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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE, YEARS OF SERVICE, GENDER,
EDUCATION, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG MENTAL HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS

BY

VERIA L. HICKS

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

PSYCHOLOGY

GENERAL PROGRAM

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

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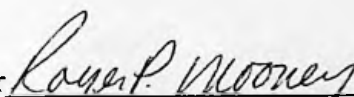


MASTER OF ARTS THESIS
OF
VERIA L. HICKS

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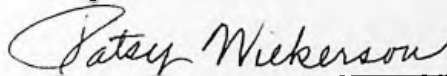


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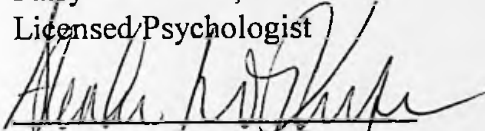

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Running Head: Job Satisfaction

The Relationship Between Age, Years of Service, Gender, Education, and Job

Satisfaction Among Mental Health Professionals

Veria L. Hicks

Marshall University Graduate College

Abstract

The study explored the relationship between age, years of service, gender, education, and job satisfaction among mental health professionals. Thirty subjects (15 males and 15 females) were involved in the study. The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated no significant relationship between age, years of service, gender, education and job satisfaction among mental health professionals. Recommendations for future research are discussed.

Acknowledgments

This endeavor could not have been accomplished without the assistance of many wonderful people. I would like to thank Dr. LeGrow and William Taylor (my nephew) for their invaluable help with the statistical analysis. I would also like to thank Patsy Wilkerson and Dr. Goudy for graciously agreeing to be members of my thesis committee. And to Dr. Mooney for his time, support, and patience with me throughout this project. I would like to thank the administrator of FMRS for allowing me to survey the staff. Special thanks go to my family for their prayers and support, with which I could not have completed this endeavor, and to Tony for help with the table and instructions on the use of a computer. Most importantly, I want to thank God for giving me the stamina, willpower, and intelligence to complete what I always thought was an impossible dream.

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List of Table

Table 1 Relationships between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment 8

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible. It appears to be a list of table titles or descriptions, but the content cannot be accurately transcribed.]

Job Satisfaction Among Mental Health Professionals

Bender and Sloan (1998) defined job satisfaction " as the individual's subjective assessment of the utility gained from his working environment"(p.1). Job satisfaction was viewed as the sum of a number of independent job elements. Research (Barber & Dunham, 1992; Bender & Sloan, 1998; Mckelvey & Webb, 1995) indicates that job satisfaction is influenced by different factors such as money, working conditions, job security, and working environment. Little has been written that addresses job satisfaction among mental health professionals in community mental health centers. This study examined the factors that affected job satisfaction among mental health professionals.

According to Onyett and Pillinger (1997) various theories have been used as a framework for job satisfaction: the needs fulfillment theory, the social reference theory, and the two-factor theory. The needs fulfillment theory states that "work satisfaction is a function of the degree to which the job fulfills or allows the individual to fulfill personal needs" (p. 2). The social reference theory states that job satisfaction is a function of the comparison between an individuals' satisfaction and his or her perception of a peer or reference group. The two-factor theory describes job satisfaction as determined by the "ratio of input (attributes brought by the worker to the exchange, such as education, intelligence, and experience) to outcome (rewards received by an individual for services rendered, such as; pay, pension, and status)" (p. 3).

Kadushin and Kulys (1995) studied levels of job satisfaction among social workers in hospitals. The findings indicated overall job satisfaction among the social workers.

Sources of job satisfaction were the ability to help patients and families, job challenge, and autonomy. Onyett and Pillinger (1997) found job satisfaction among members of a community mental health agency centered around team clarity and identification with the team. Tang and Kim (1999), in a study of mental health workers, found that money was the most significant factor associated with job satisfaction. Results indicated that money was used to attract, retain, and motivate mental health professionals. The researchers noted that money was not only important to the mental health professionals but also to the employers. Freeborn and Hooke (1995) also found that the majority of the mental health professionals, in a health maintenance organization, listed income as the main factor which influenced job satisfaction. McKelvey and Webb (1995) stated that psychiatrists felt that job satisfaction was related to income, levels of job stress, types of patients, and administrative support. The researchers stated, "On review of the literature, no single factor emerges as consistently associated with practitioner's levels of career satisfaction except for income" (p.3).

In the medical field Dwore and Murry (1997) found that job satisfaction among hospital managers was influenced by leadership behaviors (interpersonal skills). Interpersonal skills were expressed verbally and nonverbally. Attitudes and affective communication were the most significant factors in job satisfaction. Responsibility, autonomy, and flexibility to administer and create programs to benefit employees were also identified as significant factors. According to Freeborn and Hooker (1995) physician assistants (PAs) related job satisfaction to income (62%), level of responsibility (85%) and benefits (58 %). Physicians assistants, however, were less satisfied with income,

than the other health maintenance workers. They were more satisfied with the level of responsibility and less satisfied with the benefits, such as sick leave and vacation.

On college campuses Mason (2000) found that 90% of college faculty involved reported satisfaction with career choice, but were not satisfied with the low pay, poor job aspects, and the bureaucracy. Tang and Talpade (1999) stated that male professors listed income as the major reason for job satisfaction, whereas female professors listed peer relationships. The study, however, found no significant differences in overall job satisfaction among the male professors and female professors.

The beverage industry (Beverage Industry, 1998) reported challenging work was the most important factor related to job satisfaction. Income and benefits were also identified as important. Hutcheson and McDonald (1999) found that the right work role influenced job satisfaction among workers. The researchers stated, " Our research shows that when people are in roles that match up with their natural abilities, they are almost always happier and more satisfied" (p. 2).

Overall, Money and Graham (1999) and Karl and Sutton (1998) found that job satisfaction among the various industries was based on income and job security. Other research, however, found work role, education, age, gender, and level of responsibility as the primary factors in job satisfaction. This study focused on the relationship between age, years of service, gender and education, and job satisfaction among mental health professionals employed by a community mental health center. The research will help administrators in community mental health centers better address job turnover and enhance job satisfaction. The hypotheses were:

Ho: There is no significant difference between age, years of service, gender, education, and job satisfaction among mental health professionals.

H There is a significant difference between age, and job satisfaction among mental health professionals.

H There is a significant difference between years of service and job satisfaction among mental health professionals.

H There is a significant difference between gender and job satisfaction among mental health professionals.

H There is a significant difference between education and job satisfaction among mental health professionals.

Method

Subjects

Thirty subjects participated in the research. The subjects were employees of FMRS Mental Health Council, Inc. FMRS Mental Health Council, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization that provides a wide range of comprehensive mental health services to residents of a four county area.

Procedure

Data was collected over a two week period. One hundred Tennessee Self Concept Scales (TSCS-2) and a demographic questionnaire (See Appendix B) were placed in employee mailboxes. Thirty were randomly selected to participate in the study. The TSCS-2 was given according to the instructions from the test manual. A graduate student

from Marshall University Graduate College administered the survey.

Instrument

The Tennessee Self Concept Scale-Second Edition (TSCS-2) is a self concept assessment used for adults and children (down to seven years). The TSCS-2 is based on six scales: physical, moral, personal, family, social, and academic-work. These scales are grouped into a total score and a conflict score. The first 20 items can be used as a short form (this correlates .90 with the longer version). There are four validity scores: inconsistent desponding, self criticism, faking good, and response distribution. There are three supplementary scores: identity, satisfaction, and behavior. Reliability has been estimated using Cronbach's alpha with internal consistencies ranging from a low of .73 on the social self concept scale to a high of .93 on total self concept, over a two week period. Test-Retest reliability is slightly lower from .47 to .82 . Validity information is based on the accumulated studies from previous versions (Fitts & Warren, 1996).

Results

Analysis of Data

The research involved a between subject design. The independent variables were age, years of service, gender, and education. The dependent variable was job satisfaction. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data. The ANOVA identifies proportion of the variance of the dependent variable, the independent variable contributes, and the proportion of the total variance the error variance contributes. Alpha was set at .05.

The results of the ANOVA indicated no significant relationship between group differences for age, $F(1, 29) = .499, p < .05$, years of service, $F(1, 29) = .050, p < .05$, gender, $F(1, 29) = .190, p < .05$, and education, $F(1, 29) = 1.62, p < .05$. The null hypothesis was accepted. The sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean squares, and F-ratios for between and within the groups are shown in Table 1. The alternative hypotheses were rejected. There was no significant relationship between age, gender, years of service, education and job satisfaction among mental health professionals.

Discussion

The results of the research indicated there was no significant relationship between age, years of service, gender, and education as factors of job satisfaction among mental health professionals. Mental health professionals typically enter the field of mental health to help others. The concern is for the welfare of the clients who seek help. According to Onyett and Pillinger (1997) job satisfaction among social workers was related to team role clarity and identification with the team. The authors defined job satisfaction as an affective state that involved feelings about one's work. The results of this research suggests mental health professionals may share these values.

In other studies (Tang & Kim, 1997; Tang & Talpade, 1997; McKelvey & Webb, 1999) pay was considered the most prominent variable related to job satisfaction. Attitudes about money are established early in childhood and are maintained in professional life. Attitudes toward money are also known to be correlated with the economic development of the nation and related to motivation to out perform others. For some individuals, money has been seen as a powerful motivator, but for others it has not.

The subjects in this study were reluctant to disclose income levels. The highest F value (0.18) which was not, however, statistically significant was in education.

Education would be highly correlated with income (the higher the educational requirements for the position the higher the salary levels). On the other hand, research by Kadushin and Kulys (1995) found social workers were satisfied with their jobs despite low pay.

Overall, the results suggest those in control of operating mental health centers need to consider variables other than age, years of service, gender and education to maintain staff. The research from Oynett and Pillinger (1997) indicated for social workers, clarity of job responsibilities and a sense of identity with other team members may be the most important variables related to job satisfaction. These variables would be cost effective and could easily be the focus of new employee training.

For future research in this area, the author would suggest using more than one community mental health agency. Researchers may also wish to consider role clarity, team identification, and interpersonal skills as variables that may affect job satisfaction of mental health professionals.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance Between Groups

Tests Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
AGE	16.819	1	16.819	0.499	0.487
YEARS	1.672	1	1.672	0.050	0.826
GENDER	6.414	1	6.414	0.19	0.667
EDUCATION	63.542	1	63.542	1.883	0.183
ERROR	809.719	26	33.738		
TOTAL	898.166	30			

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The following section discusses the various factors that influence job satisfaction. It begins with a discussion of the concept of job satisfaction and its measurement. It then discusses the various factors that influence job satisfaction, including intrinsic and extrinsic factors, organizational factors, and individual factors. The section concludes with a discussion of the implications of job satisfaction for organizational performance.

Appendix A

Literature Review

This section provides a comprehensive review of the literature on job satisfaction. It begins with a discussion of the concept of job satisfaction and its measurement. It then discusses the various factors that influence job satisfaction, including intrinsic and extrinsic factors, organizational factors, and individual factors. The section concludes with a discussion of the implications of job satisfaction for organizational performance.

There has been a consistent absence of research focusing on age, gender, years of service and job satisfaction among mental health professionals. There is an abundance of research on job satisfaction regarding various factors that are related to job satisfaction in business, medical and teaching professions. Tang and Talpade (1997) reported that in 1992 it was estimated that more than 5000 studies were done examining job satisfaction. In a study by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin, job satisfaction was defined as "an affective state involving feelings about one's work" (as cited by Kadushin & Kulys, 1995, p. 4). Various theories were grouped together to be used as a framework for job satisfaction. Three groups emerged: the needs fulfillment, social reference group, and the two-factor group. The needs fulfillment theory stated "work satisfaction is a function of the degree to which the job fulfills or allows the individual to fulfill personal needs" (p. 2). The social reference theory designated work satisfaction only as a function of the comparison between an individual's satisfaction and his or her perception of a peer or reference group. The two-factor theory explained job satisfaction as being determined by the "ratio of input (attributes brought by the worker to the exchange, such as education, intelligence, and experience) to outcome (rewards received by an individual for services rendered, such as pay, pension, and status" (p. 3). The authors identified six factors associated with job satisfaction: autonomy, job status, organizational requirements, personal interactions, task requirements, and pay. Results indicated autonomy, personal interaction, and status to be positively correlated to job satisfaction, whereas organizational requirements and task requirements were negatively correlated to job satisfaction. Pay was also negatively correlated to job satisfaction. Overall the research indicated social workers were satisfied

with their jobs.

Oynett and Pillinger (1997) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and burnout among members of community mental health teams. Job satisfaction scales were taken from the Occupational Stress Indicator which had five scales: achievement, the job itself, organizational design and structure, organizational processes, and work relationships. Other variables factored in were individual role clarity and team role clarity. Job satisfaction was associated with team role clarity and team identification.

Tang and Talpade's (1997) study focused on sex differences in satisfaction with pay and co-workers. Women rated social needs (e.g., working with people, and being helpful to others) as more important to job satisfaction, whereas men rated pay as more important. The authors reported that gender difference in studies has been contradictory. In some studies women were more satisfied than men, in others men were more satisfied than women, and still in others there was no significant difference between the genders. What does seem to be consistent is that attitude toward money appears to be one variable both males and females consider to be a factor associated with job satisfaction.

Tang and Kim (1999) reported attitudes about money are established early in childhood, and are maintained in professional life. Attitude toward money is also known to be correlated with the economic development of the nation and related to motivation to outperform others. Money is considered as a powerful motivator for some individuals, but not so powerful for others. In other words, the meaning of money is in the eye of the beholder. The authors studied the meaning of money among mental health professionals and the endorsement of money ethics as it related to organizational citizenship behavior,

job satisfaction, and commitment. Money was the variable that was most important in attaining, retaining, and motivating employees.

Leavitt (1996) focused his study on the relationship between high pay and low job satisfaction in a public sector agency. The agency was moving away from a conservative "family like" culture to an organizational culture (p. 4). Pay was high but employees rated job satisfaction low due in part to the change going on in the organization.

In another study Tang and Gilbert (1999) found that intrinsic job satisfaction was related to the attitude that money was freedom and power. The authors focused the study on self-esteem among mental health workers. They defined organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) "as the degree to which organizational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organization"(p.2). The study revealed that people with a high OBSE had a higher job satisfaction than those who had a low OBSE. The study also showed that individuals with a high OBSE had a high educational level. The authors suggested that people with a high level of education sought jobs or perceived jobs as challenging and rewarding. The study showed that OBSE construct was related to other feelings that are intrinsic to the worker.

Mckelvey and Webb's (1999) study of job satisfaction among psychiatrists in Texas looked at factors that related to job satisfaction, such as age, years in practice, and income. The study found that psychiatrists who were least satisfied with their career were older, had many years of experience and derived most of their income from private practice. No single factor emerged as a primary factor to job satisfaction except for income. Freeborne and Hooker (1995) studied job satisfaction among physician

assistants (Pas). Some of the factors studied were age, gender, years of service and job classification. The (Pas) were mostly men and the non-physician assistants were mostly women. The respondents were similar in age. In regard to years of service, (Pas) had less tenure than the non- (pas). Most of the (Pas) were satisfied with pay and highly satisfied with work.

Karl and Sutton (1998) reported that workers in the United States placed a high value on good wages and job security. The study looked at the private and public sector of workers. The authors found no significant difference between the private and public employees in the importance of job security. However, the researchers found public employees were more job security oriented than the private sector employees. Private sector employees ranked good wages higher in importance than the public sector employees. Bender and Sloane's (1998) study suggests that job satisfaction is a trade between wage income and leisure time. The study surveyed union and non-union employees. Job satisfaction was expected to increase with wages and decline with hours worked. However, what was discovered was job satisfaction was determined by different factors. Results suggested being in a union had a strong negative effect on job satisfaction. When broken down into gender, the results indicated women were more dissatisfied with the job than men.

Dwore and Murray (1997) reported that job satisfaction was related to factors designated as motivators and maintenance. Motivators were " intrinsic to the job, controlled by the worker, and benefit healthcare organization, practitioners, and patients" (p2). Maintenance referred to worker's basic physiological and social needs.

Presumably these factors led to dissatisfaction. The authors studied Utah hospital managers in community and non-community hospitals. Results indicated overall job satisfaction. Motivators that stood out were achievement and responsibility. With respect to maintenance, job satisfaction was highest with superior and subordinate relations, lowest with organization policy, job security, and salary.

Mason's (2000) study of college professors found overall job satisfaction among the professors. Results indicated 90% were satisfied with their career choice because of a "love of learning, professional autonomy, and intellectual freedom"(p. 2). Flexible work schedule and job security were also found to be important to the professors. Variables attributed to some dissatisfaction was low pay, politics, and job openings.

Graham and West (1992) focused their study on relational teaching approach and job satisfaction. The authors assessed variables that were associated with teacher job satisfaction. The underlying assumption was that teaching involved a process of relational development and required effective interpersonal skills to achieve satisfying outcomes. Being a competent teacher has been shown to be related to job satisfaction. Teaching is basically a communication oriented activity, and satisfaction with the profession appears to be contingent upon satisfying teacher-student interactions. The majority of a teacher's time on the job is spent communicating with students. Accordingly the authors reported communication is "a significant and integral component of teachers' job satisfaction" (p. 4). Results indicated that "a satisfying teaching experience can be attained by an ongoing interpersonal relationship between teacher and student" (p. 4).

The major variable of job satisfaction in the beverage industry was challenging work. Thirty-six percent of the respondents reported challenging work was most important to their level of job satisfaction, while 31 percent said salary and benefits were most important (Beverage Industry, 1998).

In Barber and Dunham's (1992) study of financial service organizations, the authors found there was an increase in overall job satisfaction after the implementation of a flexible benefit plan. According to the authors, " job satisfaction is viewed as the sum of satisfaction with a number of independent job elements, such as pay, promotions, and working conditions" (p. 2). Researchers have insisted that pay satisfaction can be subdivided into independent elements, such as satisfaction with benefits, pay level, pay administration, and pay structure. Attitudes toward benefits have been found to be significant determinants of pay satisfaction. The authors suggested that because benefit satisfaction is an element of overall job satisfaction, an increase in benefits should lead to an increase in job satisfaction. The results of their study found this to be accurate.

Ting (1997) studied determinants of job satisfaction of Federal Government employees. He reported job satisfaction was related to three sets of factors: job characteristics, organizational characteristics, and individual characteristics. Job characteristics referred to variables that described characteristics of jobs performed by the employee. Organizational characteristics describe characteristics of the organization, and individual characteristics referred to variables that described characteristics of the employees who performed the job. The author based job characteristics on Maslow and Herzberg theories. He stated: " job satisfaction is caused by individuals' desires to fulfill

personal needs, which include intrinsic and extrinsic needs” (p. 2). Therefore, an individual’s job satisfaction is determined by the degree to which job characteristics fulfill a person’s needs. Organizational characteristics were based on the commitment toward the organization and interactions with co-workers and supervisors. Individual characteristics were the attitudes and values of the employee as well as age, gender, education, and ethnicity. The authors also studied age, gender, and education as variables that relate to job satisfaction. The results suggested job characteristics were found to have a strong relationship with job satisfaction. Also organizational characteristics showed a significant effect on job satisfaction. There were, however, mixed results on individual characteristics. Age was found to have a significant effect on job satisfaction. The older the employee was, the more satisfied with the job. Education had no effect on job satisfaction, but there was a difference in regard to ethnicity. White employees at lower level jobs were found to be more satisfied with their jobs than minority employees. But they were less satisfied with the job than the minority as they moved up the ladder. One reason noted for the discrepancies is that minorities may experience a lower level of job satisfaction due to discriminatory personnel decisions in the organization.

In a study that examined the relationship between treatment discrimination and level of job satisfaction among African-American accounting professionals, Moyes, Williams, and Quickley (2000) found that there was a significant relation between the two variables. The authors focused on four factors: pay, promotion, supervision, and organizational climate. According to the authors, pay is an essential component of job satisfaction. Pay appears to represent not only the ability to acquire material goods but is also an indication

of recognition and achievement. As with pay, promotions are also seen as a measure of job success. The third factor was supervision. Supervisors frequently have input in decisions concerning promotion, pay and job assignment. The fourth factor was viewed as social and interpersonal. It involved the interaction of the employee with his or her peers as well as with supervisors and subordinates. Results indicated no distinction among benefits and job satisfaction. There was a highly significant relationship between salary and level of job satisfaction. Perception of discrimination increased with the level of dissatisfaction with the job. The results also suggested those with the lowest level of job satisfaction were the most negative about promotions. They reported discrimination as a primary factor influencing promotion practices. There was a significant difference in the responses regarding supervision. Those with the lowest level of job satisfaction reported they felt the supervisor did not allow them to participate in decision making processes. Results of organizational climate suggested those with a lower level of job satisfaction reported their work situation as more stressful. For those least satisfied, perceived discrimination in the workplace was highest.

Wolverton and Gallimore (1998) based their research on members and non-members of the appraisal institute. Variables which were examined were age, experience, gender, ethnicity, and income. Six dimensions of job satisfaction were measured in addition to overall satisfaction. They were: clarity of role, pace of the workload, control over work environment, intellectual challenge, amount of total compensation received, and fringe benefits. The only item which indicated some dissatisfaction centered around benefits. The results indicated members were slightly older than non-members, had more appraisal

experience, and were much more likely to own their own firm. There was no significance between education and training. Results also found that members had a higher income than non-members. Kadushin and Kulys (1995) stated that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not polar opposites on the same continuum. The study supported the 1959 study by Herzberg. There are various factors to consider when examining job satisfaction in any field.

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The following is a list of the most common reasons for job dissatisfaction. The reasons are listed in order of importance, with the most important reason listed first. The reasons are: 1. Lack of interest in the work, 2. Lack of challenge in the work, 3. Lack of variety in the work, 4. Lack of responsibility, 5. Lack of advancement opportunities, 6. Lack of recognition, 7. Lack of pay, 8. Lack of benefits, 9. Lack of a good supervisor, 10. Lack of a good working environment, 11. Lack of a good company, 12. Lack of a good location, 13. Lack of a good schedule, 14. Lack of a good job title, 15. Lack of a good job description, 16. Lack of a good job contract, 17. Lack of a good job offer, 18. Lack of a good job interview, 19. Lack of a good job offer letter, 20. Lack of a good job offer package.

Appendix B
Questionnaire

1. I am interested in my work.

2. My work is challenging.

3. My work is varied.

4. I have a lot of responsibility.

5. I have good advancement opportunities.

6. I am well paid.

7. I have good benefits.

8. I have a good supervisor.

9. I have a good working environment.

10. I have a good company.

11. I have a good location.

12. I have a good schedule.

13. I have a good job title.

14. I have a good job description.

15. I have a good job contract.

16. I have a good job offer.

17. I have a good job offer letter.

18. I have a good job offer package.

Appendix B

As a student at Marshall University Graduate College, I am required to complete a thesis in order to obtain my degree in psychology. I have chosen to study job satisfaction among mental health professionals working in a community mental health center as my field of interest. This study requires the completion of a five item questionnaire and a 20 item survey. Time to complete both the questionnaire and the survey is approximately 10-15 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. If you agree to participate, please complete the attached assessments and place in the box labeled - SURVEYS-, which will be located in the employees mail room. Thank you for taking time to help.

Veria Hicks MA

Please answer the following.

1. Age _____
2. Gender _____
3. Length of service (employment) _____
4. Education (High School-HS; College-BA, B.S., Reg. BA.; Graduate-MA, Post Graduate- Ph.D.) _____
5. Job Classification _____

