# Career Success Factors in Higher Education Institutions

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## Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the Career Success of faculty working in Higher Education Institutions working in Coimbatore District. A survey on 662 faculty members representing 10% of the population was done with Stratified Sampling Method with a response rate of 77.8% and with Cronbach Alpha of 0.9. Faculty members perceive high career success only when they are able to utilise their skills and competencies. A comparison study of career success of faculty among Arts and Science and Engineering and Technology was done and it was observed that there were significant differences between two groups with respect to the type of institution, gender, educational qualification and current position. Overall satisfaction in faculty member's career increases their morale which further influences the students and the society as a whole.

*Key Words: Higher Education Institutions, Carer Success*

## 1.1. Introduction

In the challenging Higher Education Institution Sector, every institution focuses on building highly competitive students. To mould the students in pace with the requirements of the industry, the role of faculty is predominant. The Higher Education Institutions needs to attract and retain faculty who are qualified and willing to take on new task and responsibility. Faculty will be content only if they are successful in their career and in their work.  A research on career success among faculty in Higher Education Institutions is timely to provide directions to the management of educational institutions to take efforts on motivating the faculty members to use their competencies, knowledge and skills and empower them in the field of education.

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### 1.1.1.   Education in our society

In today's information societies, knowledge drives economic growth and development. Higher education is the main source of that knowledge – its production, dissemination and its absorption by any society (Bray M. , 2007). (Ottaway, 1980) defined society as the whole range of social relationships of people living in a certain geographical territory and having a feeling of belonging to the same kind of group. In every society, whether developing or developed, complex or primitive, there is always an education system. Education systems are not the same, as no two societies are identical. Therefore, education systems differ from society to society and their aims, contents and techniques also differ from one society to another.

(Dubey, 1984) observed that a good educational system, in all its full substance and ramifications, is related to the level of culture, industrial development, rate of urbanization, political organization, religious climate, family structure, stratification and other institutions of the total social system. Education has to fulfil both the individual's needs and those of the society and must keep pace with other sub-systems in the society, as both variables are inter-related.

Education in every sense is one of the fundamental factors of development. No country can achieve sustainable development without investment in human capital.  Education contributes to the growth of national income and individual earnings. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves. It improves the quality of their lives & leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. Education provides a foundation for development, the ground works on which much of our economic and social well-being is built. The strength of the education is ever-increasing day by day and the success of education depends on the faculty who are the pillars who mould the students, to a bright future.

### 1.1.2.   Faculty's role in Education

To prepare for sustaining one's revivability as today's college faculty, functioning in the ever changing society, faculty would need to re-interpret academic traditions regarding faculty roles and to re-position them to fit today's new educational environment. While maintaining the integrity guaranteed and protected by academic freedom, faculty need also to learn to understand the multifaceted work that goes into effective teaching, creating effective curricular pathways through which students gain the competencies and skills they need. Taking the challenges and transforming self to be more in alignment with the expectations of the ever changing society will be considered an important quality of today's college faculty, further developing a true scholarship of teaching. (Boyer, 1990), (Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997)

The principal academic resource of a university is its faculty. The quality and commitment of the faculty determine the excellence of the academic programs of a university, the quality of its student body, the excellence of its teaching and scholarship, its capacity to serve broader society through public service, and the resources it is able to attract from public and private sources.

**1.2.Literature Review**

**1.2.1.  Higher Education Institutions in India**

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in its institutional capacity in the years since Independence. The number of Universities/University-level institutions has increased 18 times from 27 in 1950 to 504 in 2009. The sector boasts of 42 Central universities, 243 State universities, 53 State Private universities, 130 Deemed universities, 33 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) and five Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase with just 578 in 1950 has grown to be more than 30,000 in 2011.

In India the institutional framework consists of Universities established by an Act of Parliament (Central Universities) or of a State Legislature (State Universities), Deemed Universities (institutions which have been accorded the status of a university with authority to award their own degrees through central government notification), Institutes of National Importance (prestigious institutions awarded the said status by Parliament), and Institutions established by State Legislative Act and colleges affiliated with the University (both government-aided and unaided). (Kaul, 2006). In India technical education is treated as a separate sector. There are 65 centrally funded institutions like IITs, IIMs, NITs, IISc, etc. (Table:1)

**Table: 1 Central funded Universities in India**

| S.No | Name of the institution | Number of institutions |
|------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) | 15 |
| 2 | Indian Institute of Management (IIM) | 7 |
| 3 | Indian Institute of Science (IISc) | 1 |
| 4 | Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) | 5 |
| 5 | National Institute of Technology (NIT) | 20 |
| 6 | International Institute of Information Technology  (IIIT) | 4 |
| 7 | National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research (NITTTR) | 4 |
| 8 | Others ( School of Planning & Architecture (SPA),  Indian School of Mines University (ISMU),   North Eastern Regional Institute of Science & Technology (NERIST) ,  Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology (SLIET) , National Institute of Industrial Engg. (NITIE)  &  National Institute of Foundry & Forge Technology (NIFFT) ,  Central Institute of Technology | 9 |
| **Total** | | **65** |

Source: (AICTE, 2012)

The open universities in India are regulated by the Distance Education Council of India (DEC), New Delhi which maintains the standards, encourages and organizes the activities of Open and Distance learning in India (ODL). Distance education with new information and communication technology (ICT) promises to expand the frontiers of Higher Education as never before. This is because it costs 66 per cent less and the students need not leave their homes or profession. The internet and satellite technology are being put to use to further the cause of distance education.

The Higher Education sector ensures the quality of the educational process with the help of accreditation agencies established for the purpose. The main agency which accredits universities and colleges in general education is the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) established by the UGC in 1994, whereas a similar function is done for technical education by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) set up by AICTE in 1994, and for agricultural education by the Accreditation Board (AB) set up by ICAR in 1996. NAAC proposes to introduce the India Education Index (IEI) for ranking institutes based on academic, research performance and other parameters. The outcome will help in the international comparison of institutes. NAAC has entered into an MOU with higher learning institutes of the United States, Taiwan, Norway and Kuwait and with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to facilitate collaborative work on quality assurance in higher education institutions (HEIs). (Gupta & Gupta, 2012).

### 1.2.2.   Career Success of Faculty

Career success can be viewed as a means to fulfill a person's needs and desires through achievements, accomplishment and power acquisition (Lau & Shaffer, 1999). Career success and career strategies are elements within the broad tradition of career theory (Riley & Ladkin, 1994). An understanding of the strategies used in order to develop a successful career can help individuals choose the best way to achieve promotion to the top of a company's hierarchy (Aryee, Chay, & Wah, 1994). Within a specific professional environment, it is useful for career development to identify the specific individual or environmental characteristics and requirements that lead different people to career success in different industries or organizational structures (Reklitis & Trivelas, 2002). The practical meaning of this knowledge or information is important for both companies and individuals as it enables companies to have the ability to plan more effectively the systems of staff training and development, and individuals can develop career strategies that will offer them greater career success in terms of job position, satisfaction and salary (Ellis & Heneman, 1990).

Research suggests that job tenure and total time in the one's occupation are positively related to career attainment (Cox & Harquail, 1991), (Gutteridge, 1973), (Jaskolka G, 1985), (Judge, Boudreau, & Jr, 1994), (Pfeffer & Ross, 1982), (Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991). Along with amount of experience, type of experience may be relevant in predicting career success. Specifically, it is becoming more important for executives to have international work experience (Cava & Mayer, 1993), suggesting that organizations are more likely to reward and promote executives who have had international exposure (Vries & Mead, 1992). Thus, it is expected that job and occupational tenure, and having international experience, positively predict objective career success. An important characteristic of professionals which should affect their career success is their level of accomplishment in their job and career (Hough, 1984).

(Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991) argued that motivational variables are likely to be influential in predicting career success. Two variables included by Whitely et al. as indicators of motivation were hours worked per week and work centrality. Considerable research supports the relationship between the number of hours worked per week and salary and ascendancy (Cox & Cooper, 1989), (Gutteridge, 1973), (Harrell, The personality of high earning MBA's in big business, 1969), (Judge, Boudreau, & Jr, 1994), (Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991).

Career success also can be judged by the individual pursuing the career. Most research on career success typically has focused on objective success (Kotter, 1982), rather than individual appraisals of their own

success (Gattiker & Larwood, 1989). Past research has suggested that many individuals who are extrinsically successful do not feel successful or satisfied with their achievements (Korman, Wittig-Berman, & Lang, 1981), so it is important to consider both objective and subjective evaluations of career success (Bray & Howard, 1980), (Gattiker & Larwood, 1989).Accordingly, our model includes subjective career success, defined as individuals' feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with their careers. Obviously, there is a link between objective success and subjective appraisals in that individuals define their success based, in part, on their objective accomplishments. In fact, past research generally has found that objective and subjective success are positively but moderately related (Bray & Howard, 1980) ; (Harrell, 1969) ; (Judge & Bretz, 1994). A career is a sequence of work-related positions (jobs) occupied throughout a person's life (London & Stumpf, 1982), and because of that we define subjective career success to include current job satisfaction just as the career includes the current job. Consistent with (Locke, 1976), overall job satisfaction is defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p. 1300).

Career satisfaction, in turn, is defined as the satisfaction individuals derive from intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their career, including pay, advancement, and developmental opportunities (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990).

## 1.3.Objective

The objective of the study is to study the satisfaction of the career success factors of faculty of HEI
**Methodology**

Data were collected from 662 faculty members working in educational institutions affiliated to Bharathiar University and Anna University in Coimbatore. The sample was extracted randomly to 10% of the population. The sampling method used for the study is Stratified Random Sampling. Data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to 850 faculty members working in HEI in Coimbatore out of which 700 were received and only 662 useable responses were taken indicating a response rate of 77.8%.

The Instrument for Career Success construct focussed on Objective factors like salary and promotions and Subjective Indicators like acquiring new skills and knowledge, rewards and recognition, career satisfaction etc.,. The statistical tools used for the study are Percentage Analysis, Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Anova. The five point Likert Scale such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree was used.

Reliability was tested on the data collected using Cronbach Alpha Test and the overall reliability for Career Success was found to be 0.926.

### 1.4.Results

The present study aimed in identifying the perception of Career Success of faculty working in Higher Education Institutions. In order to find out the career satisfaction of the members of the faculty the current position of faculty was determined in the table below.

**Table: 1 Current Position of the faculty members**

| S. No | Designation | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | HOD | 51 | 7.7 |
| 2. | Professor | 18 | 2.7 |
| 3. | Associate Professor | 59 | 8.9 |
| 4. | Assistant Professor | 500 | 75.5 |
| 5. | Lecturer | 34 | 5.1 |
| **Total** | | **662** | **100** |

From *Table: 1*, it was found that majority i.e. 75.5% of the faculty members were from Assistant Professor Category, 8.9% in the Associate Professor category and 7.7% of them were heading the department. As per the legislations it is common that the Professor to Assistant Professor ratio should be 1:5. Hence majority of the people surveyed were working currently in the Assistant Professor category in various institutions in Coimbatore.

### 1.4.1.  Analysis of Satisfaction of Career Success

In order to study about the career satisfaction of the members of the faculty, the various objective and subjective factors of career success were analysed in the *Table 2*.

## Table: 2 Analysis of Satisfaction of Career Success

| S.No | Statements | Mean | S.D |
|------|------------|------|-----|
| 1. | Able to do the work which is enjoyable | 4.26 | 0.883 |
| 2. | Promotions | 3.75 | 1.100 |
| 3. | Receiving higher salary than colleagues | 3.26 | 1.218 |
| 4. | Salary being progressive with my career | 3.39 | 1.173 |
| 5. | Respect from colleagues | 3.88 | 0.977 |
| 6. | Satisfaction with success in career | 3.83 | 1.030 |
| 7. | Contentment with the progress towards career goals | 3.83 | 0.985 |
| 8. | Received awards and recognitions | 3.58 | 1.116 |
| 9. | Acquisition of new skills | 4.01 | 0.929 |
| 10. | Able to utilize my competencies | 3.98 | 0.940 |
| 11. | Overall Career Success | 3.86 | 0.806 |

*Table 2* indicates the objective and subjective indicators of Career Success of faculty and it was found that in a scale from 1 to 5, the highest mean 4.26 was given to the statement *"Able to do the work which is enjoyable"* and the lowest 3.26 was graded to the factor *"Receiving higher salary than colleagues"*. From this we can understand that the faculty members are contented with the current position in which they are working and the fact that they are not satisfied with the salary they receive. This is because majority of the faculty were working in Self Financing Colleges and hence they do not receive a competitive pay when compared to the faculty members who are working in the Aided Stream. In a scale from 1 to 5, majority of the faculty members have agreed to the statement "*Able to utilize my competencies*" with a mean as 3.98

and the statement *"Respect from colleagues"* has earned a mean score of 3.88. This proves that the members of the faculty perceive to receive mutual respect from each other. The faculty members of the Higher Education Institutions of today opinion that they are able to use their competencies and expertise because they are involved in healthy practices like participating and organising various programmes. Also members of the faculty perceive career success if they are involved in challenging assignments where they can acquire skills and abilities. The spread of normality extended with SD between 0.806 and 1.218. It was also observed that majority of the faculty members agree that they perceive Overall Career Success in their Career as faculty members.

### 1.4.2.  Comparison of Career Success among faculty members working in Arts & Science and Engineering Technology Institutions

A comparison study was done to identify the difference of Career Success among faculty members working in Arts & Science and Engineering Technology Institutions. The objective and subjective factors of Career Success was compared with various demographic factors such as type of institution, nature of institution, age, marital status, educational qualification, income and current position. The statistical tool namely Anova was applied to determine whether there was any significant difference among the two groups viz. faculty members working in Bharathiar University and members of faculty working in Anna University affiliated institutions. The factors which have the significant values for their respective frequency which were less than 0.05 were said to be significantly different between the two groups. The details of comparison between the faculty members working in Arts & Science and Engineering Technology Institutions are mentioned in Table 3.

### Table: 3 ANOVA for the Construct Career Success

| S.No | Statements | Type of Institution | | Nature of Institution | | Gender | | Age | | Marital Status | | Educational Qualification | | Income | | Current Position | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig | F | Sig | F | Sig | F | Sig | F | Sig | F | Sig | F | Sig | F | Sig |
| 1 | Able to do the work which is enjoyable | 5.599 | **0.018** | 0.007 | 0.933 | 2.347 | 0.126 | 0.895 | 0.649 | 0.089 | 0.765 | 0.137 | 0.938 | 1.669 | 0.140 | 1.005 | 0.404 |
| 2 | Promotions | 3.046 | 0.081 | 0.346 | 0.556 | 0.025 | 0.875 | 0.844 | 0.732 | 0.741 | 0.390 | 1.988 | 0.115 | 1.430 | 0.211 | 0.608 | 0.657 |
| 3 | Receiving higher salary than colleagues | 1.691 | 0.194 | 3.425 | 0.065 | 2.109 | 0.147 | 1.163 | 0.237 | 2.036 | 0.155 | 1.036 | 0.376 | 3.427 | **0.005** | 1.287 | 0.273 |
| 4 | Salary being progressive with my career | 0.019 | 0.892 | 0.345 | 0.557 | 0.545 | 0.461 | 0.773 | 0.832 | 0.003 | 0.957 | 2.555 | 0.054 | 1.998 | 0.077 | 0.744 | 0.562 |
| 5 | Respect from colleagues | 1.697 | 0.193 | 0.224 | 0.636 | 0.487 | 0.486 | 0.755 | 0.854 | 0.007 | 0.934 | 1.367 | 0.252 | 0.493 | 0.781 | 2.470 | **0.044** |
| 6 | Satisfaction with success in career | 0.812 | 0.368 | 0.584 | 0.445 | 0.036 | 0.850 | 0.843 | 0.733 | 0.034 | 0.853 | 1.319 | 0.267 | 1.369 | 0.234 | 2.595 | **0.035** |
| 7 | Contentment with the progress towards career goals | 0.002 | 0.962 | 0.025 | 0.875 | 0.035 | 0.852 | 0.965 | 0.531 | 0.001 | 0.977 | 1.487 | 0.217 | 0.885 | 0.491 | 1.078 | 0.366 |
| 8 | Received awards and recognitions | 0.014 | 0.905 | 0.189 | 0.664 | 0.212 | 0.645 | 0.775 | 0.829 | 0.100 | 0.752 | 4.082 | **0.007** | 0.821 | 0.535 | 0.832 | 0.505 |
| 9 | Acquisition of new skills | 1.487 | 0.223 | 0.155 | 0.694 | 0.021 | 0.885 | 1.151 | 0.251 | 0.604 | 0.437 | 1.335 | 0.262 | 1.792 | 0.112 | 1.516 | 0.196 |
| 10 | Able to utilize my competencies | 0.567 | 0.452 | 1.187 | 0.276 | 0.069 | 0.793 | 1.118 | 0.294 | 1.104 | 0.294 | 1.269 | 0.284 | 0.740 | 0.394 | 2.202 | 0.067 |
| 11 | Overall career success | 2.694 | 0.101 | 0.268 | 0.605 | 5.322 | **0.021** | 1.122 | 0.288 | 0.150 | 0.698 | 2.825 | 0.038 | 1.633 | 0.149 | 3.500 | **0.008** |

From the *Table 3* we can infer that there are no significant differences in Career Success among the faculty working in Arts and Science and Engineering and Technology institutions with respect to the demographic factors like nature of institution, age and marital status. It was observed that there was significant difference among the two groups with respect to position of work in comparison with the type of institution. The faculty members perceive difference in career success with regard to Arts and Science and Engineering Institutions. They opinion that they have difference in position of work with regard to the Engineering Institutions as they are affiliated to Anna University. It was also observed that there was significant difference among the two groups with respect to overall career success in comparison with gender. Majority of the respondents were females and they perceive overall career success than males when compared to both the groups.

The members of faculty opinion that there was significant difference among the two groups with respect to awards and recognition in job in comparison with educational qualification. It is obvious that educational qualification is one of the major criteria to be considered in recognition in job.

It was also observed that there was significant difference among the two groups with respect to higher salary in comparison with the colleagues in evaluation with income. The faculty members working in Engineering and Technology Institutions receive higher salary than the faculty who were working in Arts and Science Institutions.

Faculty members view that there was significant difference among the two groups with respect to the factor recognised by my colleagues, satisfaction of success in career and overall career success in comparison with the current position. From this we can understand that there is difference in the way the faculty are being recognised and the level of career success among both the groups.

### 1.5.Conclusion

The results of the study provide initial evidence of the factors associating with Career Success.  It was also found that faculty perceived acquiring new skills and knowledge in their career and that they were dissatisfied with their pay packages when compared with their colleagues. It was also observed that there are no significant differences in Career Success among the faculty working in Arts and Science and Engineering and Technology institutions with respect to the demographic factors like nature of institution, age and marital status were as difference persist in certain factors with regard to the type of institution, gender, educational qualification and current position. Further studies could be done in order to find out what are all the other factors that influence Career Success of faculty in HEI.

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