

UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

Executive MBA Training in Agribusiness and Commerce

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**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF JOB SATISFACTION:
A CASE STUDY IN CROATIA**

Master Thesis

Zagreb, October 2007.

UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

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UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

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Supervisor: Morag Mitchell, Ph.D. Scottish Agricultural College

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1. Introduction

Attitude is an evaluative statement that can either be favourable or unfavourable concerning certain objects, people, or events. All attitudes have three components. Cognitive component includes evaluation of the object, affective component is the emotional segment of the attitude and behavioural component refers to intention to behave in a certain way toward the object.

One of the most important attitudes in the study of organizational behaviour is job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction can be defined as a positive feeling about a person's job resulting from evaluation of its characteristics. (Robbins and Judge, 2007.) Satisfaction derived from work can be measured by simply asking people how satisfied they are with their job. However, a person's assessment of job satisfaction may also require complex summation of a number of job elements. Any employed person can be highly satisfied with some job facets and at the same time dissatisfied with others. Job satisfaction is therefore usually measured in two ways – by a single, global rating and by summation score where many job elements are rated. Of all the different facets of work, such as pay, promotion, supervisors, co-workers, usually the most important factor in overall job satisfaction is the work itself. A person doing the work he/she loves can sometimes put up with other, less favourable aspects in the workplace. Interesting job that provides independence, variety, new challenges, is satisfactory for most employees. Other characteristics of the job also contribute to overall feeling of job satisfaction, the most important being relationship with co-workers, promotion possibilities, the level of pay, relationship with management, external conditions of work, job safety, decision making possibilities etc.

The level of job satisfaction has significant consequences for the employee as well as for the company. When employees are satisfied with their job, their productivity is usually affected in a positive way which is good for the company, but it is also a positive thing for the employees and their feeling of self-esteem and overall satisfaction in life. Dissatisfaction with work is more often the topic of scientific research since the consequences of an unsatisfied employee are usually more serious and are expressed through decreased productivity, absenteeism and turnover (leaving the company).

A theoretical framework that describes the behaviour of dissatisfied worker is called **exit-voice-loyalty-neglect framework**. (Robbins and Judge, 2007.) This theory explains that there are four possible responses to an unsatisfactory working situation and they can be viewed along two dimensions: constructive/destructive and active/passive. Exit is an active and destructive behaviour, where an employee chooses to leave the organization.

An active and constructive behaviour is called voice, where a worker is actively trying to improve the conditions by suggesting improvements, discussing with management, joining the union and similar behaviours. Loyalty is a passive and constructive way in which an employee is optimistically waiting for the conditions to improve, trusting the management of the company. Passive and destructive behaviour is called neglect where employees allow conditions to worsen and this behaviour is usually tied with being late and absent from work, reduction in efforts and increased errors.

Besides job satisfaction, there are other important attitudes related to work. **Job involvement** measures the degree to which people identify psychologically with their job and consider their performance a part of their self-image. People with high job involvement strongly identify with their work and they care about its results. If a person is highly involved in what he/she does, the probability of negative work attitudes is reduced, and it has been found that high job involvement is related to fewer absences and lower resignation rates. (Van Dick et al, 2004.)

Organizational commitment is also one of the important attitudes to work and it is defined as a state in which an employee identifies with an organization and its goals and wishes to remain in the organization. (Robbins and Judge, 2007) Previous research has shown that organizational commitment can be divided into three separate dimensions. Affective commitment is an emotional attachment to the organization and belief in its values. Continuance commitment refers to perceived economic of staying in an organization compared to leaving it, while normative commitment is a feeling of obligation to stay in the company for moral or ethical reasons.

The research evidence so far suggests that there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and job productivity as well as negative relationship between organizational commitment and absenteeism and turnover. However, recent studies also indicate that the concept of organizational commitment may be obsolete these days because many employees do not stay with one organization during the whole working age and that today's workforce is much more fluid than it used to be.

All work-related attitudes are usually measured using attitude surveys. The typical survey consists of a set of statements or questions with a rating scale which indicates the degree of agreement with a given statement. Individual scores are achieved by summing up responses to all items. These surveys can give valuable information to the management of the company because the results may warn them about potential problems.

Keeping the workforce satisfied and committed to an organization usually results in higher productivity and lower rates of negative workplace behaviours. Every management should try to reduce so-called withdrawal behaviours, such as lateness, turnover and absenteeism. Hanisch and Hulin (1991, cited from Sagie, 1998.) suggested a theory where withdrawal behaviours reflect attitudes such as job dissatisfaction, low level of organizational commitment or an intention to quit. According to this theory, an employee who is often absent from work is consciously or unconsciously expressing negative attachment to the organization. Absenteeism is especially frequent among the victims of workplace deviant behaviours such as mobbing or sexual harassment.

Turnover is also negatively related to job satisfaction but more often intention to leave the company may be influenced by other factors such as labour market conditions, expectations about alternative job opportunities and length of tenure with the current organization. However, job satisfaction and organizational commitment seem to be good predictors of turnover. That is one more reason why management should be careful about the levels of job satisfaction because harmful effects of high turnover rates have been documented (Chen, 2006). This is especially the case if the company invests significant resources into training and development of experts. Some companies try to hold on to their employees by binding them with contracts but that may be only a short-term solution against turnover while job dissatisfaction will probably remain the source of deviant workplace behaviour.

2. Review of literature

Research literature on various aspects of job satisfaction is extensive. The concept of job satisfaction has been widely researched and related to many other psychological and other variables in order to explain organizational behaviour. However, research literature in Croatian is scarce, so most of the sources come from foreign countries.

There are some scientific articles dealing with characteristics of job satisfaction in different countries. Long (2005.) describes a study of job satisfaction in Australia. The paper investigates issues of job satisfaction and gender and finds that women are generally happier in work than men, but this finding is true only for lower skilled and lower educated employees. The determinants of job satisfaction for men and women in this group are significantly different but these differences were not found in higher educated and higher skilled professionals.

Michael Rose (2005.) has conducted a study of job satisfaction in Britain and found a complex situation. There was a decline in satisfaction with particular job facets, the work itself and hours worked. He also found rise in satisfaction with total pay and job security, rising job satisfaction among men and a steep decline in job satisfaction among women.

Green and Tsitsianis (2005.) compared national trends in job satisfaction in Britain and Germany. They found declining job satisfaction in both countries, but they stated that this can not be attributed to changing job security, but to intensification of work efforts in both countries.

Lau et al (2005) investigated the effect of financial and non-financial measures on job satisfaction. Their hypothesis is that use of performance measures will affect managers' job satisfaction. They found this to be true but the effects are indirect and they depend on managers' perception of the fairness of these measures and perception of trust these measures promote.

Gines-Mora et al (2005) researched the problem of job satisfaction among European higher education graduates. They found similar levels of satisfaction with men and women and the positive impact of age and social background. Their dissatisfaction is caused by possibilities of further learning on the job.

Abraham Sagie (1998) gave a revision of relations between employee absenteeism, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Hypothesis of the research was that voluntary absence from work can be predicted by organizational commitment, job satisfaction and their interaction. The research confirmed this hypothesis although the intention to quit job was not significantly related to any type of absence from work.

Stefan Gaertner (1999) studied the relationship between structural determinants of job satisfaction and organizational commitment within context of contemporary turnover models. He found that distributive justice, promotional chances and supervisory support are directly related to organizational commitment. The exception was amount of pay which was unrelated both to job satisfaction and to organizational commitment.

Schwepker (2001), Coomber & Barriball (2007) and Chen (2006) all investigated job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions for specific groups of employees such as nurses, salespeople and flight-attendants. The results showed that job-specific characteristics influence their job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Nurses have a high level of stress that influences job satisfaction, for salespeople relations with management are important and for flight-attendants it is the pay and marital status.

Welbourne et al (2007) conducted a research on relation of attributional style, workplace coping strategies and job satisfaction. The results showed that a positive occupational attributional style was associated with greater use of cognitive restructuring coping styles and less use of avoidance styles to deal with stress. This style is closely related to job satisfaction.

3. Objectives and research methodology

3.1 Organization

Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zagreb

Faculty of Agriculture in Zagreb (www.agr.hr) was founded in 1919 as the fifth faculty of the Zagreb University. It is the leading institution of its kind in the Republic of Croatia, with respect to the number of researchers and their activities in the field of agricultural sciences and the profession, in that more than 200 researchers are involved in scientific and research work. Main research subjects are: preservation of the biodiversity of plants and autochthonous indigenous breeds of animal, pollution of soils and waters, effective plant protection, application of biotechnology in agriculture, application of geoinformatics science in agriculture, new technologies for sustainable and renewable (organic) agricultural production, new food production technologies, evaluation and preservation of landscapes and the heritage of garden-come-park architecture, socio-economic and marketing analyses of Croatian agriculture, competitiveness of Croatian agriculture on the domestic and world markets. The mission of the Faculty of Agriculture is:

- to ensure that courses of study lead to the acquisition of knowledge and to the skills needed for profitable agricultural production through the use of renewable natural resources, while at the same time ensuring the protection of the environment, as well as the preservation of rural areas
- to provide opportunities for the gaining of a wide variety of practical knowledge, ranging from the production of cereal crops, vegetables, fruit and flowers, through to livestock breeding, fisheries and apiculture, as well as meat, wine and cheese processing technologies;
- to develop the concept of educating the "complete expert" who is ready to face all the challenges of the agricultural world of the new era, while simultaneously creating the conditions for the acquisition of specialised know-how essential for competitive agricultural production;
- to modify the educational system in accordance with the Bologna Process, i.e. to enable the students to integrate into European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The faculty is divided into 28 departments. At present, Faculty of Agriculture employs 427 full time staff, of which 33 are full professors, 36 associate professors, and 47 assistant professors. Other teaching staff numbers 169 persons, and administrative and technical staff includes 142 persons.

3.2 Research problems

The main goal of this paper is to measure job-related attitudes, absenteeism and turnover intentions in an organization (Faculty of Agriculture). Job-related attitudes that were the object of this research were:

- **job satisfaction (overall and faceted)**
- **job involvement**
- **organizational commitment**

The main research questions are:

- ❖ What is the level of overall job satisfaction in the organization?
- ❖ Which characteristics of job contribute most to the overall job satisfaction?
- ❖ What are the levels of job involvement in the organization?
- ❖ What are the levels of organizational commitment in the organization?
- ❖ What are the main sources of job (dis)satisfaction?
- ❖ What are the levels of absenteeism and turnover intentions in the organization?

Besides measuring job related attitudes and behaviours, some socio demographic data were also collected in order to analyze the data regarding different characteristics of the respondents.

3.3 Research design

Cross-sectional design was used in this research (employee survey). The questionnaire was constructed by partly adapting the questionnaire already used in Maslić et al (2000, 2005.) with the kind permission of the author.

3.3.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of six parts and it is attached to this paper as Appendix 2.

The first part collects basic **socio demographic data**: age, occupation, tenure in the organization, monthly income, managerial position, marital and parental status and membership in the union. The respondent's task was to provide the answer or to select one of the categories offered in the questionnaire.

The second part of the questionnaire measured **satisfaction with different job characteristics**. Nine job characteristics were listed:

- Stimulating and interesting work
- The possibility of advancement
- Pleasant co-workers
- Just remuneration
- Good earnings
- Competent leadership
- External conditions of work
- Participation in decision-making process
- Safe job

Each job characteristic was rated on two five-point Likert-type scales – on the first scale the respondent had to rate the degree to which a certain characteristic is generally important, and on the other scale respondent's task was to rate the degree in which a specific job characteristic is present in his/her current workplace. The example is given below.

Stimulating and interesting work that makes me happy

In general this is:	unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	very important
In my work this is:	not present	1	2	3	4	5	very present

The third part of the questionnaire contained a **job involvement scale**. The scale consists of 20 statements and the respondent's task is to indicate the degree of agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 means „fully disagree” and 5 means „fully agree”. The example of a statement is given below:

- *I am ready to stay after working hours to finish my work, even if I am not especially paid to do this.*
1 2 3 4 5

The fourth part of the questionnaire is dedicated to measuring the **organizational commitment**. The organizational commitment scale is made up of 18 items (statements) and the respondent's task is the same as in the previous scale – to indicate the degree of agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert scale. The example of a statement is given below:

- *I would not leave this organization because I feel an obligation to the people working in it.*
1 2 3 4 5

The fifth part of the questionnaire contains four multiple-choice questions regarding **overall job satisfaction**. Besides overall job satisfaction, respondents were asked to write down the sources of their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their own words.

The last, sixth part of the questionnaire refers to the measure of **absenteeism and turnover intentions**. Five multiple choice questions deal with the intention of leaving the present job and four multiple choice questions refer to the measure of absenteeism (number of sick-days etc.).

3.4 Sample and procedure

Before the distribution of the questionnaires, a formal approval for the procedure was requested and consequently granted by the Dean of the Faculty.

The questionnaires were distributed only to full-time employees of the Faculty of Agriculture in open envelopes. The respondents were assured that the survey is anonymous and that all data will be used exclusively for scientific purposes. In order to protect the confidentiality of data, respondents were instructed to seal the envelope before returning it. Full instruction to the respondents is given in Appendix 1. Each respondent received a copy of the instruction along with the questionnaire. The participation in the survey was voluntary and after one week respondents were reminded via e-mail message to return the questionnaire.

Total number of full-time employees is 427 and 156 valid questionnaires were returned, which gives a response rate of 36.5%.

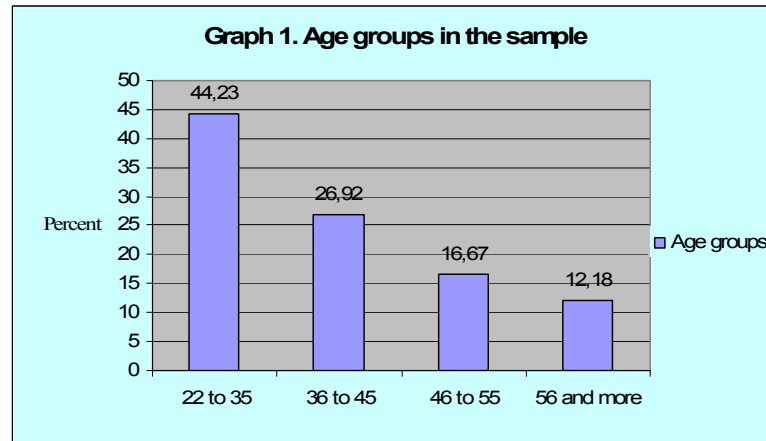
3.4.1 Data analysis

After the collection of the questionnaire after a ten-day period, data were entered and analyzed using SPSS software package (Version 13.0, 2004, SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL, USA).

Univariate and multivariate statistical methods were used in data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate frequencies, mean values and standard deviations. For more detailed analysis of differences between groups of respondents, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. To estimate the correlation between variables, we used Pearson r coefficient of correlation. Statistically significant differences were declared at $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$ levels.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Characteristics of the sample



Source: own research

Age group that was the most represented in the sample were respondents between the ages of 22 and 35. As the age increases, there are fewer respondents in respective age groups. This was partly expected because older respondents usually have a lower rate of participation in surveys. As further results will show, older respondents also tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, the fact which may reduce their willingness to participate in this kind of research. Previous studies also showed that employees with higher levels of job dissatisfaction have the need to voice their opinion therefore their rates of participation are usually higher. (Long, 2005.)

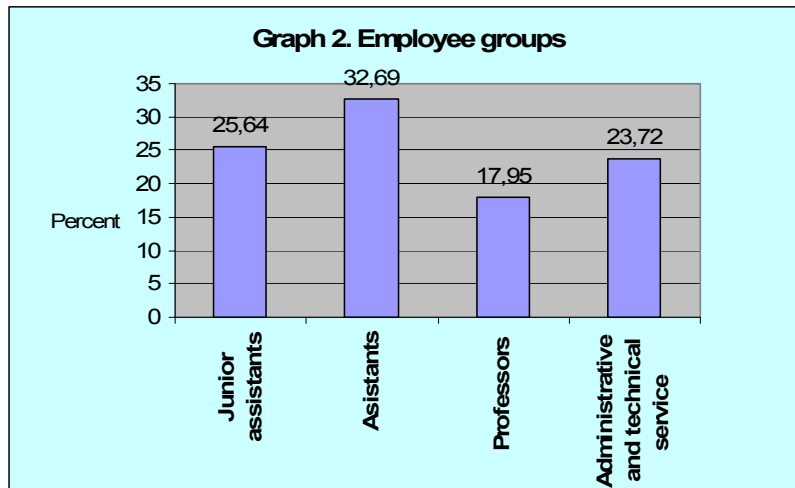
However, a slight imbalance in the distribution of age groups in the sample should be noted.

Table 1. The range and mean value of age in the sample

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	22	70	40,51	11,596

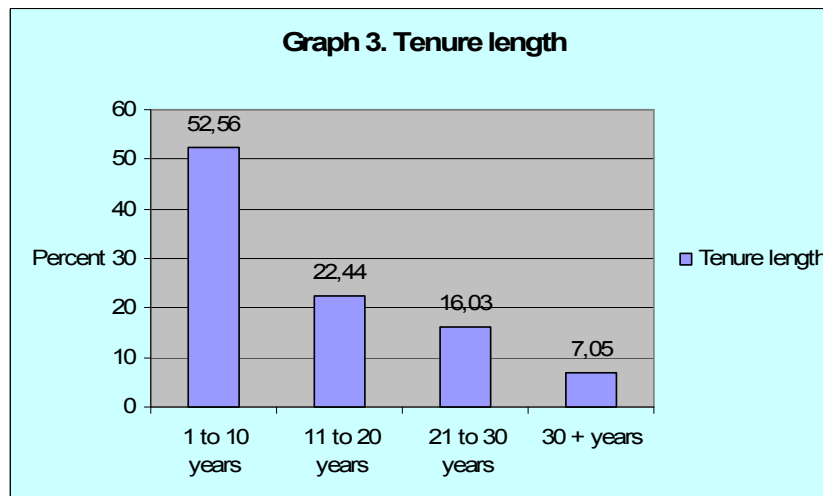
Source: own research

Table 1 shows that the youngest respondent was aged 22, and the oldest 70 years of age. Mean value of age in the sample was 40.5 years of age.



Source: own research

Educational institutions, such as Faculty of Agriculture, have a specific organization where employees are divided into groups, and this division is usually based on academic achievements and length of tenure in the organization. Besides that, all faculties have employees that are not involved in the educational process, such as administrative and technical staff. These groups are different in many characteristics as the results further in this paper will demonstrate.



Source: own research

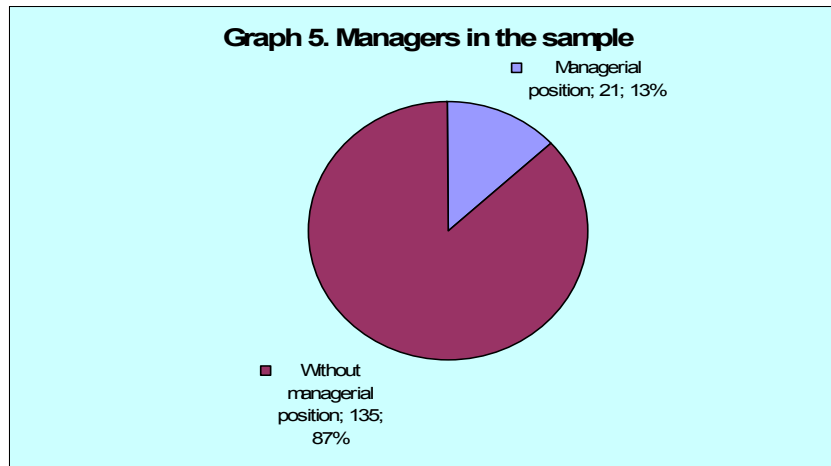
The distribution of tenure length closely resembles the distribution of age in the sample which is logical, because age and the duration of employment are closely related. The most represented group in the sample are employees with one to ten years of tenure in the organization.

Table 2. The range and mean value of tenure length in the sample

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tenure length	1	42	12,48	10,381

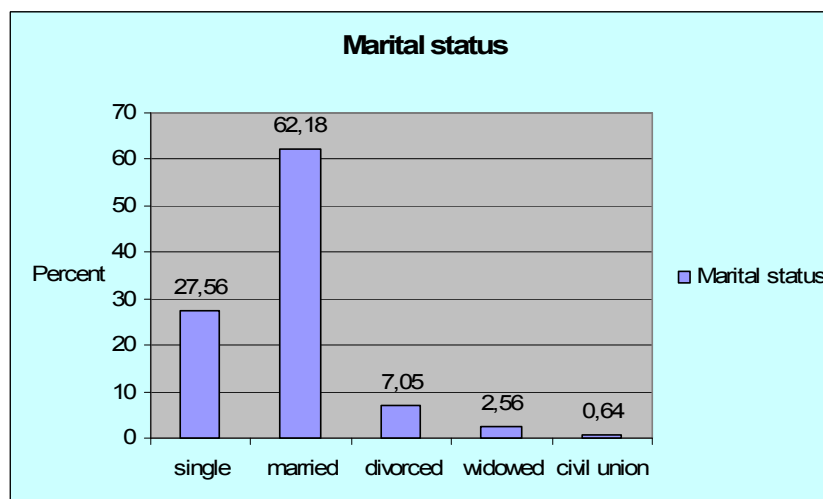
Source: own research

Tenure length ranges between one year and a maximum of 42 years, with a mean value of 12.5 years.



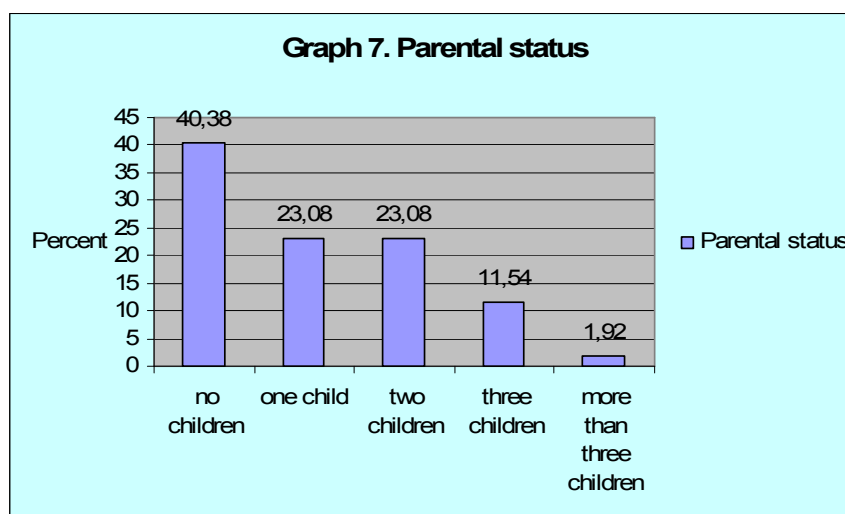
Source: own research

The sample included 21 respondents (13%) of employees who hold a managerial position. This may be the position of the Head of the Department or a member of the Faculty Administration.



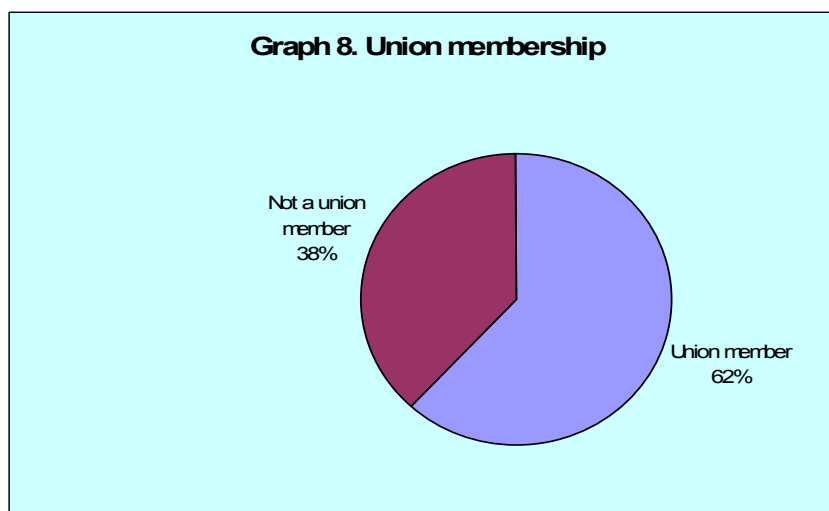
Source: own research

Most respondents in the sample are married, and the next biggest group are single employees. The proportion of divorced, widowed or employees living in a civil union are much less represented.



Source: own research

Around 60% of respondents in the sample have children, the groups with one and two children being the most represented, and groups with three and more children are present to a smaller degree.



Source: own research

As it can be seen in the Graph above, 62% of respondents are members of the union. The union in question is the Independent Union of Research and Higher Education Employees in Croatia.

Table 3. Activity level as a union member

	Frequency	Percent
I have a Union function	1	1,0
I take part in the Union actions	16	16,7
I am informed about Union actions	36	37,5
I just pay the membership fee	43	44,8
Total	96	100,0

Source: own research

However, the results in the Table 3 show that most members only pay the membership fee or they try to be informed about union actions, while only a smaller proportion takes a more active role in the union activities.

4.2. Job satisfaction characteristics

One of the respondents' tasks was to evaluate nine job characteristics (facets) in two ways – how important is a particular facet in general, and to what extent is a particular facet present in his/her current job. The ratings were given on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (completely unimportant) to 5 (very important). The results in Table 4 show the general importance of job characteristics in descending order.

Table 4. The importance of particular job facets

Job characteristic	Mean	Standard deviation
Stimulating and interesting job	4.74	0.602
Pleasant co-workers	4.71	0.655
Pay	4.69	0.678
Competent leadership	4.69	0.759
Good earnings	4.66	0.677
Job safety	4.60	0.893
External work conditions	4.54	0.765
Decision-making participation	4.45	0.837
Advancement possibilities	4.42	0.930

Source: own research

The results show that all job characteristics were rated as very important (all ratings above 4.4, the maximum rating being 5). These results can be compared with two longitudinal studies of Maslić et al (2000, 2005.). Every year since 1993, a survey of job-related attitudes was carried out among Croatian employees by these authors. The results generally revealed that pay was the most important job aspect during the period 1993-2005. High value was also placed upon good managers, pleasant co-workers and an interesting job.

Our results are very similar even though respondents have placed “interesting job” as the most important job characteristic. Although the differences between ratings are very small we can assume that payment as the extrinsic motivator will become less important as the standard of living improves and intrinsic motivators such as interesting work and pleasant colleagues will become more important.

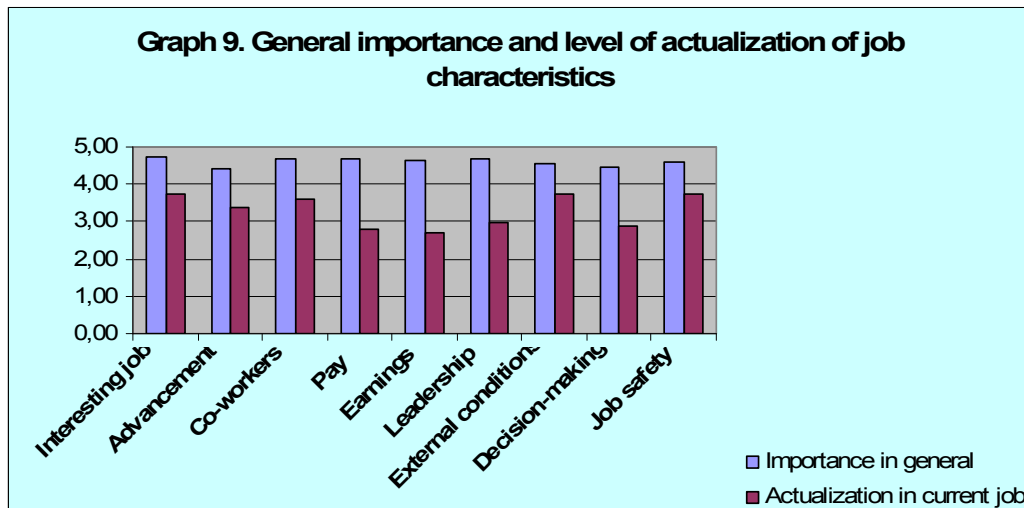
As it was already mentioned, respondents rated all job characteristics as very important in general. Table 5 shows their opinion about the actual levels of realization of these characteristics in their present job.

Table 5. The presence (realization) of particular job facets in the current job

Job characteristic	Mean	Standard deviation
Stimulating and interesting job	3.74	1.022
Job safety	3.73	1.236
External work conditions	3.72	1.157
Pleasant co-workers	3.59	1.196
Advancement possibilities	3.38	1.469
Competent leadership	2.99	1.298
Decision-making participation	2.87	1.217
Pay	2.80	1.204
Good earnings	2.70	1.115

Source: own research

It is evident that there are some discrepancies between general importance and actual realization of some job characteristics, especially for financial aspects of the work. Those discrepancies are illustrated in Graph 9.



Source: own research

In the ideal circumstances, the presence of certain job facets would be equal to its perceived importance for an employee, but that is rarely the case in everyday work environment. The graph shows that the biggest discrepancy exists for the financial aspect of work and participation in the decision-making process. These facts may help the management of the company to focus their attention on improvements in these areas in order to make their employees more satisfied.

Further statistical analysis showed that there are significant differences in the rating of job safety characteristic between different categories of employees. ANOVA (One-way analysis of variance) revealed that employees in administrative and technical services of the Faculty place more importance to job safety than the educational staff ($F=4.475$; $df=3$; $p<0.05$). This finding is expected because academic staff usually achieves a status where job safety is guaranteed whereas many employees in administrative services have contracts that are subject to revision periodically. Regarding the importance of other job characteristics, no significant differences between employee groups were found.

There are also statistically significant differences between employee categories in the perception of realization of job characteristics. Once again, employees in administrative and technical services stand out from other groups (educational staff). They feel that they have a less interesting job ($F=12.44$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$) than other groups, almost no possibility of advancement ($F=15.95$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$), lower pay ($F=4.81$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$), and that they do not participate in the decision making process ($F=4.81$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$). Along with their colleagues from administrative and technical services, the category of junior assistants also differs from other groups in their perception that they are not well paid for the job they do ($F=7.58$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$).

4.3. Job involvement

Job involvement was measured using 20 item scale and the respondent's task was to indicate the degree of agreement with each statement (scale from 1- fully disagree to 5- fully agree). Most items were positive statements indicating high job involvement and seven statements were negative, indicating low job involvement. During data analysis, negative statements were reverse coded so the higher number on the scale always indicates higher job involvement.

The reliability of the job involvement scale, measured by Alpha coefficient, is $\alpha=0.80$ which indicates high reliability of the scale.

Table 6. Example of statements in the job involvement scale

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
I am ready to stay after working hours to finish my work, even if I am not especially paid to do this.	4.12	0.966
For me, time at work just flies by.	4.08	0.862
A person can be judged based on how good he/she is doing his/her job.	3.95	0.914
I live for my work.	2.37	1.017
I have other activities that are more important for me than my work.	2.13	1.033

Source: own research

Table 6 illustrates some statements from the job involvement scale for which the respondents showed the highest degree of agreement or disagreement. In general, respondents see their work as a very important part of their life and they are ready to commit themselves to doing the work properly.

For each respondent, job involvement score can be computed by adding the ratings for all 20 items. The maximum job involvement score is 100 (20 items x 5 which is the highest rating).

Table 7. Range and mean value of job involvement score

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Involvement Score	42	87	65,62	9,327

Source: own research

As Table 7 shows, job involvement score range goes between 42 and 87, and the mean value is 65.6. This mean value indicates job involvement higher than average among the employees on the Faculty of Agriculture.

However, there are differences in job involvement between employee groups.

Table 8. Job involvement scores for employee groups

Employee group	Mean Job involvement score	Standard deviation
Junior assistants	65,05	8,524
Assistants	62,96	9,394
Professors	72,71	7,403
Administrative and technical services	64,54	9,026

Source: own research

Professors have a significantly higher level of job involvement compared to other employee groups ($F=7.94$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$). This higher level of involvement may come as a result of years of experience and a certain social status that comes with the title. Younger employees might have other priorities and can not commit themselves to work as much as professors.

4.4. Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment was measured with an 18 item scale and the respondent's task was to indicate the degree of agreement with each statement (scale from 1- fully disagree to 5- fully agree). Four items were reverse coded so the higher number on the scale always indicates higher organizational commitment.

The reliability of the organizational commitment scale, measured by Alpha coefficient, is $\alpha=0.82$ which indicates high reliability of the scale.

Table 9. Example of statements in the organizational commitment scale

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
This organization means a lot to me.	3.82	0.954
At this moment, staying in this organization is equally a necessity and my wish.	3.79	0.977
I do not feel emotionally tied to this organization.	2.83	1.114
I would feel guilty if I left this organization now.	2.51	1.139

Source: own research

Table 9 illustrates some statements from the job involvement scale for which the respondents showed the highest degree of agreement or disagreement. Respondents feel emotionally tied to the organization, however, some of them might leave if they found a better job opportunity and they would not feel guilty about leaving.

For each respondent, organizational commitment score can be computed by adding the ratings for all 18 items. The maximum job involvement score is 90 (18 items x 5 which is the highest rating).

Table 10. Range and mean value of job involvement score

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organizational commitment	34	84	58,06	9,672

Source: own research

Organizational commitment scores are in a range between 34 and 84 points, mean value being 58 which indicates that commitment to organization is higher than average.

Once again, the differences in organizational commitment between employee groups were found.

Table 11. Organizational commitment scores for employee groups

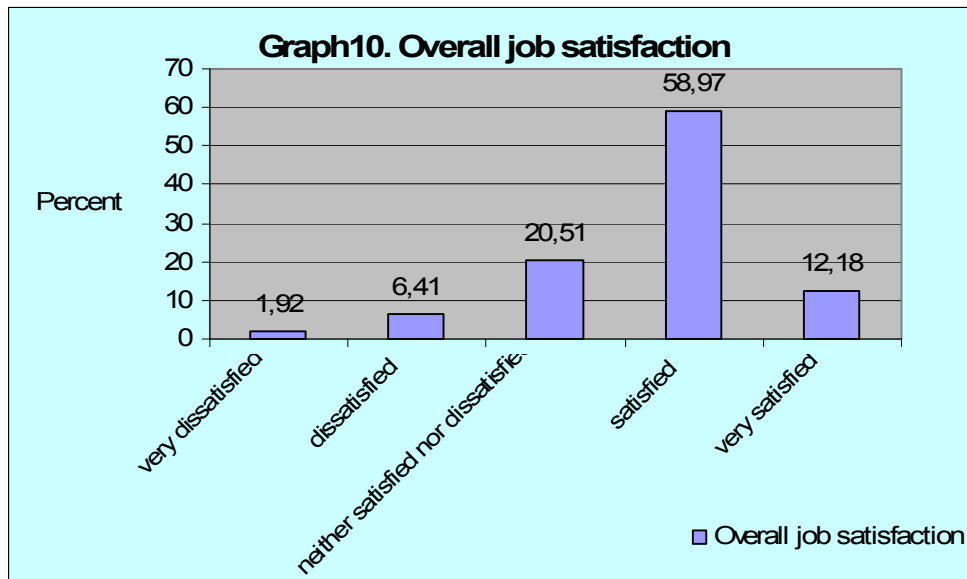
Employee group	Mean Organizational commitment score	Standard deviation
Junior assistants	55,55	8,373
Assistants	54,84	9,431
Professors	63,25	10,419
Administrative and technical services	61,30	8,276

Source: own research

As it was the case with job involvement, professors have a significantly higher level of organizational commitment in comparison with other employee groups ($F=7.74$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$). This result is also in line with expectations, having in mind that organizational commitment develops with time spent in an organization and with achieving certain goals within one's position (Chen, 2006). It is also interesting to note that employees in administrative and technical services have a higher level of organizational commitment than some of the educational staff (junior assistants and assistants).

4.5. Overall job satisfaction

In the first part of the questionnaire we tried to measure satisfaction with different job characteristics. Graph 10 illustrates overall job satisfaction measured by one multiple-choice question.



Source: own research

We can see that 8.3% of Faculty employees are either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with their job. There are 20.5% of employees that are ambivalent (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). Employees that are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs make 71% of the sample. These results can be encouraging for the Faculty management because majority of employees are satisfied in their workplace. However, a relatively high percentage of employees are ambivalent (20.5%) and 8% of dissatisfied workers should not be ignored.

4.5.1 Sources of job (dis)satisfaction

The reasons for the employees' perception of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction were tapped using an open-ended question, where respondents could state, in their own words, the things from which they derive their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in work. Table 12 lists the sources of job satisfaction, the most frequently mentioned being at the top of the list.

Table 12. Sources of job satisfaction

Sources of job satisfaction
Job itself
Co-workers
Independence, freedom to create one's own work
Professional advancement
Contacts with colleagues from abroad, travelling
Work with students
Teaching
Creativity and job diversity
Challenging work in science

Source: own research

The most frequently mentioned sources of job satisfaction are job itself and relationship with co-workers. These results are in line with the findings of similar research done by Weiss (2002.) where it was also found that employees usually derive their job satisfaction from the characteristics of the job itself and from meaningful and pleasant relationships with their colleagues.

The reasons for job dissatisfaction are listed in Table 13; most frequently mentioned ones are at the top of the list.

Table 13 Sources of job dissatisfaction

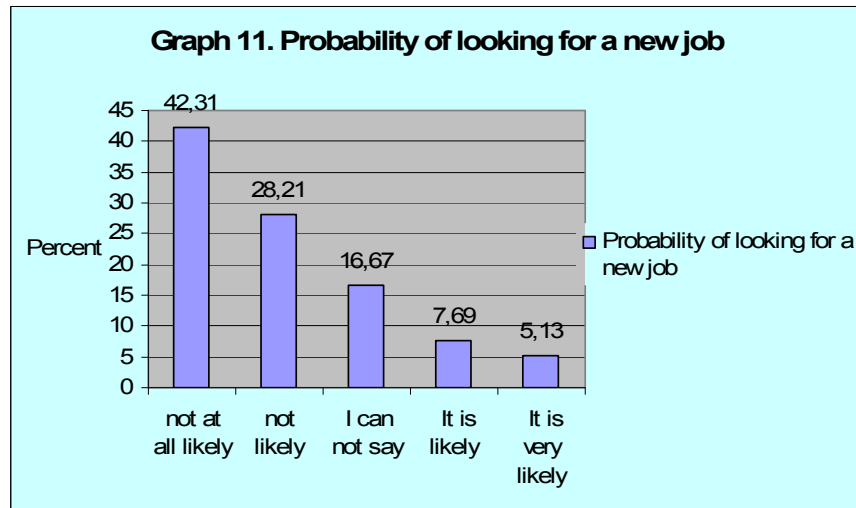
Sources of job dissatisfaction
Administrative work, bureaucracy
Bad organization of work
Low payment
Superiors
Co-workers (interpersonal relations)
Job insecurity
Advancement requirements
Injustice (different standards)
Informal groups (gossip)

As it could have been expected, the most frequently mentioned sources of dissatisfaction in a large organization are bureaucracy and bad organization of work. Many employees feel that disorganized management of everyday work is significantly reducing their efficacy in work and their satisfaction. Low pay received for work is the next biggest source of job dissatisfaction.

Although co-workers were one of the biggest sources of job satisfaction, interpersonal relations are also a significant source of job dissatisfaction, especially relations with superiors and some co-workers. Many respondents have mentioned informal groups as a source of dissatisfaction because these groups sometimes exert their influence on the management and spread gossip within the organization. Other sources of dissatisfaction are related to institutional requirements for advancement that can be a source of stress and result in job insecurity if an employee fails to fulfil them. Besides that, some employees feel that there is injustice or different standards in advancement decisions and this perception of injustice can create a rather negative atmosphere in the workplace and influence interpersonal relations as well.

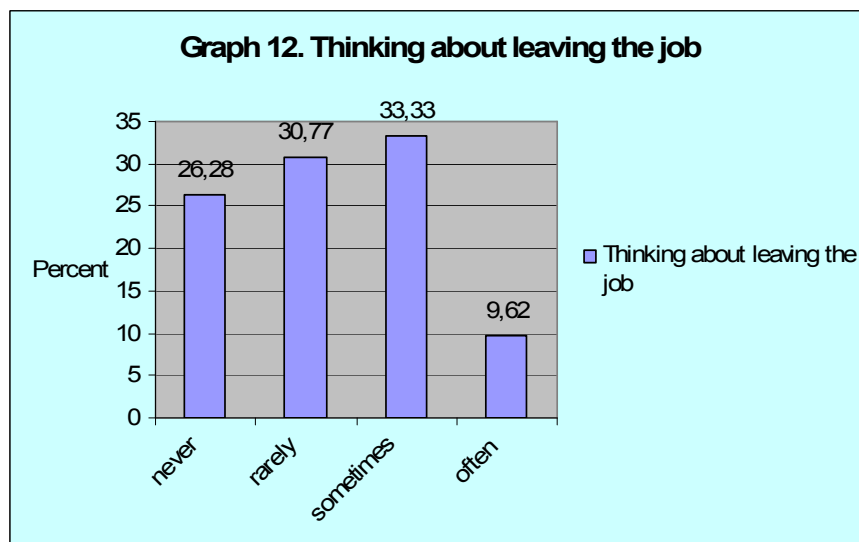
4.6. Turnover intentions and absenteeism

Turnover intentions and absenteeism were measured using simple multiple-choice questions. Graph 11 presents the results for the probability of looking for a new job in the near future.

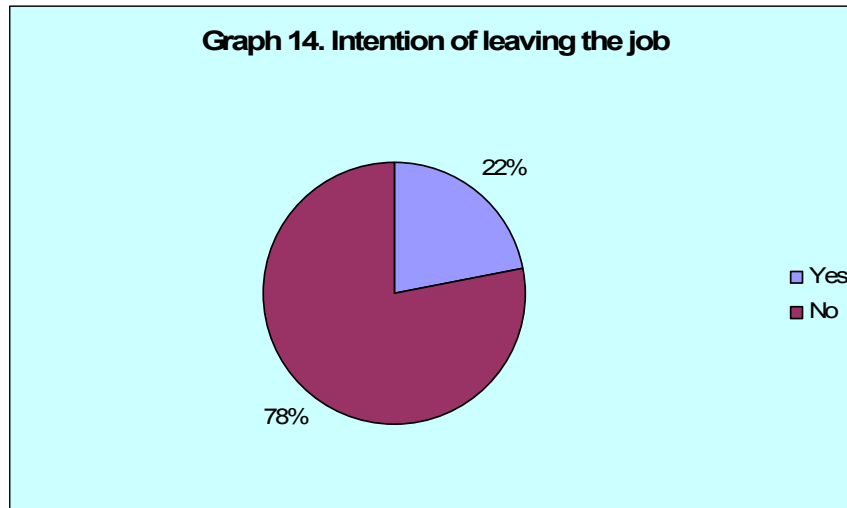


Source: own research

There are 12.8% of employees who think that is likely or very likely that they will be looking for a new job soon.

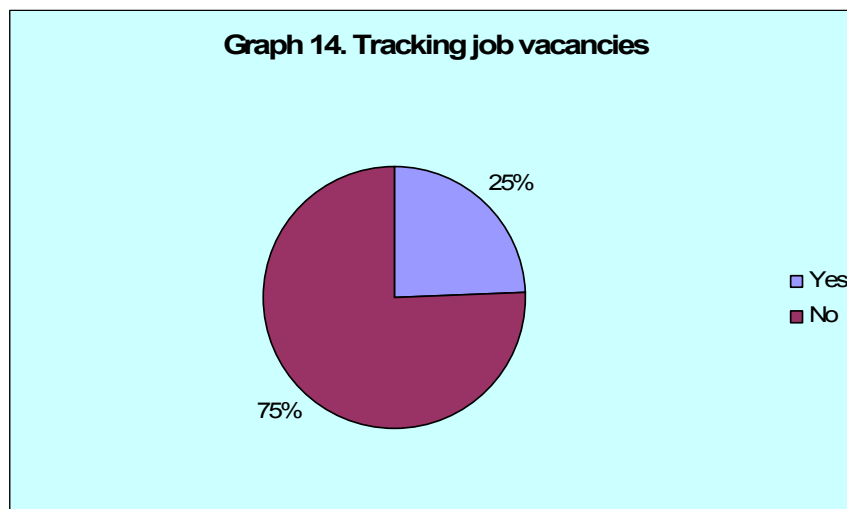


A similar percentage of respondents (9.62%) often think about leaving the current job. Frequent thinking about leaving the job is one of the most usual predictors of turnover intention. Further 33% of employees sometimes think of leaving the job.



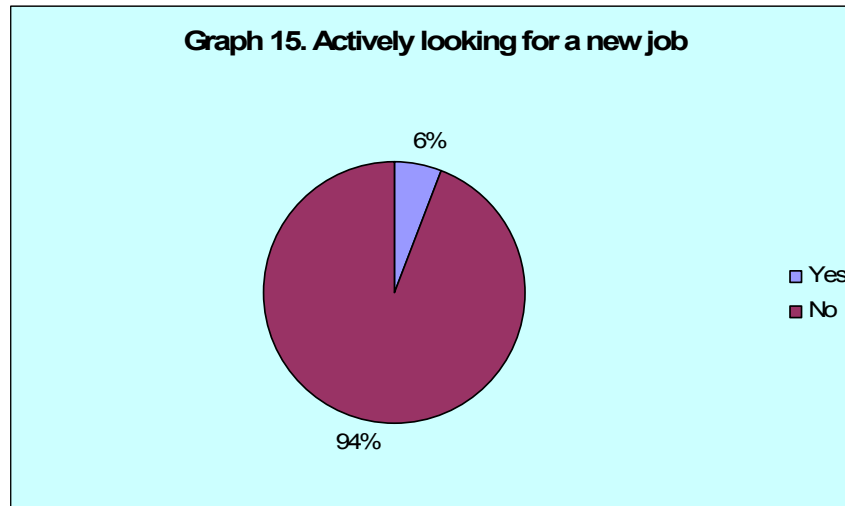
Source: own research

If a favourable opportunity comes up, 22% of respondents stated that they would be ready to leave the organization. This intention is tied to the favourable opportunity in another organization and that might explain a slightly higher percentage of intention to leave. Employees are less willing to leave if the future is uncertain.



Source: own research

Graph 14 shows that 25% of employees are tracking job vacancies i.e. they are trying to find information about available jobs that fits their expert profile. This does not necessarily imply the intention to leave the job, but it may be an indicator of latent job dissatisfaction.

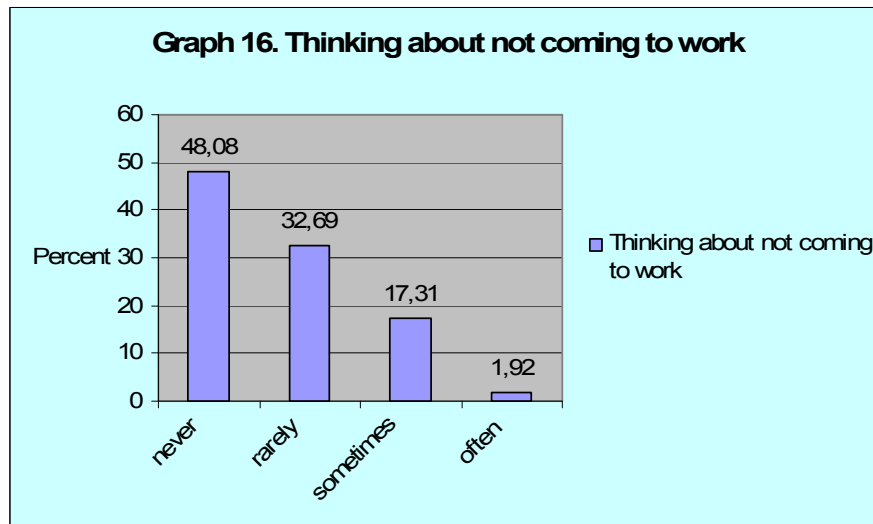


Source: own research

Only 6% of employees are actively looking for a new job. Active search includes writing applications, going to interviews and other activities that could result in finding a new job.

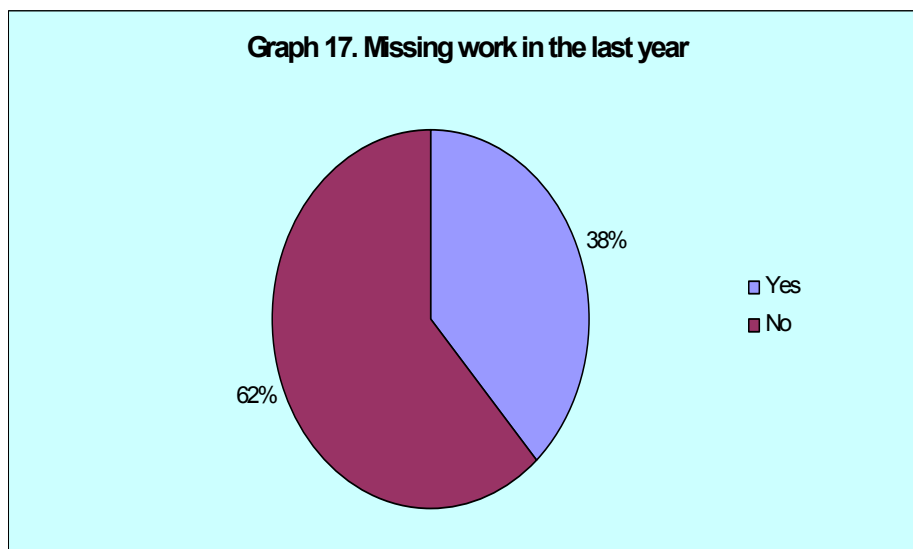
Different measures of turnover intention listed above show that many employees think about leaving from time to time. However, only 6% are actively trying to change their job. Turnover intention is highly related to job characteristics and it is higher in some high-risk or stressful jobs. (Schwepker, 2001.) Some professions associated with high turnover rates are nurses, flight-attendants, firemen and similar stressful occupations. (Chen, 2005; Coomber & Barriball, 2006.). Being employed in academic institution is not associated with high turnover rates.

Absenteeism is one of withdrawal behaviours that indicate conscious or unconscious dissatisfaction with work or an intention to quit the job. Absenteeism is usually negatively correlated with job satisfaction and organizational involvement. Graph 16 shows how often respondents think of not coming to work.



Source: own research

Only 1.92% of respondents often think about staying home rather than going to work, while 17% think about it sometimes.



Source: own research

There are 38% of employees who missed working days in the period of last year. However, most of them stated that their absence from work was justified, usually due to illness of their own or a member of their family. 62% of respondents were not absent at all, so the data shown above demonstrate that Faculty of Agriculture does not have a big problem with employees' absence from work. However, it should be noted that attendance monitoring in an academic setting (and in a large organization such as Faculty of Agriculture) is more relaxed than in private companies.

4.7. Correlations

In this part of the discussion, it would be interesting to consider correlations between certain variables and concepts of job involvement and organizational commitment.

Table 14 Correlations of job involvement with other variables

Job involvement	Correlation
Organizational commitment	0.38**
Age	0.26**
Length of tenure	0.21**
Overall job satisfaction	0.27**
Monthly pay	0.32**
Absence from work	-0.22**
Turnover intention	-0.17**
Management position	-0.21**

** - Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The concept of job involvement is positively related to organizational commitment which is a finding already supported in literature (Gaertner, 1999.). These concepts are somewhat similar, job involvement being dedication to one's work and organizational commitment being loyalty and emotional rapport with an organization where job is performed. Other variables in correlation with job involvement are age of respondents, length of tenure in the organization and pay level. This is also expected as people develop job involvement after staying in one professional area for a longer period of time and financial reward can certainly help in developing a responsible attitude to one's work. It is also visible in these results that higher job involvement is positively correlated with overall job satisfaction.

Job involvement is negatively correlated with absence from work, turnover intention and having a managerial position. It could have been expected that job involvement will have a negative correlation with withdrawal behaviours, but results also suggest that managerial positions are less involved in their jobs. This may be explained with the fact that in the Faculty context managers (Heads of Departments and members of Faculty management) are expected to perform their usual duties (teaching, research, project work) while being managers at the same time. This duality of roles may lead to a decrease in basic job involvement.

Table 15 Correlations of organizational commitment with other variables

Organizational commitment	Correlation
Age	0.38**
Length of tenure	0.39**
Overall job satisfaction	0.44**
Monthly pay	0.19*
Absence from work	-0.21**
Turnover intention	-0.48**
Management position	-0.19**

** - Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* - Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The general direction of correlations is the same as in the case of job involvement, even though the correlations with organizational commitment seem to be stronger. Organizational commitment is strongly related to overall job satisfaction although it has been a matter of theoretical discussions whether satisfaction leads to commitment or the other way around (Chen, 2006.). Commitment to an organization develops over time so it is logical that age and length of tenure are positively correlated to it. Pay level is correlated to commitment but this correlation is weaker.

Withdrawal behaviours (absence, quitting) are negatively correlated with commitment to organization as well as having a managerial position.

5. Implications for the management

To the best of our knowledge, this research of job related attitudes conducted among employees of the Faculty of Agriculture is the first research of the kind in the organization and in the academic community in Croatia in general. The “Bologna process” of higher education reform in Europe has introduced regular surveying of students’ attitudes towards the educational process and teachers, but so far there has been no structured effort to measure the attitudes of educational staff, their job satisfaction and other job-related attitudes and behaviours.

As it is frequently mentioned in the literature, job-related attitudes can have very important consequences for the organization and can serve to the management of the company as an early warning for potential problems (Robbins & Judge, 2007.). This research can serve as a starting point for the management of the Faculty of Agriculture to start considering how employees feel in their workplace, what are the sources of their satisfaction as well as to point out weak points and sources of dissatisfaction. Knowing one’s employees is crucial for the management to prevent behaviours that would have a negative effect on the organization. Negative effects of employees’ dissatisfaction have been well documented in the literature and the most usual ones are high rates of turnover, bad interpersonal relations, bad organizational climate etc. All of these issues, if not addressed by the management can have a negative influence on the organization’s productivity.

In the actual case of the Faculty of Agriculture there are several points for the management to consider and try to improve in order to address the concerns and dissatisfaction of employees. Certain job characteristics are a source of job dissatisfaction, such as low payment, participation of employees in decision-making process, dissatisfaction with the leadership and advancement possibilities. Although the management can not do much about payment levels since this is regulated by the State, other job characteristics that employees are dissatisfied with lie within their area of influence. The management can consider a higher degree of employee participation in the decision making process, since it has already been documented that participative style of running a company may have positive effects (Kim, 2002.).

The process of academic advancement should be made more transparent as many employees see it as a source of injustice and different standards. The perception of injustice usually leads to worsening of interpersonal relations and overall job satisfaction. The management should focus on improving the intrinsic parts of the job, making the work interesting and challenging.

Employees of the Faculty of Agriculture have demonstrates levels of job involvement and organizational commitment that are above average. In general, employees like their jobs and the organization they work for which is also confirmed by relatively high overall job satisfaction level. However, the management should take note of all the sources of dissatisfaction mentioned, such as bureaucracy and bad organization of the work.

Negative workplace behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover intentions are not very often in this organization. This means that employee dissatisfaction has not come to the alarming levels, still, to prevent their appearance in higher proportions, all employee suggestions should be discussed and, if necessary, corrective actions should be taken.

There are significant differences in job satisfaction between different employee groups. This indicates that there are employee groups (namely administrative and technical services employees) that are more dissatisfied and have more objections. The management should consider trying to solve specific problems of each group in order to improve the conditions of work for them. Differences between groups can have the effect that some groups of employees may feel that they are constantly being treated unfairly which can cause a higher proportion of job dissatisfaction and negative behaviours.

In conclusion, the overall situation with job satisfaction and related attitudes on the Faculty of Agriculture is not alarming. Nevertheless, there are issues that need to b addressed by the management in order to improve the organizational climate and simulate employees for an even better performance at their workplace.

6. Summary

The goal of this research was to investigate job related attitudes, absenteeism and turnover intentions in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zagreb. Job-related attitudes that were the object of this research were:

- job satisfaction (overall and faceted)
- job involvement
- organizational commitment

Overall job satisfaction results show that 71% of the respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs, while there are 8% of dissatisfied employees.

The breakdown of job satisfaction to particular job characteristics revealed that employees feel that their jobs are interesting; they have pleasant co-workers and external work conditions. However, they are less satisfied with payment, their participation in decision-making and leadership of the organization. Significant differences between employee groups were found for satisfaction with job characteristics, where administrative employees were the least satisfied.

Job involvement of employees has been found to be higher than average. It reflects respondents' dedication to their work. However, there were differences in job involvement between employee groups, where professors showed the highest level of job involvement.

Organizational commitment is a measure of attachment to the organization a person works in. For Faculty of Agriculture the level of organizational commitment is higher than average. Once again, significant differences between employee groups were found. Compared to other employee groups, professors showed the highest level of organizational commitment.

Sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were identified. The most frequently mentioned satisfaction sources are the job itself, relationship with co-workers, professional advancement and independence in work. The sources of job dissatisfaction that were most frequently mentioned were bureaucracy, bad organization of work, low payment and relationships with the management.

Only 12.8% of employees of the Faculty of Agriculture expressed turnover intentions. Even though employees consider leaving the organization from time to time, only 6% of them are actively looking for a new job.

Absenteeism is not a behaviour that is common on the Faculty of Agriculture. Only 1.92% of employees often think of staying at home to avoid work. Moreover, 38% of respondents have been away from work in the last year but usually due to illness or other justified reasons.

Finally, some significant correlations between concepts that were the object of the study were found. Job involvement and organizational commitment are positively correlated to age, length of tenure, monthly pay and overall job satisfaction. Also, both these concepts are negatively correlated to absence from work, turnover intention and holding a managerial position.

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Appendix 1 - Instruction to the respondents

Zagreb, 25. September 2007.

Dear colleagues,

As a part of the MBA course held on the Faculty of Agriculture in Zagreb, I am working on my Final Thesis under the title "**The characteristics of job satisfaction: a case study in Croatia**".

For this purpose, I organized a **job satisfaction research** that would be conducted by surveying full time employees of the Faculty of Agriculture, so I am kindly asking for your participation in this research.

The survey is **completely anonymous** and in this way the confidentiality of the data is assured, and the results of the research will be used **exclusively for scientific purposes**. After data analysis, results of the research will be presented only **as average results and statistical indicators**, which is also a way to ensure the confidentiality of individual responses.

The questionnaires are delivered to you in open envelopes. In order to ensure further protection of the privacy of data, after you fill out the questionnaire, please return it into the envelope and seal the it. Please return the completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes to Faculty Register Office as soon as possible.

For any additional information, questions and results of the research, feel free to contact the leader of the research.

Thank you for your participation,

Yours sincerely,

Jerko Markovina, prof. psih.

Department of Agricultural Marketing

tel: 2394060

e-mail: jmarkovina@agr.hr

Appendix 2 - Job satisfaction questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 1 (General data)

1. Year of birth 19____
2. Occupation _____
3. How long have you been working? _____
4. How long have you been working in this organization? _____
5. Monthly pay in 2007. (only within this organization) _____
6. Are you in a managerial position?
7. Marital status
 - a) single
 - b) married
 - c) divorced
 - d) widowed
8. Parental status
 - a) no children
 - b) one child
 - c) two children
 - d) three children
 - e) more than three children
9. Are you a member of the Union? YES/NO
10. If yes, how active are you?
 - a) very active, I have a position in Union management
 - b) I organize Union activities
 - c) I participate in Union activities
 - d) I try to be informed about Union activities
 - e) I just pay the membership fee

PART II (Job satisfaction)

Please rate the following characteristics of your job. With each characteristic please try to assess:

a) how important is the particular job characteristic in general

b) to what extent is this characteristic present in your job

1. **Stimulating and interesting work** that makes me happy

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

2. **The possibility of advancement**, according to personal abilities and efforts

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

3. **Pleasant co-workers** who understand and support each other

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

4. **Just remuneration**, reflecting the worker's efforts

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

5. **Good earnings**, which allow a decent living

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

6. **Competent leadership**, who manages the company properly and cares for the employees

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

7. **Good external conditions** (clean and safe working place, tolerable noise and temperature...)

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

8. The possibility of **participation in decision-making process** that concern your position in the organization

In general this is: **unimportant** 1 2 3 4 5 **very important**

In my work this is: **not present** 1 2 3 4 5 **very present**

9. A **safe job**, where there is a low probability of getting fired

In general this is: unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	very important
In my work this is: not present	1	2	3	4	5	very present

PART III (Job involvement)

On a five-point scale, please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements, where 1 means "I completely disagree" and 5 means "I completely agree".

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am ready to stay after working hours to finish my work, even if I am not especially paid to do this. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. A person can be judged based on how good he/she is doing his/her job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The main source of satisfaction in my life is my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. For me, time at work just flies by. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I usually come to work early to prepare. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. One of the most important things going on in my life is my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Sometimes I lie awake at night, thinking about the work that awaits me tomorrow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. In my work I try to achieve perfection. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I feel bad when I do something wrong on work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I have other activities that are more important for me than my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I live for my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I would probably continue working even if I didn't need the money. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I often feel like staying at home, rather than going to work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Work is just a small part of what I am about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Personally, I am much occupied with my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I try to avoid taking on additional obligations and responsibilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. I used to be more ambitious at work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Most other things in life are more important than work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I used to care more about work, but now I have other priorities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Sometimes I would like to punish myself for the mistakes I do at work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PART IV (Organizational commitment)

On a five-point scale, please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements, where 1 means "I completely disagree" and 5 means "I completely agree".

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. This organization means a lot to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. At this moment, staying in this organization is equally a necessity and my wish. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I would not leave this organization because I feel an obligation to the people working in it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I owe a lot to this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. One of the main reasons I am staying in this organization is that leaving would require a significant sacrifice – I would not have the same benefits anywhere else. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I feel the problems of this organization as my own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I do not have a strong feeling of belonging in the organization I work in. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. One of the negative consequences of leaving this job would be that I have no realistic alternatives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. At this moment, it would be hard to leave this organization, even if I wanted to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Even if leaving would be good for me, I feel that it would not be fair to leave this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I would feel guilty if I left this organization now. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. It would make me very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I do not have any sense of obligation to stay with my present employer. | | | | | |

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. Too many things in my life would be affected if I decided to leave this organization now. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I feel that I have too few choices to consider leaving this organization now. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. In this organization I do not feel like a part of the family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. This organization deserves my loyalty. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I do not feel emotionally tied to this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PART V (Overall job satisfaction)

Please respond to the following questions by selecting one of the answers.

1. Please consider your present job, all of its advantages and disadvantages and answer how satisfied you are with it:
 - a) very unsatisfied
 - b) unsatisfied
 - c) neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
 - d) satisfied
 - e) very satisfied

2. How satisfied are you with our job compared to other employees in your organization?
 - a) no one is more unsatisfied than me
 - b) I am more unsatisfied than other employees
 - c) I am satisfied like everyone else
 - d) I am more satisfied than other employees
 - e) no one is more satisfied than me

3. During the course of time, people are more or less happy when they work. How would you describe your position?
 - a) I am never happy at work
 - b) I am rarely happy at work
 - c) I am equally happy and unhappy at work
 - d) I am mostly happy at work
 - e) I am always happy at work

4. Do you think that you would be happier in some other organization?

- a) I would certainly be happier somewhere else
- b) I would probably be happier somewhere else
- c) I do not know if I would be happier somewhere else
- d) I probably would not be happier somewhere else
- e) I certainly would not be happier somewhere else

Please state the sources of your job satisfaction:

Please state the sources of your job dissatisfaction:

PART VI (Absenteeism and turnover intention)

1. How likely is it that you will be looking for a new job in the next year?

- a) not at all likely
- b) not likely
- c) I can not say
- d) It is likely
- e) It is very likely

2. Have you considered leaving this organization?

- a) never
- b) rarely
- c) sometimes
- d) often

3. I will change my job as soon as I get the opportunity. **YES/NO**

4. I do research about vacancies for jobs for my educational profile. **YES/NO**

5. At the time, I am actively looking for a new job. **YES/NO**

6. How many days did you miss work in the last year? _____

7. Please estimate the percentage of days in which you did not have solid reasons to miss work
_____ %

8. How often do you think about not coming to work?

- a) never
- b) rarely
- c) sometimes
- d) often

9. How likely is it that you will miss work in the next two months?

- a) not at all likely
- b) not likely
- c) I can not say
- d) It is likely
- e) It is very likely