

**Applying Hagedorn's Conceptual Framework to Examine Job Satisfaction among Faculty at the  
University of Sarajevo**

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**Abstract**

Faculty around the world shares some underlying commonalities by virtue of sharing a profession, but we cannot draw informed parallels because culture, style and history of higher education, and faculty socialization play a significant role in how the faculty life is lived and experienced. We know quite a bit about faculty working in developed and developing nations, but the current snapshot lacks perspectives from academics living in transitional nations. This in-progress study will survey faculty employed at the University of Sarajevo, located in Bosnia and Hercegovina, to establish a baseline of their demographic profile and to describe their job satisfaction using Hagedorn's conceptual framework. This study will test the applicability of Hagedorn's framework in non-US settings and expand our understanding of the causes and outcomes related to faculty satisfaction.

*Keywords:* faculty satisfaction, higher education reform, Western Balkan

**Introduction**

The working environment of faculty around the world has changed considerably in recent decades as an increasing number of countries' higher education systems have grown and differentiated (Galaz-Fontes et al., 2016). The impact of these changes on the academic profession around the world, including on faculty satisfaction, have been well documented (Bentley et al., 2013; Galaz-Fontes et al., 2016; Teichler et al., 2013). National and regional differences in academics' (dis)satisfaction can be

Received September 20, 2020; revised November 1, 2020, and November 25, 2020; accepted December 1, 2020; electronically published January 31, 2021

*Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*

December, 2020, Vol. 12, No. 6S1, pp. 91-96.

DOI: 10.32674/jcihe.v12i6S1.2986

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attributed to the severity of change to system-specific traditions, including the academic role (Bentley et al., 2013). Researchers have noted rising dissatisfaction with increased workloads, discrimination, the unequal balance between work and family life, collegiality, and efficiency-based management (Galaz-Fontes et al., 2016; Shin & Jung, 2014).

The present snapshot of the academic profession lacks perspectives of those living in transitional nations like Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH) (Bentley et al., 2013). Often labeled as an Eastern Bloc nation, BiH belonged to the Yugoslavian confederation, which operated under a form of market-friendly socialism. Although the structure and style of BiH's higher education mimicked the Soviet ethos, higher education in Yugoslavia was less controlled by the state. Still, managerial and curricular issues proliferated, and reforms of the late 1970s and 1980s were ineffective. The eruption of civil war in the 1990s further decimated the higher education system. This feeble system was resurrected after the war, and larger European reforms were either improperly or selectively implemented, making the contemporary higher education system a strange amalgam of reform and tradition (Zgaga et al., 2013). BiH institutions are afflicted with issues of quality control, insufficient funding, and complicated bureaucracy. The consequences of stagnation, punctuated by occasional reform, are keenly felt by its academics, yet BiH is relying on its public institutions to stem the tide of increased expatriation and to incubate economic development.

### **Study Site**

To establish a baseline understanding of academics in BiH and their job satisfaction, the University of Sarajevo (Univerzitet u Sarajevu), UNSA, was selected as the study site because it is the oldest and most prestigious of all public institutions in BiH. UNSA is composed of 31 colleges, research institutes, and specialized outreach centers, and because of its comprehensive portfolio of study programs, UNSA enrolls a significant percentage of the total college age population. In the 2020-2021 academic year, UNSA employed 1,458 part- and full-time academics, which provided a robust sample

size for a survey-based study and ensured that academics from various disciplines would be represented. Academics with the rank of Assistant Professor or higher were eligible to participate.

### **Conceptual Framework, Design & Method**

Hagedorn's framework of faculty satisfaction identifies two constructs that interact and affect job satisfaction. The first construct, labeled triggers, is composed of six significant life events (change in life stage, change in family-related or personal circumstances, change in rank or tenure, transfer to a new institution, change in perceived justice, and change in mood or emotional state). The second construct, labeled mediators, is composed of three variables that can interact with each other, thereby altering one's judgment of job satisfaction (motivators and hygienes, demographics, and environmental conditions). Faculty satisfaction can range from disengagement, to acceptance/tolerance, and active engagement.

The author modified a faculty satisfaction survey designed by Galaz-Fontes (2002) to conduct a cross-sectional survey among University of Sarajevo (UNSA) faculty who met eligibility criteria. This study had three primary goals: (a) to describe the profile and academic trajectory of UNSA faculty members, (b) to ascertain a baseline level of satisfaction among UNSA faculty on a variety of work-related facets, and (c) to examine how well Hagedorn's (2000) constructs of mediators and triggers predicted overall job satisfaction. The modified survey was forward and backward translated by two separate cultural consultants in the United States and in BiH (Tsang et al., 2017).

Survey items asked faculty participants the following: demographic information, working conditions and activities, levels of satisfaction concerning different characteristics of their work, judgments of specific characteristics of their work, and opinions about their occupation and occupational environment. A pilot was conducted in July 2020 to establish survey reliability and validity. Structural equation modeling (SEM) methods were utilized to verify the reliability and validity of the adapted survey instrument. Based on preliminary analysis, the adapted instrument explained 62% of the

variance in job satisfaction. Items related to service commitments were not statistically significant and were removed. Official data collection for this study is currently in progress. Data analysis will utilize descriptive and inferential statistics (i.e., multiple regression) to answer the three research objectives stated above.

### **Implications**

This study has three major contributions to the field of international higher education. First, Hagedorn's model has been extensively tested within the United States and it has been shown as adaptable, reliable, and valid in various institutional settings (Conner, 2019; Markus, 2011; McCullough, 2013; Ramirez, 2011). International uses of this framework have been limited and its use on the intended population in this study will help determine its effectiveness and applicability in non-US settings (Bentley et al., 2013). Secondly, while education in contemporary BiH has been an object of scholarly research, the bulk of these investigations has focused on discrimination and segregation within primary and secondary education (Pašalić-Krešo, 2002). Investigations into BiH's higher education system have focused on the institutions and the overall landscape of higher education, rather than on the people operating within. By studying job satisfaction among UNSA academics, we can reveal the scope that system-specific changes have had on BiH's academics and their careers. Identification of job satisfaction levels among UNSA faculty can subsequently reveal the extent of faculty (non)participation in their institution, which is crucial if BiH's higher education system is to continue engaging in meaningful reform to meet the challenges facing the nation and the region. Lastly, findings from this study can set-up future investigations into higher education in BiH, and ultimately neighboring countries in the Western Balkans, with whom BiH has had a shared past.

### **Author Note**

Nina Marijanović, Ed.S., is a doctoral candidate in the Educational Policy Studies & Evaluation department at the University of Kentucky. Her research interests are 1) faculty socialization and retention in the Western Balkans and 2) student access and retention both domestically and in the Western Balkans.

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