

# The Agricultural Students' Satisfaction from Their Field of Study (Case Study: Bu-Ali Sina University, College of Agriculture)

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Abstract

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This research has an aim to assess agricultural students' satisfaction from their field of study. The statistical population consisted of 1040 students from the University of Bu Ali Sina (800 bachelor and 240 master students) during the years of 2011 to 2013. Through stratified random sampling method 240 bachelor and 80 master students were selected. Data was collected by means of a researcher made questionnaire. Face validity of questionnaire was done through an expert's panel and reliability was tested through pilot testing out of research sample by using Cronbach alpha test. Alpha coefficient was 0.82. The results showed that there was positive relationship among the independent variables i.e. satisfaction from professors' ability, career satisfaction, satisfaction from the content and curriculum, the field of students and the dependent variable (satisfaction from field of study).

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, Agricultural Students, Field of Study, Bu-Ali Sina University.

## 1. Introduction

Reviewing on educational satisfaction isn't a new phenomenon, but the lack of research in this area has led to this wrong issue that students' satisfaction is not a part of educational achievement. May be a good predictor of the increases in satisfaction's degree have an impact on educational achievement (Makaeilimonie, 2012). The educational achievement is a program with the aim of evaluating and identifying successful individuals in learning (Fortune, *et al.*, 2001) but, educational satisfaction refers to the student satisfaction in educational environment. It can be concluded with no doubt that educational satisfaction is a very wide range of issues that will be required further investigation. Because on the other side Ojeda et al (2011) stated educational dissatisfaction in college has an important role in the dropout, compatibility problems, disciplinary problems and psychological problems. In this research, the dimensions of subject would be examined, including: personal characteristics (gender, field of study, students living in dormitories and educational grade point average) and the environment. Assessing whether these factors have any impact in Bu Ali Sina University student satisfaction? And how is their impact? We are hoped that the results of this research can measure the true

factors successfully and be a baseline for students' satisfaction.

There are several factors that affect students' satisfaction degree. Some researchers have studied these factors and believe that providing student satisfaction is one of the factors that promote effective education centres (Baykal, *et al.*, 2005). The first factor that has been investigated in this context is gender. Heidari (2006) in his investigation concluded that there was no significant difference between male and female students in the educational satisfaction in Isfahan University. And in case study of Tehran University which did by Niknam and Hejazi (2006) also there wasn't significant difference between male and female in terms of satisfaction. But Zarifian and Joneidi Shariatzade (2002) found in their research that there was a significant difference between of male and female students' attitudes about agriculture. Movahedi et al (2008) found that although the rate of students interest were in average level before they enter the field of agriculture, but their interest rate has greatly increased after entering the field. The results of this study showed that 89 percent of students have positive attitude, 21 percent of students have moderate, 68 percent of students have agreeing attitude and only 11 percent of them have negative attitude towards agriculture. The study also showed that the tendency of girls were more than boys in

agriculture, and the tendency of students to the field of agriculture in Islamic Azad and Public University, in both Hamedan, and Lorestan are the same. On the other hand there was a significant relationship between student's residence (urban or rural) and the tendency toward agriculture. The second factor that has been investigated in educational satisfaction is "field of study".

According to Hakim (2014) research, the majority of Ahvaz university nursing students had low satisfaction in their field of study. But Sanaeinasab et al (2010) showed more than 90 percent of students were satisfied with their field of study and had positive attitude toward their field of study.

Satisfaction of post title and job, social status, income and difficulty level of the study field and its job are more important factors for the students' interest and motivation in their field of study and Graduates satisfaction in their job (Borjian Borujeni, *et al.*, 2011). The research showed that the opinion of the Tehran University graduate students was not desirable about the quality of education in the areas of content, teaching methods and teachers professional development (Movahed mohamadi and Shams, 2009).

On the other hand, the level and type of students contact with professors and the hardware environment around them and also with each other have effect on satisfaction (Johnston, *et al.*, 2005). Professors' behaviour, interest rates and their dominance of courses can influence on sense of students in their field of study and lead to their satisfaction. From other environmental factors can be cited student dormitories. In this case, Mohammadi and Saketi (2008) in their research concluded that the effect of living in a dormitory is different in men and women and students who live in dormitory are less satisfied with their educational field. While Heidari (2006) expressed opposite the title and said there is no significant difference between dormitory and non-dormitory students satisfaction. He also argued that clear job had decisive role in the creation of students' satisfaction.

As mentioned, there are several effective factors in students' satisfaction with their field of study, but as previously mentioned, the satisfaction field of study is a widespread topic which will be required further investigation. And dimensions of the subject have been less studied: living in student dormitory and its impact on student satisfaction. In this study we seek to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between students' individual characteristics and satisfaction of their field of study?

2. Is there a significant relationship between agricultural education disciplinary and educational satisfaction?

3. Is there any relationship between the curriculum content and students' satisfaction of their field of study?

4. Is the ability of teachers effective in students' satisfaction of their field of study?

The main aim of this research was to assess agricultural students' satisfaction from their field of study. The specific objectives in this study were:

- Assessment of characteristics of the students
- Identify students' satisfaction with their field of study in terms of curriculum and content
- Identify students' satisfaction with their field of study in terms of employment and job market
- Identify students' satisfaction with their field of study in terms of the teachers ability
- Compare students' satisfaction with different disciplinary towards their field of study

## 2. Materials and Methods

The study was a survey research which has been done by correlation and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the Data, including measures of dispersion (variance and standard deviation) and central indexes (mean and frequency). In the analytical statistics we used Spearman correlation coefficient, Phi and Cramer, Kruskal-Wallis test and stepwise multiple regression analysis. The population is consisted of 1040 students from the University of Bu Ali Sina, 800 bachelor during the years of 1389 to 1392 and 240 master students during the years of 2011 to 2013 and they have been studying in agricultural extension and education, agricultural machinery, irrigation, horticulture, soil science, plant production, agronomy and animal Sciences. Through stratified random sampling method and Cochran statistics (240 bachelor and 80 master students) were selected that they have been studying in horticulture, agricultural extension and education, agronomy and plant production.

The data were collected through a questionnaire that was in two parts. Face validity of questionnaire was obtained through an expert's panel and reliability was obtained through pilot testing 30 students out of research sample by using Cronbach alpha test. An alpha coefficient was 0.82 which indicates the high reliability of items in the questionnaire.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Personal and professional characteristics of the students

Demographic characteristics statistics of the study showed that there were 186 female students (58.1 percent) and 134 male (41.9 percent) in this study. The average age was 22 years and the minimum age was 18 years and the maximum age was 42 years old. 75 percent of sample population (n= 240) were bachelor students and 25 percent (n = 80) were master students. 178 students (55.6 percent) lived in a dormitory, 42 students (13.1 percent) at their home, and 100 of them (31.3 percent) live along with their parents. Father of 67 students were government employee (20.9 percent), 64 retired (20 percent), 101 people had their self job (31.6 percent), 53 of them were farmers (16.6 percent), 31 were workers (9.7 percent) and 4 had other occupations (1.3 percent). Average of students GPA was 16.14. From all, 232 students (72.5 percent) lived in cities and the others 88 (27.5 percent) lived in the rural areas (Table 1).

### 3.2 Student satisfaction of their field of study

In order to measure students' satisfaction of their field of study using 50 items in Likert scale and four sections, including: the satisfaction of professors ability, career satisfaction, satisfaction with the content and curriculum, and field of study tendency. On items with a positive value 5 used for strongly agree and a value of 1 for strongly disagrees and the others were in this range. Also on the negative items (43, 45, 46, 48 and 49), 5 value is considered strongly disagree and 1 value for strongly agree. Coefficients of variation (CV) were used for prioritizing the items properly.

According to the table it is clear that in the satisfaction of professors ability, item regarding the

Table 1. Describes the personal and professional characteristics of students (n=320)

Variable	Variable level	Frequency	percent
gender	Female	186	58.1
	male	134	41.9
age	23>	170	53.1
	23 - 26	106	33.1
	26<	37	11.6
	missing	7	2.2
education	Bachelor students	240	75
	master students	80	25
residence	dormitory	178	55.6
	home	42	13.1
Father occupation	With parents	100	31.3
	government employee	67	20.9
	retired	64	20
	their self job	101	31.6
	farmers	53	16.6
	workers	31	9.7
Grade point average	other occupations	4	1.2
	12 - 14	13	4
	14 -16	110	34.4
	16 -18	153	47.8
environment	18 - 20	44	13.8
	city	232	72.5
	rural area	88	27.5

ability of professors in presented theoretical training, had the highest priority (CV= 21.96) and the item of professors information about the employment situation had the lowest priority (CV= 40.88). In the next part of the career satisfaction item of importance and necessity level for the field of study had the highest priority (CV=31.68) and item of employment possibility after graduation had the lowest priority (CV = 45.32). In the sector of satisfaction with the content and curriculum, items satisfaction of providing general and professional skills (CV=30.41) and the training appropriate amount (CV= 42.09) have been obtained respectively the highest and lowest priority in order to students attitude. Finally, in the field of study tendency item 'I feel that I am better able to help rural communities' had the highest priority (CV =32.52) and item of others (parents, relatives, friends, etc.) encourage were effective in my chosen field of study had the lowest priority (CV = 48.03).

According to Pearson's correlation coefficient in table 3 The relationship between the average grade and variables the field of study satisfaction, the satisfaction of professors ability, satisfaction with the content and curriculum were significant at 0.01 level and with the satisfaction of career at 0.05 level but this variable had no significant relationship with the field of study tendency.

Relationship between the age and variable satisfaction of professors ability were significant at 0.01 level, with the field of study satisfaction were significant at 0.05 level and with the satisfaction of career, satisfaction with the content and curriculum and the field of study tendency were not significant (Table 3).

Table 2. Prioritization students satisfaction of their field of study (n= 320).

Sector	Item	Ranking Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of Variation	Priority
Satisfaction of professors ability	ability of professors in presented theoretical training	3.46	0.76	0.219	1
	The expertise and experience professors degree	3.59	0.90	0.250	2
	The professors familiar with the educational rules	3.58	0.92	0.257	3
	To be updated professors knowledge and information	3.40	0.88	0.258	4
	The ability of professors in classroom management	3.69	0.97	0.262	5
	professors can use the proper training methods	3.31	0.97	0.293	6
	Motivation of professors to field of study	3.43	1.01	0.294	7
	The professors responsibility in person visits	3.33	1.02	0.306	8
	professors ability to make a connection with a students	3.34	1.03	0.308	9
	Satisfaction of professors' behaviour	3.41	1.06	0.310	10
	The professors familiar with the needs of job market	3.10	1.01	0.325	11
	The ability of professors in terms of practical training	3.09	1.01	0.326	12
	The professors ability to use educational achievement evaluation methods properly	3	1.06	0.353	13
	The professors responsibility in electronic connection	2.98	1.09	0.365	14
	Proportion between the teacher training and job market needs	2.79	1.03	0.369	15
	The availability of professors in proper time	2.86	1.11	0.388	16
	The professors advice and inform about the other issues outside of the University	2.65	1.08	0.407	17
Career satisfaction	Rate of professors inform about the employment situation	2.74	1.12	0.408	18
	The importance and necessity of your field of study for society	3.63	1.15	0.316	1
	Degree of interest in employment after graduation	3.40	1.23	0.361	2
	Satisfaction of social status of jobs related to the field of study	2.93	1.07	0.365	3
	Satisfaction degree in your field of study	2.84	1.08	0.380	4
	The jobs opportunity related to your field of study	2.94	1.12	0.381	5
	Enough to gain skills for future employment	2.89	1.11	0.384	6
	Appropriate future job in your field of study	2.85	1.15	0.403	7
	Satisfaction of any self-employment and entrepreneurship in the fields of study	2.91	1.18	0.405	8
	The probability of having enough money in your future job	2.90	1.20	0.413	9
Satisfaction with the content and curriculum	The probability of having job after graduated	2.78	1.26	0.453	10
	Satisfaction of the content of the provision of general and specialized skills	3.19	0.97	0.304	1
	Appropriate number of courses	3.25	0.99	0.305	2
	The suitability of your field Specialized courses	3.17	0.97	0.306	3
	Appropriateness of the content in terms of volume and extent	3.09	0.98	0.317	4
	Content selection based on scientific standards	3.13	1.01	0.322	5
	Organizing content base on student learning needs	3	1.02	0.340	6
	Satisfaction with the availability of books in your field of study	3.13	1.07	0.341	7
	The flexibility and changes in your courses	2.96	1.02	0.344	8
	Rate your courses match to the needs of society	3.13	1.08	0.345	9
	The updated content and curriculum	3.04	1.05	0.346	10
	The content of this field courses are appropriated for career	3	1.10	0.366	11
	Content and curriculum proportion the needs of your field job	2.92	1.11	0.380	12
Field of study tendency	Appropriate level of training	2.78	1.17	0.420	13
	I feel in this field I can help rural communities better	3.29	1.07	0.325	1
	Choose this field because of life problems (going to the military and get a degree, etc.)	3.51	1.15	0.327	2
	My degree of interesting in this field has increased after entering the university	3.35	1.13	0.337	3
	I Wanted a few times to opt out from my field of study	3.58	1.25	0.349	4
	I have no desire to study in this field	3.52	1.25	0.355	5
	If my relatives and friends want to choose this field I will encourage them	2.95	1.28	0.433	6
	I admit I made a mistake in choosing this field of study	3.03	1.37	0.452	7
	If I re- exam, I have no desire to re-election this field	2.91	1.36	0.467	8
Encourage relatives (parents, relatives, friends, etc.) don't affect in my field chosen	2.54	1.22	0.480	9	

Table 3. Results of Pearson correlation (n= 320)

Independent variable	Dependent variable	correlation coefficient	Significant level
Grade point average	satisfaction of their field of study	0.233**	0.000
	satisfaction of professors ability	0.313**	0.000
	career satisfaction	0.129*	0.025
	satisfaction with the content and curriculum	0.178**	0.002
	field of study tendency	0.057	0.324
Age	satisfaction of their field of study	0.152*	0.010
	satisfaction of professors ability	0.205**	0.000
	career satisfaction	0.006	0.917
	satisfaction with the content and curriculum	0.109	0.056
	field of study tendency	0.076	0.182

Table 4. Results of Spearman correlation coefficient (n= 320)

Independent variable	Dependent variable	correlation coefficient	Significant level
Satisfaction of professors ability	Satisfaction of their field of study	0.782**	0.000
Career satisfaction	Satisfaction of their field of study	0.809**	0.000
Satisfaction with the content and curriculum	Satisfaction of their field of study	0.849**	0.000
Field of study tendency	Satisfaction of their field of study	0.603**	0.000
Level of education	Satisfaction of their field of study	0.287**	0.000
	Satisfaction of professors ability	0.312**	0.000
	Career satisfaction	0.166**	0.003
	Satisfaction with the content and curriculum	0.215**	0.000
	Field of study tendency	0.114**	0.042
Field of Study	Satisfaction of their field of study	0.202**	0.001
	Satisfaction of professors ability	0.184**	0.001
	Career satisfaction	0.137*	0.015
	Satisfaction with the content and curriculum	0.161**	0.004

Table 5. Results of Phi and Cramer correlation coefficients (n= 320)

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation coefficient kind	Correlation coefficient	Significant level
Father occupation	Satisfaction of their field of study	Phi	1.544**	0.000
		Kramer	0.690**	0.000
Residence	Satisfaction of their field of study	Phi	0.951**	0.002
		Kramer	0.673**	0.002
Gender	Satisfaction of their field of study	Phi	0.662*	0.030
		Kramer	0.662*	0.030

Table 6. Results of Mann-Whitney test (n= 320)

Level of education	Frequency	Mean Rank
Bachelor students	240	132.28
master students	80	187.65

Spearman correlation coefficient calculation showed that the relationship between independent variables: satisfaction of professors' ability, satisfaction of career, satisfaction with the content and curriculum and the field of study tendency with dependent variable: field of study satisfaction were significant at 0.000 level. So  $H_0$  hypothesis, which said there is no relationship, was rejected (table 4).

Spearman's correlation coefficient between the variables level and field of study, as independent variables and satisfaction of professors' ability, satisfaction of career, satisfaction with the content and curriculum and field of study satisfaction as dependent variable are showed in table 4.

Phi and Cramer's coefficient of correlation showed significant relationship among the independent variables of father's occupation, and

residence with dependent variable of the field of study satisfaction at 0.01 level and also showed a significant relationship between gender and the field of study satisfaction at 0.05 level (table 5).

Mann-Whitney test was used to compare satisfaction of bachelor and master students in field of study satisfaction and the results showed that the test was significant at 0.000 level. This means that the probability of more than 99 percent there was a significant difference between bachelor and master students in field of study satisfaction (table 6).

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Research results showed that according to student attitude in the satisfaction of professors' ability, item regarding the ability of professors in presented theoretical training, in the next part of the career satisfaction item of importance and necessity level for the field of study in the sector of satisfaction with the content and curriculum items satisfaction of providing general and professional skills and finally, in the field of study tendency item 'I feel that I am better able to help rural communities' had the highest priority.

As the interest and satisfaction of field of study is one of the most important factor in education and student achievement, it should be at the forefront of educational programs (Fatahi, et al., 2004). The main aim of this study was measuring students' satisfaction of their field of study by using 50 items in Likert scale and four sections, including: the satisfaction of professors ability, career satisfaction, satisfaction with the content and curriculum, and field of study tendency.

Correlation coefficients between the independent variables: gender, father's occupation, place of residence, field of study, age and grade point average with dependent variable: field of study satisfaction were as follows:

There is significant relationship between Gender and a variable field of study satisfaction. This means that between male and female students regarding the field of study satisfaction there was a significant difference, that it is corresponded to the research results of Zarifiyan and Jonaidi Shariatzade (2002), but it is inconsistent with other research results like: Edraki and his colleagues (2010), Niknam and Hejazi (2004), Heidari (2006) and Kamera and his colleagues (2000).

The results showed that there was significant relationship between fathers occupation and the field of study satisfaction, that it is corresponded to the research results of Hesam and Sanagu (2011), Behnampoor and his colleagues (2011) and Zamani and Ardekani (2003), but it is contrast with other research results like: Hakim

(2012) and Delaram and his colleagues (2012). There was significant relationship between residence and variable field of study satisfaction, that it is corresponded to the research results of Hakim (2014) and Mohammadi and Saketi (2008), but it is inconsistent with the results of Heidari (2006).

The results suggested that there was significant relationship between the field of study and field of study satisfaction, that it is corresponded to the research results of Niknam and Hejazi (2004).

There was significant relationship between Grade Point Average and field of study satisfaction, that it is corresponded to the research results of Hakim (2014) and Edraki and his colleagues (2010). The results showed that there was a significant relationship between age and field of study satisfaction, that it is inconsistent with other research results of Hakim (2012) and Edraki and his colleagues (2010). Results showed that there were significant relationship between independent variables: satisfaction of professors' ability, satisfaction of career, satisfaction with the content and curriculum and the field of study tendency with dependent variable: field of study satisfaction.

Mann-Whitney test was used to compare satisfaction of bachelor and master students in field of study satisfaction and the results showed that the test was significant at 0.000 level. This means that the probability of more than 99 percent there was a significant difference between bachelor and master students in field of study satisfaction.

The results also demonstrated that there are differences among agriculture students field of study satisfaction in different disciplinary as among bachelor students, horticulture students had the highest degree of satisfaction and agricultural extension and education students had the lowest level of satisfaction with their field of study and among master students, agronomy students had the highest degree of satisfaction and agricultural extension and education students had the lowest level of satisfaction with their field of study.

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