

A Qualitative Study on Job Satisfaction of Public Information Workers

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ABSTRACT

Organizations worldwide, in both the private and public sectors, depend on their workforce to achieve optimal productivity, resulting in enhanced organizational effectiveness. Therefore, ensuring employee job satisfaction is a necessity for every organization. This study investigates the job satisfaction of public information technology (IT) employees in Türkiye. In this study, the qualitative research method was preferred, and interviews were conducted with 10 participants using a semi-structured interview form. The data obtained from the interviews was analyzed using descriptive and content analysis techniques. The study revealed that the participants' qualifications were compatible with their job requirements. However, it was found that their overall job satisfaction was insufficient. Furthermore, the study revealed varying perspectives on topics such as employee satisfaction with workload, salary, corporate support, commitment, work-life balance, teamwork, and attitude. The results of this study also have practical implications for managers in public institutions because they provide them with a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to job satisfaction among IT public employees. The conclusion section presents recommendations for public institution managers and decision makers to enhance the job satisfaction of IT employees in public institutions.

Keywords: Public Institution, Information Technology Employees, Job Satisfaction, Qualitative Research Method.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business environment, the success and sustainability of organizations depend on employee performance and satisfaction. Job satisfaction refers to employees' general feelings about their jobs. The state of well-being and happiness related to performance in and around the workplace. The concept of job satisfaction is so broad that it cannot be defined in a single, comprehensive manner. The positive affect that results from an evaluation of one's job and work experience is also referred to as job satisfaction (Riyanto, Endri, & Herlisha, 2021). The term "job satisfaction" describes the emotions that arise from an employee's assessment of how much their job meets their needs. It concerns an employee's emotional state about how much they enjoy their role at work (Kong, Jiang, Chan & Zhou, 2018). It is a multifaceted construct comprising various emotional states and conditions. According to Miner (1992), job satisfaction is an important factor in the functioning of an organization and is one of the main indicators of an organization's health. More employee productivity translates into better service and value for your customers. Job satisfaction increases productivity from employees. Increased customer pleasure and loyalty because of this value supports an organization's profitability and long-term success. Therefore, organizations attach great importance to job satisfaction. Satisfied workers are eager to complete their responsibilities meaningfully, whereas dissatisfied workers are less motivated. Consequently, satisfied workers frequently show greater interest in the business itself. Because satisfied employees contribute to the effectiveness and long-term success of organizations, employee satisfaction levels are important. The effectiveness and productivity of an organization depend on its personnel and "a happy employee is an effective employee". An organization cannot develop without considering the use of employees' talents and the improvement of their working conditions. Organizations with satisfied employees are probably more successful than other organizations (Basar, 2011).

In the context of an increasingly competitive and complex business environment, the significance of job satisfaction is also growing (Inayat & Khan, 2021). As a result of the literature research, it has been observed that knowing the satisfaction level of employees is important both for employees and institutionally in terms of organizational efficiency (Demiralp, 2006; Sahin, 2015). In addition, due to global competition and technological developments, it is seen that business management has realized that sustaining their existence is not only by attracting a qualified workforce to the business but also by keeping this workforce in the business and ensuring their satisfaction should be the primary goals of the organization (Cabukel, 2008). In addition, in today's volatile business environment, where employee turnover rates are high, organizations need to prioritize employee job satisfaction a priority (Judge, Zhang, & Glerum, 2020). Studies have also reported that increased job satisfaction increases employee performance (Habib et al., 2014; Inuwa, 2016; Phuong & Tran, 2020; Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023). A satisfied workforce not only meets organizational goals but also demonstrates organizational citizenship behaviors, including punctuality, productivity, commitment, and satisfaction with their work and lives. In this contemporary digital era, the role of information technology professionals is becoming increasingly crucial for both public and private sector organizations. An IT employee works with computer systems, software, and networks to ensure the proper functioning and security of an organization's IT systems and technologies. They design, develop, and maintain technology solutions. IT employees may work in programming, database management, cybersecurity, network management, and technical support, and they are responsible for designing, building, and managing information systems, networks, and databases in organizations, as well as developing new software applications and technologies. IT employees are frequently responsible for devising new goods and services, fixing issues, or developing plans of action and strategies to improve company outcomes. Therefore, they are the backbone of organizations. Ensuring that technology works effectively and efficiently in organizations ensures that they have essential positions and are critically important employees.

The first and most important purpose of a business is to make a profit. However, the primary purpose of public institutions is to satisfy citizen satisfaction with a service. In this case, public institution workers' job satisfaction becomes even more important. A positive attitude and behavior on the part of a worker is likely to result from the worker's belief that the employer values, respects, and treats workers well. The present research focuses on job satisfaction as a key outcome. Numerous studies have been conducted on the job satisfaction of employees in Türkiye. The participants in these studies included hospital employees (Gider, Akdere, & Top, 2019), university academic and administrative staff (Küskü, 2003; Toker, 2011), teachers (Aytac, 2020; Baykara & Orhan, 2020; Buyukgoze-Kavas, et al., 2014), municipality employees (Türkyilmaz et al., 2011), manufacturing factory employees (Asgarova, 2019; Demiral, 2017), police officers (Buker & Dolu, 2010), agricultural workers (Çevrimli, 2020), nurses (Kapucu et al., 2017), employees of small and medium-sized companies (Ayranci, 2011; Halil & Selim, 2007), and those working in the tourism sector (Kara, Uysal & Magnini, 2012; Tepeci, 2005; Ozturk & Hancer, 2011). This study makes a notable

contribution to the existing literature because it is the first to investigate job satisfaction among public IT employees in Türkiye.

The objective of this study is to determine the level of job satisfaction among public IT employees. To achieve this objective, the research question can be expressed as follows: "What are the opinions of public institution IT employees regarding job satisfaction?" This study provides a new perspective on the research on employee experience and to assist managers in gaining a deeper understanding of IT employees in public institutions. Since recent studies have considered the views of private sector employees, this study is valuable and unique in its focus on job satisfaction among public IT employees. Furthermore, the findings of this study are crucial for decision makers responsible for public IT employee policies. It is our hope that they will gain insight into the job satisfaction status of IT employees and the factors affecting it and that they will consider these study results when making necessary arrangements. Additionally, the results of this study will contribute to advances in the fields of organizational behavior and human resources management in public institutions.

This study is composed of five sections. The first two sections present the introduction and literature review, and the third section presents the methodology. The fourth section presents the findings of the study, and the fifth and final sections present the conclusions and recommendations. At the end of the study, references are provided.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction remains one of the most extensively studied attitudes in industrial and organizational psychology. Scholars and practitioners alike have acknowledged the significance of job satisfaction, citing its utility in predicting crucial organizational effectiveness outcomes (Judge, Zhang, & Glerum, 2020). Research shows that satisfied employees are more likely to become loyal champions, ambassadors, and advocates for their organizations. Research on job satisfaction is of interest to both individuals working in organizations and those studying job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is closely linked to numerous organizational phenomena, such as motivation, performance, leadership, attitude, conflict, and morality. The literature review reveals that researchers have attempted to identify the different components of job satisfaction, evaluate their relative importance, and investigate their impact on worker productivity. This section examines these studies and their findings.

One of the greatest pioneers of job satisfaction studies is the Hawthorne study conducted between 1924 and 1933. Because of these studies, it was first determined that changes in working conditions temporarily increase productivity, which was called the Hawthorne Effect. However, it was later found that this increase was due to observation, not working conditions. Considering this information, other factors related to job satisfaction have begun to be investigated by providing evidence that employees work for purposes other than wages (Mishra, 2013).

Three fundamental relationship impact employee satisfaction. These are the employee's relationship with the organization, the relationship with the manager, and coworkers (Tang, Siu, & Cheung, 2014). Other researchers have also identified the employee-manager relationship as a significant factor that influences employee job satisfaction (Edgar & Geare, 2005; Fila et al., 2014). Furthermore, the employee-organization relationship encompasses the employee's alignment with corporate strategy and company goals, and their dedication to these objectives. This relationship is also influenced by other factors, including the extent to which companies facilitate an optimal work-family balance for their employees (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003). Because of the literature review, it was found that the job satisfaction of employees in different sectors in different countries was investigated. One of these studies examined the effect of job satisfaction on the performance of employees in private sector organizations in Peshawar, Pakistan. The study findings indicate a significant correlation between an individual's occupation and their job satisfaction level. Additionally, a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance was confirmed. Consequently, it can be concluded that employees who are satisfied with their work perform better than those who are dissatisfied, thereby playing an instrumental role in the growth and success of organizations. Based on the study's insights, the researchers proposed strategies to enhance job satisfaction among bank employees (Inayat & Jahanzeb, 2021). Another study conducted in Pakistan with employees from the telecommunications sector revealed a negative correlation between job stress and employee job satisfaction (Mansoor et al., 2011). A similar study was conducted by Islam et al. (2000) on the job satisfaction levels of women employed in public and private banks in Bangladesh. This study evaluated women's job satisfaction based on factors such as salary, better job opportunities, and the presence of a manager. The results revealed that the factor that most affects female employees' job satisfaction is salary. In a separate study, Kabir and Parvin (2011) examined the job satisfaction of employees of various pharmaceutical companies. The findings indicate that salary, productivity at work, supervision, and coworker relations are the primary determinants of job satisfaction. Overall, employees in the pharmaceutical sector exhibit a favorable level of job satisfaction. A study conducted in Türkiye with bank employees (Güner & Çetinkaya Bozkurt, 2017) identified

several negative factors that affect job satisfaction. These include inadequate physical working conditions, exposure to noise and excessive intensity, long working hours, a stressful work environment, high work intensity, high volume of telephone calls and emails, insufficient wages, lack of overtime pay, lack of necessary financial compensation despite the job involving financial risk, frequent problems with taking leave, and extreme fatigue caused by long working hours. McMurtrey, Grover, Teng, and Lightner (2002) conducted a study on the job satisfaction of IT professionals in an environment where computer-aided software engineering tools were used. The study found that employees with a technical career orientation exhibited a significantly higher level of job satisfaction than those with a managerial career orientation. Another study was conducted by Lim (2008) on IT employees working in libraries. This study examined IT employees' job satisfaction in terms of demographic, socioeconomic, and job-related variables. As a result of this study, it was found that salary, sense of belonging, belief in the desire to belong, and the feeling of acceptance and promotion positively affected job satisfaction.

The literature review presents recent studies on job satisfaction, including Yüksekbilgili's (2022), who emphasized the significance of job satisfaction in retaining efficient employees within an organization. The study highlights that job satisfaction has a positive impact on employee performance. Additionally, a study conducted on 119 managers and civil servants in the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity found that a positive organizational climate had a positive effect on job satisfaction (Al-Ani, 2019). This study investigates the relationships among knowledge management processes, IT employee satisfaction, and organizational performance among 248 academics and administrative personnel working in higher education institutions. The study found that information management processes have a significant impact on employee satisfaction with IT. Furthermore, this study revealed that IT employee satisfaction improves organizational performance in higher education institutions (Sahibzada et al., 2019). In his 2018 master's thesis, Güneş Aydemir identified various factors that determine job satisfaction, such as job quality, work environment, relationships with managers and colleagues, salary, career opportunities, and fringe benefits. Job satisfaction is generally defined as an employee's overall contentment with their job.

The demand for talented IT professionals remains high globally. Therefore, recruiting and retaining IT professionals is vital for many organizations (Metin, 2023). Metin (2023) conducted a study on the mediating role of perceived organizational support and the psychological empowerment retention of public IT specialists in Türkiye. Data for the study were gathered from 361 IT specialists working in 31 public institutions in Türkiye with large-scale IT units. The study revealed that 40.7% of specialists in Türkiye's public IT sector are considering quitting their current positions.

A literature review has revealed that job satisfaction has been researched among employees in various occupations. Nevertheless, there is a significant gap in the existing literature about the job satisfaction of employees in public institutions, particularly in the public IT sector in Turkey. This study aims to address this gap in the literature.

3. METHOD

The methodology section presents in detail the research method, the working group, development of the data collection tool, data collection and analysis processes, and how the validity and reliability of the research were ensured.

3.1. Method of Study

This study was conducted using a qualitative research methodology. This method was preferred because it was planned to conduct interviews with public IT employees in line with the purpose of the study. In addition, it also aimed to collect in-depth information from the participants. This study, which attempts to understand the perspectives of IT sector employees working in public institutions to determine their job satisfaction, is phenomenological research, which is one of the qualitative research method designs and aims to reveal the essence of a person's perception of their experiences.

3.2. Working Group

The population of this study comprises IT employees working in public institutions. In the selection of the study group, convenience sampling and criteria sampling methods were combined. The reason for choosing convenience sampling is that it enables participants who are suitable for the research to be included in the research most easily; in other words, these participants are the easiest for the researcher to access. Criterion sampling was also preferred because it enables selection of participants who meet the criteria appropriate for the research (Patton, 2003). The criteria for this study are that the participants are easily accessible and have worked in the field of informatics at a public institution for at least one year. Since it is impossible to reach and interview all IT sector personnel working in public institutions

in Türkiye, the study group of this study consists of public IT employees working in three public institutions in Ankara who participate in the research voluntarily. Interviews were conducted with 10 participants who met the inclusion criteria and worked in the informatics field. Care was taken to ensure that the participants voluntarily contributed to the study and were informed about the study. The personal information of the participants was not included in the study, and the participants were identified by numbering them as "P1, P2, P3,...P10".

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was employed as the instrument for data collection. A draft interview form was created based on the literature review conducted by the researchers. In addition, the "Two-Factor Theory of Motivation" developed by American psychologist Frederick Herzberg guided the preparation of the interview questions. In his theory, Herzberg named the factors related to work-related elements as intrinsic or motivating factors and the factors related to negative attitudes toward work as extrinsic or hygiene factors. Herzberg observed that these factors have a major influence on motivation, happiness, and business success. These two factors are hygiene and motivating factors. The sub-factors of the hygiene factor are company policies, relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security. The sub-factors of the motivating factor are achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, progress, and growth (Nickerson, 2023). Following the literature review and Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory, it was decided that four main factors affect job satisfaction (Al Maqbali, 2015; Indiafreenotes, 2020; Nickerson, 2023; Pandey & Asthana, 2017; Waqas et al., 2015). The interview form was designed to assess four main factors affecting job satisfaction. These factors include organizational factors, the work environment, work itself, and personal factors.

There are 20 questions on the proposed interview form. For the suitability of the questions to the subject, opinions were obtained from two experts who have conducted research in the field of job satisfaction. Based on the feedback received, two questions were added, and two were removed. A preliminary test of the interview form was conducted with five IT employees from a public institution to assess the clarity and comprehension of the interview questions. The participants also indicated that the questions were well-structured and straightforward. Based on expert recommendations and pre-test feedback, a final version of the interview form was obtained. In the final form, there are 20 questions on the interview form. The interview form comprises two parts. In the first part, the participants were informed about the research, and demographic information (gender, age, education level, department, title, years of service) about the participants was included. In the second part, there are 20 interview questions.

Table 1. Four Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction and Question Distribution

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction	Number of Questions	Question Numbers
Institutional factors	5	2., 8., 10., 12., 15.
Work environment	4	5. 9. 11. 13.
Work itself	3	1., 6., 14.
Personal factors	3	3., 4., 7.

Table 1 shows the distribution of questions according to the categories used in the preparation of the interview form and the four factors that affect job satisfaction. As shown in Table 1, there are 15 questions. The remaining five questions ask about the advantages and disadvantages of being an IT employee in a public institution, the aspects they are satisfied with, the aspects they are not satisfied with, and what they would like to add. Finally, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee was applied for the evaluation of the study, and as a result of the evaluation, approval (Decision no. /09-215 Date: 22.11.2023) was obtained for the ethical suitability of the research. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants who participated in this study.

3.4. Data Collection Process

The data were collected using a semi-structured interview form. Six interviews were conducted face-to-face and four were conducted online using the ZOOM program. The researcher conducted all interviews unbiased. The interviews were conducted in the participants' offices. Audio recordings were taken for face-to-face interviews and video recordings were taken for online interviews, with the researcher also taking notes on the responses given. The average interview duration was 45 min. Data collection occurred between December 1 and 30, 2023. Transcripts were created for each participant after the interviews were conducted. The transcripts were written verbatim to capture the participants'

responses accurately. Subsequently, the audio and video recordings were compared with the transcripts. Transcripts were sent to each participant by email for approval. The data analysis began after obtaining approval.

3.5. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis approaches, namely descriptive analysis and content analysis, were employed to analyze data obtained from the participants through interviews. Direct quotation marks were used in the descriptive analysis to effectively reflect the views of the participants. Content analysis focused on details and identified concepts and themes. Tables were also created to increase comprehensibility and to summarize the collected data.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of this study, Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory and a literature review were used while preparing the interview questions. In addition, expert opinions were obtained before finalizing the questions on the interview form, and pre-tests were conducted with five participants. In the descriptive analysis used in the data analyses, direct quotes were included in the responses given by the participants. The data collected immediately after the interviews were converted into written forms and interview transcripts were prepared. The interview transcripts were checked against audio and video recordings of the interviews. The interview transcripts were sent to the participants. After the participants approved the interview transcripts, the data were analyzed. For the reliability of the study, the researcher conducted the interviews with an impartial attitude. The participants were informed about the research, and the environment and processes in which the interviews were conducted were explained. In addition, all the obtained data (audio and video recordings and notes) were stored in an encrypted environment that only the researchers could access for review when necessary.

4. FINDINGS

This section is divided into two parts. The first part provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants, and the second part presents the findings. The findings were obtained by applying descriptive and content analyses to the participants' responses to each question. In the initial section of the interview form, participants were asked to provide demographic information, including gender, age, education level, department, title, working year, and organizational status. This information is summarized in Table 2, which indicates that the participants are all public sector employees, and they provide a range of demographic information. Table 2 shows that seven participants were female and three were male. Notably, a higher proportion of female IT employees participated in the study. Although most participants work as analysts in the IT sector, the majority have been doing so for 11-15 years. This suggests that they have significant experience in the field.

Table 2. Demographic Information about the Participants

No	Gender	Age	Education Level	Department	Title	Working Year
P1	Male	21-30	Bachelor's degree	Computer Engineering	Engineer/Analyst	1-5 Years
P2	Female	31-40	Doctoral Degree	Electronics and Communication	Engineer/Analyst	11-15 Years
P3	Male	21-30	Bachelor's degree	Public Administration	Technical staff	1-5 Years
P4	Female	21-30	Bachelor's degree	Management Information Systems	Engineer/Analyst	1-5 Years
P5	Female	41-50	Doctoral Degree	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	Engineer/Analyst	16-20 Years
P6	Female	31-40	Bachelor's degree	Industrial Engineering	Engineer/Analyst	11-15 Years
P7	Female	31-40	Master's degree	Industrial Engineering	Engineer/Analyst	16-20 Years
P8	Male	31-40	Associate degree	Computer Programing	Technical Staff	6-10 Years
P9	Female	31-40	Bachelor's degree	Physics	Project Manager	11-15 Years
P10	Female	31-40	Master's degree	Business	Engineer/Analyst	11-15 Years

In the first question of the interview form, the participants were asked to explain the relationship between their job and their professional qualifications. Upon analyzing the responses provided by the participants to this question, it was observed that half of them (P2, P3, P6, P8, P9) believed that their current occupation aligned well with their professional abilities. Participant P8 stated *"There is a strong alignment. Working in this sector allows me to use the technical skills and knowledge I have."* Conversely, three participants (P5, P7, P10) expressed partial compatibility, whereas two participants (P1, P4) pointed out a lack of compatibility. In this context, participant P4 responded to this question as follows, *"My professional qualifications are at a higher level for the job I work in, and they are more than enough for the job I work in. Sometimes it even makes me think that I am blunting myself"*.

On the interview form, the second question was about the organization's support for staff's professional development. Participants P1, P4, P5, P7, and P10 stated that no support was provided, while other participants mentioned that training and seminars were organized. Participant P7 stated that *"There is no special support, training, etc. is limited"*, while participant P5 responded to the question as follows *"There has been no training provided by my organization so far. I have been improving myself through my education, career, and personal efforts. However, the ordinary flow of work provides a certain amount of development (such as meetings and workshops attended). However, this is at the level inherent in every job."*

In the third question of the interview form, the participants were asked about institutional factors that make them see themselves as part of the organization they work for. Upon analysis of the participants' responses to this question, two individuals (P1 and P10) indicated that they did not perceive themselves as part of their organizations. On the other hand, other participants stated different organizational factors. For instance, participant P8 responded to this question by stating, *"I consider myself a part of the organization I work for because they take our ideas into consideration, communication is effortless, and they support our personal growth."* Table 3 summarizes the institutional factors mentioned by the participants and the participants who mentioned them. An analysis of Table 3 reveals that the evaluation and evaluation of employee ideas, collaboration with team members, and valuing and respecting employees are the most prominent factors.

The fourth question on the interview form asked the participants about their job satisfaction in their current position. Half of the participants (P3-P6, P8) reported positive job satisfaction, using words such as "energetic," "happy," and "motivated." However, three participants (P1, P9, P10) expressed negative feelings about their job satisfaction, using words such as "anxious," "unhappy," and "stuck." The two remaining participants (P2, P7) expressed neutral and undecided feelings regarding job satisfaction. Participant P7 reported being satisfied with job security and their interactions with colleagues but expressed a desire for more challenging work. Participant P10 reported feelings of dissatisfaction and pressure in her job.

Table 3. Organizational factors

Factors	Participant
To be able to make decisions	P9
Evaluating employee ideas	P2, P8, P5, P4
Healthy communication between employees	P8
Support personal development	P8
Teammates	P6, P7
Valuing and respecting employees	P3, P5

In the fifth question on the interview form, the participants were asked their opinions on how the workload was distributed among the staff at their institution. Six participants (P1, P2, P4, P6, P7, P10) pointed out that the workload was not distributed equally. The participant (P10) expressed this inequality as follows: *"They give more work to those who do the job well or those who do not comply with assigned tasks." They give less work to those who are close to managers or lie to avoid getting the job."* The other four participants (P3, P5, P8, P9) indicated that their organizations' workloads were evenly distributed. *"In our organization, the workload is evenly distributed,"* was the participant's (P9) response.

In the sixth question of the interview form, the participants were asked what they think about the effects of working outside working hours on work/life balance. In response to this question, the participants at P1, P3, P6, P7, P9, and P10 stated that working outside working hours was negative. Participant P8 said, *"Actually, I like working outside working*

hours because it provides an opportunity for my personal development and career advancement. However, this is a problematic situation because it causes intense stress and fatigue, which can cause health problems. In addition, of course, we cannot ignore the fact that it negatively affects both family relationships and the social environment."

In the seventh question of the interview form, participants were asked about the compatibility between their assigned jobs and their abilities. Upon analyzing their responses, seven participants (P1-P3, P6, P8-P10) stated that their assigned jobs were compatible with their abilities, while three participants (P4, P5, P7) noted that they were performing tasks below their skill level. Participant (P4) responded as follows: *"The tasks assigned are not appropriate for my skills, and many tasks were below my skill level."* The participant (P8) who believed it is compatible replied, *"I think it is appropriate. I have improved myself more with the training and certificates I received after my university education, and I work in this field."*

The eighth question on the interview form was designed to determine participants' opinions of the wage policies implemented in their organizations. Table 4 presents the participants' analyzed responses.

Table 4. Participants' opinions on the Wage Policy

Wage Policy	Participant
Reasonable wages	P5, P8, P10
Low wages	P1, P3, P6, P9
Unsure about wages	P2
Not committed to equity	P4, P7

According to Table 4, only three employees were satisfied with their salaries, while others reported receiving low salaries or did not comply with the principles of equality. For example, participant P1 stated, "I think this is wrong. There can be a difference in salary between people with the same title. There should be some standards." P7 expressed this disparity as follows: *"Our salaries are much lower than those of IT workers in the private sector."* Only one participant was uncertain about wages.

The ninth question that the participants asked is whether or not their opinions, suggestions, and ideas as employees are considered in their organizations.

Table 5. Evaluation Status of the Participants' Ideas

Evaluation Status of the Participants' Ideas	Participant
It was considered and evaluated	P8, P9
Sometimes considered and evaluated	P6, P7
It was not considered and evaluated.	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P10

Table 5 presents the results of examining the participants' responses to the questions. Six participants indicated that their opinions, suggestions, and ideas were disregarded by their organizations. One participant (P1) expressed this situation as follows: *"I do not think that my opinions, suggestions, and ideas are given much importance in our organization. Managers make decisions, and we implement it."* Two participants reported that their ideas were occasionally considered and evaluated. Only two participants believed their ideas, thoughts, and suggestions were valued and evaluated.

The tenth question on the interview form asked participants about their appreciation or reward systems in their organizations. P3, P6, P8, and P10 mentioned receiving small gifts as a reward and expressing their appreciation verbally. The remaining six participants reported not having such a system. For example, P1 participant said, *"Unfortunately, there is no such system. This situation affects employees very negatively. Because people who strive more than other people in the organization and achieve something are discouraged when they do not receive any appreciation or reward and do not work as work-oriented as before."*

In the 11th question of the interview form, the participants were asked how communication in terms of information exchange and cooperation between employees is ensured in their organizations. The eight participants (P1-P6, P8, P9) responded that they preferred to use e-mail and messaging applications. Only two participants (P7, P10) answered differently, stating that face-to-face meetings were used to communicate.

The impact of the organization's fringe benefits and sociocultural events on job satisfaction was the 12th question on the interview form. When reviewing the participants' responses, eight individuals (P1-P5, P8-P10) had not provided any

feedback on this question because social and cultural activities were not available at their institutions. All participants expressed that fringe benefits contributed to their job satisfaction. P8 participant said, *"It increases our motivation; our loyalty to the organization increases even more. It also brings out the team spirit."* However, all participants also noted that fringe benefits were inadequate.

The 13th question on the interview form asked how participants obtained the necessary tools, supplies, and materials to support their work environment and tasks. Half of the participants reported having access to their work environment and essential tools, equipment, and materials through their managers or relevant administrative units. Three participants (P5-P7) were able to obtain them from the internet, while two participants (P2, P10) were able to access them through their own resources. Participant (P2) responded to this question as follows *"I would expect it to be easier. All the tools/supplies that we may need at the beginning of the work can be provided by default, and information on how to obtain them afterward can be given; in this case, the employees discover them themselves."*, while all other participants stated that they could access them through a relevant person or unit.

In the following question, the participants were asked to describe their working style, including whether they worked from an office, remotely, or in a hybrid setting. They were also asked to explain which working style would increase their job satisfaction. All of the participants, except for P10, reported that they work in an office setting. P5 and P9 mentioned that working remotely was more convenient. They also indicated that if they were allowed to work remotely, this would increase their job satisfaction. One participant (P8) responded to this question as follows, *"I work physically, and since I usually provide technical support, physical work seems suitable."* Hybrid working models can also be applied, but they are not completely remote. I think I can work physically when necessary and in emergencies and provide remote support on other days."

The interview form's fifteenth question asked participants to describe the personnel selection and recruitment methods used in their institutions. Table 6 presents the results of the participants' responses.

Table 6. Personnel Selection and Recruitment Process

Methods	Participant
Reference checks	P2
Assessment tests	P9, P4
In-person interviewing	P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
Resume screening	P8
Application	P2, P3

Upon examining Table 6, it can be seen that interviews, assessment tests, and applications are the top three methods in the recruitment process.

Benefits of working as an IT employee in a public institution is the sixteenth question on the interview form. Table 7 summarizes the participants' responses regarding the benefits of working in public institutions.

Table 7. Advantages of Working as an IT Personnel in a Public Institution

Advantages	Participant
Fixed working hours	P1, P8
Learn administrative processes	P2, P4, P5
Job guarantee	P3, P7, P8
Satisfaction with serving the government	P4, P8, P9, P10
Easy to follow developing and changing technology	P6, P7
Participating in large-scale IT projects	P7, P10

Upon analyzing Table 7, it is evident that the participants prioritize their satisfaction with serving the state as their primary advantage. This is followed by job security and learning administrative processes in public institutions, among other advantages. Additionally, IT employees consider fixed working hours, the possibility to easily keep up with new technologies, and the opportunity to participate in large-scale projects as other advantages. One participant (P8) responded to this question as follows, "*There are many advantages. Our working conditions are good and generally stable. There are not many personnel changes; we continue with the people we are used to and with whom we have good communication. There is a job guarantee, and it also makes me happy to contribute to the state and public service.*"

The next question is: What are the disadvantages of working as an IT personnel in a public institution? Participants' responses were analyzed, and the results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. *The Disadvantages of Being an IT Employee in a Public Institution*

Disadvantages	Participant
Restricted workspace	P4, P9
Low wages	P1, P2, P3, P5, P8, P9, P10
No professional development support	P1, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10
Bureaucracy	P4, P8, P10
Long working hours	P10
Inflexible work style	P2
Limited fringe benefits	K9

Table 8 shows that the participants identified low wages and lack of support for professional development as the most significant drawbacks of being an IT employee in public institutions. Intense bureaucracy, limited workspace, long hours, inflexible work style, and low benefits were also mentioned as disadvantages. In this question, the P10 coded participant responded to the question as follows "*Low salary policy, not seeing the value you deserve, not being able to advance in your career, educational limitations, long working hours, intense bureaucracy and political pressure, not being agile.*"

Question 18 on the interview form asked participants about the aspects of working at the institution that satisfied them. Table 9 presents a summary of the participants' responses to the questions. When Table 9 is examined, the results indicate that the participants are content with their employment in a public institution and are pleased to contribute to government-related projects. Additionally, they appreciate their coworkers. To this question, P5 responded as follows, "*The fact that it is a state institution that directly follows technological developments and gives direction nationally*", while P2 responded as follows "*The chance to contribute to the projects to be developed as a country in the medium and long term, to transfer the technical skills I have acquired to the policy and strategy level and the chance to work together with people from various backgrounds*".

Table 9. *Participants' Satisfaction Aspects of their Institutions*

Satisfaction Aspects	Participant
Contributing to government projects	P2, P4, P10
Ability to use technical skills	P1, P2
Being a government institution and its prestige	P4, P5, P6, P9
Compliance and good communication skills	P7, P8
Work Climate	P9
Co-workers	P1, P2, P3

In the nineteenth question of the interview form, the participants were asked about aspects of working for public institutions that did not satisfy their needs. The responses were similar to the answers emphasized to the question about the disadvantages of working as an IT staff member in a public institution. The participants identified several issues, including workload distribution, inadequate physical conditions, communication problems, work disruptions, and lack of merit. Participant 4 was particularly dissatisfied with communication problems, being given a workload below their capacity and not being offered training opportunities. The primary concern identified by Participant 1 was the unequal distribution of workloads and the failure to consider employee preferences.

In the final question of the interview form, participants were asked whether they had any additional comments. Participant P8 suggested that private health insurance should be considered due to the risky nature of the occupation. Participant P10 recommended that organizations develop strategies to retain qualified IT personnel to prevent brain drain. The issue of IT personnel leaving the country because of insufficient salaries, long working hours, and inflexibility was highlighted. Action should be taken to address this problem. The remaining participants did not provide any additional comments and expressed their gratitude to the researchers for their efforts in gauging job satisfaction.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study reveals public IT employee job satisfaction. In line with this objective, interviews were conducted with 10 IT employees from 3 different public institutions in Ankara. Because of the analysis of the participants' experiences and opinions, it was seen that their qualifications were mostly compatible with their jobs. An analysis of the responses indicated that the organizations were unable to leverage the potential of their employees and that professional development opportunities were limited. An analysis of the attitudes of the participants toward their jobs revealed that most participants demonstrated a high level of commitment and care about their work. However, after facing some problems, they stated that their commitment gradually decreased and they became insensitive to their jobs. Metin (2020) stated that public IT employees have a staff turnover problem, and the main reason for this problem is that they cannot satisfy their need for self-realization.

Another result of the research is that considering employee opinions, facilitating communication, and contributing to professional development increase IT employees' commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, and performance. In addition, it has been revealed that good communication, cooperation, and coordination positively affect job satisfaction, and in cases of incompatibility and lack of communication, teamwork should be encouraged and efforts should be made to achieve harmony. Other research results also show that job satisfaction positively affects employee productivity. It is also negatively related to the employee turnover rate (Egan, Yang, & Bartlet, 2004; Korkmaz & Erdogan, 2014; Silverthorne, 2004). Employees' job dissatisfaction can cause disasters for an organization, such as apathy toward their responsibilities, lateness to work, disengagement from their jobs, and decreased job performance, all of which negatively affect the daily functioning of the organization. These can result in employees leaving the organization, leading to high employee turnover (Gregory, 2011, Hee et al., 2018). This situation should be carefully evaluated for public institutions that have had difficulty employing IT employees for many years. It should be considered that IT employees' work styles, satisfaction, and commitment differ from other employees (Drucker, 2002). It should be kept in mind that employee satisfaction and satisfaction levels with their jobs depend on various factors, and working environments should be improved. In particular, the hierarchical organizational structure in public institutions does not meet the needs of IT employees.

It has been observed that workload distribution is generally not fair and balanced, work is assigned based on performance, and employees need equal opportunities and a fair working environment. In addition, this balance needs to be established because working outside of working hours will cause problems if it is continuous, negatively affect the work-life balance, and reduce the time allocated to their private lives. On the other hand, flexible working hours that can be implemented can positively affect the satisfaction and performance of IT employees.

The study revealed that public IT employees are generally paid low wages with no fair wage mechanism in place. The additional research findings indicate that salaries are a significant factor that affects job satisfaction (Hee et al., 2018; Utriainen & Kyngäs, 2009). It would be beneficial to review public institutions' salary policies for IT employees. At the very least, they should be equalized with private sector IT personnel who perform the same job functions. This can help reduce the probability of public institutions' IT employee turnover rates. Furthermore, a suitable salary policy based on performance-based evaluations can be implemented.

The public sector is an essential pillar of any functioning society. However, it faces challenges despite providing services aimed at improving people's lives. reputation problems among IT employees, communication difficulties, and institutional resistance can alienate IT workers from public institutions. Managers and decision makers in public organizations must understand that IT workers have different needs than other employees. Managers should simplify

IT workers' bureaucracies and provide support to eliminate barriers between functional areas. Transforming the work style to a digital-first system can motivate IT workers to work in public institutions. In addition, IT workers can work seamlessly between the workplace and home with consistent and secure network access. The physical presence of IT workers in the workplace does not necessarily guarantee productivity. Therefore, hybrid working opportunities should be provided for IT workers.

Researchers argue that job satisfaction is essential for employee motivation (Rao, 2005). Employee motivation and performance are even more important, especially considering that digital transformation has affected the entire world and organizations. Improvement of working environments, communication, and the creation of motivational and encouraging environments are at the forefront. Thus, public IT employees' performance, motivation, and job satisfaction can increase. Job satisfaction and service quality can be enhanced by workers who are satisfied with their work. In this regard, managers and policymakers at public institutions should focus on providing various opportunities to their employees to keep them satisfied (Kabir & Parvin, 2011). Employees should be provided advancement opportunities, such as salary increases and participation in policymaking, to improve job satisfaction and performance. In addition, security and good relationships with managers and co-workers are important for job satisfaction.

This study has some limitations. Interviews were conducted with 10 IT employees. In future studies, a questionnaire can be applied to public IT employees using a quantitative research method on the same subject, and interviews can be conducted with IT employees from different cities. In addition, the effect of demographic variables such as gender, age, years of service, and educational status on the satisfaction of public IT employees can be investigated.

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