

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY CLASSIFIED
EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEY

by

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APPROVAL

of a professional project submitted by

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This professional project has been read by each member of the committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Business.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the satisfaction level of classified clerical employees at Montana State University.

This survey was conducted to determine the satisfaction level of classified employees in clerical positions at a university. The survey covered broad topics to determine if there were consistent areas of employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The results were cross-referenced with different departments, length of service, grade level, and gender to find any consistent patterns of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in these areas.

The population for this study consisted of approximately 584 classified employees in clerical positions who work in a variety of offices and departments on campus, and have wide ranging duties and titles. For this study, the sample size was all 584 clerical employees from the population.

The primary research methods used for this study were reference materials from Renne library consisting of journals, publications, articles, and previous surveys. The Internet provided some additional materials, primarily descriptive survey conclusions and sample surveys. The Office of Employee Relations provided feedback on the method of conducting the survey, as well as a review of the survey instrument. The survey contains simple check mark questions and a few short answer questions. The respondents rated a number of areas, including overall university goals, mission, and management, questions pertaining to the respondents' department, and questions on their immediate work environment, supervisor, and coworkers.

Employees rated their departments, co-workers, and supervisors very highly. The highest rated answer to what the respondents liked best was their co-workers, followed closely by their job duties and working with students.

The employees liked their pay the least, followed by the attitude of the administration toward the department, poor upper level management, not enough time to do their duties, and cramped office space.

The results of the survey showed that even though there were concerns by almost everyone, two-thirds of the respondents were satisfied with their jobs, and most would work for MSU again. Dissatisfaction tended to be with one or two aspects of the job, and not with the overall position, atmosphere, or environment.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The classified staff, a large and important group within colleges and universities, have seldom been the focus of research studies. Differentiating them from faculty members and administrative staff, Deal & Jenkins (1994) describe the vital role of classified staff in the institutions they serve:

Operating behind the scenes, a third group goes about its important business with little attention and fanfare. This hidden cast of staff members, while often invisible, constitutes a major part of the workforce. Without these employees, the entire operation would collapse.

Colleges and universities employ a number of classified personnel, but this group has often been taken for granted. Studies have been done regularly to determine faculty and administration satisfaction. Among these studies are salary comparisons to stay competitive with other universities and attract top quality personnel, flexible schedules and workloads, and other non-monetary benefits. The clerical staff on the other hand, is not wooed with higher salaries and benefits to work for and stay with the university. Even though the entire university would come to a standstill without these people to perform the support functions, the classified personnel are overlooked in the function of the university.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of satisfaction of classified clerical staff at Montana State University.

Questions to be Answered

1. Overall, how satisfied are classified clerical employees at Montana State University?
2. What factors are most important in determining the level of satisfaction of Montana Sate University's clerical staff?
3. Does clerical employee satisfaction differ in different departments or colleges?
4. What influences the satisfaction level of Montana State University's clerical employees? Gender? Grade level? Length of employment?
5. What should be changed, if anything, to improve the job satisfaction level of clerical employees in their job?

Need for the Study

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (1985), approximately 75% of the nation's workforce operates behind the scenes. Deal & Jenkins (1994) warn that behind-the-scenes employees are often subject to poor treatment by supervisors or disregarded like disposable objects, and in response, often retaliate against this treatment in counterproductive ways. For example, they may reduce the effort they put into their jobs, have higher rates of absenteeism, or terminate their employment. Clerical staff members'

perceptions of the work environment can exert a distinct influence on the levels of quality and productivity in their work. An understanding of these perceptions can provide organizational managers with insights regarding how to prevent negative situations from arising in the higher education work environment.

Terminology

The following terminology is given to aid the reader of the study:

Classified employee: a non-instructional university employee that is not an administrator, faculty member, or professional. (Office of Employee Relations, MSU, 1997)

Clerical employee: a person who performs routine office duties and is not in a maintenance, research, or technical position. (Office of Employee Relations, MSU, 1997)

Professional: a person in a vocation or occupation requiring advanced education and training, and involving intellectual skills. (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1994)

Faculty: all the teachers of a school, college, or university or of one of its departments or divisions. (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1994)

Administrator: one who works in the management of governmental or institutional affairs. (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1994)

University: an educational institution of the highest level, typically, in the U.S., with one or more undergraduate colleges, together with a program of graduate studies and a number of professional schools, and authorized to confer various degrees, as the bachelor's, master's, and doctor's. (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1994)

College: any of the schools of a university offering instruction and granting degrees in any of several specialized courses of study, as liberal arts, architecture, law, medicine, etc. (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1994)

Department: a separate part, division, or branch, as of a business, government, or school. (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1994)

Grade level: a state employee pay classification related to job duties and responsibilities. (Office of Employee Relations, MSU, 1997).

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to 584 Montana State University classified employees, specifically those in clerical positions. These classified employees work in clerical positions under administrators, professionals, researchers, or for entire departments. The titles include assistant, aide, clerk, secretary, receptionist, and support staff. In these categories, there are different levels for each (i.e. secretary I, secretary II, secretary III), and each title corresponds to a different grade level. (MSU Employee Relations)

Organization of the Study

This paper describes an exploratory study of the nature of the work environment as perceived and defined by the university clerical staff at Montana State University.

This

paper contains five chapters - chapter one states the problem, identifies the questions to be answered by the study, the need for the study, and the overall organization of the paper.

In chapter two, related literature is discussed, including the work environment, the classified staff, job satisfaction factors, and other applied research.

Chapter three covers the instrument used, the sources of data, the time frame for completion, and selection of the employees involved in the study.

Chapter four reports the results of the study. The survey results are categorized and tabulated, and the final analysis of the results are presented.

Chapter five is the summary of the findings. It includes the conclusions the researcher has drawn and recommendations made from the study.

Summary

The classified employee is a vital part of the university. They are too often taken for granted by other staff members and students. The quality of a department or office often depends upon the satisfaction level of the person relating directly to other departments or to the public. The classified employee is often overlooked as an integral part of university functions, and this report helps clarify areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of clerical staff in their duties.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature related to the higher education work environment, the non-instructional, non-administrative staff in higher education, the factors that affect employee satisfaction, and the applied research in the area were reviewed for this study. The work environment literature provided insight into sources of influence on staff member's perceptions of their environment. The literature on non-instructional staff assisted in the identification and understanding of the behind-the-scenes staff at an institution, and the literature on employee satisfaction factors provides insight into the measurement of the perceptions of the staff.

Work Environment

There are several ways to identify an organization's work environment: 1) as objective patterns of behavior or working conditions; 2) as the perceived patterns of behavior and attitudes related to that environment; or 3) as the underlying values and beliefs of the organization or its participants (Peterson, Cameron, Julia, Winn, Spencer, &

Vander Putten, 1994). These definitions can be used to describe the organization's culture and climate which provides employees with an understanding of their organization, their internal work environment, and the meaning of their work. (Peterson et al., 1993; Peterson & Spencer, 1994). Culture and climate also provide a framework for understanding informal and formal aspects of their institutional environment (Peterson & Spencer, 1994). Both influence job satisfaction.

Organizational culture can be defined as the overall shared goals, values, and principles that an institution holds, and in higher education, cultural values are inherent in the institution's history, tradition, academic mission, governance, administrative methods, and delivery processes (Peterson & Spencer, 1994). Webster, in his dictionary, further defines culture as a) "the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought; and b) these patterns, traits, and products considered as the expression of a particular period, class, community, or population." (Webster, 1995). A culture that is not comfortable for an employee, such as conflicting views on the mission of the university, can decrease the employee's satisfaction in the workplace.

The climate of an organization is the policies, procedures, and practices that communicate goals and define the current work environment. It can be further defined as the "current, common patterns of important dimensions of organizational life, or it's members' perceptions of and attitudes toward them" (Mattice, 1994). Each organization

develops its own climate from traditions, stereotypes, communication, leadership, and personalities, and the climate affects staff behavior. The climate can have positive or negative effects on employee satisfaction. Policies or procedures that are not clear or conflicting have a direct negative effect on employee performance and attitude.

Peterson and Spencer (1994) contrast organizational climate as current "atmosphere" and culture as long term "values".

Job Satisfaction Factors

Job satisfaction can be split into two categories: job content and job context. Job content is psychological motivation to do a job, such as achievement, recognition, advancement, and responsibility. Job context is external factors. Compensation, supervision, coworkers, working conditions, policies, benefits, and the organization's culture are external, or environmental issues. From Bittel & Newstrom (1990) satisfaction is defined as "the state that exists when truly motivating factors - such as interesting and challenging work, full use of one's capabilities, and recognition for achievement - are provided" (p. 260). Dissatisfaction occurs in the "state that exists when 'maintenance' or 'hygiene' factors such as good pay, job security, fringe benefits, and desirable working conditions are lacking" (p. 260).

Other Applied Research

As part of a periodic study, the San Diego Community College district in California surveyed 280 classified staff members on their perception of the campus climate. They requested information on employee morale, administration, equal opportunity, discrimination, and other areas of their climate. The focus of this study dealt primarily with discrimination issues of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, but the study did find good results in other, broader areas. Of the 280, 57% or 154 of the staff responded. Eighty-one percent indicated they looked forward to going to work, 73% said that equal opportunities existed for women, approximately one-fifth indicated they had occasionally or frequently been discriminated against because of race or gender, but 68% thought that discrimination was dealt with immediately by administrators (Takahata, 1995).

A study of library support staff concluded that the support staff did not get the recognition or respect they felt they deserved (St. Lifer, 1995).

A climate study done on the College of the Canyons in California turned up various results. The survey was administered to faculty, administrators, staff, and students, and the response rate was 32% out of the 380 surveyed. All the administrators and 90% of the faculty believed diversity was good for the university, 84% of the staff and 79% of the students agreed. On a question of affirmative action hiring, 64% of the staff and 56% of the students agreed that affirmative action hiring leads to employing less qualified staff, while 40% of the faculty and 15% of the administrators agreed. Twenty-three percent of the faculty and 17% of the administrators said a scarcity of qualified

minority candidates was a major obstacle to increasing diversity, while only 3% of the staff employees felt that way. (Mattice, 1994).

Summary

All of the studies looked at by the researcher had specific climate factors (such as minority issues or discrimination) as their primary focus, or did not specifically rate the classified clerical staff member's job satisfaction. Several other studies incorporated all staff (faculty, administrators, and classified) into one broad group, and as seen in the study by Mattice above, there are some wide variations in the perceptions of the different employees. The focus of this study is specifically the classified employees, but the study will be broad in scope.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to determine the level of satisfaction for classified clerical employees at Montana State University. This chapter will focus on the sources of data, the classified staff, participant selection, the survey instrument, and the approximate time line for the completion of the project.

Sources of Data

Review of the literature from Montana State University's Renne Library provided sources of information related to the topic of employee satisfaction through articles, books, publications, and journals. The Internet was used as an additional source of information for related articles and survey samples. The literature provided insight into the importance of staff satisfaction, and focused on the areas of climate (atmosphere of the work environment), and culture (overall goals, values, and principles of an institution) as primary factors in determining employee satisfaction. Most of the related studies dealt

with university faculty and administrators, or all university employees, with little information exclusively dealing with the clerical staff.

Classified Staff

For the purpose of this study, the classified staff consists of university clerical employees. These employees are non-faculty, non-administrative, and non-professional positions in the university, but does include a few quasi-professional positions. There have been numerous studies done on the work environment of administrative staff and faculty, but relatively little research has been conducted on the classified staff. They are often overlooked as a major part of the institution's framework, but are vital to the operation of the university.

Personal opinions and organizational atmosphere can have a significant impact on how individuals perceive their work environment. These variables help shape an individual's perception of organizational culture and climate, and directly affect job satisfaction.

Participant Selection

For the purpose of this study, the population consisted of all the classified clerical employees at our university. The population size was 584 employees consisting of the clerical support positions and included a small number of classified professional positions that fall into the clerical category. The sample size for this study was all 584 employees.

The university's Office of Employee Relations assisted the researcher in providing the listing of all clerical personnel currently employed at the university.

The surveys were sent out through the university mail to the sample population in February 1998. The researcher planned for a minimum return rate of 39%, or 234 completed surveys.

Data Instrument

The data instrument used for this study was a survey (see Appendix) constructed from the related literature and sample surveys, and suggestions and input from the Office of Employee Relations at Montana State University.

The survey was sent to all 584 classified clerical employees at our university, and the instrument contained questions in the following areas:

1. The level of overall satisfaction of clerical employees in their current positions.
2. The factors that are most important in job satisfaction of clerical employees.
3. The level of satisfaction with the university, their department, and their immediate workplace.
4. The level of satisfaction as it relates to gender, grade level, and length of service.
5. What would be changed, if anything, to improve job satisfaction.

The draft survey instrument was reviewed and modified by the Office of Employee Relations staff. It was also scrutinized by ten graduate students in the summer of 1997 in Research Procedures, a graduate business education course. Dr. Norm Millikin, the researcher's advisor and Associate Professor of Marketing in the College of Business at Montana State University, also provided revisions.

Time Line

August 1997	Completion of instrument
September 1997	Pilot survey
October 1997	Final approval of instrument
February 1998	Mail survey and cover letter
March 1998	Follow-up survey
March 1998	Data analysis
April 1998	Final report completed

Summary

Journals, articles, sample surveys, and Internet web pages provided the researcher with the necessary materials to focus the survey instrument on employee satisfaction factors. The survey population was limited to classified clerical staff at Montana State University, and the sample size was all of these employees. The instrument was reviewed

by the university's Office of Employee Relations, business education graduate students, and Dr. Norm Millikin in the summer of 1997.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

Introduction

The survey was sent to all 584 classified clerical personnel at Montana State University. The researcher used campus mail and the current campus list of classified personnel to reach all employees. The surveys were not numbered and were sent and returned anonymously to achieve better results and return rate as well as keeping individual information confidential.

The researcher established a minimum return rate of 234, or 39% for all employees. The minimum return rate was exceeded with 345 surveys returned, or 59%.

Data

The survey was divided into three areas: the university as a whole, the department the employee works in, and the immediate work environment. The researcher used a combination of levels of satisfaction with the three groups and a rating system to determine how employees felt about each topic. The information was then analyzed by

employee grade level, length of employment, gender, and general area of employment.

The survey instrument (see Appendix A) contained questions in these areas:

1. What is the level of satisfaction of employees in their current positions?
2. What are the most important job satisfaction factors for clerical employees?
3. What is the level of satisfaction these employees have with the university as a whole, their department, and their immediate workplace?
4. How does the level of satisfaction vary, if at all, as it relates to gender, grade level, and length of service?
5. What would the employee change to improve satisfaction in his/her job?

The researcher used a Likert Scale to find the level of satisfaction for each of the questions. The first section of thirty-five questions used a six level Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The second section, questions thirty-six through seventy-one, used a five step Likert scale with the ratings of excellent, good, fair, poor and unacceptable. The third section of questions asked the employees to rate their overall satisfaction with their job, the importance of their job, and if they would work for MSU again. The second half of the section asked employees what they liked best and worst about their job and what they would change to make it more satisfying. The final section was used to categorize employees by grade, years of service, gender, and area employed, and included an area for other comments.

Following is a listing of all the questions asked on the instrument and the corresponding percent of employees that responded at each level on the scale:

Ratings for Montana State University Overall

This section on page one of the instrument relates to Montana State University as a whole.

1. I am proud to work for Montana State University

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
21.9%	29.5%	28.4%	13.5%	5.3%	1.5%	0.0%

2. MSU is well managed

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
2.0%	4.7%	30.7%	23.4%	24.0%	14.6%	0.6%

3. MSU and the unions work well together

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
1.2%	3.2%	19.3%	24.3%	29.5%	18.7%	3.8%

4. I would recommend MSU as a good place to work

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
9.9%	23.4%	31.6%	18.7%	10.8%	5.3%	0.3%

5. MSU values me as an employee

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
3.2%	12.3%	23.7%	22.2%	17.5%	19.9%	1.2%

6. I sometimes doubt the truth about what management tells me

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
17.0%	20.8%	23.7%	16.4%	15.5%	6.1%	0.6%

7. I feel my job is secure at MSU

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
14.9%	28.9%	24.0%	12.6%	12.0%	7.0%	0.6%

8. There is too much bureaucracy at MSU

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
40.6%	27.2%	17.5%	7.6%	4.1%	2.0%	0.9%

9. I have often thought of quitting my job

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
14.6%	14.6%	14.9%	13.7%	17.8%	21.6%	2.6%

10. I usually hear about important changes at MSU through management, rather than rumors

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
3.8%	10.9%	18.5%	19.4%	25.5%	21.7%	0.3%

11. The union represents me well

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
2.6%	2.1%	14.1%	18.8%	22.0%	32.8%	7.6%

12. Communication with faculty/administration is good

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
1.8%	13.8%	24.3%	26.4%	20.5%	10.0%	3.2%

13. Formal rewards (money, promotions) equal my contributions

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
0.9%	4.1%	8.2%	12.3%	21.4%	52.5%	0.6%

14. I am satisfied with my benefits package

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
12.3%	19.6%	22.6%	18.8%	14.4%	12.0%	0.3%

Summary

The overall management of the university tended to rate as mediocre with the employee ratings spread across the scale for many of the above statements. They did, however, have strong opinions in some areas. They felt strongly that the union did not represent them well, MSU has too much bureaucracy, and formal rewards did not equal their contributions.

Departmental Ratings

This section relates to the employees' department, supervisor, co-workers and immediate work environment.

15. Procedures in my position often involve unnecessary steps

Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer
10.3%	15.5%	17.6%	19.6%	24.3%	12.0%	0.6%

16. My performance evaluations provide me with useful feedback						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
8.2%	15.3%	19.7%	14.4%	15.0%	18.5%	9.1%
17. My supervisor asks me for my input to help make decisions						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
24.9%	33.4%	12.9%	11.4%	8.2%	8.8%	0.3%
18. My supervisor treats me with respect						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
43.7%	24.3%	12.3%	8.8%	6.7%	3.8%	0.3%
19. My supervisor is unbiased and fair						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
34.9%	25.2%	13.5%	11.7%	7.6%	6.7%	0.3%
20. I can get as much training as I need to do my job well						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
24.3%	27.6%	17.0%	11.1%	10.9%	9.1%	0.0%
21. I have the right information to do my job well						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
22.6%	32.0%	20.8%	14.1%	6.7%	3.8%	0.0%
22. Deadlines in my department are often unrealistic						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
6.2%	10.6%	10.9%	21.4%	32.0%	18.8%	0.3%
23. The quality of work in my department is excellent						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
31.4%	41.3%	17.3%	5.6%	4.1%	0.3%	0.0%
24. Informal rewards (praise, recognition) equal my contributions						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
15.2%	22.6%	16.1%	15.5%	14.1%	16.1%	0.3%
25. It is safe to say what you think						
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree		No Answer
13.5%	24.9%	21.7%	12.0%	13.2%	14.1%	0.6%

26. I have too much work to do							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
14.7%	14.1%	16.7%	27.0%	17.6%	10.0%	0.0%	
27. I have enough authority to make the decisions required of my job							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
23.5%	33.4%	20.8%	8.5%	9.1%	4.4%	0.3%	
28. Members of the faculty/administration treat me with respect							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
22.3%	31.7%	23.2%	12.0%	7.3%	3.5%	0.0%	
29. I like my job							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
32.3%	32.0%	21.7%	6.5%	5.9%	1.2%	0.6%	
30. I am performing my job as effectively as possible							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
38.7%	39.6%	12.6%	5.9%	2.1%	0.9%	0.3%	
31. I am paid enough for my responsibilities and work quality							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
3.5%	8.8%	15.8%	12.3%	21.7%	37.8%	0.0%	
32. There are good opportunities for advancement							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
2.9%	6.7%	11.7%	13.8%	21.4%	41.9%	1.5%	
33. Faculty/administration act like they are "better than" or "more important" than me							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
21.4%	19.6%	19.4%	12.6%	15.0%	10.6%	1.5%	
34. I am accountable for the decisions I make							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
42.8%	39.0%	11.7%	3.8%	2.1%	0.3%	0.3%	
35. I often feel stress in my job							
Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree	No Answer	
22.0%	19.6%	25.5%	15.8%	12.0%	4.7%	0.3%	

Summary

Departmental ratings were significantly different from the overall university ratings. Employees rated the department in which they work considerably higher than the university as a whole. They rated their co-workers, supervisors, availability of training and job information, quality of work, and informal rewards highly. Almost all employees strongly agreed that they liked their jobs.

MSU Policies, Procedures, and Benefits

In this section, employees were asked to rate how they felt about each topic as it related to MSU. The scale used was a Likert scale with selections of excellent, good fair, poor, and unacceptable.

36. health care benefits

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
19.1%	48.7%	24.0%	6.5%	1.5%	0.3%

37. vacation policy

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
34.0%	53.1%	10.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.3%

38. sick leave policy

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
35.5%	51.3%	11.4%	1.2%	0.3%	0.3%

39. retirement plan

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
7.3%	40.8%	35.5%	13.2%	2.3%	0.9%

40. current MSU-Bozeman policies

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
2.1%	26.7%	51.6%	13.2%	0.3%	6.2%

41. performance review procedures

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
0.9%	20.8%	34.9%	25.8%	9.4%	8.2%

42. amount of benefits provided

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
11.1%	34.6%	39.3%	11.7%	1.8%	1.5%

43. Board of Regents policies

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
0.3%	15.2%	43.4%	26.1%	5.6%	9.4%

44. employee cost for benefits provided

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
6.8%	25.3%	41.5%	19.4%	5.0%	1.8%

45. availability of training

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
7.6%	41.3%	27.6%	14.7%	7.3%	1.5%

46. pay

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
0.9%	10.0%	26.7%	44.0%	17.6%	0.9%

47. overall management

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
1.5%	21.1%	44.9%	27.3%	4.1%	1.2%

48. communication with university administration

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
1.5%	15.3%	39.1%	33.8%	8.5%	1.8%

49. overall goals and objectives

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
1.8%	26.5%	49.4%	17.9%	2.4%	2.1%

50. affirmative action policies

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
4.1%	37.4%	42.4%	8.8%	1.8%	5.6%

51. union goals and objectives

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
0.6%	13.2%	33.4%	30.8%	14.4%	7.6%

52. grievance process

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
1.2%	21.5%	47.4%	13.5%	4.4%	12.1%

Summary

Employees tended to rate Montana State University's overall goals, policies, and objectives as fair. Benefits such as health benefits, vacation time, and sick leave rated strong, with the vast majority of employees rating these areas good or excellent. Other benefits, the cost of benefits provided, amount of benefits provided, and the retirement plan, rated only fair. Forty-four percent of MSU's staff rated pay as poor.

Departmental Ratings

In this section, employees were asked to rate how they felt about each topic as it relates to their department and/or work environment.

53. procedures for your job duties

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
12.9%	60.7%	19.1%	4.7%	0.6%	2.1%

54. the relationship between faculty and staff

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
22.0%	47.2%	20.2%	7.0%	1.5%	2.1%

55. performance evaluations

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
5.6%	26.5%	31.0%	18.0%	10.0%	8.8%

56. job advancement opportunities

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
4.1%	14.1%	21.5%	45.6%	12.9%	1.8%

57. feedback on job performance

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
8.8%	31.7%	30.8%	20.8%	6.8%	1.2%

58. communication with other departments

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
6.8%	46.5%	33.8%	10.6%	1.5%	0.9%

59. communication with department administration

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
12.9%	39.3%	31.4%	12.9%	2.3%	1.2%

60. praise and recognition for your job

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
15.0%	28.4%	28.7%	20.2%	7.3%	0.3%

61. supplies and equipment

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
17.0%	43.7%	23.5%	12.6%	2.9%	0.3%

62. office space

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
16.7%	32.0%	19.9%	19.4%	11.1%	0.9%

63. supervisor

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
35.0%	32.9%	17.9%	10.0%	2.9%	1.2%

64. co-workers

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
40.2%	44.6%	12.3%	1.5%	0.3%	1.2%

65. communication with college administration

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
5.6%	27.6%	38.8%	18.8%	4.4%	4.7%

66. air conditioning/heat/lighting

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
7.6%	27.0%	29.0%	22.0%	13.5%	0.9%

67. required hours of work

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
22.9%	52.5%	18.2%	4.1%	2.1%	0.3%

68. teamwork

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
27.9%	45.7%	18.5%	5.6%	1.8%	0.6%

69. communication with your supervisor

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
32.9%	35.0%	18.5%	9.1%	3.8%	0.6%

70. career development opportunities

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
8.5%	20.8%	31.4%	27.9%	10.6%	0.9%

71. communication with your co-workers

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable	No answer
33.1%	49.3%	13.8%	2.1%	0.9%	0.9%

Summary

Departmental ratings again were much better than the ratings of the university as a whole. Employees rated all areas of communication, supervision, co-workers, work environment, and job procedures as good or excellent. Job advancement opportunities were rated the worst, with 45.6% of the employees rating it poor.

Overall Job Ratings

In this section in part three, the employees were asked to mark the box that corresponds closest to their feelings.

72. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job at MSU?

Extremely Satisfied			Neutral			Extremely Dissatisfied	No Answer
7.3%	28.4%	27.0%	17.3%	9.7%	6.2%	1.5%	2.6%

73. How would you rate the importance of your job?

Very Important			Neutral			Not at all Important	No Answer
28.7%	32.6%	19.9%	9.1%	4.1%	1.8%	0.6%	3.2%

74. If you were to "do it all over again", would you work for Montana State University?

Definitely Would	Probably Would	Might	Probably Would NOT	Definitely Would NOT	No Answer
26.3%	40.5%	20.8%	7.9%	2.1%	2.4%

Analysis and Categorization

This section was used by the researcher to classify employees and analyze the results. A summary of the respondents is as follows:

Grade Level:

6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.5%	5.0%	16.7%	16.7%	15.8%	12.6%	7.0%

13	14	15	16	17	19	20	No Ans.
8.5%	6.7%	5.3%	1.8%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	1.2%

Years of service:

< 1	1-2	2-5	5-10	10-20	20-30	over 30	No Ans.
8.8%	9.4%	21.8%	28.2%	20.3%	10.6%	0.3%	0.6%

Gender:

Male	Female	No Answer
10.3%	89.1%	0.6%

In which area do you work?

Research	Service	Academic	Administrative	Other	No Answer
11.7%	23.5%	12.9%	39.3%	11.4%	1.2%

For each of the questions below from the survey, the researcher chose to summarize the answers into related groups and present the findings. The number of answers do not correspond to the total number of employees surveyed, due to the fact many employees had more than one answer to each of the questions.

75. What do you like best about your job?

For this question, most of the answers fell into six major categories:

Response

Number of Responses

Coworkers	105
Job duties	90
Working with students	67
Flexibility (hours, duties, supervision)	52
Department administration	38
Department atmosphere	23

Other areas mentioned, in decreasing order, were: benefits, working with the community, respect, the academic environment, stability, and free college courses.

The next question found a significantly wider range of responses:

76. What do you like least about your job?

Pay	58
Attitude of the administration toward department	36
Not enough time for duties (deadlines, workload)	25
Poor upper level management (no leadership, direction)	25
Cramped office space	25

Other answers with nine or more responses were working conditions (heat, air conditioning, lighting, no windows), union, office politics, unnecessary paperwork, routine, parking, and distinct separation of workers and administration.

The third question produced a large number of answers as well:

77. How would you change your job to make it more satisfying?

More pay	69
More communication with administration	41
More promotion opportunities	21
More skill development and training	20
Improving skills of supervisors	20

The other responses included more benefits, better or more computers and equipment, higher grade classifications, and increased responsibilities. Eleven of the respondents stated that no changes were needed in their jobs.

The answers to all questions were cross-evaluated by grade level, years of employment, gender, and general area of work. Surprisingly, job grade levels made little difference in responses with few exceptions. In rating how the employees felt about vacation policy and sick leave policy, grade nine employees rated each one higher than the employees as a whole. In rating the retirement plan, the higher the employee's grade level, the lower the rating given.

A number of the ratings changed as the length of service increased. Employees that had been at MSU for longer periods of time agreed more strongly that MSU has too much bureaucracy, that they had often thought of quitting their job, that they sometimes doubt what management tells them, and that faculty/administration act like they are better or more important than them. In other areas, the answers declined more significantly. The longer term employees were not as proud to work for MSU, they felt more strongly that MSU is not well managed, they felt that informal rewards did not equal their contributions, they were more discontent with their pay, and there were fewer opportunities for advancement. In a few areas of interest to the researcher, no change was noted. Length of service did not increase the feeling that their job was secure. The employees did not state that they liked their jobs any better, and they did not show that they felt that they were getting paid any better for their responsibilities and work quality

than others.

In this study, there were 305 female and 35 male respondents. Although the number of males was low, the researcher noted several differences. Men in the survey tended to agree more strongly that the union represented them well and deadlines in their departments were often unrealistic. The men rated the importance of their jobs higher than women, but as the researcher notes, the men in the survey had a higher average grade level than the women, which could account for the difference. The notable differences were in how the men consistently rated their supervisor lower than the women. The women agreed more strongly that their supervisor treated them with respect, was unbiased and fair, and asked for their input to help make decisions. The men did not feel as strongly that they could get as much training as they needed to do their job well, that they had the right information to do their job well, or that informal rewards equaled their contributions. They also rated these areas lower than the women: praise and recognition for their job, supplies and equipment, teamwork, and supervisor. They did agree with the women that the quality of work in their department was excellent and they are paid enough for their job responsibilities and work quality, and disagreed as strongly as the women that there are good opportunities for advancement.

The individuals in each of the areas of work responded similarly to the questions, with a few exceptions. In the research area, the employees rated supplies and equipment, career development opportunities, and overall satisfaction in their job higher than the other areas. The academic area felt more strongly that the procedures in their positions

often involved unnecessary steps.

Summary

Employee satisfaction is different from dissatisfaction in that satisfaction comes from motivating the employee through interest in the job, using capabilities, being responsible for the work, doing something meaningful, and recognition of achievement. Dissatisfaction occurs when certain areas are lacking such as good pay, vacations and holidays, affordable and useful insurance, a solid retirement plan, comfortable working conditions, and decent coworkers.

Montana State University classified employees have indicated that although for the most part, the satisfiers are present, such as interesting job duties, good supervisors and coworkers, and some recognition of achievement, there are areas of dissatisfaction present that reduce their overall satisfaction. Most of the areas that produce dissatisfaction (pay, vacation, holidays, insurance, retirement, working conditions, and coworkers) were rated quite high by the employees, with the exception of adequate pay, better working conditions for a number of employees, and promotion potential.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of satisfaction of classified clerical staff at Montana State University.

To achieve this, 584 surveys were sent out to the classified personnel at Montana State University, and 345 of the staff responded, for a total return rate of 59%. Chapter four analyzes the data received from the surveys.

Conclusions

1. Almost two-thirds of the respondents tended to feel satisfied with their jobs at MSU.
2. Most respondents felt their jobs were important or very important to the university.
3. Even though there were a number of concerns with MSU and their jobs, two-thirds of the respondents stated they would work for MSU again.
4. The respondents tended to be satisfied with their immediate work environment, including supervisors, coworkers, and job duties.

5. Overall, the respondents were satisfied with their department in the areas of management, interdepartmental communication, and job flexibility.
6. Most respondents were not satisfied with their pay, career development opportunities, overall university management, union, and lack of communication with administration.

Recommendations

After the review of the literature and the previous survey analysis, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. The previous survey be used as a baseline for further studies in the future for Montana State University. The researcher recommends that this study be a basis for continued, regular monitoring of employee satisfaction, and recommends targeted, in depth studies be done in areas of concern such as pay, working conditions, and promotion opportunities.
2. The researcher further recommends that this study and future studies be integrated into the goals and objectives of the university to improve upon employee satisfaction.
3. The researcher recommends that employees and management be encouraged to improve communications and promote feedback from the employees to management and from management to employees.
4. In an attempt to narrow the perceived gap between staff and management, a direct line of communication should be established for all employees to voice their concerns with upper management.
5. Encourage and recognize employees and supervisors who perform well. A

standard of performance evaluation should be established not only to rate subordinates, but also for staff to assess superiors.

6. Research methods and practices of alternative compensation for classified clerical staff at Montana State University. Pay scales are at the mercy of Legislative action, but other types of compensation may be an option.

February 2, 1998

Dear University Employee:

I am Deanna Meredith, a graduate student in Business Education in the College of Business, and I am conducting this survey of classified employees. I have no other association with any college, department, union, sponsor, or group.

The purpose of this study is to assess the level of satisfaction of classified employees at Montana State University. When this survey is completed, a summary of the findings will be available on-line at www.montana.edu/cob/dlm for review.

It is only with your full support and through your frank responses that this survey will be a success. Please complete and return it in an envelope through campus mail to the College of Business using the label provided as soon as possible. Any questions you may have about the survey can be directed to survey_question@hotmail.com. Your responses will be kept confidential, so please do not write your name on the survey.

Thank you for participating in this important survey.

Sincerely,

Deanna Meredith

Classified Employee Survey**PART ONE**

Listed below is a series of statements. **Be sure to read each one carefully.**
Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement with an 'X'
in the appropriate box .

Section 1:

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree			
I am proud to work for Montana State University.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MSU is well managed.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Montana State University and the unions work well together.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would recommend MSU as a good place to work.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MSU values me as an employee.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I sometimes doubt the truth about what management tells me.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel my job is secure at Montana State University.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is too much bureaucracy at MSU.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have often thought of quitting my job.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I usually hear about important changes at MSU through management communications, rather than rumors.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The union represents me well.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication with faculty/administration is good.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Formal rewards (money, promotions) equal my contributions.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with my benefits package.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 2:

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree			
Procedures in my position often involve unnecessary steps.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My performance evaluations provide me with useful feedback.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor asks me for my input to help make decisions.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor treats me with respect.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor is unbiased and fair.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can get as much training as I need to do my job well.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have the right information to do my job well.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Deadlines in my department are often unrealistic.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The quality of work in my department is excellent.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Informal rewards (praise, recognition) equal my contributions.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 3:

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree			
It is safe to say what you think.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have too much work to do.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enough authority to make the decisions required of my job.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Members of the faculty/administration treat me with respect.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I like my job.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am performing my job as effectively as possible.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am paid enough for my responsibilities and work quality.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are good opportunities for advancement.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faculty/administration act like they are "better than" or "more important" than me.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am accountable for the decisions I make.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often feel stress in my job.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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PART TWO

In this section, please rate how you feel about each topic as it relates to MSU.

Section 1:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
health care benefits.....					
vacation policy.....					
sick leave policy.....					
retirement plan.....					
current MSU-Bozeman policies.....					
performance review procedure.....					
amount of benefits provided.....					
Board of Regents policies.....					
employee cost for benefits provided.....					
availability of training.....					
pay.....					
overall management.....					
communication with university administration.....					
overall goals and objectives.....					
affirmative action policies.....					
union goals and objectives.....					
grievance process.....					

In this section, please rate how you feel about each topic as it relates to your department and/or work environment.

Section 2:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
procedures for your job duties.....					
the relationship between faculty and staff.....					
performance evaluations.....					
job advancement opportunities.....					
feedback on job performance.....					
communication with other departments.....					
communication with department administration.....					
praise and recognition for your job.....					
supplies and equipment.....					
office space.....					
supervisor.....					
co-workers.....					
communication with college administration.....					
air conditioning/heat/lighting.....					
required hours of work.....					
teamwork.....					
communication with your supervisor.....					
career development opportunities.....					
communication with your co-workers.....					

(continued on next page)

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PART THREE

In this section, please mark the box that corresponds closest to your feelings.

Section 1:

Overall, how satisfied are you with your job at MSU?

Extremely Satisfied							Extremely Dissatisfied
☐		☐		☐		☐	☐

How would you rate the importance of your job?

Very Important						Not at all Important
☐		☐		☐		☐

If you were to "do it all over again", would you work for Montana State University?

Definitely <u>WOULD</u>		Probably <u>WOULD</u>		Might		Probably would <u>NOT</u>		Definitely would <u>NOT</u>
☐		☐		☐		☐		☐

In this section, briefly state your feelings about your job.

Section 2:

What do you like best about your job?

What do you like least about your job?

How would you change your job to make it more satisfying?

(continued on next page)

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PART FOUR

The following section is to help the researcher categorize employees, and will be used only to summarize the information from all the respondents. Individual responses will be kept confidential.

What is your job grade level?

2 ☐	5 ☐	8 ☐	11 ☐	14 ☐	17 ☐	20 ☐	23 ☐
3 ☐	6 ☐	9 ☐	12 ☐	15 ☐	18 ☐	21 ☐	24 ☐
4 ☐	7 ☐	10 ☐	13 ☐	16 ☐	19 ☐	22 ☐	25 ☐

How many years have you been an employee at Montana State University?

less than 1	1-2	2-5	5-10	10-20	20-30	over 30
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Gender:

male	female
☐	☐

In which area do you work?

Research	Service	Academic	Administrative	Other
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please feel free to include any additional comments or input:

Thank you for your participation!

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