



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS AND SATISFACTION LEVELS  
WITH HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT THE  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

by  
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# AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

Alexandra Aboulhosn for Master of Human Resource Management  
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Human resource management plays a critical role in every organization. This study aims to assess the importance of human resource management practices in a higher education setting, namely, the American University of Beirut. Many workplace factors are affected by human resource management's implementation and creation of policies and procedures. This study's examination of a faculty satisfaction survey provided key insights into the areas where human resource management efforts are having beneficial results and identified which areas can be improved with relation to workplace/compensation satisfaction alongside career-related stress factors such as work-family conflict and gender equality.

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the areas of human resource management within the American University of Beirut which are generating goodwill and satisfaction among faculty members and which policies and/or procedures are hindering overall satisfaction levels. The results generally indicate that the American University of Beirut's human resource management efforts are functioning well compared to other similar universities (comparison groups surveyed). Ultimately, the areas in which the American University of Beirut human resource management efforts could improve would be in relation to diversity training (with a focus on gender equality) a reevaluation of the compensation packages currently being offered, as well as an assessment of how personal time for each faculty member is determined and provided.

As long as human resources is viewed as an external and faceless department operating *alongside* the university, faculty members will likely continue to view this administrative function with distrust and apprehension. The measures for improvement proposed above should attempt to serve as a preliminary step toward the enhancement and further integration of human resource management within the university, and hopefully, toward improved and sustained faculty satisfaction with the human resource management efforts at the American University of Beirut.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The field of higher education is expanding rapidly worldwide. However, it is experiencing exponential growth in developing countries, such as Lebanon. This rapid increase in the number and types of higher education institutes which are becoming available in the Middle East is worth discussion, as these centers of learning have been shown to directly impact and improve the knowledge economy of their nations (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013). This improvement of a nation's knowledge economy can directly impact the economy, political atmosphere, and social status of a post-war developing nation. Academic faculty members are at the epicenter of the generation and improvement of this knowledge economy in Lebanon. Their commitment and engagement has a noteworthy impact on the quality of knowledge which their students receive (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007). Human resource management within universities is of key importance as this function within an institution is responsible for rewarding, training, and promoting academic faculty (Majcher, 2008). Thus, human resource management efforts are closely linked to the satisfaction levels of academic faculty.

This study aims to assess the levels of satisfaction that academic faculty have with their institution with regards to the human resource management functions of the university. This research study, which assesses the past satisfaction levels of faculty members at the American University of Beirut (AUB) via archived data records,

contributes greatly to the existing literature on human resource management practices and their implications in the higher education setting within the Middle Eastern context.

This case study aims to illuminate the areas of human resource management practice that are positively or negatively regarded by academic faculty of the American University of Beirut. In the American University of Beirut, in particular, the academic faculty members deal with the university's human resource management function in a limited and distinct number of ways. The human resource management department at the American University of Beirut deals with professors in regards to their contract preparation, benefits, housing (if applicable,) the schooling of their families, health insurance, research funding, and research leaves.

This study seeks to identify any differences in satisfaction levels between three main sub-categorizations of professors. Firstly, the study aims to determine if newer and lower ranking faculty members are more likely to be satisfied with the university's human resource practices as opposed to individuals who hold positions of higher seniority (Majcher, 2008). Secondly, the study assesses the possible differences in satisfaction levels of faculty members between different academic departments (Schultz, 2010). Thirdly, the study explores the degree to which (if at all) male and female staff may differ in their perceived satisfaction levels with the human resource functions of the university (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). Of added value is that this research endeavor potentially serves to bridge multiple literature gaps as it is highly interdisciplinary in nature and will be conducted in a new and relatively unexplored Middle Eastern context.

## CHAPTER II

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & OBJECTIVES

The research methodology used in this case study involves compiling relevant archival data on past satisfaction reports which have been gathered internally via the American University of Beirut's annual faculty survey. In combination with the extensive review of literature which this research project includes, this case study's examination of archival data seeks to specifically identify possible patterns and areas of concern with regard to the human resource management practices at the American University of Beirut. The archival data which is used for this study consists of a series of qualitative surveys which have been distributed annually to university faculty. These surveys are created and distributed annually by the American University of Beirut's OIRA department (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment). While this department creates and distributes a wide variety of surveys annually to university faculty, staff, and students, this study focuses solely on the reactions of faculty members in relation to their opinions on human resource management practices in the university. The questions in these satisfaction surveys are qualitative in nature. The target sample of this study includes university faculty members and the survey data which they provided relating exclusively to their satisfaction with human resource management issues at the university. The responses of faculty who participated in this study were categorized based on rank, department, and gender.

The objective of this research focuses on the role of human resources within institutes of higher education. The emphasis of this study relates to the connection between human resource management and higher education in relation to the American University of Beirut and how their human resource departmental function affects the satisfaction levels of academic faculty. More specifically, this study aims to capture the unique difficulties associated with human resource management within an institution of higher education and which human resource practices most directly affect faculty satisfaction levels toward the human resource management function.

While a great deal of literature currently exists describing the importance of human resource management practices within academic institutions, a gap exists with reference to this relationship in Lebanon. The research goal will be ultimately to use the information gathered from the literature in combination with the relevant insights gathered from the university's archival survey data in order to assess the degree to which academic faculty of higher education institutions are satisfied with the HRM practices of their organization. The study also highlights any individual difficulties or strengths which the American University of Beirut may face in particular with regard to their faculty's perception of the human resource management efforts.

This study aims to help provide future human resource managers and administrators working in the higher education sector with knowledge on particular aspects or techniques of management which could be easily adapted from business contexts and management subjects which should be more individually determined and created based on the specific needs and circumstances of the academic staff.

Research questions for this study include:

- *To what extent are AUB faculty satisfied with the current human resource practices?*
- *Which elements of the human resource management functions of AUB positively or negatively affect the satisfaction levels of faculty?*
- *How do male and female faculty member perceptions contrast in relation to the human resource management at AUB?*

## CHAPTER III

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **A. Human Resource Management in Higher Education Settings**

In the educational sector, especially with regards to universities post-globalization, human resource management plays a critical role. This strategic function ultimately determines the degree to which the university will experience success (Vacarescu-Hobeanu & Loredana, 2013). University human resource management, on a more secondary level, plays a role in social improvement as well. Institutions of higher education lie at the epicenter of a nation's development; the correct management of higher educational institutions directly influences the economic status of the country (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013). Universities become the knowledge capitals of their communities and, in turn, render their student bodies more ready and able to contribute more positively within society (Vacarescu-Hobeanu & Loredana, 2013). Because staff, more commonly faculty, have such a direct effect upon the outcome of student academic performance, it is crucial that human resource departments properly play their intended roles. The major problem with existing literature on international human resource management is that the current texts tend to ignore diversity points such as age, class, ethnicity, and religion; all of which play a dynamic role in how human resource management is carried out and even studied (Metcalf, 2007).



According to findings by Bahrami et al (2013), human resource managers will be able to fortify the competitive advantage of their institution by selecting and recruiting appropriate and competent personnel (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). Higher education human resource managers must facilitate university contexts so faculty members are able to deliver exceptional standards of educational services. This is executed through proper recruitment, selection, training and development programs, compensation, and performance appraisals of university staff (Osakwe, 2015).

It has been shown across cultures and throughout many decades pre-dating the most recent wave of globalization, that higher education, especially in the new globalized context, can play a decisive and dynamic role in improving social standards and economic levels. Due to the role higher education plays in influencing the improvement of a society's development, greater focus has been given to the enhancement and effective management of higher education institutions in third world nations characterized by struggling economies (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013).

Institutions of higher education and their subsequent human resource management and development efforts serve to create beneficial partnerships between themselves and their respective communities. The goal of a partnership between universities and their corresponding communities is not only to benefit that community economically, but also, to create new knowledge, develop or refine existing theories, and in effect, impact real world practical applications (Akdere & Egan, 2013). The higher education sector plays an instrumental role in guiding and in forming policies within society. Universities have become more integral to development of the knowledge economy through many

techniques, but most notably, through human resource development (Akdere & Egan, 2013). Human resource development is defined by Akdere and Egan as any process or activity which bears the potential to develop an individual (or organizational) work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, or satisfaction (Akdere & Egan, 2013).

In order to establish beneficial community partnerships through which communities are improved and enhanced as a result of the human resource development within their higher education institutions, supportive institutional structures and organizational commitment of resources are necessary (Akdere & Egan, 2013). Human resource development aids universities, and as a result, societies in developing relevant competencies, focusing more effectively on outcome-based activities, and improving human capital (Akdere & Egan, 2013). Human resource development's major function within social development involves instilling and strengthening the collaborations between community organizations and higher education institutions (Akdere & Egan, 2013). Such partnerships can potentially initiate organizational development in a way which increases social capital by facilitating feasible and positive change (Akdere & Egan, 2013).

When established, such partnerships can demonstrate the positive and sustained effects of human resource development, namely, through the improvement the specific requirements of human resource management within universities. Human resource management in a tertiary institution requires the organization, staffing, planning, controlling, communicating, and directing of faculty and staff members toward the long term success and sustainability of the institution through the accomplishment of its goals and objectives. Therefore, the effective management of human resource functions would

enable such attainment of institutional goals and objectives (Osakwe, 2015). Because the ultimate vision of a higher education institution is to promote, improve, and sustain the academic performance of students, human resource departments within institutions should properly manage the efforts of their faculty and staff toward this end (Osakwe, 2015).

Due to the dynamic nature of the higher education sector, human resource management efforts within universities face added pressure to provide adequate support and guidance for faculty and staff. The educational system's ability to keep pace with the changing external environment and increasingly competitive forces is dependent upon their human resource activities and strengths within institutions. Ideally, the development and improvement of human resource management will translate into more enhanced professional training at all stages of faculty employment (Vacarescu-Hobeanu & Loredana, 2013). Schultz (2010) indicates that the essential human resource competencies in the higher education environment are knowledge of the business, knowledge of human resource practices, personal skills, and management skills (Schultz, 2010). By consistently conducting ongoing surveys and reviewing the human resource policies within the institution, substantial insights can be brought forth, and thus add increased value to the institution (Schultz, 2010).

Therefore, it is a widely shared view that human resource functions within universities can play a key role in contributing more directly toward the success of their institutions (Schultz, 2010). This can be carried out by reinforcing the human resource departments so as to improve their capabilities and encourage their responsiveness to external environmental changes (Schultz, 2010). When these capabilities and competencies

are identified, they can be mobilized and utilized so as to increase the competitive advantage of the university (Schultz, 2010). Given the dynamic nature of the higher education environment, due to factors such as globalization and privatization of universities, it is of ever greater importance that universities successfully align their human resource departments in such a way that those functions will serve to translate into effective change and sustained success.

The nature of the knowledge economy post-globalization entails that human resource managers within institutions of higher education can no longer rely on the application of a “one size fits all” approach to managing and improving university faculty and staff (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007). Due to the complex and individual nature of the problems which occur within such institutions, human resource managers are required to adopt more flexible and customized strategies (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007).

## **B. The Dynamic Role of Human Resource Management in Higher Education**

Many conceptual methods have been used to assess the connections between effective human resource management and performance; this involves approaches taken from strategic management principles, behavioral sciences, organizational theory, economics, and resource-based perceptions (Paauwe & Richardson, 1997). An interdependent relationship exists between the level of excellence an institution’s human resource efforts can exert and the level of effective quality management within that institution. Lebanon is a Middle Eastern nation well known for openness toward Western ideals and lifestyles compared to other Middle Eastern societies (Sidani & Gardner, 2000).

For this reason, one would expect a more egalitarian form of human resource management to be present within Lebanese institutions and organizations.

Quality in management relates to how well the administrative role in that institution operates. Thus, human resource management can only be as strong as the administration under which it is run, whilst the administration itself is made more effective by the decisive, quality inputs of the institution's human resources department (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013). Effective and appropriate human resource activities give rise to the human resource management outcomes which, in turn, serve to positively influence the performance of the organization as a whole. However, two-way causation may also be a factor of success, as organizations that perform outstandingly tend to reflect beneficially on the outcome of their human resource management functions (Pauwe & Richardson, 1997). In order for universities to experience success, their human resource management, unlike the human resource efforts in other private sector industries, must take care to not simply provide quality human capital development. Human resource management in higher education institutions must also be properly and uniquely provided for by the university administration to the extent that faculty needs and objectives can be consistently met. With regard to the educational sector, human resource management functions must be modified slightly to act as a strategic force which manages personnel, both those who work individually and those who work collectively, in order to contribute effectively to the achievement of educational goals (Osakwe, 2015).

Many internal factors have contributed to the somewhat unstable environment of higher education in recent years, such as expansion, decreased budgets, and

decentralization issues, However, externally, universities have had to deal with societal pressures related to demands for increased accountability, efficiency and quality (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). Today's higher education human resource management bodies must strive to manage faculty and staff in such a way as to remain commensurate with the dynamic higher education environment.

In a response to the success of the managerialism model in private sector work settings, which promotes cost saving and open communication ideologies, universities began to adopt similar management practices within their own institutions (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). A method by which to encourage faculty members to be more involved in the strategic goal setting and attainment of the institution is to involve them as much as possible in decision making activities (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). This adoption of private sector management practices should not be limited to administration solely. Rather, the human resource management strategies within universities should also make attempts to adapt based on successful human resource management practices being implemented in the private sector. Human resource policies and systems, when efficiently implemented, have been shown to reduce employee absenteeism, increase satisfaction, improve loyalty, and improve overall effort (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013).

In private sector management settings, it is common to see tight control being exercised by human resource managers. This means that extremely detailed planning, budgeting, and reporting systems are being used and implemented. The difficulty arises in higher education settings where the adoption of such tight controls may be more difficult

to implement due to the more unique characteristics of academic faculty as opposed to the general nature of private sector staff (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013).

Firstly, many propose that introducing such rigorous and rigid controls in a collegiate setting is considerably difficult. Secondly, academic personnel tend to be resistant, given the high value they attribute to their academic and professional autonomy (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013).

### **C. The Unique Factors of Human Resource Management in Higher Education**

In universities, human resource management implementations and introductions of new management practices tend to be more positively regarded by lower level academic staff and faculty who do not have tenure, as opposed to higher level tenured faculty (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). This phenomena could be a direct result of tenured academics feeling that they have conquered their professional obstacles and finally established their sense of reputation and identity within the university. For this reason, tenured faculty may be uninterested, or even resistant towards any managerial changes which may threaten their status (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). In short, Decramer et al (2013) propose that tighter controls tend to have a more positive outcome with regard to performance and satisfaction among lower ranking academic faculty.

There is an important stratification between new and old universities with regard to their acceptance and receptiveness to new personnel management formats. Most

commonly, these formats are seen through the application of new human resource management trends occurring within the business world (Huxley & Hall, 1996).

A major element of human resource management practice in higher education is to create an alignment between faculty's objectives and the overall aims of the universities. However, in older universities, a commitment to overall university aims was found less often. Instead, these faculty members tended to comply reluctantly rather than commit in these areas when compared to the newer faculty member of institutions (Huxley & Hall, 1996). Newer universities tend to more readily accept human resource management initiatives that closely mirror the human resource management practices that would be more commonly found in business settings. This is especially true with regard to issues such as staffing policies and practices, the integration of long term strategic planning, funding, and establishing a market position (Huxley & Hall, 1996).

The introduction and implementation of such modifications in the human resource practices within a university is an endeavor which is not easily achieved. University administration must take into account the difficult nature of change. This must be acknowledged whilst bearing in mind that the human resource function within the university should play a key role in facilitating the change. This facilitation of change would include the promotion of open communication among faculty, a clear demonstration of the university's values, and a strong knowledge of the implications and ramifications associated with institutional change. This would aid university administration in remaining empathetic and approachable from the vantage point of faculty members. While it may be difficult for some members of academic faculty to adjust to drastic changes in employment



and promotional structures within their institution, successful human resource management is required to play an instrumental role in facilitating these changes and acting as a steward of culture change within universities (Schultz, 2010).

In order for human resource management functions to achieve desired academic objectives, there must be an application of administrative practice and strategies. These applications should include proper leadership, discipline, supervision, planning, delegation, motivation, and the establishment of effective communication channels (Osakwe, 2015). In line with the research findings of Osakwe, administrative strategies and human resource management are highly inter-correlated. This confirms the view that training, staffing, and motivation must be emphasized by administrators in times of management (Osakwe, 2015).

#### **D. Changing Norms in the Human Resource Management of Higher Education**

Traditional models no longer apply as academic selection and promotion have been altered considerably in the face of increased competition, reduced budgets, and more diversified academic structures (Majcher, 2008). The pressures of globalization have made it increasingly difficult for universities to remain successful and competitive within the dynamic higher education market. This is another reason why effective and well-practiced human resource management within institutions of higher education is key. It is through the application of such effective and innovative human resource policies that universities can remain flexible and adaptive enough to deal with the external dynamics which could otherwise threaten a university under such competitive circumstances (Vacarescu-Hobeanu

& Loredana, 2013). Such competitive circumstances often require universities to quickly mobilize and react to environmental changes as necessary. However, successful universities will approach such challenging times of change with the knowledge that their human resource functions should play a leading role in ensuring that their efforts will result in the maintenance of the institution's competitive advantage.

During times of change or restructuring within a university, faculty may be likely to experience lack of motivation, increased incidence of work errors, anxiety, and damaged morale (Schultz, 2010). It is during these precarious stages of restructuring and change that the human resource departments within the institution should act as a supportive and strengthening force (Schultz, 2010). This can be achieved through their efforts to promote open communication and reinforce positive rapport among faculty by instilling loyalty as a key driver toward success despite the intimidating atmosphere of change (Schultz, 2010).

An example of the changes taking place in academic recruitment and selection was the decision taken in the UK during the 1980's to abolish tenure for professors in favor of a more fair and egalitarian entry into the profession (Majcher, 2008). The main drive behind such reformative action was to improve standards of equality and transparency within universities and thus break apart the traditional model of university recruitment and promotion in favor of a more democratic approach.

Other countries are beginning to modify their recruitment structures with regard to pre-qualification; Germany is a recent example of a nation which now no longer requires postdoctoral status for qualification (habilitation), but rather, offers junior professorship positions for potential candidates (Majcher, 2008). Such social changes represent

environmental changes which universities and their human resource functions should remain attentive towards. In order for an institution to maintain or create competitive advantage, the human resource department should exercise *competitive intelligence* (Schultz, 2010). According to Schultz, competitive intelligence (the gathering of strategic information in order to improve competitive advantage) is a skill characterized by human resource departments when they are alert and responsive toward environmental changes which could either positively or negatively affect the university. This is a means by which human resource managers seek to protect the institution's competitive advantage (Schultz, 2010). Two aspects of human resource management practices, communication and alignment, have been positively linked to the improvement and sustained competitive advantage of a university (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). Alignment in this context can be related to the human resource department's ability to influence staff and faculty to collectively focus on attaining university-wide goals and objectives.

With regard to the method through which human resource departments should approach recruitment, Majcher calls for three conditions to be present in an ideal model of academic recruitment that is based on fair employment and organizational efficiency. Firstly, professors must enjoy autonomy in their work and have enough independence to pursue their research efforts alongside their teaching duties. Secondly, it is ideal that the most independent and vigorous individuals are selected. It is crucial to monitor their output so as to ensure effectiveness (Majcher, 2008). It is imperative to note, however, that such changes to human resource structures within universities are often met with great difficulty

and resistance by the academic faculty, as such modifications are often misinterpreted as threats against their autonomy and independence as academicians (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013).

Gordon and Whitchurch approach recruitment similarly as the findings of their study call for three criterion to be present when improving academic careers, so as to increase the appeal of the positions in question (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007). Firstly, the university should exercise openness in its recruitment practices, funding policies, and support interdisciplinary mobility. Secondly, the university human resource managers should demonstrate respect for the independence of all levels of faculty, even members who hold research positions. Lastly, Gordon and Whitchurch propose that universities' human resource management efforts should support issues such as improving work-life balance and developing a productive culture which is continually invested in (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007).

With regards to human resource management efforts toward improved conditions for faculty members, it is important to note that university faculty members in Lebanon, The American University of Beirut included, are often faced with issues of gender equality and gender stereotyping in their workplace. Female faculty members may face a particular set of constraints and challenges which are related directly to the fact that they live and work within a cultural context that may, unfortunately, place them at an unequal disadvantage (Jamali, Sidani, & Safieddine, 2005). While cultural and religious factors are often blamed for gender inequality in the workplace, and are traditionally linked to Islam, this is not necessarily the case, as Islam itself provides a remarkable sense of equality

between the two genders (Sidani, 2005). Still, institutional frameworks, and the reinforcements of existing frameworks, will be needed in order to support working women in business roles (Itani, Sidani, & Baalbaki, 2011).

Essentially, the difference between traditional and current academic recruitment was that in the past, professors were recruited based on doctoral and post-doctoral work that had already been completed, whereas, today more universities are hiring based on the academic research which is still to be done (Majcher, 2008). This brings to light a serious struggle which universities across the globe are dealing with today. Conservative members of the academic community would like to continue seeing professorship positions being offered after the accomplishment and ‘rite of passage’ of attaining a doctoral degree has been achieved. Majcher proposes that the optimal solution lies in balancing the traditional model with today’s current pull toward increased flexibility for professors, equality in recruitment, and eased mobility in promotion through the functions and capabilities of the university’s human resource component (Majcher, 2008).

It is the goal of universities to model and implement a form of human resource management that both fits the current needs of the institution as well as encourages and facilitates the institution’s positive transformation of culture (Huxley & Hall, 1996). Ultimately, the standards of an institution are translated into their set of core values. The human resource functions must be measured and determined appropriately so as to delineate to which extent those functions are adding to (or, in some cases, detracting from) the institution’s core values (Schultz, 2010). Also, there is a need to offer more human resource-based organizational support to working women, especially those working in

Lebanese society as it has been shown that working women are more receptive to organizational support and are less likely to report work family conflict as institutional support increases (Sidani & Al Hakim, 2012).

Strategic human resource management is also taking effect in many universities worldwide. This application of strategy within human resource functions, adopted from private sector business models and implementations, involves the human resource department's integration of all members of faculty and staff toward a strategic goal or objective which aims at further unifying and improving the institution. Strategic human resource management is the planned implementation of activities intended to facilitate the organization's attainment of goals and objectives, human resource practices occur when firms influence the skills, attitudes, and behavior of employees to elicit and sustain desirable performance and, by proxy, achieve organizational goals (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013).

#### **E. Misapplications of Human Resource Management in Universities**

The factors which have been associated with lackluster or inadequate human resource management practice include lack of commitment, lack of motivation, improper leadership, poor communication, low supervision, faculty ineffectiveness, and lack of orientation efforts (Osakwe, 2015). Another major issue affecting the human resource management success of a university has been linked to the denial of promotion or the irregular/inconsistent promotion of faculty and staff (Osakwe, 2015). This malpractice can result in lowered morale and later translate into lowered faculty commitment and

motivation. It is important to note the difference in sources of job satisfaction depending on culture and society. For example, employees in Western developed nations tend to glean job satisfaction stemming from intrinsic job factors (such as purpose) as opposed to workers from developing nations [such as Lebanon] who place higher value on extrinsic sources of satisfaction such as salary and working conditions (Abdulla, Djebarni, & Mellahi, 2011).

The lack of a genuine connection to the university's mission statement is often a lurid indicator that an institution's human resource practices are not sincere and are occurring in name only. Thus, a way to identify whether or not a university's human resource management practices are genuine, is to note the presence of a mission statement and a university's adherence toward it. When human resource managers disingenuously attempt to repackage old methodologies and practices with new buzz-word human resource idioms and labels, academic faculty and staff become aware and distrusting toward the efforts of the human resource departments (Huxley & Hall, 1996). It is important that human resource management applications and transformational changes occur in accordance with the context under which they are applied. Also they must be effective so that academic faculty can truly identify and appreciate the changes which have taken place.

Many academics have traditionally criticized human resource management roles within universities as superficially converging unrelated individuals or tasks in the name of "strategy" and "coherence" without paying mind to the actual academic outcomes (Huxley & Hall, 1996). For this reason, human resource management departments within higher

education institutions have been stereotypically labeled as ineffective “sheep in wolves clothing,” simply aiming to streamline and reduce inefficiencies with little or no regard for the individuals affected by their managerial decrees (Huxley & Hall, 1996).

At times, more paradoxically, it is the human resource management function *itself* within a university which acts as a barrier against positive strategic change. Stagnant human resource management departments within a university can directly affect the institution’s ability and likelihood of adopting and implementing potentially beneficial organizational changes amongst faculty. In the UK, a study conducted by Thirkell and Ashman in 2014 was carried out within two universities and aimed to introduce the ideals of total quality management as it had been expressed by Deming through the *Lean Thinking* business model which had previously experienced great success within the Japanese automobile industry (Thirkell & Ashman, 2014). The rationale was that such management practices could be translated into the public sector academic setting with similar positive results. In both universities, the research team found that not only were *Lean Thinking* concepts not being readily accepted and integrated within the university framework, but even more surprisingly, both universities’ human resource management staff acted as obstacles against, as opposed to facilitators for, the new introduction (Thirkell & Ashman, 2014). This illustrates a wider problem which can occur within human resource management functions of academic institutions. Human resource staff members themselves can become obstinate toward transformation and fail to adopt strategic roles as advocates of culture change. These negative and inflexible attitudes can



directly impact the level of satisfaction university faculty will develop concerning the human resource departments of their institution.

#### **F. Total Quality Management and Human Resources in Universities**

Human resource development contributes greatly to the institution's total quality management and efforts toward continually improving quality standards. Thus, the development of human resource departments and functions will likely expand the skills and capabilities of academic staff, and in turn, reflect positively on the performance of students (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013). Total quality management practices, when adopted and implemented throughout all facets of the university's academic and administrative efforts, improve the likelihood of success being manifested in all areas of the institution over time (Dubey, Singh, & Ali, 2015). The relationship between total quality management human resource management is symbiotic in nature. Human resource management is thought to be directly related to total quality management practices given that they are traditionally viewed as the main facilitators of such implementations. Furthermore, the human resource departments themselves tend to function more productively in the sustained presence of such total quality management practices within institutions (Dubey, Singh, & Ali, 2015).

Total quality management should permeate across all levels of university administration and management in order to provide proper conditions for both academic faculty and the student body. Faculty will be more likely to feel contented toward their institution if their needs are cared for, and likewise, students will likely be more receptive

to knowledge when exposed to instructors and professors who are satisfied with their working conditions. Administrators and human resource managers at universities should always align their objectives with the ultimate goal of the institution, which is providing quality education for their students (Bhasin & Perry, 2012). University human resource managers should consistently work to improve the working and employment conditions of academic faculty so as to further ensure that all requirements are met for appropriate learning and knowledge exchange to occur (Bhasin & Perry, 2012).

### **G. Human Resources in Higher Education: An International Perspective**

Higher education bears a greater influence in terms of national economic growth with regard to the quality of labor and manpower of the country (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013). This is similar to the situation presently unfolding in Lebanon, as it is a nation which is within the stages of rebuilding and development. Universities in the Middle East have the unique opportunity to act as agents of social change with regards to promoting principles of gender equality in the Arab World (Karam & Afiouni, 2014). A majority of the upcoming generation of Lebanese workers will emerge from the country's higher education institutes. For this reason, the ways through which these institutions are operated, managed, and organized, with specific regard to the human resource management function, bear a crucial impact on the future Lebanese labor force.

In India, despite the nation's quite expansive higher education network which has been drastically developed in recent decades, the higher education system's human resource functions face many issues. These areas of concern include financing, assessment,

and providing access and equity (Bhasin & Perry, 2012). For this reason, Indian government has proposed and carried out several interventions to improve the accreditation and assessment processes so as to benefit the human resource management functions as a result (Bhasin & Perry, 2012).

While this approach can be beneficial in public sector institutions operating in nations whose government properly monitors and funds the public universities, such interventions are less applicable to private Lebanese universities, such as the American University of Beirut. Firstly, the American University of Beirut is a privately owned university, thus, the Lebanese Ministry of Education can do little to interfere in the university's management processes, human resource management processes included (Varia, 2004). Secondly, even if the Lebanese Ministry of Education were to play a larger role in the university's management decisions and practices, serious governmental impediments and political issues present in Lebanon prevent the Ministry from applying proper moderation and improvement efforts within the university's management (Nahas, 2009). Thus, while Lebanese and Indian institutions of higher education may face similar human resource management discrepancies and setbacks, Lebanese universities (such as the American University of Beirut) must take a more proactive approach toward improving and developing their own human resource departments.

Majcher brings forth the example of how in Germany and Poland, professors tended to be recruited within the same universities from which they had graduated and spent a great deal of their professional careers (Majcher, 2008). The reforms such as the abolishment of habilitation (the recruitment of academic professors based solely on their

completion of a doctorate degree) were accompanied by changes which required professors to work at an alternate university at least once after their doctorate had been completed (Majcher, 2008). These types of reforms were aimed at primarily preventing the stagnant culture which can ensue when outside exposure is limited or overlooked by professors.

In Germany, a need for reform was recognized when it became evident that there was a remarkable brain drain occurring (mostly candidates venturing to the United States). Also, the age of candidates at the onset of their research was quite advanced. Finally, a low attractiveness on an international scale with relation to scientific work and study in Germany led to further brain-drain (Majcher, 2008). Lebanon's higher education market most closely resembles the pre-reformation German higher education atmosphere with regard to the low international attractiveness and the brain drain to other western countries such as the United States. Germany and Poland are also similar to Lebanon in that, ultimately, the reform of recruitment and promotion models in universities could potentially serve as the positive catalysts toward change in attracting and retaining talented academics to local institutions (Majcher, 2008).

It is the role of human resource management within a nation to aid in the transformation of a developing economy [such as Lebanon] into a sustainable and successful market economy (Nallbani, 2013). In this regard, it is of great importance, especially in Lebanon, for the human resource management practices within universities to promote and improve human capital within their institutions. The matter of human resource management improvement within Lebanese institutions of higher education could directly serve to reduce the instances of brain drain which have been occurring steadily in

the decades following the Lebanese civil war. Thus, by improving human capital through effective human resource management practices within universities, it is proposed that student attraction and retention would increase, resulting in more capable individuals participating in the recovery of the Lebanese economy.

In Kosovo, for example, universities struggle with quality assurance measures and practices with regard to higher education standards which are widely accepted throughout the European Union (Kosovo is currently not a member of the European Union, despite their willingness and desire to be integrated) (Nallbani, 2013). Lebanon faces a similar issue in relation to their quality assurance measures. For example, The American University of Beirut, despite its reputation as one of the best institutions in Lebanon and the Middle East and North Africa region in addition to its many international accreditations, is still perceived as inferior when compared to the older, more research-intensive universities of England and the United States. Lebanese students themselves perceive this difference, and when provided with the opportunity, many will tend to opt for study abroad. This contributes further to the Lebanese brain drain crisis. This is a further indication that effective human resource management practices within universities will aid in improving faculty quality standards, thus rendering their university more competitive compared to other institutions. By proxy, this serves as an effective mechanism to be used toward the mitigation of brain drain in Lebanon.

Thus, it is clear that many educational reforms, both on a national level as well as at the institutional level will be necessary in order for Lebanon to improve its position on the world stage as a nation which offers excellent higher education within the Middle East

and North Africa region. These reforms should move in the direction of increased flexibility and more independence for future academics and a greater emphasis on transparency and the provision of equal opportunities (Majcher, 2008). Most notably, in Lebanon, the educational reforms which are to take place must not solely focus on quality improvements with regard to curriculum and university management practices. They must also pay close attention to the manner through which future academics are encouraged to enter universities and the nature of their promotion opportunities after attaining professorship.

#### **H. Higher Education and Business Parallels: The Differing Applications of TQM**

The higher education market in developed nations has dealt with ever increasing levels of market accountability. This trend is made worse by the involvement of legislation and government administration. In short, higher education institutions have come to act more like businesses and less like academic institutions (McElwee & Holmes, 1996). While total quality management efforts are aimed at reducing costs by improved performance and enhanced human resource management techniques, McElwee and Holmes' 1996 study found that most often, such managerial principles lead to the generally inappropriate implementation of approaches to the human resource management in universities which, as a result, become too functionalist in nature (McElwee & Holmes, 1996).

The quality management systems which have gained popularity within higher education human resource management departments of such institutions are potentially

detrimental for several reasons. Firstly, such systems are expensive and costly to maintain. Secondly, such implementations tend to be repetitive within higher education settings and stifle innovation and creativity. Thirdly, the systems lack proper sensitivity and responsiveness toward the operational specificities required by faculty and students (McElwee & Holmes, 1996). The systems themselves are aimed at making the entire university more accountable, via human resource management actions and bylaws, rather than focusing on the improvement or enrichment of the learning process (McElwee & Holmes, 1996).

In recent decades it has generally been favorable for human resource managers to adopt soft approaches rather than hard approaches in their management of university staff and faculty. The soft approach to human resource management refers to the principle of viewing individuals as resourceful members of the organization who can directly contribute to organizational development and the attainment of quality (McElwee & Holmes, 1996).

Total quality management can only truly begin to take effect within universities when human resource management recognizes the importance of soft approaches, and, begins to encourage university management to involve all levels of faculty and staff in the achievement of personal and effective organizational learning (McElwee & Holmes, 1996). By recognizing the importance of interactive professionalism, a truer application of total quality management will be realized (McElwee & Holmes, 1996).

In traditional, old-fashioned, business settings, human resource management will tend to favor a deterministic view of employees. This functionalist model which gained

popularity within the business sector, ultimately views staff as reactive, rather than proactive, members of the organization (McElwee & Holmes, 1996). McElwee and Holmes' findings within the higher education sector prove that a functionalist model is quite ineffective. In universities, it is detrimental to place such an emphatic importance solely on efficiency, cost-effectiveness, compliance, and control (McElwee & Holmes, 1996). Rather, the human resource management within institutes of higher education should strive to place higher value on commitment, cooperation, negotiation, and mutual accommodation through the adoption and promotion of a shared organizational culture (McElwee & Holmes, 1996).

In the 2013 study by Decramer et al, their work showed that linkages and comprehensive connections between all aspects of the employee performance management should be present for effective human resource management to take place in the academic setting (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). Research has shown, however, that this is not a simple feat. Often, certain principles of business management, such as the promotion of team building and teamwork in the workplace, do not fall in line with the academic faculty member's perception on his/her right to autonomous research and independence with regard to their teaching and career development.

However, their findings also indicate that different groups within the academic faculty framework saw different effects and had differing needs with regard to the human resource performance management systems (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). As mentioned previously, the researchers hypothesized at the onset of their research that lower level, untenured academic faculty would be more accepting and less hesitant to



adopt new performance management strategies which were more closely aligned with institution-wide strategies. On the other hand, tenured staff were initially proposed to present resistance to such measures. A major difference between private sector organizations and universities, found by the study conducted by Decramer et al, was that vertical alignment was far more difficult to achieve in an academic setting rather than in a traditional business organization (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013). The reason for this is that academic faculty are more likely to align themselves with their field of research primarily, generally only taking a secondary interest in aligning themselves with the strategic goals of the university. This represents a unique difficulty which is distinctly found in universities as opposed to private sector businesses. Human resource managers within a university must accommodate for this fact by exercising knowledge of the institution and its faculty's needs, whilst effectively communicating the importance of alignment with the university's strategic goals.

## **I. Human Capital Planning and Knowledge Management in Higher Education**

Recent market developments such as technological, organizational, and competitive developments which have changed the face of many businesses, now affect higher education institutions as well. Today, it is of ever increasing importance (and progressively difficult) to attract and retain qualified and desirable candidates from the labor market (Khasawneh, 2011). For universities, this translates into difficulty in offering attractive research and teaching opportunities to potential faculty members as competition grows in parallel with decreasing budgets. This is an imperative issue, as the new globalized

economy has modified the higher education market to such an extent that a university's human capital is now considered an institution's single most influential source of competitive advantage (Khasawneh, 2011).

Thus, the proper development of human capital, through human capital planning, is essential for higher education institutions in today's new globalized economy. According to Khasawneh, with regard to faculty satisfaction levels within universities, human capital planning should pertain to the induction, motivation, and retention of quality faculty members (Khasawneh, 2011). The degree to which current and future faculty perceive their satisfaction levels within a specific institution will drastically affect their likelihood of not only joining a university, but also their propensity to be motivated post-employment.

Proper forecasting enables administrators and human resource managers to conduct appropriate human capital planning by placing the correct faculty members in relevant positions so as to avoid talent deficits, the risk of being overstaffed, or the risk of being understaffed (Khasawneh, 2011). Such efforts made by the human resource management within a university has been shown to aid in lowered costs through the improvement of efficiency. In combination, these byproducts of human capital planning can help to increase competitive advantage. Thus, human capital planning is essential in helping universities to achieve two strategic objectives. Firstly, human capital planning aids institutions in analyzing, prioritizing, and effectively placing faculty members. Secondly, appropriate human capital planning helps higher education institutions to maintain more optimal positions within the market, so as to ensure a constant supply of incoming and talented faculty (Khasawneh, 2011).

A university's use of human resource management to improve knowledge management can help to sustain and maintain the institution's overall competitive advantage. However, this task is made more difficult in the global arena due to the constant creation and availability of new knowledge (Brewer & Brewer, 2010). Thus, the relationship and interdependence between a university's knowledge management and human resource management practices is key toward remaining competitive in the higher education market.

According to the study by Brewer and Brewer, knowledge management has emerged as an ever-increasing critical factor in higher education and business settings for five reasons. Firstly, information within universities has become overloaded which has led to the, sometimes, chaotic management of data. Secondly, due to the massive amounts of information transfer, it has subsequently become congested. Thirdly, it has become apparent how necessary segmentation and specialization of data and information in the higher education sector truly is. Fourthly, workforce mobility and increased turnover within institutions of higher education have become more prevalent. Lastly, and most importantly, competition has increased to an unprecedented level within the higher education sector (Brewer & Brewer, 2010). These five changes in higher education, as a consequence of the importance of knowledge management, point to the need for more successful human resource management so that faculty can be more satisfied, and thus feel more motivated, to better face such developments.

Research has also shown that an institution's human resource management of certain human resource activities can improve their overall performance. By improving

these activities, the university is further ensuring that the institution is maintaining an acceptable level of quality. Development, on the other hand, aims at improving confidence and satisfaction levels of faculty so as to increase their feelings of satisfaction toward the institution itself as well as its overlying strategic goals (Brewer & Brewer, 2010). For this reason, higher education human resource management programs must focus on instilling, improving, and evaluating knowledge, skills, and abilities of faculty assets so as to increase and sustain satisfaction levels among other performance-related benefits (Brewer & Brewer, 2010).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT: AN OVERVIEW

#### **A. The History and Setting of the American University of Beirut**

The American University of Beirut was officially founded and began offering classes in 1866 and was known as the Syrian Protestant College, although the state of New York had officially granted a charter in 1863 (The American University of Beirut, 2016). The institution was founded under the patronage of Dr. Daniel Bliss, originally, the institution of higher education was founded as a center of learning that would provide medical training. By 1920, the university was officially recognized as the American University of Beirut (The American University of Beirut, 2016). In 1922, the university became open to female students (The American University of Beirut, 2016). In 2004, the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools in the United States awarded institutional accreditation to the American University of Beirut (The American University of Beirut, 2016).

The American University of Beirut is currently home to seven academic faculties, the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FEA) the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), the Faculty of Medicine (FM), the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing, and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) (The American University of Beirut, 2016). The student-to-faculty ratio is considerably low at 11 to 1 (The American University of Beirut, 2016). The university currently provides over 130 programs at the bachelors, masters, and

doctoral levels (The American University of Beirut, 2016). Today, the student demographic is roughly 50/50 as about half of the students are male and half are female (The American University of Beirut, 2016).

## **B. The Significance of Privatization**

Universities which are privately owned, such as the American University of Beirut, have the advantage in that they can more freely train, reward, and discipline faculty as the institution deems fit according to the mission and vision statement of the university, environmental factors, and any specific circumstances which may be present at the time (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007). Contrarily, the human resource management departments of publicly funded institutions are not as able to liberally adjust or implement new and existing human resource management practices (Gordon & Whitchurch, 2007). Thus, the American University of Beirut is a great example of an academic institution which more copiously controls the extent to which their human resource management functions will affect and influence strategic changes within the campus. Given that the human resource management practices at the American University of Beirut are completely controlled by, and a direct result of, the university's strategic aims, it is of ever greater importance to examine the extent to which faculty are satisfied with the resulting human resource performance outputs.

### **C. Intellectual Capital at the American University of Beirut**

Intellectual capital has come to be known as an institution's most primary and useful approach toward attaining competitive advantage within the market (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). Academic faculty are a university's backbone with regards to the intellectual capital of that institution. For this reason, human resource management within universities should work to recruit qualified, diversified, and capable faculty who can contribute exceptionally well to the intellectual capital of their institutions.

The intellectual capital of a university is comprised of its capabilities, knowledge, culture, strategy, process, intellectual property, and relational networks that utilizes to achieve and maintain competitive advantage as well as its long and short term goals (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013).

The American University of Beirut is a university which boasts high intellectual capital, especially in comparison to other competing universities of similar size within the Middle East and North Africa region. The American University of Beirut has the indicators of high intellectual capital according to the definition and scope provided by Bahrami et al, which states that an institution's intellectual capital can be divided into three separate sub-categories: human capital, structural capital, and relational capital (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). These three sub-categories of human capital are demonstrated in the American University of Beirut in the following ways.

Firstly, an institution must have human capital. This is comprised of the knowledge which the human resources, faculty, students, and administrators would "take away" if

they were to leave the institution (Bahrami, Rajaepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). The American University of Beirut employs a very competent, diverse, and experienced staff and faculty which assist in instructing and providing high quality academic standards for the university's top performing students who come from both Lebanese and international backgrounds.

Secondly, structural capital is inherent to a university. This is seen as the knowledge and assets which are retained within the institution such as organizational routines, cultures, and intellectual property (Bahrami, Rajaepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). The American University of Beirut has high structural capital, its campus is a national trademark, and its culture of diversity and academic excellence is well renowned. Intellectual property of the American University of Beirut is noteworthy as well, given the many works of academic research which are funded and published by the university annually.

Thirdly, Bahrami mentions the importance of relational capital in contributing toward the overall level of intellectual capital of a university (Bahrami et al., 2013). This relational capital refers to all of the resources linked to the relationships held by the university to external parties such as suppliers or students (Bahrami et al., 2013). The American University of Beirut has high relational capital, manifested through its many accreditations, international recognitions, and the successful and widespread network of its alumni.

Competitive advantage is more responsive to intangible resources as opposed to tangible factors, strategic human resource management which emphasizes and supports the



improvement and fostering of intellectual capital will have a greater positive impact on organizational processes overall (Bahrami, Rajaeepour, Yarmohmmadian, & Bakhtiar Narsabadi, 2013). Thus, if the human resource management strategies are centered on intellectual capital, the institution will likely enjoy higher levels of improved intellectual capital in all three of the previously mentioned categories.

Thus human resource management within universities is integral as it can either provide proper strategic support and guidance, or rather, it can detrimentally render an institution inefficient by failing to mobilize the university's faculty and staff in alignment with the organization's overriding strategy as outlined by the vision and mission of the university.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF AUB FACULTY SURVEY

The data used for this research project is gathered from the tabulated results of an archived survey instrument which was distributed internally by the American University of Beirut's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Unit within the 2013-2014 academic year. The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey was presented on-line to AUB faculty. A total of 134 American University of Beirut faculty members completed the survey form and submitted their responses (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). This HERI survey focused on how faculty members spend their time, their interaction with students, their preferred methods of teaching students, and their perceptions of institutional climate alongside their primary sources of stress and satisfaction (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). Given that this study deals exclusively with the relationship between human resource management practices and the resulting satisfaction levels of academic faculty at the American University of Beirut, only the sections of the university-wide faculty survey which dealt solely with the results related to sources of stress and satisfaction were used.

The findings used in this research project refer to the statistical insights included in the American University of Beirut's 2013-2014 annual faculty survey. The data which was selected for use in this research project deals with categories and factors which relate to faculty perceptions of human resource management issues at the university. Related factors

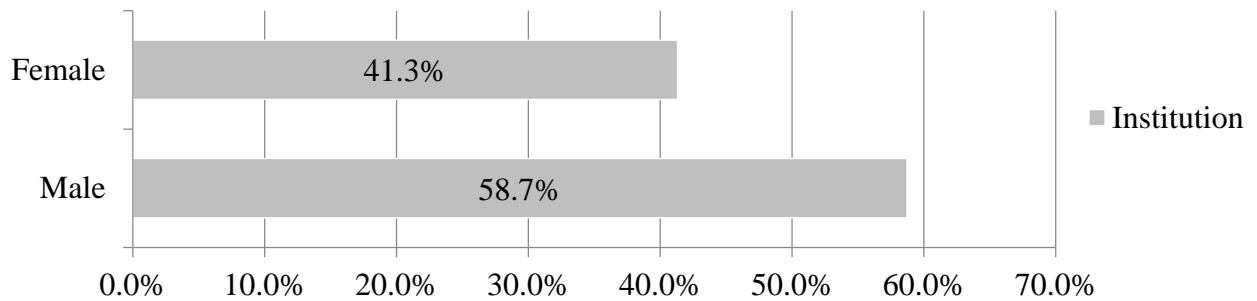
within this survey fell into the following three categories: satisfaction with workplace, compensation, and career related stress. Satisfaction with workplace refers to a measure of how satisfied faculty members are with their current working environment. Compensation relates to the degree to which faculty members are satisfied with their compensation levels and packages. Lastly, career related stress refers to how much stress faculty members endure as a direct result of their careers (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

#### **A. Demographic Data of Sample**

The sample of 139 respondents' categorization by gender and academic department are shown in figures 1 and 2, respectively. Figure 3 shows the categorization of gender alongside that of department. Table 1 shows the subcategorization by rank and principal activity. (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

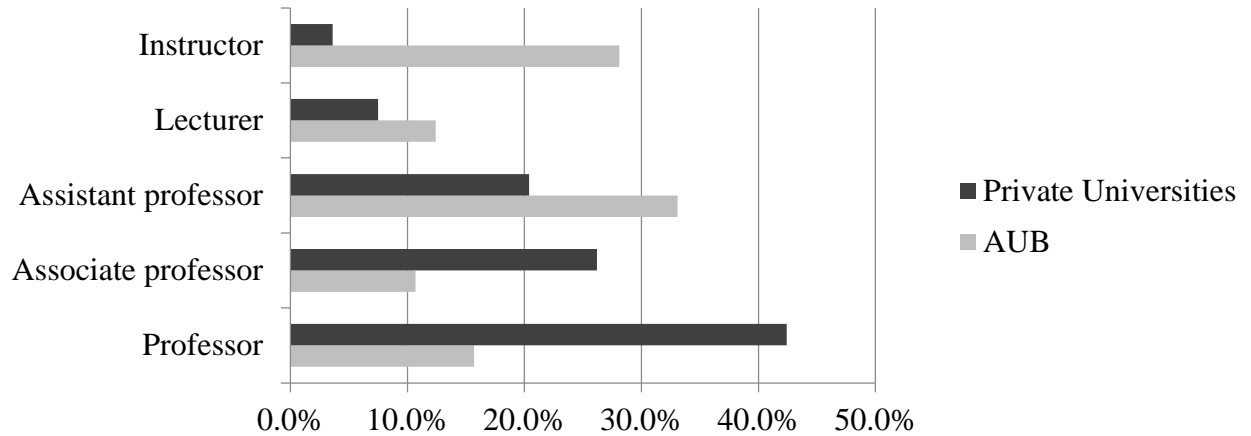
**Figure 1. Categorization of Faculty Responses Based on Gender**

(American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)



The male to female faculty ratio at the American University of Beirut is nearly even with responses from male faculty members slightly outnumbering female faculty members by about 17.4%. This difference between the number of males and females in American University of Beirut faculty could also be accounted for by the fact that the survey's response rate was relatively low (only 139 out of the nearly 600 faculty members submitted their responses to this survey).

**Figure 2: Categorization by Rank Compared to other Universities**  
(American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)



Compared to other universities which were polled on the same categories in the survey, American University of Beirut responses accounted for less associate professor and professor rank responses whereas responses from other private universities outnumbered American University of Beirut responses in the ranks of assistant professor, lecturer, and instructor.

**Figure 3: Categorization by Academic Department and Gender**  
 (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)

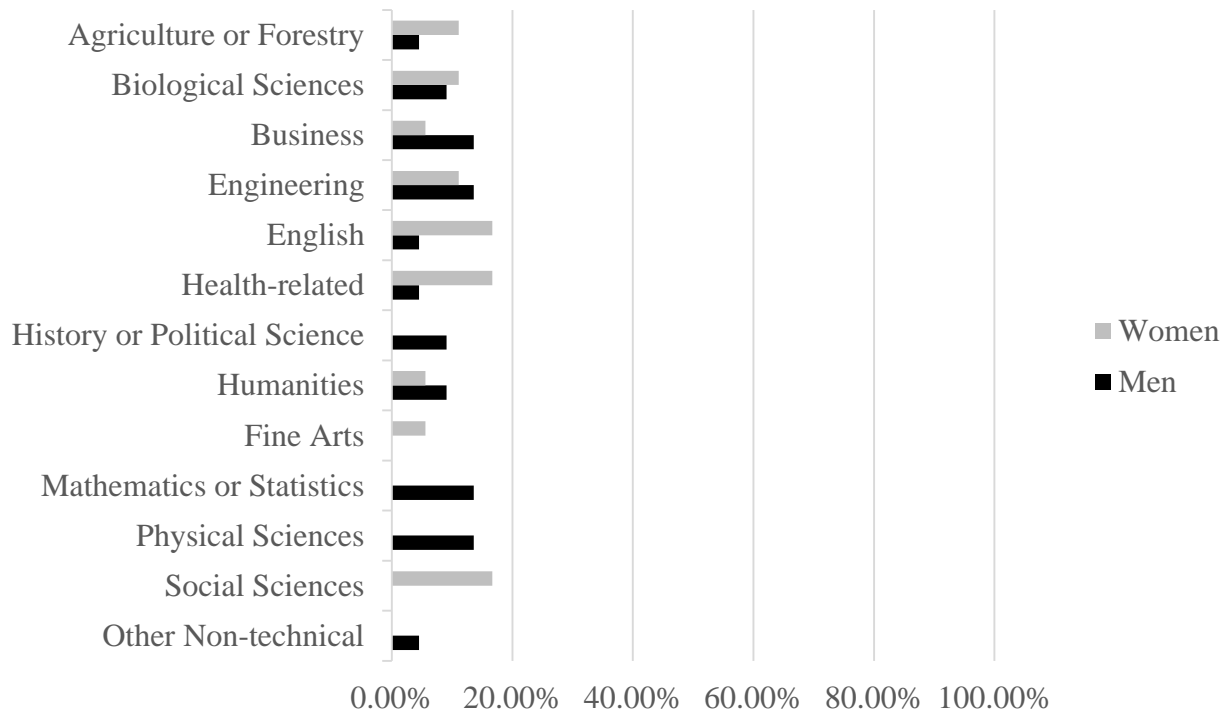


Figure 3 demonstrates that certain faculties had higher response rates than others. For example, faculty members from the social sciences, physical sciences, engineering, and English departments had the among the highest response rates. Males tend to be the more predominant faculty members in certain departments such as mathematics, business, and engineering. On the other hand, female faculty members outnumber their male counterparts in departments such as social sciences, English, and health. Therefore, while the response rates are not equal between both genders within each department, the overall stratification of responses from male and female faculty members is generally equalized due to the inconsistency of male and female representation within each individual faculty.

**Table 1: Categorization by Rank and Principal Activity**  
 (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Principal Activity</b>	<b>%</b>
Professor	16%	Administration	5%
Associate professor	11%	Teaching	68%
Assistant professor	33%	Research	17%
Lecturer	12%	Services to clients and patients	9%
Instructor	28%	Other	1%

The majority of American University of Beirut faculty responses in this survey came from faculty members who rank either as professor or assistant professor. With regards to principal activities, teaching ranked (by far) as the most common principal activity among American University of Beirut faculty as this activity accounted for 68% of respondents' main duties. As expected, a very low number of faculty members surveyed reported that their principal activity at the university dealt with administrative roles as these tasks and duties are heavily controlled by university staff members while faculty are mostly left to freely focus on their teaching and research objectives.

**B. Job Satisfaction Data**

The following refer specifically to the responses provided by American University faculty members with regard to their satisfaction with matters related to their workplace satisfaction, compensation, and career related stress.

With regard to workplace satisfaction, the data points used in this category were based on participants' satisfaction levels with the following aspects of their job:

- Professional relationships with other faculty
- Departmental leadership
- Competency of colleagues
- Course assignments
- Autonomy and independence

With regard to compensation, the data points used in this category were based on participants' satisfaction levels with the following aspects of their job:

- Opportunity for scholarly pursuits
- Teaching load
- Retirement benefits
- Job security
- Prospects for career advancement
- Salary

With regard to career related stress, the data points used in this category were based on the extent to which each of the following issues had been a source of stress for faculty members during the last two years:

- Lack of personal time
- Colleagues



- Teaching load
- Research or publishing demands
- Committee work
- Self-imposed high expectations
- Institutional procedures/red tape
- Students

### **C. Survey Items**

The job satisfaction section of this survey was composed of several items for each of the three categories covered in that section (workplace satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, and career related stress). For workplace satisfaction, the question, “*How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your job?*” was asked with regard to the following items: professional relationships with other faculty, departmental leadership, competency of colleagues, course assignments, and autonomy & independence (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

For compensation satisfaction, the question, “*How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your job?*” was asked with regard to the following items: opportunity for scholarly pursuits, teaching load, retirement benefits, job security, prospects for career advancement, and salary (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

For career related stress, the prompt, “*Please indicate the extent to which each of the following has been a source of stress for you during the last two years.*” was presented

with regard to the following items: lack of personal time, colleagues, teaching load, research or publishing demands, committee work, self-imposed high expectations, institutional procedures (red tape), students (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

Based on the extent to which faculty members rated the importance level of each of the above items, as well as to what extent they were satisfied with each item, played a role in determining the weights which were assigned to each category with regard to determining overall faculty satisfaction (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). The weight distribution of the survey items are detailed in the tables below.

**Table 2: Survey Items and Corresponding Assigned Weights (Workplace Satisfaction)**

(American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)

Survey Item	OIRA Assigned Weight
Professional relationships with other faculty	3.1
Departmental leadership	1.4
Competency of Colleagues	2.4
Course Assignments	1.27
Autonomy & Independence	1.55

Table 2 shows the importance which faculty members placed on the above survey item categories with relation to workplace satisfaction. From the weights presented, it is inferred that professional relationships with other faculty and the competency of colleagues were the most influential on how satisfied faculty members would be with their workplace conditions.

**Table 3: Survey Items and Corresponding Assigned Weights (Compensation Satisfaction)**

(American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>OIRA Assigned Weight</b>
Opportunity for scholarly pursuits	2.38
Teaching load	1.22
Retirement benefits	1.68
Job Security	1.39
Prospects for career advancement	1.53
Salary	1.39

Table 3 shows the importance which faculty members placed on the above survey item categories with relation to compensation satisfaction. From the weights presented, it is clear that the opportunity for scholarly pursuits and retirement benefits were the most influential on how satisfied faculty members would be with their compensation overall.

**Table 4: Survey Items and Corresponding Assigned Weights (Career Related Stress)**

(American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)

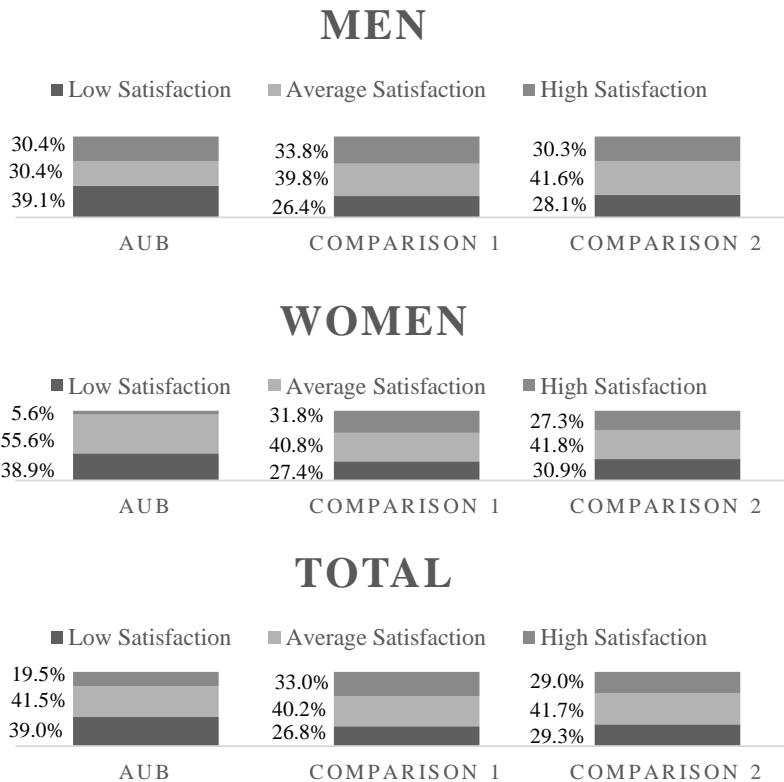
<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>OIRA Assigned Weight</b>
Lack of personal time	1.96
Colleagues	1.16
Teaching load	1.51
Research/publishing demands	1.06
Committee work	1.38
Self-imposed high expectations	1.03
Institutional procedures/red tape	1.08
Students	1.08

Table 4 shows the importance which faculty members placed on the above survey item categories with relation to factors that influenced career related stress. From the weights presented, it is shown that the lack of personal time and teaching load were the most influential factors with regard to sources of career related stress.

Overall, faculty members at the American University of Beirut are placing greater emphasis and importance on issues related to committee work, teaching load, lack of personal time, opportunity for scholarly pursuits, retirement benefits, job security, prospects for career advancement, professional relationship with other faculty, and competency of colleagues (with professional relationships, competency of colleagues, and opportunity for scholarly pursuits ranking most important) (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

Likewise, faculty at the American University of Beirut were least invested in topics relating to institutional procedures and departmental leadership. Other items covered in the survey which were regarded with equal importance (compared to the last survey distribution) included course assignments, autonomy/independence, salary, colleagues, research/publishing demands, self-imposed high expectations, and students (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). Figures 4-6 shown below identify the level of satisfaction that male and female faculty members experienced compared to each other as well as compared to other institutions who were polled on the same topics.

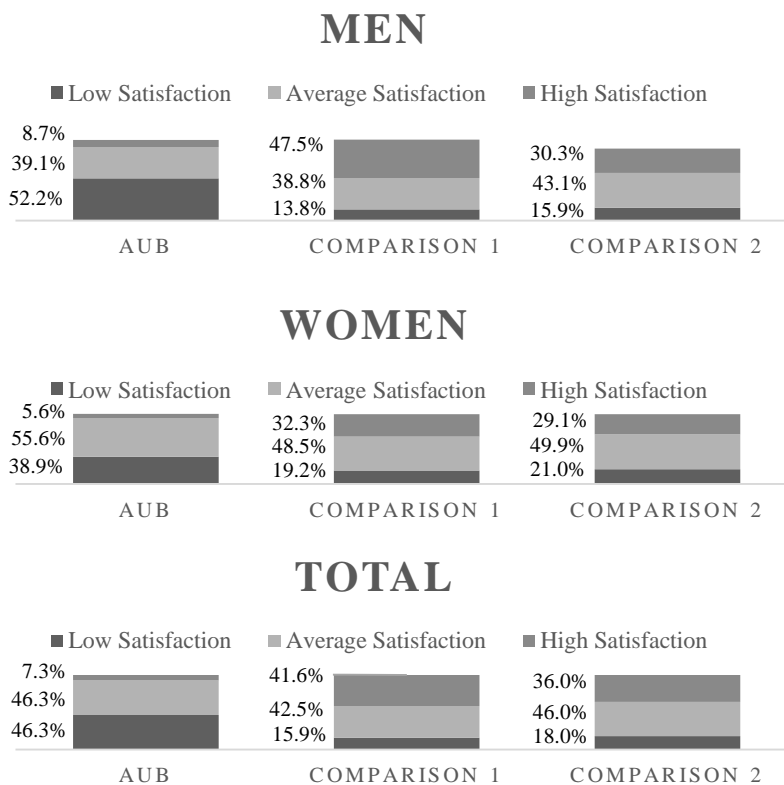
**Figure 4: Overall Job Satisfaction between Gender Groups and Institutions: (Workplace)**  
 (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)



With regard to workplace satisfaction, faculty at the American University of Beirut reported virtually equal levels of satisfaction with their workplace conditions as did the other two comparison institutions (AUB faculty averaged 41.5% total satisfaction while the other two universities averaged 40.9% satisfaction) (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). Individually, male and female faculty members at the American University of Beirut reported quite differing levels of workplace satisfaction with an average of 55.6% of female faculty members reporting

average satisfaction with their workplace whilst only 30.4% of male faculty members reported the same level of satisfaction (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). However, a striking difference is seen in the level of *highly* satisfied faculty members. 30.4% of the male faculty members surveyed reported levels of high satisfaction with their workplace whereas only a mere 5.6% of female university staff claimed to be highly satisfied with their workplace conditions (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

**Figure 5: Overall Job Satisfaction between Gender Groups and Institutions: (Compensation)**  
 (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)

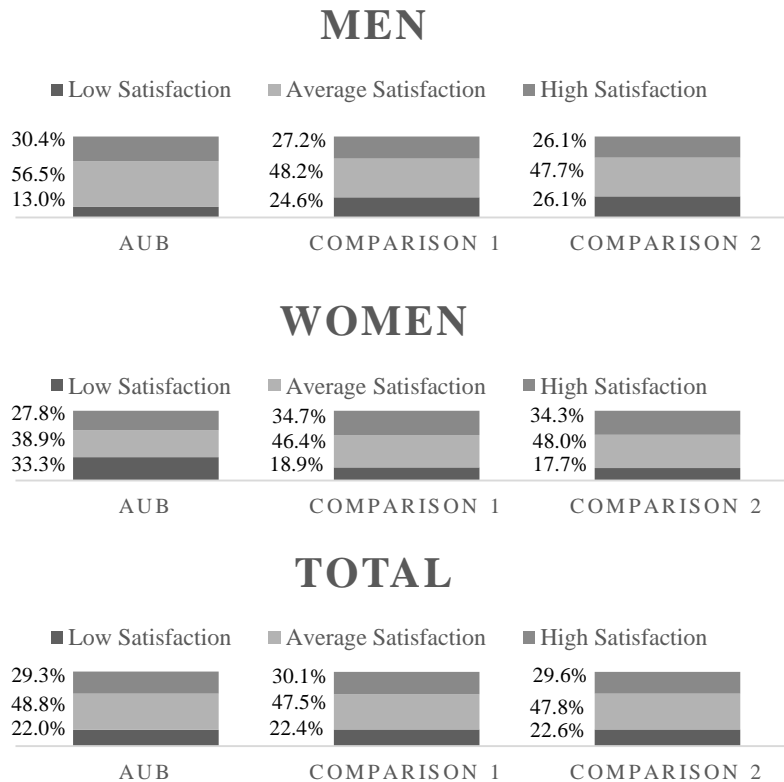


With regards to compensation, American University of Beirut faculty members are slightly more satisfied when compared to the other two institutions' average satisfaction levels (46.3% of AUB faculty reported average levels of satisfaction with their compensation levels while an average of 44% of faculty at other institutions reported the same level of compensation satisfaction) (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). In terms of low satisfaction levels, the faculty at the American University of Beirut reported much lower satisfaction levels than the other institutions surveyed. A staggering 46.3% of American University of Beirut faculty claimed to experience low satisfaction with their compensation levels while only an average of 16.5% of the faculty surveyed from the other two institutions reported low satisfaction levels with their compensation (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

Women at the American University of Beirut reported more overall satisfaction with their compensation levels compared to men (55.6% of women claimed to have average levels of satisfaction towards compensation while only 39.1% of men were equally satisfied). Likewise, more men (52.2%) reported a low satisfaction level with compensation than women (at 38.9%). However, a very low number of both men and women (less than 10% from each group) claimed to be highly satisfied with their compensation (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

**Figure 6: Overall Job Satisfaction between Gender Groups and Institutions: (Career Related Stress)**

(American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)



Compared to other universities surveyed, the American University of Beirut reported quite similar satisfaction levels toward career related stress factors. More men (56.5%) than women (38.9%) reported average satisfaction levels related to career-induced stress. Furthermore, 33.3% of women at the American University of Beirut, compared to only 13% of men, reported that they were experiencing low satisfaction in terms of career related stress. However, a relatively large (and equal) group of both male and female faculty members claimed to experience high satisfaction, meaning that they were generally



unaffected by career related stress factors (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

In summary, with regard to workplace satisfaction, American University of Beirut reported nearly equal amounts of average satisfaction levels compared to other universities. At the American University of Beirut, female faculty members were more likely than men to experience average satisfaction with workplace conditions, despite the fact far more men than women claimed to experience *high* workplace satisfaction levels.

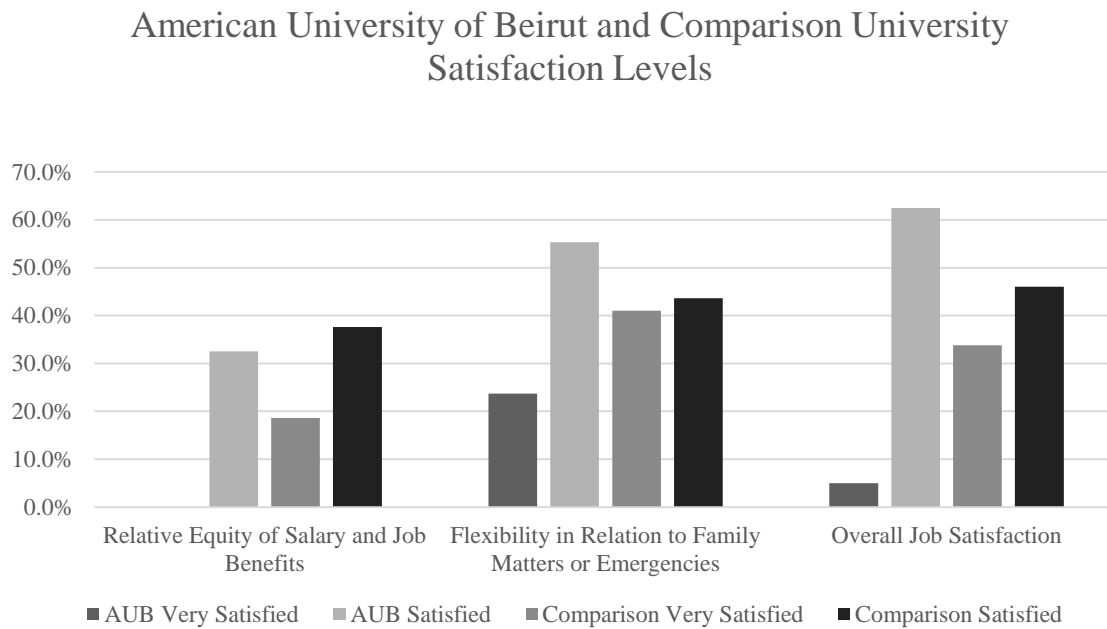
American University of Beirut faculty's general satisfaction with compensation was commensurate to that of other universities. Within the American University of Beirut, more women than men claimed to feel average satisfaction toward their compensation level—accordingly, more men reported low compensation satisfaction. Similarly, very few men or women reported high levels of satisfaction related to their compensation.

Generally, American University of Beirut faculty are equally satisfied with the level of career-related stress they face on a daily basis compared to other universities. More men claim to be satisfied with the amount of career-related stress compared to women. Additionally, more women reported *low* satisfaction levels with the amount of career-related stress they face compared to men.

Based on the findings of the survey, the opinions held by the American University of Beirut faculty do not differ greatly from those reported by other similar comparison universities. Women tended to report higher levels of satisfaction with workplace conditions and compensation levels compared to men. Contrastingly, male faculty members reported higher levels of satisfaction (or tolerance) toward career-related stress factors compared to women. This may be due to the fact that men traditionally place a

higher value on their level of monetary (compensation) success than women. Likewise, women are more traditionally primed to face pressures related to balancing career and domestic goals which has possibly resulted in the higher number of female faculty reporting higher levels of dissatisfaction toward career related stress as opposed to their male colleagues.

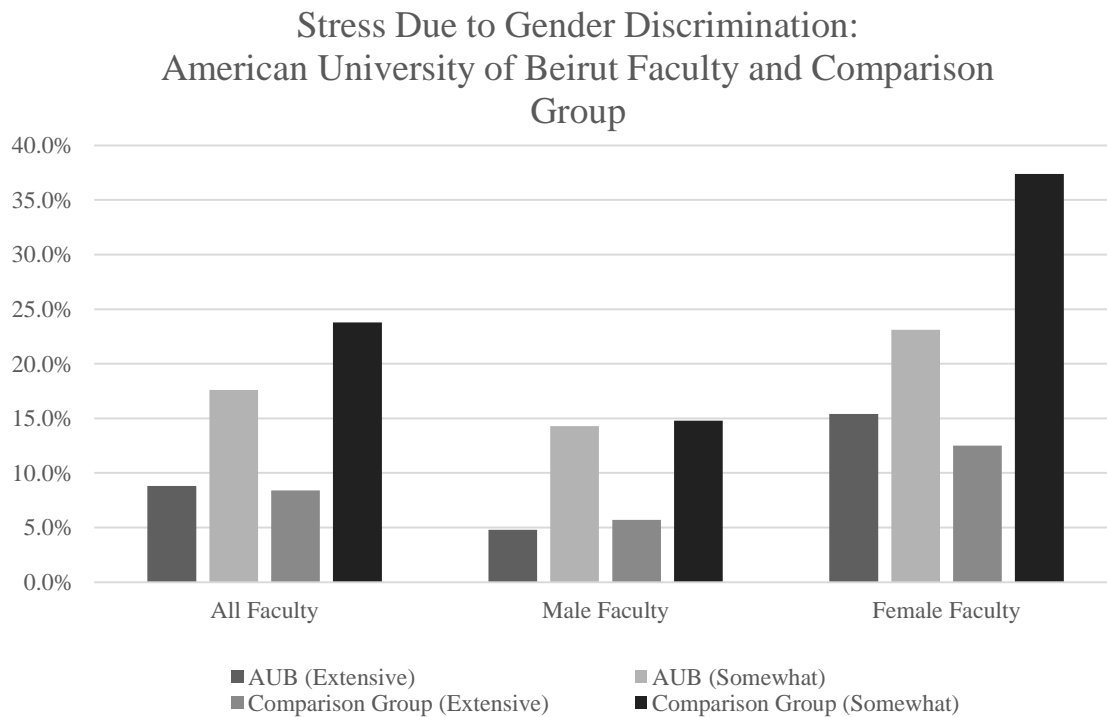
**Figure 7: Faculty Satisfaction with Pay Equity and Family Flexibility**  
 (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)



This figure clearly indicates that the American University of Beirut ranks generally higher than the comparison university in terms of average satisfaction levels. However, with regard to high satisfaction levels, the comparison university was reportedly more satisfied overall. With regards to pay equity satisfaction, only a small number (around

30%) of American University of Beirut Faculty reported satisfaction with no faculty members reporting high satisfaction levels (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). Flexibility toward family issues was an issue which American University of Beirut faculty were mostly satisfied with (more than 50% of faculty members reporting satisfaction in this category and over 20% of faculty claiming to be very satisfied) (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). Overall, faculty at the American University of Beirut enjoy generally higher levels of average satisfaction related to pay equity and family flexibility issues, compared to the other institution while high levels of satisfaction were reported far less frequently in both categories.

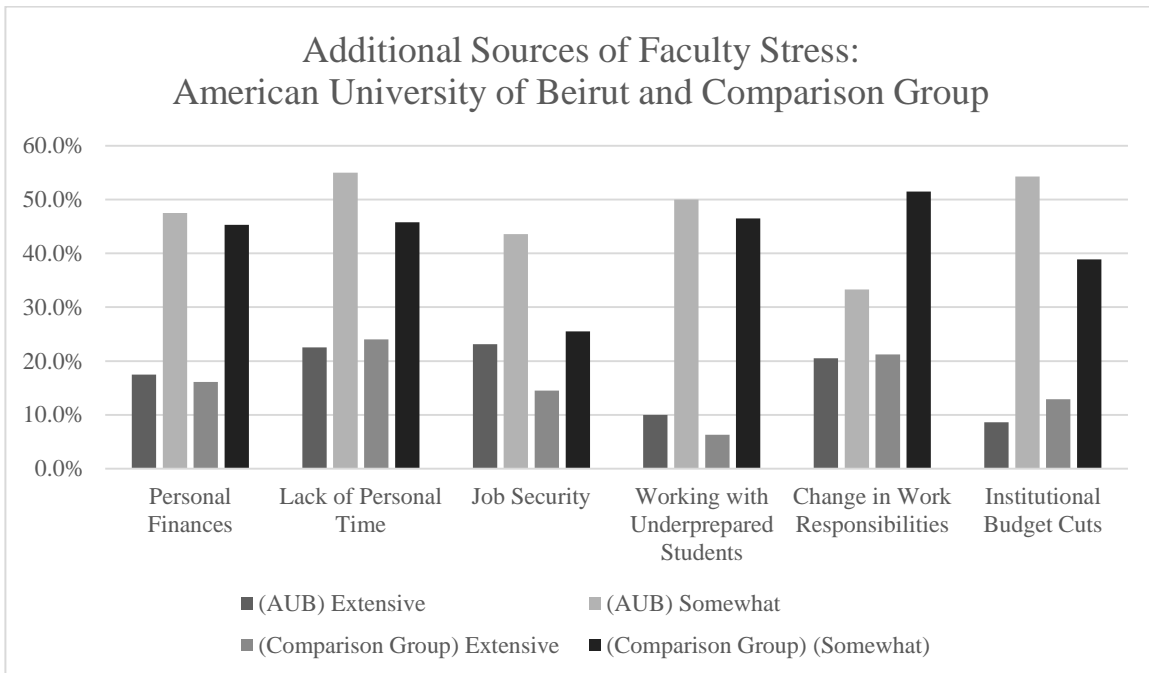
**Figure 8: Stress Due to Subtle Discrimination, by Gender**  
 (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)



Gender discrimination is a serious source of career-related stress which is faced by all faculty members, to some extent, at higher education institutions. The faculty at the American University of Beirut report relatively lower incidents of stress brought on by gender discrimination amongst all faculty. However, as expected, female faculty members (both within the American University of Beirut and the comparison group) reported more extensive stress brought on by gender discrimination compared to male faculty members. On an international scope, this pattern can be attributed to bureaucratic and traditionalist issues within higher education frameworks which at times continue to view female faculty and staff members as less competent and/or deserving compared to male faculty and staff. On a regional level, these findings confirm the widely debated issue concerning female equality within the workplaces operating in patriarchal societies, higher education institutions being no exception to this.

**Figure 9: Additional Sources of Faculty Stress**

(American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014)



The American University of Beirut faculty reported relatively similar sources of stress, and reactions to such sources, as did the comparison group. However, faculty at the American University of Beirut reported higher average levels of stress as a result of personal finances, lack of personal time, working with underprepared students, job security, and institutional budget cuts. American University of Beirut faculty reported the highest levels of extensive stress in the lack of personal time and job security categories. Overall, American University of Beirut faculty members were least stressed generally with the change in work responsibilities category, however, this category was a source of extensive stress for some faculty members.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION

While the faculty members at the American University deal with the university human resource management function in a limited number of ways, this case study illuminates how human resource management is nonetheless an important and critical factor in higher education settings. In the American University of Beirut, the human resource management function bears responsibilities which relate to developing the university's faculty members through matters such as contract preparation, retirement, and benefits. Seniority played a role in how receptive faculty members would be toward newer human resource management initiatives and policies; similarly to other international examples, the AUB human resource department faces similar challenges in improving, modernizing, and modifying its policies.

As mentioned within the review of literature, the American University of Beirut human resource management function should remain as flexible as possible so as to best accommodate for future changes in the competitive higher education landscape. As shown through the OIRA survey data used in this study, many faculty members experience a sense of injustice with regards to the inconsistent benefits provided to faculty on a sometimes unclear basis (mentioned in the gender discrimination section). Such a misapplication of human resource management was likely translated into lower faculty commitment and motivation.

The American University of Beirut's human resources department contributes directly to the university's TQM efforts and this is shown through the ways by which faculty members are treated and regarded. Globalization has resulted in many universities attempting to apply TQM as a cost saving measure. The American University of Beirut human resource department should strive to look beyond this reductionist view of TQM so that real quality education can be delivered starting with the creation of cooperation and commitment from faculty members.

Given the massive role which the American University of Beirut plays within the economic arena of Lebanon and the Middle East, it is vital that the human resource management functions of the university reflect the strong commitment to social improvements both for faculty members within the campus and graduates as well. The American University of Beirut must strive to improve human resource management efforts with regards to human capital planning, so that decreased budgets do not interfere extensively with the university's attempt to continue attracting and retaining the most capable faculty members from the region and beyond.

The faculty surveyed at the American University of Beirut have generally similar satisfaction levels when paralleled against the comparison groups throughout this study. While there were some exceptions (with either American University of Beirut faculty reporting higher or lower general levels of satisfaction) the results indicate that the American University of Beirut is not an outlier among other institutions of higher education with regard to satisfaction levels among faculty members (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

Given the three dimensions of job satisfaction which were presented in the survey, American University of Beirut faculty reported lower satisfaction levels only in the category of compensation (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). However, it is worth noting that the categories of workplace satisfaction and career-related stress also contained items which scored lower than the comparison group, while not to the same extent as the compensation category. While human resource management efforts cannot improve compensation packages for all levels of faculty and staff, measures can be taken so as to ensure that the most fair and reasonable salary and benefits package is being offered to each individual. More importantly, it is crucial that the human resource department communicate their efforts toward improving compensation packages to faculty members throughout the process.

According to the survey results, workplace satisfaction at the American University of Beirut is higher and more compatible with the comparison groups. This is a positive change given that in the previous round of survey distributions (which took place in 2011) faculty members ranked much lower in this category, far below the levels reported by comparison groups (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). It would be interesting to explore the extent to which human resource management efforts at the American University of Beirut aided in improving the workplace satisfaction levels of faculty.

The results of this survey also point to important differences among male and female satisfaction within the university. Firstly, female faculty members generally tended to be more satisfied with workplace conditions and compensation packages while they ranked least satisfied in matters concerning career-related stress (American University of



Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). As mentioned previously, this may be due to the fact that women are more likely to experience stress and dissatisfaction resulting from factors which affect their ability to properly balance personal and professional goals. Lebanese organizations, the American University of Beirut being no exception, operate in a society which greatly manifests gender roles, it is in such societies where strong gender differences (with regard to roles and duties) will be felt by working men and women alike (Sidani & Al Hakim, 2012). For many working women in the Middle East, as illustrated by the work of Itani, Sidani, and Baalbaki (2011) women measure their success in their ability to balance family and work obligations. Their work roles, as opposed to simply representing a means of income, is rather viewed as a means through which they are able to find meaning and purpose (Itani, Sidani, & Baalbaki, 2011). While major social changes may be necessary in order to alleviate gender stereotypes being faced in the Middle East, many working women only claim to call for minor social allowances which would allow them to more easily facilitate their career objectives (Itani, Sidani, & Baalbaki, 2011).

Contrastingly, male faculty members at the American University of Beirut reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with their compensation (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). Again, this may be the result of men experiencing more social and personal pressure to succeed financially. Working women are more likely than their male counterparts to report incidents of work family conflict due to the fact that socially imposed gender roles will leave women feeling more guilty about any extra time spent away from the home, whereas men, who are conditioned to accept the role of “worker” are less likely to express this type of dissatisfaction with their

careers (Sidani & Al Hakim, 2012). The issue of gender discrimination falls under the jurisdiction of human resource management issues, even within the higher education sector. The American University of Beirut, as well as other universities, should strive to promote diversity training which does not ignore the importance of gender equality within the workplace. With time, human resource management efforts can begin to modify the attitudes of faculty members so that a more equal opportunity working environment can be achieved.

In the case of the American University of Beirut, while some minor dissatisfaction resulting from gender discrimination was reported, the university ranked above norms and did not have excessively high instances of stress occurring as a result of gender discrimination (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). Rather, faculty reportedly experienced the most stress as a result of lacking personal time, job security, personal finances, institutional budget cuts, and working with underprepared students, respectively (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). These are areas where proper and effective human resource management can help play a positive and dynamic role in improving the satisfaction levels of faculty members through appropriate policy modification and enhanced practice.

In relation to the research questions posed initially within this research study, some were fortunately answered through the insights provided through the data collection process while others were less clearly resolved. With regards to “*To what extent are AUB faculty satisfied with the current human resource practices?*” the findings of this study indicate that general satisfaction levels are mostly average, as the faculty members

surveyed from the American University of Beirut reported similar levels and sources of satisfaction from workplace, compensation, and career-related stress issues similarly to the comparison groups surveyed. Thus, overall job satisfaction for faculty at the American University of Beirut is fair at 70.8% compared to the job satisfaction percentages reported by the comparison groups (average satisfaction of 70.1%) (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

The research question, “*Which elements of the human resource management functions of AUB positively or negatively affect the satisfaction levels of faculty?*” was successfully answered through the findings of the 2013-2014 Faculty Survey. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the faculty members at the American University of Beirut were most dissatisfied with their compensation. In terms of positive elements of human resource management which served to positively impact the satisfaction levels of faculty members, the American University of Beirut ranked somewhat lower in parallel with the comparison groups in gender discrimination issues. While the issues are present and still, unfortunately, experienced by faculty members at times, the university does not rank lower than the norms in this category (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014).

Of all the research questions posed in this study the question which tackled gender differences and satisfaction levels (“*How do male and female faculty member perceptions contrast in relation to the human resource management at AUB?*”) was perhaps best addressed by the data provided through the survey. In fact, the survey almost exclusively separated and contrasted job satisfaction survey elements on the basis of gender. As

identified in the previous chapter, male and female faculty members had differing satisfaction levels with different categories mentioned within the survey, with men reporting the highest levels of dissatisfaction with compensation and women reporting the highest levels of dissatisfaction with career-related stress factors (such as the lack of personal time) (American University of Beirut Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2014). The reasoning behind this difference between male and female satisfaction is linked to social norms which would have men place a greater emphasis on their earning potential (reflected through compensation) whereas women are more likely to place greater emphasis on their ability to balance career and family objectives without conflict.

The survey used in this study does not indicate whether the comparison groups mentioned represent a foreign university or another university of equal size also operating in the Middle Eastern region similarly to the American University of Beirut. For this reason, the representation of data made it difficult to pinpoint how the faculty satisfaction levels at the American University of Beirut compared to those of higher education faculty members representing alternative cultures. While the survey does not directly indicate whether or not the comparison group data represents an international or alternative culture, it is apparent through the data that any differences which exist between genders elsewhere are generally amplified in the Middle Eastern context.

As mentioned previously, a clear pattern which emerged from the data indicates that male faculty members at the American University of Beirut place greater importance on their compensation than women. Furthermore, female faculty members were more

likely to report dissatisfaction with the lack of personal time offered by the university.

Both of these key elements point to common issues faced in the Middle Eastern workplace.

Firstly, men in the Middle Eastern context are still widely viewed as the primary earners of income for their households, this translates into increased pressure to perform successfully in the financial sense. Secondly, remnants of the patriarchal nature of Middle Eastern society continue to dictate that a woman's main role and duty is to her home and to her children. While these norms are slowly improving, they still seem to affect the way in which working women in the Middle East view their careers. It follows then, that more female faculty members (as opposed to male) would have higher dissatisfaction levels with respect to career-related stress issues, such as lack of personal time.

## CHAPTER VII

### IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### **Insights for the Middle East**

The lack of substantial literature concerning human resource management in higher education settings within the Middle East inspired this case study which sought to explore the importance of human resource management roles in universities within the region as well as how faculty members responded to such actions and policies at the American University of Beirut.

The original research questions posed by this case study related to general human resource management satisfaction issues such as extent of faculty satisfaction, positive and negative elements of human resource management functions, differences in satisfaction based on faculty departments, differences in satisfaction based on level of seniority, and differences in satisfaction based on gender. However, with respect to the unique Middle Eastern perspective which this study captured, there is a distinctive and resonating need to discuss the importance of gender roles and female equality in today's Arab workplace.

There is a great complexity when considering the role of women in academia in the Middle East and North African region given the organizational, as well as the external factors, which affect the status of women at work (Karam & Afiouni, 2014). The complexity of gender and human resource management practices cannot be fully understood without connecting to broader economic and social changes which have taken place relating to women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa region (Metcalf,

2007). With regards to reformed institutional policies, Afiouni and Karam (2014) suggest that an outward focus in which the human resource management practices of a university should make greater efforts to create national gender-equality policies that uniquely incorporate the local factors and intricacies which often contribute to gender discrimination issues (Karam & Afiouni, 2014).

A reason why some women in a Middle Eastern higher education working environment may continue to report differences between themselves and male colleagues ultimately relates to particular organizational and cultural dynamics which have also been shown to contribute to gendered-stereotypes in the workplace (Jamali et al., 2005). This type of stereotypical treatment within the workplace is not bound by any particular industrial sectors or specific avenues of the economy. In the Middle Eastern context, irrespective of industry sector or religious background, most women reported cultural and patriarchal constraints as the most hindering against their ideal career development (Jamali et al., 2005). This notion is resonated in the findings of the job satisfaction survey conducted at the American University of Beirut as a great deal of the female faculty members who participated in study reported higher instances of gender discrimination than male faculty members who were polled on the same issues. According to a 2011 study conducted by Abdulla et al., environmental work factors, such as salary and incentives, are the most important determinants of job satisfaction within a Middle Eastern context (Abdulla et al., 2011). This finding is resonated in the responses of male faculty members in this case study as they were the most likely group to experience dissatisfaction with pay at the American University of Beirut.

However, the situation for female professionals in Lebanon may not be as dire as previously expected. Luckily for Lebanese female workers, Lebanon is comparatively far more open toward women's rights and abilities to participate equally in the workforce, with respect to other more conservative Arab nations, such as Saudi Arabia (Sidani, 2005). In Lebanon, unlike in other Arab nations, religious attitudes and beliefs play a more minimal role in how Lebanese workers modified their perception of women in the workplace (Sidani & Gardner, 2000). In other words, while Lebanon is a nation very divided and defined by its many religious sects, these religious beliefs do not play a major role in how the Lebanese interact with one another in the workplace setting. As opposed to religion creating barriers for employees in the workplace, Lebanese organizations [the American University of Beirut included] and their resulting human resource management practices tend to incorporate religion in a tolerant manner. For example, Lebanese managers [regardless of their own religious background] are more likely to allow employees to leave work for weekly prayers on Fridays (Sidani & Gardner, 2000). This most prominently demonstrated at the American University of Beirut which proudly boasts its diverse collection of students, staff, and faculty while celebrating and supporting the cultural and religious backgrounds which they represent.

While pay and salary are often identified as the most common areas of gender inequality within the Middle Eastern workplace, training is also seen to be an area where gendered stereotypes play a role. Many argue as to whether or not human resource management practices serve to benefit both genders on an equal basis, many studies have shown, for example, that management efforts such as training and development initiatives



are inherently gendered; often skewed to favor men (Metcalf, 2007). The limited research on job satisfaction within the Middle Eastern context has shown the region's particularly high association between demographic factors and job satisfaction. For example, women will report higher job satisfaction when paid commensurately to men while men will report higher job satisfaction when their quality of supervision is improved (Abdulla et al., 2011). This finding is directly reflected in the outcome of the faculty survey conducted at the American University of Beirut which similarly found that men had a greater desire for autonomy whereas women were more likely to base their satisfaction levels on the degree to which they were being treated equally to their male colleagues.

The road to improved gender equality in the workplace, however, will be long and challenging. In order to truly elevate the status of women at work, a process is required in which archaic and oppressive views are brought down through constant communication, discussion, and exposure to the benefits society will reap when women are free to work equally alongside men (Sidani, 2005). Among the other relevant findings of this study, the concluding impression of the results is that by improving gender and religious equality within the human resource management practices of the American University of Beirut, the university will experience much higher rates of faculty satisfaction.

## **Conclusion**

Human resource management plays a substantial role in every organization. This study attempted to assess the importance of human resource management practices in a higher education setting (The American University of Beirut). Many workplace factors are affected either positively or negatively by human resource management's implementation

of policies and procedures. The American University of Beirut, while generally satisfied overall with their workplace, compensation, and career-related stress factors; provided key insights into the areas where human resource management efforts are having beneficial results and identified which areas can be improved.

While the respondents tended to answer similarly when related to the comparison groups, this study analyzed the aspects of job satisfaction which were of particular concern for the faculty at the American University of Beirut. In general, most female faculty members felt the greatest level of dissatisfaction with relation to their allotted amount of personal time. Additionally, male faculty members were most dissatisfied with their level of compensation. It is worth noting the role which socialization may have played in the faculty member responses. For instance, men are traditionally seen as breadwinners and perhaps, as a result, feel more pressure to perform financially. This would more clearly explain why so many more male faculty members experienced low satisfaction with their compensation when compared to female faculty. Likewise, women traditionally face more social pressure to act as caretakers at home and thus may be more likely to report dissatisfaction toward limited personal time allotted.

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the areas of human resource management within the American University of Beirut which are generating goodwill and satisfaction among faculty members and which policies and/or procedures are hindering overall satisfaction levels. As expected, very few respondents claimed to be either very satisfied or very dissatisfied in any job satisfaction category. This further indicates that the American University of Beirut's human resource management efforts are functioning well

compared to other similar universities (comparison groups surveyed). Ultimately, the areas in which American University of Beirut human resource management efforts could improve would be in relation to diversity training (with a focus on gender equality) a reevaluation of the compensation packages currently being offered, as well as an assessment of the how personal time for each faculty member is determined and provided.

The American University of Beirut, with regards to improving gender equality, should strive to change and develop toward a more gender neutral working environment which supports and celebrates female advancement and success. Such efforts should potentially lead to international recognition, such as through the Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) charter which recognizes exemplary efforts toward the improvement of matters relating to gender equality (Equality Challenge Unit, 2016).

As long as human resources is viewed as an external and faceless department within the university, faculty members will likely continue to view this administrative function with distrust and apprehension. However, the measures for improvement proposed above should attempt to serve as a preliminary step toward the enhancement of human resource management within the university, and hopefully, toward improved and sustained faculty satisfaction with the human resource management efforts at the American University of Beirut.

### **Limitations**

Several major limitations were dealt with throughout this research study. Firstly, this study only focused on a single university. While this served to enhance the nature of the suggested improvements for American University of Beirut human resource

management, it did not aid in improving the study's generalizability as only one university was able to be discussed in the data collection and findings sections. Secondly, this research effort involved secondhand data. While rich and valuable in nature, because the data used originated from a secondhand source, the data only answered the research questions indirectly. As a result, there was no access to the raw data meaning that statistical processing and analysis (such as SPSS) was not conducted. Thirdly, the data provided in the 2013-2014 Faculty Survey did not provide insights as to whether or not the 134 faculty members surveyed were a fair and realistic representation of the university's actual faculty (for example, it did not mention if AUB actually employs more instructors than professors or if this was simply the final convenience sample.) Fourthly, as mentioned previously, the data available in the 2013-2014 Faculty Survey did not discuss to what extent faculty members from *different* departments were satisfied with their working conditions. The lack of regard for the satisfaction levels from these departmental categories meant that yet another, quite valuable, research question was left unanswered. Fifthly, because the faculty survey used for this research study was created and distributed internally by the Higher Education Research Institute of the American University of Beirut, credibility was slightly reduced as the survey was not conducted and analyzed by an objective third party. For this reason, one must take into account the increased possibility for errors and bias. Lastly, despite the detailed nature of the faculty survey, it did not receive a particularly high response rate from faculty members. Only 134 faculty members completed the survey and submitted their responses. This translated into a further reduction in generalizability.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations for further study would include the creation and distribution of a new survey instrument which seeks to directly answer the related questions which the faculty survey used in this study did not. For example, the newly created survey would categorize and distinguish faculty satisfaction responses based on seniority and department (in addition to gender and paygrade). The new study could also present more detailed human resource satisfaction items. This form of rich, primary data would improve results and lead to more indicative and useful research insights. Lastly, such a survey should be ideally repeated on multiple Middle Eastern universities in order to get a clearer picture of the human resource management issues which are affecting satisfaction among faculty members in higher education institutions across the region.

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