishment is my incredible best friend, Dev. His support was and continues to be amazing. You will never know how much your support means to me, Dev.

The third person to whom I wish to dedicate this dissertation is my dad, Dennis. He has always been so supportive and constantly reminds me that he is proud of me for such an accomplishment. Your support and encouragement have, and continues to be, amazing and wonderful, Dad.

The fourth and fifth people are my mom, Teresa, and her mother, my MeMaw, Estelle. Though both have passed on, I can still feel their guidance, support, and love. Mom, I thank you every day for helping me understand the academic world, sharing your academic humor, and being an inspiration to me. MeMaw, I thank you daily for being the amazing woman you were, teaching me so much, including how to be a secretary and follow in your career. Truly, you are my inspiration.

Lastly, there is a special little cat, Shere Khan. Though he has crossed the rainbow bridge, he will forever be my grad buddy. I miss you and love you, my little study partner. Thank you for adding your purrs to this amazing journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In this study, I examined the effect of employee appreciation methods on higher education support staff job satisfaction. Understanding how individuals in a support staff role perceive certain appreciation methods and their effect on job satisfaction may help leaders create a more positive working environment, resulting in higher job satisfaction rates, employee morale, and performance. This chapter includes (a) background literature that supports the need for further studies about appreciation by employers; (b) the problem statement; (c) purpose of the study; (d) research questions and hypotheses; (e) theoretical foundation; (f) nature of the study; (g) definitions of key terms; (h) assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations of the study; and (i) how the study results may affect social change.

Background of the Study

Job satisfaction is a way to measure an organization's success in sustaining a positive working environment for its employees (Che Nawi et al., 2016). An organization that strives to create a work environment with high job satisfaction may increase productivity due to motivated employees (Che Nawi et al., 2016). Positive behaviors by managers within an organization can aid in creating a positive work environment that results in high job satisfaction of employees (Fabio et al., 2017). Hence, an organization should ensure employees have high job satisfaction, resulting in customer interactions that improve customer satisfaction (Che Nawi et al., 2016).

Chambliss (2017) stated that individuals in staff support roles must meet the requirements for their role and their managers and go above and beyond their job duties by extending help when and where needed in other areas of the organization. Chambliss noted that leaders and managers often view secretaries and other support staff individuals as insignificant, whereas they should consider these individuals valuable team members. As a result, they often receive little heartfelt recognition from upper-level management.

Employers' appreciation can positively or negatively affect employee morale and job satisfaction (Haider et al., 2015). For an organization to have high employee job satisfaction ratings, the employer needs to understand that the types of employee appreciation given could directly affect employee job satisfaction and act accordingly. Naim and Lenka (2018) examined employer appreciation of employees in terms of the types of appreciation shown to employees and the resulting outcomes. Investigating other studies in the literature, Naim and Lenka (2018) determined that the type of appreciation affected employee job satisfaction perception based on certain variables, such as work location, employee generation, and leadership style. They argued that upper-level management should consider how employee appreciation methods affect support staff.

Fabio et al. (2017) further supported the effect of employers' gratitude to employees in various forms and the outcomes regarding of job satisfaction and employee morale. Fabio et al. emphasized that gratitude has a vital role in enhancing positive relationships between the employee and the employer, promoting a work environment that benefits the employee and the employer within the organization and society.

Analyzing the data collected for my study helped quantify the importance of various appreciation methods used by employers to motivate support staff in terms of how those appreciation methods affect their job satisfaction.

Gevrek et al. (2017) collected data about how employee appreciation and gratitude can affect employee morale and job satisfaction. The study participants were faculty in an academic setting that completed surveys regarding factors that influence job satisfaction, employee morale, and retention. The study results showed the importance of the monetary factor to satisfaction; however, other factors, such as rank and title, also influenced job satisfaction. In this study, I enhanced the understanding of the importance of certain employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of a different population and support staff within higher education institutions.

Problem Statement

The show of appreciation by management to employees can vary widely, and the results range from acceptance by employees to feeling insulted (Waters et al., 2013). Humans want recognition (Colquitt et al., 2015). According to White (2015a), over 80% of U.S. businesses have an employee recognition program. Ahrens (2016) discussed how managers shows gratitude could decrease stress and promote a healthy working environment if employees accepted the displays to acknowledge that employers valued them. Motivated employees are likely to be more efficient and effective within the organization, particularly when positive motivation occurs in employee appreciation than

employees who have decreased motivation and morale due to a lack of appreciation or wrongfully presented employee appreciation (Shah & Asad, 2018).

When employee appreciation methods are too generalized or presented with a lack of true gratitude, employers may inadvertently create a negative, competitive environment, causing employees to feel resentful and less valued (Goodwyn, 2016). A general problem faced by organizational leaders and managers is determining ways to show employees appreciation in ways that positively influence employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Aguenza & Som, 2012). Employers who underestimate the effect that appreciation has on the employees run the risk of having employees with low job satisfaction, which could lead to low morale, decreased productivity, and health concerns (Employee appreciation counters burnout, 2019).

Employers can influence employee job satisfaction through external methods, such as the appreciation mechanism from employers to employees (Pfister et al., 2020). The specific problem is that little knowledge exists about the effect of such employee appreciation methods on higher education support staff job satisfaction (Bradler & Neckermann, 2019; Haider et al., 2015). Employers who use effective appreciation methods can develop a strong workforce with high employee job satisfaction (Pfister et al., 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher

education institutions. To refrain from the overuse of the word appreciation, gratitude is a synonym in this study, following Beck's use of interchangeable words in her 2016 study (Beck, 2016). The support staff within a higher education setting plays an essential role in creating an environment that supports a successful institution's mission statement and vision (Stankovska et al., 2017). By acknowledging the support staff through employee appreciation, employers validate the support staff's role as a crucial element in the work environment's structure (White, 2015b).

The independent variables for this study were those identified and examined by Beck (2016), which are the following employee appreciation methods: (a) verbally (one-on-one), (b) verbally (in a group setting), (c) electronic note (email, social media), (d) handwritten (a card, letter), (e) tangible item (gift card, swag), (f) monetary bonus, (g) and no expression of gratitude. The dependent variable was employee job satisfaction. Each dependent variable was measured on a 5-point Likert scale using a straightforward instrument consisting of questions from Beck's (2016) survey used with permission and administered via SurveyMonkey to study participants.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions (RQs) and hypotheses (*Hs*) for this study were:

RQ1: What is the effect of the verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

*H*₀₁: The verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a1} : The verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ2: What is the effect of the verbal (in a group) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_{02} : The verbal (in a group setting) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a2} : The verbal (in a group setting) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ3: What is the effect of the electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_{03} : The electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a3} : The electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ4: What is the effect of the handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_{04} : The handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a4} : The handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ5: What is the effect of the tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀5: The tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a5: The tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ6: What is the effect of the monetary bonus employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀6: The monetary bonus employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a6: The monetary bonus employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ7: What is the effect of no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀7: The no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a7: The no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ8: What are the differences in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods?

H_08 : There is no significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods.

H_a8 : There is at least one significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods.

Theoretical Foundation

Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation was an essential part of the theoretical framework for this study (Alajmi & Alasousi, 2019). Maslow (1943) concluded that individuals have five levels of need, which are in a hierarchy from lowest to highest: physiological, security, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization (becoming the best that one can be). Everyone has the motivation to satisfy their highest unmet need (Alajmi & Alasousi, 2019). In this study, I used Maslow's theory of motivation as a foundation for studying the effect of employee appreciation methods by employers on higher education support staff's job satisfaction.

Victor Vroom's theory of expectancy (Vroom, 1964), the second part of the theoretical framework, refers to the connection between employers and employees and how employees' perception of what needs to be done to achieve rewards within the organization motivates the employee. Vroom (1964) shared that there were three elements to the theory of expectancy that could affect employees: Expectancy (individuals believe that what they do will result in an outcome); Instrumentality (individuals will receive outcome if expectations are met per the job performance requirements); and Valence (the value an employee places on certain outcomes).

Vroom's theory of expectancy applied to this study by connecting the valance of employee appreciation methods by employers to employees and how it affects the employee job satisfaction of support staff in higher education institutions.

The third element of the theoretical framework is Frederick Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (also known as the Herzberg theory). This theory incorporates the idea that certain factors (demotivators) considered extrinsic to the work performed, such as pay and job security, motivate employees differently than factors directly related to the work performed (motivators), such as recognition and responsibility (Coy, 2011).

The fourth theory within the framework was the theory of job satisfaction constructed by Kalleberg (1977). Kalleberg formulized that there were six factors employees valued that influenced job satisfaction. These factors are: (a) an intrinsic facet; (b) a convenience facet; (c) a financial facet; (d) an extrinsic facet of relationship with co-workers; (e) an extrinsic facet of having a career (being in one institution for a long time); and (f) resource adequacy (Kalleberg, 1977).

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions. This research study was consistent with both Beck's (2016) and Parlalis's (2011) studies on the effect of managerial gratitude in the workplace. This study's findings can be a resource for leaders and managers to increase job satisfaction and employee morale with an organization.

Participants consisted of a random sample of 241 individuals in full-time support staff roles in U.S. higher education institutions who had been in their job for at least 6 months. I analyzed the collected surveys to determine (a) whether the selected employee appreciation methods affect the job satisfaction of support staff in higher education and (b) the rankings of the employee appreciation methods from the most positive effect to the most negative effect on job satisfaction. The study data came from an online survey based on Beck's (2016) survey, administered through Survey Monkey.

A key component to achieving valid results was eliminating any individuals who completed the survey that had worked for the targeted organization for fewer than 6 months or part-time per the organization's human resources definition of part-time work hours. Individuals who had been with the organization for fewer than 6 months were still within a probational period. Part-time individuals may not have the same experience as full-time employees. For this study, collecting and analyzing responses from individuals with the organization for at least 6 months as full-time employees was essential.

Definitions

Affective commitment: Affective commitment is a connection established by the employee to the organization on an emotional level, and identification level, and a level of involvement (Naim & Lenka, 2018).

Electronic employee appreciation: This is an electronic version of employee appreciation shown by the employer to the employee in an email or social media (Beck, 2016).

Employee appreciation: Employee appreciation is a connection between the employee and the organization that can contribute to positive or negative outcomes (Gevrek et al., 2017).

Gratitude: Gratitude of employer to employee and employee to the employer can directly affect the work environment and outcomes (Fabio et al., 2017).

Handwritten employee appreciation: Handwritten employee appreciation is shown to an employee from the employer in a handwritten letter, note, or card (Beck, 2016).

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction is a multi-dimensional, complex phenomenon experienced by the employee, positively or negatively, related to the employee's working environment (Stankovska et al., 2017).

Monetary bonus: A monetary bonus is how an employer can show appreciation to an employee based on the giving of currency outside the boundaries of annual salary increases or yearly bonuses (Beck, 2016).

No employee appreciation: The absence of employee appreciation from employers can instill a sense of mistrust, a perceived understanding by employees that the employers do not see beyond the scope of production and bottom line, and can result in negative employee morale (Beck, 2016).

Support staff: Support staff is those individuals who assist supervisors, leaders, and managers within an organization (Chambliss, 2017).

Tangible employee appreciation item: This is a tangible item, such as a gift, gift card, or another item that is touchable, given by an employer to show appreciation to an employee (Beck, 2016).

Verbal appreciation in a group: This is the verbal appreciation shown to an employee by an employer in a group setting, such as meetings or a gathering (Beck, 2016).

Verbal appreciation one-on-one: This is the verbal appreciation shown to an employee by an employer in a one-on-one environment within the organization's boundaries (Beck, 2016).

Assumptions

There were three assumptions for this study. First, I assumed that the participants of the study answered the questions honestly. In information I distributed before and as part of the survey, I stressed the importance of participants answering the survey honestly and emphasized that all answers would remain confidential. My second assumption was that the participants would not discuss the survey with other individuals who had yet to complete the survey. In information I distributed before and as part of the survey, I stressed the importance of not discussing the questions and potential answers with anyone to prevent outside influences from affecting responses. Therefore, I assumed that all participants would answer the survey questions without discussing the survey with others. My third assumption was that job satisfaction increases or decreases depending on the type of employee appreciation method used by the employer.

Scope and Delimitations

This study's data consisted of the survey responses given by a sample of employees in support staff roles of higher education organizations to questions about the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on their job satisfaction. This study's scope encompassed those individuals in support staff as defined by the Human Resource Departments within higher education institutions. Participants must have met the study's three requirements to be part of the collected results and the analysis. The first requirement was for the employee to hold a job title classified as support staff in the higher education institution. The second requirement was that the employee is a full-time employee in a higher education institution. The third requirement was that the employee must have worked as support staff within the higher education institution for at least 6 months.

In this study, I attempted to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions based on job satisfaction ratings provided via a survey by support staff employees in higher education institutions who meet the study criteria. The study was consistent with both Beck's (2016) and Parlalis's (2011) research on the effects of managerial gratitude in the workplace. The study data came from participant responses to an online survey modeled after Beck's (2016) survey.

Limitations

One potential limitation of this study was the possibility of low participation. To avoid this, the participants were informed of the reason for the study and how their answers to the survey would provide valuable data that could help to potentially create a work environment that had high job satisfaction rates and employee morale among all employees, including those in the support staff roles. As a result of this and the interest shown in the study, the number of completed, valid surveys obtained (241) exceeded the minimum sample size (231).

Another potential limitation of this study was the definition and perception of individuals in support staff. It was essential to clearly define what a support staff role is within the higher education institution. Communication with the Human Resources Department would provide job requirement descriptions for individuals who are support staff. It was also critical that individuals in support staff's role understood that their role within the higher education institution was important and that they were an essential part of the workforce.

A challenge to this study's validity was the potential for biased answers from participants. Conducting the survey online and reassuring participants that all answers would be confidential mitigated this challenge. It was critical that the participants fully understood the survey's distribution process, the confidentiality of the answers on the survey, the survey's collection process, and the goal of the survey results.

Significance of the Study

This quantitative study's significance was that it might close a gap in knowledge about the effect of employee appreciation methods on higher education support staff job satisfaction, an area within the ranks of higher education employees that researchers have not fully examined (Stankovska et al., 2017). The conclusions of this study may provide valuable information for leaders and managers to use to create a positive working environment for all employees, the importance of which Buil et al. (2018) noted; particularly for those in the role of support staff, who are critical to workflow within organizations (Chambliss, 2017).

Significance to Theory

This study could directly affect the importance of support staff within an organization, and employers should understand the importance of appreciation methods to support staff and staff job satisfaction. Employees who feel appreciated by leadership and management have a stronger motivation to remain at their current job, supporting the importance of understanding what appreciation methods result in higher job satisfaction (Robbins, 2019). Job satisfaction of support staff within an organization connected to employee appreciation methods can be the foundation for future studies to determine the employee appreciation methods have the most positive effect on employee job satisfaction.

Significance to Practice

Higher education institutions are known for creating a culture of innovation, investigation, knowledge-seeking, research, and understanding (Che Nawi et al., 2016). One potential contribution of this study was the advancement of knowledge in leadership and management related to the effect of employee appreciation methods on higher education support staff job satisfaction. The application of this study's findings could improve the job satisfaction of higher education support staff, thus improving educational institutions' quality.

Significance to Social Change

Because of this study's findings, a positive social change could occur if higher education leaders employ more effective employee appreciation methods to increase higher education support staff's job satisfaction. The established relationship between job satisfaction and higher productivity of employees with elevated job satisfaction serves as a conduit for the organization to become a positive element within society (Md Salahuddin et al., 2015). More satisfied employees could equate to a more positive working environment, establishing a strong foundation for the organization to build on internally and promote positive outcomes on a community level.

Summary and Transition

Job satisfaction is an essential element of an organization, affecting its success or failure (Stankovska et al., 2017). While there is much literature regarding job satisfaction,

employee morale, and appreciation, there is little information regarding employee appreciation methods related to support staff's job satisfaction.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions. The study findings may help leaders and managers understand the effect that various employee appreciation has on employees' job satisfaction ratings and enable them to increase job satisfaction by using employee motivation methods more effectively within the organization.

The outcomes of this study may provide relevant information for institutional leaders and managers to use to create a positive working environment for all employees, the importance of which Buil et al. (2018) noted; particularly for those in the role of support staff, who are critical to workflow within organizations (Chambliss, 2017). A gap in the literature about the effect of employee appreciation methods on higher education support staff job satisfaction, an area within the ranks of higher education employees that researchers have not fully examined, may close due to this study. Further support for this study's importance is provided in the literature review in Chapter 2 and the detailed plan for survey development, distribution, data collection, storage, and analysis in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A general problem faced by organizational leaders and managers is determining ways to show employees appreciation in ways that positively influence employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Aguenza & Som, 2012). The specific problem is that little knowledge exists about the effect of such employee appreciation methods on higher education support staff job satisfaction (Bradler & Neckermann, 2019; Haider et al., 2015). The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions.

This chapter supports the study's importance and purpose in relation to support staff within a higher education institution. A detailed analysis of resources, such as online peer-reviewed literature, journal articles, and dissertations, identified using key terms is in the Literature Search Strategy section. Supportive documentation for the study's theoretical foundation and the reasons for selecting specifically named theories are in the Theoretical Foundations section. A detailed review of the current literature that supports the need for this study is in the Literature Review section. This chapter concludes with the Summary and Conclusions section.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review for this study consisted of searches within various online databases. I used the Walden University online library databases (<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/library>) to identify peer-reviewed articles,

dissertations, and other published studies. I also used the University of St. Augustine online learning center library and Google Scholar to gather additional literature about this study's elements. Published articles, peer-reviewed articles, and dissertations were the primary sources of literature; however, if other resources, such as books, were appropriate to support this study's purpose, I used them.

The key terms and phrases that I used for the resource searches included *employee appreciation, employee satisfaction, job satisfaction, secretary, and support staff*. Other significant terms and phrases that I used in the searches were *appreciation in the workplace, employee appreciation methods, employee appreciation methods in education, employee appreciation methods in Fortune 500 companies, employee satisfaction in higher education, employer appreciation of staff, employer appreciation of support staff, higher education support staff, job satisfaction in higher education, and satisfaction in the workplace*.

Theoretical Foundation

The first theory I selected for the theoretical framework was the theory of human motivation developed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. Maslow developed this theory based on the understanding that humans have a hierarchy of needs to meet to achieve a sense of purpose, a feeling of accomplishment, and the importance of being a vital part of a community (Maslow, 1943). The five levels within the hierarchy are (in order of foundational to peak): physiological, security, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943).

Alajmi and Alasousi (2019) summarized Maslow's theory by stating that those individuals who have their needs met (as specified in Maslow's theory of human motivation), particularly from outside influences, are more likely to be productive within society and aim for higher goals than those individuals who lack the motivational influencers. Maslow's theory of human motivation highlights the importance of influencers on individuals (Maslow, 1943). Employee appreciation methods can influence each step related to support staff's job satisfaction in higher education institutions.

Uka and Prendi (2021) used Maslow's theory of human motivation in their study of motivation and productivity. The elements of Maslow's theory can apply to the roles of individuals within an organization. Individuals strive to obtain a positive working environment at a higher rate when employers meet the employee's needs for a reward through recognition (Uka & Prendi, 2021).

The second theory I selected for the theoretical framework was the theory of expectancy, developed by Victor Vroom (Vroom, 1964). Vroom's (1964) theory focuses on the connection established between leaders and employees and how the employee's perception of what to do to achieve rewards (valence) is a motivator that employers could use to attain a positive job satisfaction outcome (expectancy). Coy (2011) furthered Vroom's (1964) model by analyzing how employees view their work drive and their employer's ways of recognizing hard work.

Vroom's (1964) theory has three fundamental components based on employee and employer relationships. The first relationship is the effort-performance relationship, which connects an individual's effort and recognition in the performance review. The second relationship is the performance-reward relationship, which is the employee believing a good performance review will lead to rewards within the organization. The third relationship is the rewards-personal goals relationship, which is how the individual views the potential reward. Each of the three components of Vroom's theory centers around employee performance and recognition by employers to promote a sense of well-being and appreciation for work. The theory of expectancy connected to this study through the employee appreciation methods and how the employees value the method of job satisfaction, specifically that of support staff in higher education institutions.

The third theory I selected for the theoretical framework was Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, developed in 1959 by Frederick Herzberg and his colleagues (Coy, 2011). Herzberg's theory integrates two targeted factors (demotivators and motivators). Demotivators are factors such as salary and job security, while motivators include appreciation, recognition, and responsibility (Coy, 2011). Leaders and managers who understood how these factors could affect employees could apply knowledge of effective appreciation methods to boost employee morale and increase employee retention.

Herzberg developed a way for employers to connect and understand employee thought processes about job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. One set of factors

promotes a sense of motivation towards satisfaction with the job, while the other factors promote a sense of motivation away from dissatisfaction. Both elements work together to create an employee who is loyal to the organization, is goal-oriented, has self-worth, and has a higher job satisfaction rating based on how employers use the extrinsic and intrinsic factors (Coy, 2011). Herzberg's theory was a foundational theory with this study by solidifying the importance of the connection between the employee (support staff) and employer within a higher education institution.

The fourth theory I selected for the theoretical framework was Kalleberg's (1977) theory of job satisfaction. Kalleberg stated that workers valued six different aspects of their work, resulting in their job satisfaction rating. These are: (a) an intrinsic facet, such as workers seeing the result of their work; (b) a convenience facet, which includes areas such as ease of driving to and from work, the employee's work station and work hours; (c) a financial facet, which includes areas such as salary, benefits, and the security of having the job; (d) an extrinsic facet of relationship with co-workers; (e) an extrinsic facet of having a career (being in one institution for a long time); and 6) resource adequacy, which includes the necessary equipment to complete work, leadership help when needed, and leadership recognition of good work (Kalleberg, 1977).

Coy (2011) furthered Kalleberg's theory of job satisfaction by highlighting the importance of relationships between employees and employers and the relationship between co-workers, as these relationships pertain to job satisfaction. If the relationships are positive, then the employee is likely to give a higher job satisfaction rating than those

who do not have favorable relationships in the work setting. “In contrast, if a work environment is without the characteristics that enable satisfaction, it limits the development of individual potential and is to be negatively valued” (Coy, 2011, p. 19).

I used the theory of job satisfaction for this study to help establish the importance of the connection between the employee and the employer. The theory highlights critical requirements that workers place upon themselves within a work environment that can affect their job satisfaction perception. Employers should recognize these factors when considering employee appreciation and recognition methods to achieve a high job satisfaction outcome.

Literature Review

A vital component of any organization's success or failure is the employees' job satisfaction (Stankovska et al., 2017). A satisfied workforce can be a foundational cornerstone of an organization's success (Mahajan & Kumar, 2018). Creating a positive work environment can attract top individuals and retain highly productive employees, which should be employers' focus (Jalilianhasanpour et al., 2021). Employees who experience positive motivation from employers and have high job satisfaction are committed to the organization's success (Varma, 2017). Mani and Mishra (2020) discussed that high employee morale and high job satisfaction are critical components of a successful organization that employers should address continuously, especially during times of uncertainty and stress on a societal level. An organization's development and growth can stem from a deep understanding of the importance of employee job

satisfaction (Sittisom, 2020). Employees who feel appreciated at work are more likely to be motivated and enjoy coming to work (Hamrick & White, 2020).

Mahadi et al. (2020) discussed the importance of positive relationships between employers and employees to achieve high job satisfaction and productivity. The positive relationship affecting job satisfaction is achievable through various support methods, including positive feedback, guidance, appreciation recognition, and effective communication (Mahadi et al., 2020). A “supervisor showing gratitude and appreciation for employee contribution will motivate them to perform better and underappreciated will make employees feel down and demoralized and will have the intention to leave the organization” (Mahadi et al., 2020, p. 209).

As Olen (2017) discussed, many available literary resources focus on job satisfaction, employee morale, and appreciation. Beck (2016) examined the importance of appreciation in the workplace as a factor that could improve employees' day-to-day job satisfaction through various delivery methods. Achmad et al. (2020) discussed the importance of employers recognizing the effect that compensation and other work motivators have on employee satisfaction and higher productivity.

Most of the literature pertaining to job satisfaction focused on the workforce's general population. Few sources targeted the job satisfaction of an organization's support staff. The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions.

Defining Support Staff

An essential element of this study was to define the role of support staff, commonly known by the titles of secretary, administrative assistant, executive assistant, office assistant, general assistant, and office clerk. Chambliss (2017) defined support staff as individuals who assist leaders, managers, and supervisors within an organization. He supported his definition of the administrative assistant (AA) role by comparing the AA to a help desk. “Unofficially, the AA is an all-purpose help desk for her building” (Chambliss, 2017, p. 14).

Olen (2017) stated that support staff were originally titled secretaries and suffered the stigma of being considered “dumb” until the 1970s and 1980s, when a shift in title and understanding of the actual job duties occurred due to increased pressure from feminist groups. Olen (2017) further defined the role of support staff by including the advent of new technology that helped to evolve the role from simply answering phones and taking dictation to generating reports, creating presentations, and generally serving as an extension of the leader, manager, or supervisor.

In their quantitative study, Md Salahuddin et al. (2015) focused on administrative staff individuals in a university setting. They defined administrative staff as those individuals in support roles for department leads, faculty, and students, not solely for one supervisory role, furthering the idea that the individuals in the positions of support staff provide significant contributions to the daily workflow within an organization (Md Salahuddin et al., 2015). “The central core of university activities is based on these

human resources and the way they are employed to perform different tasks to achieve organizational goals” (Md Salahuddin et al., 2015, p. 28).

Che Nawi et al. (2016) defined higher education support staff in their literature review study as individuals in a non-academic role within an academic setting. Like Md Salahuddin et al. (2015), Che Nawi et al. (2016) emphasized that non-academic staff play an essential role within an educational institution due to its nature non-academic staff role being one that helps in managing all aspects of the organization. Their review, which focused on job satisfaction among academic and non-academic staff at Malaysian public universities, showed that job satisfaction is an important part of an organization regardless of an individual's role within the workforce.

In the qualitative study by Norman (2005), project participants consisted of staff from a medical facility, including nurses, attendants, clerks, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance, therapists, dieticians, food service, and clerical support staff. Norman explained the importance of including all roles within the organization, not considering leadership or management as individuals on the organization's frontlines. “I felt that this was an important group of employees to the canvas as they are representative of the worker group closest to the customer, in this case, residents of the facility” (Norman, 2005, p. 23). This thought process is in line with previously discussed studies discussing the importance of support staff as the first contact for customer interaction and an extension of its leadership and management.

Allard (1983) defined administrative assistants as individuals who fell into four titled categories: (a) members of Professional Secretaries International; (b) individuals with the title of administrative assistant; (c) individuals with the title of administrative secretary; and (d) individuals with the title of executive assistant. He further narrowed his potential participants to only those with the stated titles in five New England states. He also acknowledged that advances in the workplace regarding office equipment and office programs had made the individual support staff more involved in the office's workflow, with advanced knowledge and skillsets.

Employee Appreciation Methods

There are many ways to show appreciation to groups or individuals within an organization. “Recognizing employees early and often directly influences their desire to produce great work, consistently” (Stuart, 2015, p. 57). Individual employees are motivated by different means, leading the employer to determine and understand the right motivation and appreciation methods to achieve positive job satisfaction (Noor & Zainordin, 2018). De Gieter and Hofmans (2015) discussed the importance of financial rewards to motivate employees; however, they pointed out that there is a movement to reward employees through non-financial rewards to show appreciation. Montani et al. (2020) concluded in their study that employees can develop a strong sense of meaningfulness within the organization based on the type of recognition from employers.

Achmad et al. (2020) discussed employees' motivation within an organization as the result of a collection of influencers that can include employers' actions, such as showing employee appreciation. Achmad et al. (2020) also discussed how the influencers

could affect employees' job satisfaction. Employees who feel valued by employers within an organization tend to be more engaged at work, have higher retention, and have higher job satisfaction than those who feel less valued (White, 2016). The results of the study indicated several types of employee appreciation methods affect the job satisfaction of support staff within a higher education institution.

Coy (2011), in a qualitative study, used the five languages of appreciation created by Chapman and White (2011) to explore two types of methods of appreciation that employers use to increase employee job satisfaction (financial and non-financial). Financial methods examples were bonuses, pay increases, benefits, and gift cards (Coy, 2011). Non-financial examples were positive personal communication from supervisors, personal notes of praise from supervisors, public recognition of employees by the supervisor for accomplishments, and supervisors holding morale-boosting, celebratory meetings (Coy, 2011).

Beck (2016) used eight appreciation methods as gratitude mediums for the foundational survey questions in this current study. These methods were: (a) verbally (one-on-one), (b) verbally (in a group setting), (c) electronic note (email, social media), (d) handwritten (card, letter), (e) tangible item (gift card, swag), (f) monetary bonus, (g) no expression of gratitude, (h) and other (Beck, 2016). Beck (2016) used these employee appreciation methods to study how managers showed appreciation compared to employees' preferred signs of appreciation. The participants could write in responses for the method classified as "other" in Beck's (2016) study.

Hamrick and White (2020) identified the top 10 methods of appreciation that had the most positive effect on employees as related to the five languages of appreciation: (a) words of affirmation, (b) acts of service, (c) quality time, (d) tangible gifts, and (e) physical touch. Hamrick and White used the Motivating by Appreciation Inventory survey to collect data from over 100,000 participants. Based on their analysis of the responses, they concluded that one of the primary methods of employee appreciation preferred by employees is receiving affirmation words.

Stankovska et al. (2017) used two types of surveys regarding appreciation methods in their study. The first was the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Paul Specter in 1985 (as cited in Stankovska et al., 2017, p. 162). Participants answered 36 questions regarding nine facets of their job: (a) pay, (b) promotion, (c) supervision, (d) benefits, (e) contingent rewards, (f) operating procedures, (g) nature of work, (h) co-workers, (i) and communication. Parlalis (2011) used the survey to collect data regarding job satisfaction, with the same nine factors used in the analysis. Stankovska et al. (2017) also used the Job Motivation Questionnaire (JMQ) to investigate what factors influenced job satisfaction with academic instructors.

Norman (2005) presented appreciation methods in her qualitative study through open-ended questions and allowed the participants to share what they felt were signs of appreciation or lack of appreciation. Her target participants were staff within a medical environment whom she divided into small groups and asked open-ended questions regarding the five following topics: (a) a time when an employee felt appreciated and

valued at work; (b) a time when the employee felt unappreciated at work; (c) way that the employee offers appreciation to others; (d) who does the employee most enjoy receiving appreciation from; (e) offer methods of appreciation by employers that made the employee feel appreciated at work (Norman, 2005).

Norman (2005) used open-ended questions in her study to allow individual participants to offer their ideas of the methods of appreciation they would like to receive or had received, and which methods were not appreciated by employees. Norman (2005) identified five primary methods of appreciation that produced positive outcomes: (a) being acknowledged as a person, (b) being recognized for good work, (c) being the recipient of various small gifts, (d) having co-workers and employees express their thanks via verbal or written methods, and (e) various methods (e.g., treats brought to work, employer acknowledging hard work by helping employee accomplish a task).

Haider et al. (2015) found that non-financial appreciation methods positively affect employees' job satisfaction in educational institutions. Non-financial appreciation methods include career development opportunities, furthering the education and training of employees paid for by the employer, flexibility of working hours and working locations (i.e., working from home), job recognition, and encouragement through direct communication from a supervisor (Haider et al., 2015).

Jensen et al. (2005, as cited in Haider et al., 2015) argued that organizations with non-financial rewards have higher employee engagement and are considered top employers that value employees. As Haider et al. (2015) cited, Scott, Yeld, and Hendry

concluded that non-financial rewards balanced with financial rewards create an environment within the organization that allows employers to reward employees beyond the expected monetary appreciation methods. A significant component of the study was comparing the different method factors (financial and non-financial) as both can be linked directly to affecting employee job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

A vital component of this study is job satisfaction and defining what job satisfaction means within organizations. Mumford (1972, as cited in Parlalis, 2011, p. 197) described job satisfaction as a “nebulous concept.” Parlalis (2011) further defined job satisfaction as a concept influenced by both an employee’s internal ideas and external motivation. Vorina et al. (2017) defined employee satisfaction (job satisfaction) as the collective opinions, feelings, and experiences an employee has related to their job and employer.

More and Padmanabhan (2017) emphasized the connection between job satisfaction and how employees perceived the job and organization. Job satisfaction was a measurable feeling by employees about their work environment and employment related to their sense of accomplishment and appreciation by employers (Parlalis, 2011). “A positive attitude towards the job ensures high job satisfaction and negative attitudes indicate job dissatisfaction” (More & Padmanabhan, 2017, p. 33).

Satisfied employees are inspired, pioneering, and more optimistic than those who are dissatisfied with their employment situation (Rast & Tourani, 2012; Windon, 2019).

Employers who understand and act on the importance of job satisfaction could see an increase in employee productivity. Employers who express gratitude to their employees promote a positive working environment with employees who feel appreciated, which increases their productivity and loyalty (Jalilianhasanpour et al., 2021). In contrast, those employers who do not recognize the importance of employee job satisfaction could decrease employee productivity and employee morale (Sittisom, 2020).

Noor and Zainordin (2018) defined job satisfaction as how the individual feels about the job and organization, with the absence of job satisfaction indicated by the employee's lack of interest and commitment to the organization. Employer actions or non-actions can influence job satisfaction (Noor & Zainordin, 2018). Luthans and Sommer (2005) stated that employers need to be conscious of factors that can positively influence or negatively influence employee job satisfaction.

Stankovska et al. (2017) studied job motivation and satisfaction of academic staff (instructors) in higher education through quantitative methods. "Job satisfaction is an individual's emotional response to his or her current job condition" (Stankovska et al., 2017, p. 160). It collects ideas and views that each employee creates based on their current job situation (Stankovska et al., 2017). Job satisfaction is also an important factor that organizations review when contemplating changes to obtain the best possible productivity outcomes (Stankovska et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction is a complex singularity and multidimensional response with layered intrinsic and extrinsic elements, like Parlalis' (2011) definition of job satisfaction

being a fluid concept. Stankovska et al. (2017) furthered the definition of job satisfaction by stating various factors can influence the job satisfaction one feels. These factors can be from within the organization or outside the organization but, in either case, directly affect the individual.

Job satisfaction can invoke both positive and negative feelings within the employee related to their job, which can cause different reactions and outcomes in the work environment (Stankovska et al., 2017). Stankovska et al. further stated that employers' understanding of the importance of job satisfaction within the organization could help organizations achieve high job satisfaction ratings among employees, leading to higher productivity and a positive working environment.

In a mixed-methods study, Olen (2017) defined job satisfaction as a feeling that employees have concerning their job and is an essential part of the life of an employee at an organization, which is like the description of job satisfaction of Parlalis (2011) and Stankovska et al. (2017). Hoppock (1935) provided one of the earliest official definitions of job satisfaction, defining it as a mixture of psychological, physiological, and environmental elements that can cause an individual to like their job (as cited in Olen, 2017, p. 4).

Olen furthered the job satisfaction description by sharing that the actual description of job satisfaction is ambiguous; nevertheless, it is a factor within the workforce that can affect employees' effectiveness and efficiency (Olen, 2017). Job satisfaction is also a measurable reactionary tool used by employees when comparing the

expected outcomes of a job to the actual results. Olen addressed the effect that employees' positive job satisfaction and negative job satisfaction can have on an organization and how employers can use it to help maintain or gain higher job satisfaction ratings, thus promoting a positive work environment and higher productivity (Olen, 2017).

Che Nawi et al. (2016) defined job satisfaction as a tool organizations can use to measure success, just as Olen (2017) defined job satisfaction in her study. "If an organization can provide satisfaction to its employees, it does not only improve the image of the organization, but it can also increase the motivation and productivity of all employees" (Che Nawi et al., 2016, p. 148.) Che Nawi et al. (2016) addressed the concept that defining job satisfaction can be difficult due to the wide range of factors that influence the definition. As others mentioned have stated, it is challenging to define job satisfaction.

Haider et al. (2015) defined job satisfaction as an important aspect of an employee's work experience with multiple influences that can increase or decrease employee satisfaction and potentially affect employee productivity. The job satisfaction felt by employees can influence the workflow within an organization. Haider et al. (2015) further divide job satisfaction into two categories (extrinsic and intrinsic), with each category connected to different factors that employees relate to job satisfaction. Extrinsic factors outside the employee, such as pay, co-workers, benefits, and supervision, could influence job satisfaction. In contrast, intrinsic factors are internal such as the enjoyment

of performing tasks, the job's complexity, responsibility, and skill knowledge (Haider et al., 2015).

Md Salahuddin et al. (2015) defined job satisfaction as similar in mindset to other literary resources as a fluid concept with personalized defining boundaries based on internal and external influencing factors. Influential factors include workload, task requirements, demands of the job, organizational system, communication, relationship with co-workers and superiors, and demographic elements (age, race, gender, etc.). These factors can help shape employee feelings about job satisfaction, helping create a positive or negative working environment (Md Salahuddin et al., 2015).

Employee Appreciation Methods and Job Satisfaction

The literature selected as foundational literature for this study suggested the need for further research to understand the connection between methods of appreciation and job satisfaction. Jalilianhasanpour et al. (2021) concluded that employee recognition could result in high job satisfaction, high workplace engagement, high work quality, and a sense of being a valued member of the organization. Employees who are motivated through various methods and incentives (financially, recognition, or physical items) feel better about their job and have a strong incentive to work at a higher level of productivity (Ana & Ardita, 2021). This review of results and limitations may help researchers produce works that leaders can use as tools to improve employee job satisfaction, resulting in more productive work environments.

Pathak (2014) was selected based on the importance of gratitude in the workplace, which is more than a paycheck. Gratitude is a key component for employers to show employees and motivate employers to motivate and increase employee satisfaction. Pathak counters the idea that the only way to motivate employees to improve productivity is to task them with setting challenging goals with the idea that employees who receive appreciation will be motivated to strive for higher productivity.

Leaders can behave in three specific ways to develop and produce the best positive effect on employee job satisfaction (Pathak, 2014). The first is helping employees develop their skills on a professional level through training and professional development opportunities. By doing this, managers demonstrate that they appreciate the employees' skills and encourage them to expand their skills. The second is involving employees in decision-making and problem-solving. The third is fostering collegiality between leadership, management, and employees (Pathak, 2014).

The interaction with each other and the importance that employees feel when employers create an environment of creativity, opportunity, and bonding can inspire high job satisfaction. Pathak (2014) concluded that leaders and managers who show direct appreciation to employees could positively affect the employees, resulting in higher job satisfaction and boosting employee morale and motivation. The method of appreciation for the most favorable outcome is direct communication with employees (Pathak, 2014).

Gevrek et al. (2017) produced a study that focused on the connection between salary raises and how employees viewed monetary appreciation relating to job retention

and job satisfaction. The study was a mix of literature reviews and quantitative methods. The literature used in the study focused on the relationship of employee compensation to job satisfaction. Data came from 262 (174 actual responses) survey responses to full-time faculty members at a public university. Distribution of surveys occurred via email that included a URL to link the employees to an online survey – ensuring that their answers would remain anonymous.

The findings proved significant because most faculty had a pre-established connection of a higher salary as employer appreciation leading to a higher retention rate (Gevrek et al., 2017). The faculty viewed the importance of higher wages over the importance of employers' direct appreciation to employees. If the employee does not receive what they perceive to be a fair amount in raise, then employee morale will decrease, and higher turnover is possible (Gevrek et al., 2017).

Coy's (2011) study focused on evaluating the participant and the effect of appreciation methods from their employers through the utilization of the assessment tool that included qualitative methods (i.e., Chapman and White's (2011) Motivating by Appreciation Inventory) and interviews with eight participants. Coy collected narratives and analyzed the data. The analysis revealed that one of the primary themes across all participants was that words of affirmation or verbal praise result in high employee morale. Also noted were the effects of gifts that would mean something to the individual, which are also ways of showing appreciation that result in improved morale (Coy, 2011). Coy concluded that further investigation is necessary to solidify a complete

understanding of the workplace's effect of appreciation methods. One future study area would be assessing the signs of appreciation shown to online faculty/adjunct distant faculty using a comparative study design.

White (2017) addressed the appreciation methods employee would like and the outcomes of applying those methods by analyzing the data collected from the over 100,000 employees who participated in the study. White used the Motivating by Appreciation (MBA) Inventory survey he developed based on the five languages of appreciation by Chapman and White (2011). Those appreciation methods are: (a) words of affirmation, (b) quality time, (c) acts of service, (d) tangible gifts, (e) and physical touch (White, 2017, pp. 197-198). These methods were a mixture of financial and non-financial ways for employers to show appreciation to employees.

White (2017) concluded that the most effective method of appreciation on job satisfaction an employer could offer an employee are words of affirmation, with close to half of the employees surveyed (47%) so rating it. White clarified that affirmation words could be oral, written, one-on-one, or delivered in a group environment. Tangible gifts were the least desirable methods of appreciation, with only 6% of those surveyed supporting tangible gifts as the most effective method to produce high job satisfaction ratings.

Beck's (2016) mixed-method study used two types of data collection (qualitative and quantitative). For the qualitative study, 27 employees recruited via e-mail were divided into three focus groups and asked to share their personal experiences regarding

workplace gratitude. Individuals in each group answered 10 questions, and data collection occurred from anonymous transcriptions.

The distribution of surveys for Beck's (2016) quantitative study occurred via e-mail. Additional recruitment occurred via online social media, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Participants answered seven survey questions regarding gratitude in the workplace. A total of 883 working professionals across 20 different industries responded to the survey questions, which included questions with a five-point Likert rating scale and three open-ended questions. Beck concluded that communication as a form of employee appreciation has the most beneficial effect on job satisfaction; however, appreciation methods should not be limited to one form. One appreciation method might be positive for one employee, where the same type of show of gratitude would not have the same positive effect with another employee. Employers need to determine what methods work best for employees and use them to set up a system of appreciation methods beneficial to all employees (Beck, 2016). Beck also concluded that the study's limitation of being confined to one corporation narrowed the scope of outcomes, leading to the need for future research in different settings with multiple organizations.

Stankovska et al. (2017) used the quantitative method for data collection in their study regarding job motivation and satisfaction with academic (faculty) staff in higher education. The study involved 100 participants that were full-time academic employees (Stankovska et al., 2017). The data was collected using the Job Satisfaction Survey –

JSS) developed by Paul Specter in 1985, the Job Motivation Questionnaire (JMQ), and a generalized demographic survey (Stankovska et al., 2017). After analyzing the collected data with SPSS 20.0, Stankovska et al. concluded that overall, there is a direct connection between job motivation and job satisfaction. “When an organization manages to increase employees’ job satisfaction, it does benefit not only the employees but also the organization as a whole” (Stankovska et al., 2017, p. 164). Stankovska et al. acknowledged that more research on the variables that could affect job satisfaction and motivation was necessary.

Factors that affected pharmaceutical industry employees' job satisfaction were the Sittisom (2020) case study's focus. Sittisom used three independent variables for the quantitative research: (a) workplace environment, (b) job empowerment, and (c) employee recognition. Out of 250 questionnaires sent out, there were 226 responses. The researcher’s goal was to determine whether there was a relationship between the three independent variables and job satisfaction. Regression and correlation analyses showed the strongest relationship between workplace environment and job satisfaction (Sittisom, 2020). Researchers concluded that employers who create a positive work environment have higher job satisfaction than employees who are more productive.

The employee recognition variable had a strong relationship with employees' job satisfaction within the surveyed organizations. However, this relationship was the weakest influence on job satisfaction of the three measured in the study. Researchers concluded that the weaker relationship could result from employees wanting a better

work environment and recognizing an employer's willingness to listen to the employees' wants and needs to create such an environment to show indirect employee appreciation (Sittisom, 2020).

Achmad et al. (2020) studied motivation (including appreciation methods) and compensation influencing organizations' employees. The mixed-methods study involved qualitative and quantitative numerical data analysis based on questionnaire responses and collected oral and written responses from 35 participants. Achmad et al. concluded that both compensation and motivation had positive and significant effects on employees' performances within the studied organization. Motivation and reward could include corporate social gatherings, organizationally funded training to further employees' skills and knowledge, division awards, and signs of appreciation of employees by employers. "The higher motivation will encourage employees to give better performances" (Achmad et al., 2020, p. 54).

Varma's 2017 quantitative study objectives centered on understanding factors that affected employees' motivation and job satisfaction and led to a positive employee commitment (Varma, 2017). The data collection occurred from 100 viable survey questionnaires out of the initial 150 sent to potential participants in different organizations. Results showed that while most respondents viewed training and development as a decisive factor for job satisfaction, recognition and appreciation were essential factors that contributed to employees' overall job satisfaction (Varma, 2017).

Varma (2017) concluded that organizations need to fully understand the factors, more than financial, that influence employee job satisfaction. The factors could include communication of expectations both by employee and employer, a fully developed employee recognition and appreciation system that involves the employee in creation, idea suggestion, and career development and training (Varma, 2017). With future studies centering on motivation and job satisfaction, the research could lead to further insights into the factors that affect motivation and job satisfaction, a deeper understanding of the role of employers in employee commitment, and how innovation and creativity within a workplace could raise productivity levels and job satisfaction of employees (Varma, 2017).

Mahajan and Kumar (2018) studied factors that caused employees to feel job satisfaction. The quantitative study data came from a questionnaire sent to individuals in five higher education institutions. Ten factors used as variables that could affect job satisfaction were: (a) monetary benefits, (b) appreciation, (c) being fair, (d) the feeling of belonging, (e) credits, (f) mixture of formal and informal approach, (g) anticipated growth, (h) promotion changes, (i) adequate working conditions, and (j) addressing grievances (Mahajan & Kumar, 2018). Mahajan and Kumar concluded that there is a relationship between job satisfaction of employees and employee performance. Some 80% of respondents agreed that job performance connects to the satisfaction felt with the job and organization. Motivation, appreciation, and positive leadership from employers can influence job satisfaction. If there is a decline in job satisfaction, it is up to the

employers to determine the cause and quickly correct the problem to halt any decrease in productivity and morale (Mahajan & Kumar, 2018).

In their study, Noor and Zainordin (2018) reviewed the effects of different motivations, referred to as rewards (independent variables) within the surveyed firms, on the employees' job satisfaction (dependent variable). The independent variables were of two types: extrinsic (festival bonus, incentive, basic pay, performance bonus) and intrinsic (recognition, appreciation, challenging work, advancement, learning opportunity). Noor and Zainordin concluded a moderately negative relationship between the two types of rewards and job satisfaction of the study participants. Noor and Zainordin determined that the negativity might have been a consequence of the small sample size (10). Their analysis of a similar follow-up study with a different surveyor organization and more participants (30) resulted in individuals ranking job security (extrinsic) as a factor that affected job satisfaction (intrinsic). The comfort of having a job produced a feeling of positive job satisfaction among employees, resulting in employees being motivated to work at a higher level of productivity to ensure job security.

Summary and Conclusions

The major themes within the literature review pertained to the importance of employees' job satisfaction within a workplace, employee appreciation methods by employers, and the implications of positive and negative job satisfaction ratings on the success or failure of an organization. There is significant research on job satisfaction, motivation, and appreciation that targets different organizations and employees' levels. However, there is little in the way of published research that explicitly focuses on

employee appreciation methods of support staff's job satisfaction at higher education institutions. This study closed the gap between the published research about generalized job satisfaction and the research regarding employee appreciation shown to support staff in higher education institutions and the effect of those appreciation methods on job satisfaction. The research methods and data collection for this study regarding survey development, participant selection, survey distribution and collection, and data analysis are discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions. Understanding how individuals in a support staff role perceive employee appreciation methods and whether the appreciation methods directly affect their job satisfaction can benefit organizational leaders. This study could help leaders create a positive working environment that results in higher job satisfaction, morale, and employee performance in support staff roles.

The sections in this chapter support the choice of research method. These sections cover the rationale for the research design, study methodology, sampling procedures, procedures for recruitment of participants, data collection, instrumentation, the data analysis plan, and threats to study validity. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

There are seven variables for this study, which I measured using an anonymous survey. These variables were seven methods of employee appreciation: (a) verbally (one-on-one), (b) verbally (in a group setting), (c) electronic note (email, social media), (d) handwritten (a card, letter), (e) tangible item (gift card, swag), (f) monetary bonus, (g) and no expression of gratitude (Beck, 2016). The dependent variable was the job satisfaction of individuals in support staff roles in higher education institutions.

The research questions and hypotheses were:

RQ1: What is the effect of the verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_01 : The verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a1 : The verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ2: What is the effect of the verbal (in a group) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_02 : The verbal (in a group setting) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a2 : The verbal (in a group setting) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ3: What is the effect of the electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_03 : The electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a3 : The electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ4: What is the effect of the handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀₄: The handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a4}: The handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ5: What is the effect of the tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀₅: The tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a5}: The tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ6: What is the effect of the monetary bonus employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀₆: The monetary bonus employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a6}: The monetary bonus employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ7: What is the effect of no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀₇: The no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a7} : The no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ8: What are the differences in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods?

H_{08} : There is no significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods.

H_{a8} : There is at least one significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods.

To test the various hypotheses of the effect employee appreciation methods have on higher education support staff job satisfaction, I used the single-sample t test for RQ1 to RQ7 to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the mean effect of each employee appreciation method and zero, and analysis of variance (for RQ8) to determine whether there are any significant differences among the seven employee appreciation methods in terms of their effect on the job satisfaction of higher education support staff. This design choice was consistent with research designs that advance knowledge in the discipline through quantitative data collection and analysis, such as Beck (2016).

Methodology

This study was a quantitative study. Participants answers to survey questions based on a 5-point Likert scale provided the study data. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Population

The population of the study were individuals in the role of higher education support staff. For this study, the support staff position is an individual who assists supervisors, leaders, and managers directly or indirectly through daily operations within the organization, as defined by Chambliss (2017). The population for the study consisted of individuals who identified their role within U.S. higher education institutions as an administrative assistant, office assistant, office clerk, secretary, clerical support, office coordinator, receptionist, data entry clerk, data entry specialist, or assistant/clerk.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Participants were required to be full-time employees at U.S. higher education institutions who have worked there for 6 months or longer as support staff (clerical-type). Excluded were part-time individuals, employed for less than 6 months, employed at a non-higher education workplace, or other roles besides support staff.

As shown in Appendix A, I ran a priori power analysis using G*Power to determine the appropriate minimum sample size for the study based on the single-sample t test for the difference between an independent mean and zero, a medium effect size (.5), alpha of .05, and power of .80. The calculated minimum sample size was 27. To determine the minimum sample size necessary to test the hypotheses for RQ8, I ran a priori F-test for a fixed-effects, omnibus, one-way analysis of variance with a medium effect size (.25), alpha of .05, power of .80, and seven groups. The calculated minimum

sample size was 231. Hence, the minimum sample size to test all the study hypotheses was 231.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection (Primary Data)

Participants for this study had to be a randomly selected sample of at least 231 individuals in full-time support staff roles in U.S. higher education institutions who had been in their job for at least 6 months. For this study, it was imperative to collect and analyze responses from full-time employees that have been with the organization for at least 6 months, as individuals who have been with the organization for fewer than 6 months could be considered still within a probationary period with the organization and lack enough experience with the organization to gauge satisfaction based on employee appreciation. Gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, location, and ethnicity were not determining factors for participation in the study; however, this information was presented under demographic data if provided by participating individuals.

I obtained permission to use survey questions from Beck's (2016) study (Appendix B). The study data came from an online survey developed in Survey Monkey using the questions found in Appendix C. I posted a link to the survey on social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Twitter) and opened it for 10 weeks for data collection.

The survey consisted of four sections: (a) study information and informed consent; (b) demographics; (c) employee appreciation questions; and (d) thank you.

Individuals who chose to participate in the survey understood that all responses were anonymous. Survey responses were only considered viable for data analysis if the respondent had indicated informed consent and answered the demographic questions and employee appreciation questions.

Section A consisted of information about the study's nature, the study's value, the benefits of the outcomes, and informed consent. If an individual wished to participate, the individual would read the informed consent and check a box that acknowledged the study's understanding and agreement. Participants had to complete Section A if they wished their responses to be included in the study data.

Section B consisted of demographic information divided into six sub-sections that allowed individual participants to check and fill in responses to clarify selected answers. The five sub-sections were: (a) gender identity of the male, female, non-binary/non-conforming, other (specify); (b) age group of 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+; (c) race, consisting of African American, Caucasian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Indigenous Tribes, African, Indian, Hispanic, Latino/Latina; (d) optional blank space for location, which the participant may choose to provide; (e) type of higher education organization (for-profit, non-profit, traditional four-year university, community college, specialized higher education institution) and (f) job title broke into two options for selection: clerical support staff (i.e., receptionist, administrative assistant, secretary, office clerk, assistant, other clerical support staff) and an option to write in actual job title and non-clerical support staff (i.e., maintenance, mailroom) with an option to write in the actual job title.

Section C consisted of questions about each of the seven methods of employee appreciation: (a) verbally (one-on-one), (b) verbally (in a group setting), (c) electronic note (email, social media), (d) handwritten (a card, letter), (e) tangible item (gift card, swag), (f) monetary bonus, (g) and no expression of gratitude. Participants responded to each question using a five-point Likert scale rating of how they rate the type of appreciation method.

Section D contained the reason for and the expected benefits from the study, an assurance that the responses will be confidential (i.e., not be associated with the name of the individual), and an expression of thanks to the individual for participating. Finally, this section contained information on how participants could learn the study results. The copy of the survey is in Appendix C.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

The name of the developer is Crystalee Beck, who published her findings in 2016. Beck's (2016) mixed-methods study focused on the effects of managerial signs of gratitude in the workplace is appropriate to the current study. Both qualitative and quantitative reliability and validity values were published within the study and are relevant to this study. On October 7, 2020, Dr. Beck responded to my email in which I asked permission to use her study's instrumentations for my study. I obtained permission to use her 2016 study instrumentations. A copy of the email is shown in Appendix B.

Eight hundred eighty-three participants completed Beck's study surveys, with 27 individuals who participated in focus groups answering questions regarding the role of

gratitude in their job. The focus group findings (three groups totaling 27 full-time employees) ranged from employees needing employers to show appreciation, wanting the appreciation as it was a boost, to a distaste of any sign of recognition. The survey (n=883) was based on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 equaling unimportant to five equaling very important. There was an average of 4.45 (SD=0.73) for ranking “important of receiving gratitude for job performance” (Beck, 2016, p. 339).

The development used the foundational research question presented in Beck’s 2016 study based on seven appreciation methods. Internal consistency is positive evidence for reliability to assess the online survey results about employee appreciation methods and the effect on U.S. higher education support staff’s job satisfaction. Internal consistency does not require retesting, eliminating the need to test/retest as evidence for reliability. Analysis of the scores of the seven methods of appreciation received from the participants will divulge which methods have the highest and the lowest effect on job satisfaction.

Evidence for validity was found through construct, content, and face value validity. Construct validity measured the abstract feeling of job satisfaction of support staff in U.S. higher education organizations. The indicators measured participants’ job satisfaction collected in a 5-Point Likert Scale (1 = Unimportant to 5 = Very Important). Support evidence for construct validity was content and face validity, though face validity was the weakest validity evaluation. The necessary instrumentation to answer the

research questions was achieved by using validated survey questions from Dr. Beck's (2016) study, with permission from the author.

Data Analysis Plan

The confidential survey was administered through the online survey tool Survey Monkey. Viable responses were those that met the criteria by having Section A's (Informed Consent) completed, a job title that fit the definition of support staff in Section B, and a completed Section C. I loaded the responses into SPSS for analysis. The survey questions, measured on a five-point Likert scale, corresponded to the first seven research questions:

RQ1: What is the effect of the verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

RQ2: What is the effect of the verbal (in a group) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

RQ3: What is the effect of the electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

RQ4: What is the effect of the handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

RQ5: What is the effect of the tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

RQ6: What is the effect of the monetary bonus employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

RQ7: What is the effect of no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

Once I had collected and verified each survey's completeness, I analyzed the data using SPSS. To test the various hypotheses of the effect employee appreciation methods have on higher education support staff job satisfaction, I used the one-sample *t*-test statistic (for RQ1 to RQ7) and analysis of variance (for RQ8).

Threats to Validity

External Validity

The threats to external validity were low because the variables were clearly defined and easily measured (Yu & Ohlund, n.d.). Researchers can use this study's findings as a baseline for future studies that analyze employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of individuals in different organizational roles or different organizations. The variables would remain the same while the participants' organizational roles and organizations would differ from this study.

Threats to external validity included, but were not limited to, testing reactivity, interaction effects of selection and experimental variables, the specificity of variables, reactive effects of experimental arrangements, and multiple-treatment interference, as appropriate to the study (Yu & Ohlund, n.d.). One external threat was some participants would take the survey multiple times.

Internal Validity

Threats to internal validity included but were not limited to history, maturation, statistical regression, experimental mortality, and selection-maturation interaction (Yu & Ohlund, n.d.). Careful consideration of these internal validity threats should occur by researchers considering future studies utilizing this study's instrumentation methods. Regarding the threats of history and maturation in this study, the risk was low due to the short scope of time for data collection, and there was no need for a second or further testing with the same participants. This eliminated the potential for an adjustment to the data due to events between the first and second data collection that could influence the second collection scores.

Statistical regression could have been a potential threat if the researcher had selected extreme score data intending to change the score based on a change in the history and a rerun of the collection. For this study, scores were analyzed and presented in the findings as a one-time collection with no further collection design scheduled for this study. Future studies could run the risk of threat due to statistical regression if multiple data collection occurred.

The experimental mortality threat was low due to the data collection occurring once over a designated time, with no further collection designated for this study. Once a determination was made as to which responses were valid and viable for this study, no other data collection occurred pertaining to the research questions.

Construct Validity

A key threat to the construct validity was hypothesis guessing. Suppose participants think the researcher has already formed a desired outcome for the data collection. In that case, the participants might answer to favor what is perceived as a potential preconceived desired outcome of the researcher. This action would result in an outcome that is not valid. To avoid the threat, information clearly described the importance of participants answering truthfully, without influencing a potential preconceived outcome.

A second threat to construct validity was evaluation apprehension. Some potential participants are anxious and hesitant about completing a survey, even with the assurance that the responses will be anonymous. This hesitation could have resulted in participants completing the survey with false answers from their true answers or submitting incomplete surveys. Recognizing evaluation apprehension was difficult to determine with an online survey; however, the apprehension was eased with reinforcement that there was no way to trace a survey back to an individual and reinforcing the importance of true answers.

Ethical Procedures

Study participants were individuals who met the selection criteria (full-time support staff at a higher education institution) and completed the online, anonymous survey distributed via a link through social media outlets (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Twitter). Due to the study survey's anonymity, no direct contact

occurred between the participants and the researcher. Each participant acknowledged reading the consent form by checking a box in the survey before proceeding to the survey questions.

Once obtained, the institutional permissions, including IRB approvals, were listed in this section. There was a low ethical concern related to recruitment materials and processes. A survey developed through Survey Monkey guided potential participants to answer questions, continually reassuring them that the answers were anonymous. There was no method to connect the submitted surveys back to an individual. There was no means of locating any participants as individuals who accessed the survey through a link posted on different social media platforms and not sent via email directly to individuals.

There was a low ethical concern related to data collection/intervention activities, including participants refusing participation or early withdrawal from the study and response to any predictable adverse events. If an individual did not wish to participate, they would not click on the link or complete and submit the survey. As the survey was anonymous, there was no direct communication method with the participants who chose to submit a survey. If a scenario arose that would not allow for the survey distribution via a link through social media platforms, an alternative means of delivery would occur based on a discussion between the researcher, the Chair, and the Committee Member; however, this scenario was a low risk of occurring and did not occur.

Treatment of the collected data and any archival data for this study was confidential, with all answers from the survey being anonymous. No sharing of the

collected raw data occurred to protect the participants, even with the anonymity of the survey responses, under FERPA. No individual outside the researcher, the researcher's Chair, and Committee Member should have any need to review the collected raw data.

Data collection was anonymous in the setup. No potential participant could submit the survey with any identifying name, numbers, or other information that could have linked the participant responses to the participant identification. The researcher did not discuss any information submitted via the surveys with anyone other than the Chair, Committee Member, and other designated faculty individuals who were directly related to the researcher's degree pathway. These actions elevated the security of the responses and helped ensure the participants' anonymity.

Data storage was in three locations, with each location secured from access other than the study's single data collector. No other individual had access to the collected data material. Data storage was maintained within Survey Monkey's site, securely protected through https internal security systems. Only I, the single data collector, know the password to access Survey Monkey surveys. I stored data on a backup hard drive on a secured computer owned and operated solely by me. A backup memory key was the third secure location for the collected data. I own the backup memory key that contains the study data, and I keep the key in a secured area. I will archive the data for 5 years.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher

education institutions. There were four sections in the study instrument: (a) study information and informed consent; (b) demographics; (c) employee appreciation questions; and (d) thank you. All answers will be anonymous. For the responses to be usable in this study, participants completed Sections A (acknowledging Informed Consent), Section B (job title), and Section C (responses to the employee appreciation methods). Data collection ended once the survey submission window was closed. I stored the study data in three secured locations (Survey Monkey, my computer, and a memory device) for 5 years. To test the various hypotheses of the effect employee appreciation methods had on higher education support staff job satisfaction, I used the *t*-test statistic (for RQ1 to RQ7) and variance analysis (for RQ8). Results of the data collection, data analysis, and the study findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff at higher education institutions. Support staff in higher education institutions assist in creating an environment that supports the institution's mission statement and vision (Stankovska et al., 2017). Acknowledging the support staff through employee appreciation, employers validate the support staff's role as a crucial element to the work environment's structure (White, 2015b).

The independent variables for this study were the seven types of employee appreciation methods identified and examined by Beck (2016): (a) verbally (one-on-one), (b) verbally (in a group setting), (c) electronic note (email, social media), (d) handwritten (a card, letter), (e) tangible item (gift card, swag), (f) monetary bonus, (g) and no expression of gratitude. The dependent variable was employee job satisfaction. Each independent variable was measured on a 5-point Likert scale using a straightforward instrument consisting of questions from Beck's (2016) survey used with permission and administered via SurveyMonkey to qualified study participants. The research questions addressed the effect of each employee appreciation method individually, and all of them collectively, on the job satisfaction of higher education support staff. This chapter includes statements of the research questions and hypotheses, a review of the data collection methods and timeframe, participant demographics, and the study results obtained by analyzing the survey data.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions and hypotheses were:

RQ1: What is the effect of the verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_01 : The verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a1} : The verbal (one-on-one) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ2: What is the effect of the verbal (in a group) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_02 : The verbal (in a group setting) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a2} : The verbal (in a group setting) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ3: What is the effect of the electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H_03 : The electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_{a3} : The electronic note (email, social media) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ4: What is the effect of the handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀4: The handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a4: The handwritten (card, letter) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ5: What is the effect of the tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀5: The tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a5: The tangible item (gift card, swag) employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ6: What is the effect of the monetary bonus employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀6: The monetary bonus employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a6: The monetary bonus employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ7: What is the effect of no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method on higher education support staff job satisfaction?

H₀7: The no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method has no significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

H_a7: The no expression of gratitude employee appreciation method has a significant effect on higher education support staff job satisfaction.

RQ8: What are the differences in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods?

H₀8: There is no significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods.

H_a8: There is at least one significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods.

Data Collection

This study was a quantitative study. The study data consisted of participant responses to anonymous, 5-point Likert scale survey questions in an online survey developed in Survey Monkey (Appendix C). I posted the link to the survey on five social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Twitter). The survey remained open for a total of 5 months to ensure the collection of sufficient data to achieve the minimum sample size (231) and due to communication from individuals asking if they could share the survey with professional administrative organizations (example: IAAP – International Association of Administrative Professionals) and Facebook and Reddit groups targeting professionals in support roles.

Participants submitted 270 surveys. Of those 270 surveys, 18 surveys were incomplete and thus unusable. Of the remaining 252 surveys, 241 surveys were useable, meaning that the respondents met the requirements for participation and the surveys were complete.

In terms of participant demographics, female, male, and genderqueer/non-binary were the three selections available regarding gender. Most participants, 206 (85.48%), identified as female, 25 (10.37%) identified as male, and 10 (4.15%) identified as genderqueer/non-binary. Of the six options pertaining to age, most participants, 77 (31.95%), selected the 30-39 age bracket, 55 participants (22.82%) selected the 50-59 age bracket, 52 participants (21.58%) selected the 40-49 age bracket, 35 participants (14.25%) selected the 18-29 age bracket, 20 participants (8.30%) selected the 60-69 age bracket, and 2 participants (0.83%) selected the 70+ age bracket. Six selections were available pertaining to race. Most participants, 145 (60.17%), selected White, 43 (17.84%) participants selected Black, 38 (15.77%) participants selected Hispanic, 13 (5.39%) participants selected Asian, 1 (0.41%) participant selected Native American, and 1 (0.41%) participant selected Other (unspecified).

Five selections were available pertaining to a regional location. Most participants, 56 (23.24%), selected West, which includes Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii; 52 (21.58%) participants selected Mid-Atlantic, which includes Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina; 51 (21.16%) participants selected

South, which includes South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas; 47 (19.50%) participants selected Northeast, which includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; and 35 (14.52%) participants selected Midwest, which includes Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

Regarding the place of employment, 117 (48.55%) participants selected Traditional Four-Year College/University, 61 (25.31%) participants selected Community College, 48 (19.92%) participants selected Specialized Higher Education Institution, 15 (6.22%) participants selected Other. Regarding the type of employer, 112 (46.47%) participants selected that the employer was For-profit, 94 (39.00%) participants selected that the employer was Non-profit, and 35 (14.52%) participants selected Unknown for whether the employer was For-profit or Non-profit.

Most of the participants, 103 (42.74%), selected Administrative Assistant as their job title, 22 (9.13%) participants selected Secretary as their job title, 16 (6.64%) participants selected Office Coordinator as their job title, 11 (4.56%) participants selected Assistant as their job title, 10 (4.15%) participants selected Clerical Support as their job title, 9 (3.73%) participants selected Office Assistant/Office Clerk as their job title, 8 (3.32%) participants selected Receptionist/Front Desk as their job title, 3 (1.24%)

participants selected Data Entry Clerk/Specialist as their job title, and 59 (24.48%) participants selected Other as their job title.

Study Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the seven employee appreciation methods in the study. For the data from the 241 surveys used in the study, the mean survey scores range from 3.07 (No method of employee appreciation) to 4.31 (Verbal one-on-one methods) on a scale from 1 (Unimportant) to 5 (Very Important). To test the significance of these mean scores and thus determine whether the respective employee appreciation method affected the job satisfaction of the higher education support staff who participated in the study, I ran a single-sample *t* test for each method. As shown in Table 2, each employee appreciation method had a statistically significant effect on job satisfaction ($p < .001$). Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant effect was rejected for each employee appreciation method.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction Effect of Employee Appreciation Methods

Employee Appreciation Method	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic
Verbal one-on-one methods	241	2	5	4.31	0.717
Monetary bonus	241	1	5	4.23	0.954
Hand-written methods	241	1	5	4.00	1.097
Verbal in a group setting	241	1	5	3.67	0.902
Electronic methods	241	1	5	3.45	0.987
Tangible item	241	1	5	3.40	1.099
No method	241	1	5	3.07	1.473

Note. Job Satisfaction Effect Scale (1 = Unimportant – 5 = Very Important).

Table 2*Significance of Job Satisfaction Effect of Employee Appreciation Methods*

Employee Appreciation Method	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	CI Lower	CI Upper
Verbal one-on-one methods	93.294	240	.000	4.31	4.22	4.40
Monetary bonus	68.801	240	.000	4.23	4.11	4.35
Hand-written methods	56.530	240	.000	4.00	3.86	4.14
Verbal in a group setting	63.101	240	.000	3.67	3.55	3.78
Electronic methods	54.258	240	.000	3.45	3.32	3.57
Tangible items	48.055	240	.000	3.40	3.26	3.54
No method	32.311	240	.000	3.07	2.88	3.25

Note. Job Satisfaction Effect Scale (1 = Unimportant – 5 = Very Important).

To test the null hypothesis for Research Question 8, that there was no significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods, I used analysis of variance. Table 3 shows the results: there are five separate homogeneous subsets of employee appreciation methods. The homogeneous subsets table shows which groups statistically have the same mean and which have a different mean. Within a group, there is no significant difference in the mean, while between homogeneous groups there is a statistically significant difference in mean. For example, no method, which is the first group, has a different mean from the second group, electronic methods and tangible items, each of which has statistically the same mean. Based on the evidence presented in Table 3, the null hypothesis for Research Question 8 is rejected in favor of the alternative, as there is at least one significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods. One example of this is that verbal one-on-one methods

are superior to handwritten methods, verbal methods in a group setting, electronic methods, tangible items, and no method. Another is that verbal methods in a group setting and electronic methods are superior to no method. A third is that electronic methods and tangible items are superior to having no method of employee appreciation.

Table 3

Homogeneous Subsets of Employee Appreciation Methods

Employee Assistance		Homogenous Subsets (alpha = 0.05)				
Method	N	1	2	3	4	5
Verbal one-on-one methods	241					4.31
Monetary bonus	241				4.23	4.23
Hand-written methods	241				4.00	
Verbal in a group setting	241			3.67		
Electronic methods	241		3.45	3.45		
Tangible items	241		3.40			
No method	241	3.07				

Note. Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed. Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 241.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff at higher education institutions. Seven research questions focused on the individual employee appreciation methods that were used in Beck's study (2016). An eighth research question focused on whether there was a significant difference in the mean job satisfaction of the respective. A link to a 5-point Likert scale survey was distributed through social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Twitter) to collect a minimum of 231 viable

surveys for study. Of the 270 surveys returned, 241 surveys were viable for use in this study as they were complete and the respondents met the selection criteria.

Most participants were white (60.17%) female (85.48%). Most participants were between the ages of 30-39 (31.95%). Most participants were in the west (23.24%) which included Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii. Most participants worked or had worked in a traditional four-year college or university (48.55%). Most participants selected Administrative Assistant as their job title (42.74%).

A *t* test was run for each employee appreciation method to test the significance of the mean scores and determine whether the respective employee appreciation method affected the job satisfaction of participants in the study. The mean survey scores range is from 3.07 (No method of employee appreciation) to 4.31 (Verbal one-on-one methods) on a scale from 1 (Unimportant) to 5 (Very Important). An ANOVA test was used to test the null hypothesis for Research Question 8. The null hypothesis was rejected as there is at least one significant difference in the mean score pertaining to participants' job satisfaction.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the importance of the findings of this study as related to how employers could maintain or improve to a high level the job satisfaction of support staff in high education institutions. I will discuss the limitations of this study and the recommendation of how this study could be used to explore employee appreciation methods affecting job satisfaction of employees in various settings. I will showcase the

implications of this study regarding positive social changes within the work environment and how the implications of this study can have a positive social change on a societal level.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions. Understanding how individuals in a support staff role perceive employee appreciation methods and whether the appreciation methods directly affect their job satisfaction can benefit organizational leaders. The outcomes of this study provide relevant information for institutional leaders and managers to use to create a positive working environment for all employees, the importance of which Buil et al. (2018) noted; particularly, for those in the role of support staff, who are critical to workflow within organizations (Chambliss, 2017).

Participants submitted 270 surveys. Of those 270 surveys, 241 surveys were useable, meaning that the respondents met the requirements for participation and the surveys were complete. Most participants were white females in the age bracket of 30-39 years old from the western United States who were working or had worked in a traditional 4-year college/university in the role of Administrative Assistant.

A single-sample *t* test was run on each of the seven appreciation methods. For each appreciation method, there was statistical significance pertaining to the effect on job satisfaction ($p < .001$), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant effect on job satisfaction. Utilizing the ANOVA test on research question 8 resulted in a rejection of the null hypothesis as there was at least one significant difference in the mean

job satisfaction of higher education support staff among the seven employee appreciation methods.

Interpretation of Findings

In this section, I interpret the findings of the study in relation to the literature reviewed and the four theories of the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 2. The data collected and analyzed helped close the gap in research on employee appreciation methods used by leaders to motivate individuals in support staff roles within higher education institutions and the relative effect the seven appreciation methods studied have on the job satisfaction of those targeted support staff. This study's research connects the theoretical frameworks and the supporting literature documentation by adding the importance of employee appreciation methods and the effect on the job satisfaction of support staff in higher education institutions.

A cornerstone of a successful organization can be a satisfied workforce that positively impacts workflow within the organization (Mahajan & Kumar, 2018). Employees who feel that their organization truly appreciates their work are more likely to be highly motivated and enjoy being a part of the organization (Hamrick & White, 2020). As discussed by Achmad et al. (2020), employees recognized by employers through compensation and appreciation methods are more likely to have a higher job satisfaction rating and higher productivity. This study's results indicate that employee appreciation methods directly affect the job satisfaction of support staff in higher education organizations.

The study findings supported De Gieter and Hofmans' (2015) conclusions that although financial forms of employee appreciation methods were strong influencers of job satisfaction, non-financially centered forms of employee appreciation also had strong positive effects on the job satisfaction of employees. Beck (2016) also studied how employees responded to specific appreciation methods and found that financial appreciation was not the most impactful to the employees. Aligned with Beck, as well as Varma (2017), my study also found that appreciation factors other than financial rewards, such as verbal one-on-one communication methods, strongly influence job satisfaction.

The data in my study showed that employees in support staff roles in higher education institutions appreciated verbal one-on-one methods more than the other six methods studied. This finding is in line with White's (2017) finding that the most effective appreciation method an employer could offer to an employee are words of affirmation delivered directly to the employee in the form of oral, written, one-on-one or group communication.

The findings of my study also showed that a lack of employee appreciation methods also affected the job satisfaction of support staff in higher education institutions. This directly aligns with what Sittisom (2020) and Noor and Zainordin (2018) found: that failure to recognize employees as important to an organization can result in decreased productivity and morale.

The results also align with the four theories selected as cornerstones of the theoretical framework for this study: Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation, Victor

Vroom's expectancy theory, Frederick Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, and Arne Kallenberg's theory of job satisfaction. As Maslow (1943) discussed, the theory of human motivation highlights the importance of humans achieving a sense of purpose, accomplishments, and being a part of a community. Study results showed that employee appreciation methods affect job satisfaction, thus affecting the employee at the five levels of hierarchy discussed by Maslow (physiological, security, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs). Employee appreciation methods motivate the individual to propel their own sense of accomplishment, increase productivity, and strengthen their sense of security and belonging within the organization.

Vroom's (1964) theory of expectancy pertains to the connection between leadership and employee based on the perception of what the employee deems necessary actions to achieve a positive reward as a motivator within an organization. Vroom explained that there were three key components to the theory: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy equates to the belief by the individual (employee) that what the individual does will result in a particular outcome. Instrumentality equates to the thought process that the individual (employee) will achieve an outcome if expectations are met based on the job requirements. Valence equates to the value of the outcome as determined by the employee.

My study validates this theory through all three elements. The participants of this study worked in roles that had job requirements that, if met, resulted in the employee achieving the outcome (expectance and instrumentality). Pertaining to the third element,

valence, the participants in my study evaluated each appreciation method presented to them and scored each method on a 5-point scale based on how the methods affected their job satisfaction.

This study also connects with the motivation-hygiene theory developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959, also known as the Herzberg theory. Herzberg determined that if leaders understood that there were two groups of factors affecting employees, effective appreciation methods could be used to increase job satisfaction and employee retention. Salary and job security were classified in the demotivators grouping, while appreciation, recognition, and responsibility were classified in the motivator grouping (Coy, 2011). The results of this study showed that employee appreciation methods impacted job satisfaction, linking the study to Herzberg's theory.

Kallenberg's (1977) theory of job satisfaction stated that there were six aspects of work that influenced an employee's job satisfaction: (a) an intrinsic facet, (b) a convenience facet, (c) a financial facet, (d) an extrinsic facet of relationship with co-workers, (e) an extrinsic facet of having a career (being in one institution for a long time), and (f) resource adequacy. Each of the six elements of Kallenberg's theory is important in the relationship between employee and employer as it relates to job satisfaction.

This study's findings support the aspects of Kallenberg's theory, particularly the last one, resource adequacy, regarding leadership recognition of good work. Employee appreciation methods did influence the job satisfaction as a recognition of work by employers. The effect that the method had on job satisfaction has connection to the other

five elements of the theory. The employee has a positive job satisfaction rating after receiving a specific type of appreciation method can result in the employee feeling more compelled to perform at a higher level at work (intrinsic facet). With the positive employee appreciation method, the employee views the commute and work area (convenience facet) as doable because the security of having a job and a potential career (extrinsic facet) at a salary (financial facet) as acceptable.

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions. It is important to review the data collection process thoroughly once a study is complete to determine if there is room for improvement in future studies. Though this study did produce viable results, with the one-on-one appreciation method being the most effective, there were limitations that future researchers could try to minimize or eliminate.

One limitation of the current study is the inclusion of only seven employee appreciation methods. Some employers may offer unique types of employee appreciation methods outside the scope of the original seven types. Although unique to the individual organization, those types of appreciation methods may be as or more impactful than the seven included in this study.

Recommendations

A general problem faced by organizational leaders and managers is determining how to show employees appreciation in ways that positively influence employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Aguenza & Som, 2012). The specific problem is that little knowledge exists about the effect of such employee appreciation methods on higher education support staff job satisfaction (Bradler & Neckermann, 2019; Haider et al., 2015). This quantitative study closed the gap in the literature pertaining to the effect of employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff in higher education institutions.

Further research should be undertaken to continue expanding the implications of employee appreciation methods across a variety of organizations, not limited to higher education institutions. Utilizing the same study model with adjustments to the participant requirements and the inclusion of additional employee appreciation methods would generate a broader range of collected data for analysis. Studies could be set up in financial institutions, sales institutions, legal institutions, medical institutions, and lower education institutions regarding employee appreciation methods and how they affect the job satisfaction of those institutions' support staff.

Future studies could also be created to study the effect of employee appreciation methods on support staff in higher education institutions worldwide. A further review of the culture of the countries could reveal different outcomes that show one type of method favored above another based on the country and culture. The study could be expanded

across different countries by changing the participant criteria from support staff in higher education institutions to support staff in various other institutions.

An overall recommendation is for the outcomes of this study and future studies pertaining to the effect of employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff in all institutions to be reviewed by leaders and managers within the organizations. Information obtained from these studies could help leaders understand the importance of having a positive relationship with employees who feel appreciated (Hamrick & White, 2020). Employees who feel appreciated will have a higher job satisfaction and a stronger loyalty to an organization (Beck, 2016).

Implications

The impact of positive social change based on the results of this study can be found both inside the organization and outside of the organization (family, home, society). Within the organization, particularly in higher education institutions, employee job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and positive morale could result if leaders fully understood how employee appreciation methods could impact the employee. Robbins (2019) shared those employees who feel appreciated by leaders and management have a stronger motivation to remain at their current job, supporting the importance of understanding what appreciation methods result in higher job satisfaction. A positive working environment can result in higher productivity outcomes, a work environment that draws individuals to want to be a part of the organization, and a positive view of the organization from society outside the organization itself (Buil et al., 2018).

It is important for leaders and managers to understand the effect that employee appreciation methods have on the job satisfaction of employees in general (Chambliss, 2017), pertaining to this study, the job satisfaction of support staff in higher education institutions. The choice of appreciation method can influence employees' work and idea of the organization (Coy, 2011). This study supports Chambliss (2017) and Coy (2011) with statistical evidence that employee appreciation methods affect the job satisfaction of higher education support staff. Based on the type of employee recognition, Montani et al. (2020) concluded that employees have a sense of meaningfulness with the institution. As a positive social change, this loyalty can lead to positive views of the institution as a good place to work, which treats its employees with respect, thus extending positivity throughout the community.

A recommended practice that higher education institutions can implement, or continue if already in action, is to treat their support staff as a vital part of the organization. Leaders and managers should also recognize that not every support staff member will welcome the employee appreciation method on the same level as other employees. This study showed that one-on-one employee appreciation methods were particularly well received and most influenced the individual's job satisfaction.

Discovering the most impactful employee appreciation method for each of the employees within an organization could elevate employee morale and job satisfaction, resulting in a more desirable workplace. This type of action on the part of leadership and management would demonstrate to employees that they are more than just an employee

ID number, but that upper management does care about the individual and wants the work environment to be positive with high employee morale and job satisfaction.

In addition to following Vroom's (1964) theory of expectancy and Kalleberg's (1977) theory of job satisfaction, employers who implement employee appreciation methods based on this study's findings could potentially see an increase in productivity and job satisfaction. Higher education organizations that view their employees in support staff positions just as important as faculty and directors could help to raise employee morale and increase productivity. Employee appreciation methods targeted by leaders based on the individual employee's perception of the method (Vroom, 1964) convey to the employee that they are important.

Conclusions

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the effect of seven employee appreciation methods on the job satisfaction of support staff within higher education institutions. Utilizing Beck's 2016 study as a foundation, I reviewed viable data collected from 241 participants that met the criteria of being a support staff member for 6 months or longer at higher education institutions in the United States. The study's results showed that all seven methods influenced the job satisfaction of higher education support staff employees with the verbal one-on-one method being the most effective.

Further research should occur, utilizing this study as a foundation to determine if similar results would be found with support staff in different types of organizations. The research and further study results could be used as instruments for leaders and managers

to enact strong employee appreciation methods that result in higher employee morale, job satisfaction, and a more positive working environment. These desired results would have a positive social impact by elevating the organization as a preferred workplace due to the awareness of employers truly caring about their employees and holding individuals in support staff roles as important members of the organization.

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Appendix A: G*Power Sample Size Analyses

[1] -- Sunday, April 11, 2021 -- 11:32:41

t tests - Means: Difference from constant (one sample case)

Analysis: A priori: Compute required sample size

Input:	Tail(s)	= One
	Effect size d	= 0.5
	α err prob	= 0.05
	Power (1- β err prob)	= 0.80
Output:	Noncentrality parameter δ	= 2.5980762
	Critical t	= 1.7056179
	Df	= 26
	Total sample size	= 27
	Actual power	= 0.8118316

[2] -- Sunday, April 11, 2021 -- 11:50:47

F tests - ANOVA: Fixed effects, omnibus, one-way

Analysis: A priori: Compute required sample size

Input:	Effect size f	= 0.25
	α err prob	= 0.05
	Power (1- β err prob)	= 0.80
	Number of groups	= 7
Output:	Noncentrality parameter λ	= 14.4375000
	Critical F	= 2.1392096
	Numerator df	= 6
	Denominator df	= 224
	Total sample size	= 231
	Actual power	= 0.8138330

Appendix B: Permission Letter for Survey Use

From: Crystalee Webb Beck <4crystalee@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 6:28 PM
To: Joanna Carter <joanna.carter@waldenu.edu>
Subject: Re: Requesting Permission to use instrumentation from your 2016 Study

Joanna,

How delightful to hear from you! Thank you for reaching out.

You have my permission to use my seven (7) instruments for your research. I like the eighth one you are adding! I have two asks, though:

- 1) Please cite my research in yours.
- 2) Please share your findings with me. I would love to see what you discover. I'm now best reached at crystalee@teamcomma.com. I'm no longer in academia, although I do Guest Speaker appearances (two this week!) and really enjoy building my communication company.

Will you please reply and let me know you accept those conditions?

I would also love to have a phone chat at some point. You're welcome to pick the best time for you on my calendar here: www.calendly.com/teamcomma

Cheers,
Crystalee

Appendix C: Survey

Employee Appreciation Methods

SECTION A – Reason for Study and Informed Consent:

Thank you for taking the time to read and complete this survey pertaining to employee appreciation methods and the potential effect the methods have on job satisfaction of support staff who work in a higher education setting. The aim of this study is to benefit society by determining if employee appreciation methods affect the job satisfaction of higher education support staff and to help leaders and managers understand the importance of how these methods can help or hurt job satisfaction in the workplace.

The information collected from this survey is and will remain completely confidential. No one, including the researcher will have any means to be able to connect your answers with your identification.

If you would like to participate in this study, please read the following Informed Consent and virtually sign by selecting the check box. If you do not wish to participate, thank you the opportunity to present this study to you.

I understand that this study is collecting data pertaining to the potential effect that employee appreciation methods have on the job satisfaction of full-time employees in the role of support staff in a higher education organization. I understand that my answers will be anonymous, and no answer can be connected back to my identification now, or in any future analysis. I understand that this data will be stored in a secure location with only the researcher available to view the data. I understand that for my data to be used, all responses my be completed. You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

By checking the YES box below, I am giving my consent to participate in this study.

YES NO

SECTION B – Demographics:

- 1) Gender Identity
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

- c. Non-binary/non-conforming
- d. Other: _____

2) Age Group

- a. 18-29
- b. 30-39
- c. 40-49
- d. 50-59
- e. 60-69
- f. 70 and above

3) Race

- a. African American
- b. Caucasian
- c. Asian
- d. Pacific Islander
- e. Indigenous Tribes
- f. African
- g. Indian
- h. Hispanic
- i. Latino/Latina

4) Location

- a. _____

5) Type of Higher Education Institution

- a. For-Profit
- b. Non-Profit
- c. Traditional 4 Year University
- d. Community College
- e. Specialized Higher Education Institution

6) Job Title / Role

- a. Clerical
 - i. Receptionist
 - ii. Administrative Assistant
 - iii. Secretary
 - iv. Office Assistant / Clerk
 - v. Assistant
 - vi. Clerical Support
 - vii. Office Coordinator
 - viii. Data Entry Clerk / Specialist

- ix. _____
- b. Non-Clerical
 - i. Maintenance
 - ii. Mailroom
 - iii. _____

SECTION C – Employee Appreciation Methods

Using the same five-point scale provided with each of the employee appreciation methods, with one being the lowest (unimportant) and five being the highest (very important), please rate the following methods of appreciation by employers as it pertains to your job satisfaction.

1. Appreciation through verbal one-on-one methods
2. Appreciation through verbal in a group setting (being named while in a group setting)
3. Appreciation through electronic methods (email, social media)
4. Appreciation through hand-written methods (card, letter)
5. Appreciation through tangible item (gift card, swag)
6. Appreciation through monetary bonus
7. No method of appreciation used by employer

SECTION D – Thank you and Results of Study

Thank you for completing this survey. Again, please note that your responses are anonymous and will never be connected back to your identity. Responses of this study will be reviewed by the researcher to determine whether there is a connection between the method of appreciation and job satisfaction. The results could help employers further their knowledge of the importance their actions have on employees with regards to employee appreciation methods. The results of this study will be available through ProQuest and potentially published/presented. Public results will also be made available through social media.