

An Assessment of Agricultural Education Faculty Perceptions Toward Compensation Levels and Practices

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Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive and correlational study was to examine perceptions of faculty in agricultural education of faculty compensation levels and compensation practices. A survey of agricultural education faculty in the United States was conducted. Data for the study were collected by mailed questionnaire. An 80% response rate was achieved. Findings showed that over 60% of participants indicated their compensation level was too low. Overall, faculty compensation level and practice scores tended to be negative. Faculty compensation level and practice scores tended to increase when faculty perceived interdepartmental salary to be fair, faculty perceived salary by rank at their university to be similar, and faculty perceived salary by rank to be similar at other universities.

Introduction

The ability of an organization to evaluate and compensate employees effectively reflects its essential mission and philosophy (Fink & Longenecker, 1998). Compensation programs should be designed to help implement strategies that support an organization's mission and strategic objectives (Buford & Lindner, 2002). A compensation system should further reinforce changes in organizational culture, work processes, and the behavioral and performance expectations connected to performances. Assessment helps ensure that employees will be available, motivated, and directed toward achieving their critical mission in the organization (Fink & Longenecker, 1998). Compensation policies and practices should be consistent internally, competitive externally, and should reward individual performance fairly and equitably (Milkovich & Newman, 1999; Wallace & Fay, 1988).

If jobs that are similar in content and value are paid similarly, and dissimilar jobs are paid more or less in accordance with the job hierarchy, then the criterion of internal consistency has been met. External competitiveness requires that an employer pay a fair rate of salary when compared to the salaries of similar jobs or skill levels in the external market (Buford & Lindner, 2002). When these elements are violated, job satisfaction and motivation may be sacrificed.

Buford and Lindner (2002) further noted that adequate and fair compensation programs are needed to attract, retain, and motivate employees to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, research on faculty compensation levels may help administrators and faculty members gain a better understanding of the effects of current compensation strategies and may help in creating better recruitment, retention, and reward policies and procedures.

According to Ledford and Hawk (2000) compensation programs are designed to implement strategies that support the organizational mission and strategic objectives. Such strategies might include competing in the market, improving productivity, reducing costs, building teams, rewarding individual performance, providing upward mobility, encouraging employees to expand job boundaries, developing employee potential, and complying with laws and regulations. In practice, however, compensation programs are typically a set of techniques and procedures put in place with little, if any, regard for strategic implications. When properly carried out, a technique or procedure accomplishes its intended purpose, which may or may not implement a strategy.

In some cases, compensation programs may actually prevent strategies from being implemented. For example, a pay structure with a large number of narrowly defined pay grades discourages employees from taking on additional responsibilities without a grade promotion. This also illustrates the point that certain strategies are mutually exclusive. The organization must decide which strategy is more appropriate (encouraging employees to expand job boundaries or providing upward mobility). In any case, a clearly articulated compensation strategy is necessary if the program is to match the unique characteristics, culture, and objectives of the organization.

Renewed interest in the quality of teaching in America's college classrooms has resulted in an increased examination of the underlying policies and procedures with respect to

compensation needed to ensure society-ready graduates (Wardlow & Johnson, 1999). Zingheim and Schuster (1995) found that in education, pay was correlated with job satisfaction and employee retention.

When agricultural education professionals perceive compensation strategies to be unfair, job satisfaction and performance are at risk. Recent evidence suggests that many people are dissatisfied with their jobs or alienated from work altogether. Causes of this dissatisfaction can range from unhealthy supervisory relationships to non-contingent reward systems to dislike of the actual work (Vogt & VanTilberg, 1988).

Hammond, *et al.*, (1999) found that faculty perceptions toward their compensation programs were unfavorable and led to lower levels of motivation, satisfaction, and work ethic. McClain (1987) showed that faculty did not believe teaching was adequately rewarded with merit, promotion, and tenure. Rather than having all teachers receive the same pay within a system of regulated and mandated compensation systems, teachers should be compensated with a system that better corresponds with teachers' competencies and performance. Compensation systems for educators should be based on demonstrated improvement, reflected in traditional supply/demand considerations in the marketplace, and with training systems that focus on increasing student academic improvement (Bowman, 2001).

Modifications to compensation systems should recognize that superior teachers should be paid more than average teachers; poorly performing teachers should be expeditiously removed; and across-the-board pay hikes should be resisted and/or discontinued (Bowman, 2001). Negative perceptions towards an institution's compensation program can have detrimental effects. Fink and Longenecker (1998) noted that it takes a very long time to undo damage caused by an ineffective compensation system and that unjust compensation policies may result in the poor use of human resources, frustration, high turnover, and lower productivity.

Fink and Longenecker (1998) noted that the key factors which created frustration within compensation systems were consistently low merit pay percentages, unattainable/conflicting goals, diminutive payouts for goal attainment, internal/external salary compression, unclear performance standards/goals, internal pay inequities, unstructured/unprofessional performance reviews, compensation not commensurate of responsibility, and a lack of trust in the performance measurement system and political performance ratings. Key factors found to be consequences of an ineffective supervisory compensation system are demotivation/erosion of work ethic, consideration of leaving the organization, less willingness to take on new challenges, increased levels of work-related frustration, decline in morale within the supervisory ranks, feelings of being unappreciated, unwillingness to change/try new things, increased stress, bitterness/anger, and a lack of trust in the organization (Fink & Longenecker, 1998).

An employee's compensation includes all types of financial and non-financial returns that employees receive as part of the employment relationship. These include direct, indirect, and intrinsic compensation (Buford & Lindner, 2002). For the purpose of this paper, compensation levels and practices are defined as the factors identified by Fink and Longenecker that have the potential to produce negative outcomes in an organization or those that result in perceptions of unfairness and inequalities in pay. An organization's compensation practices include policies,

procedures, and strategies that provide guidance in administering the overall compensation system. These include internal consistency, external competitiveness, employee contribution, pay adjustment and rewards for performance and legal aspects.

Research has shown that agricultural education professionals have perceived that they are not being fairly compensated. Data on agricultural education faculty members for the years 1998 to 2001 is available on the American Association for Agricultural Education website. Bowen and Radhakrishna (1991) found that agricultural education faculty during the years 1980 to 1990 were most satisfied with interpersonal relationships inherent in being a faculty member, and least satisfied with the level and method used to determine their salaries. They further noted that job satisfaction levels of agricultural education faculty remained constant over the same time period.

For one to more fully understand the effects of an organization's compensation program, it is necessary to periodically examine the program and employees' perceptions (Buford & Lindner, 2002; Barkema & Bomez-Mejia, 1998). In order to recruit, retain, and reward the best agricultural education faculty, universities need to research and examine faculty compensation systems more thoroughly. Engleberg (1991) noted that the first step in developing an effective compensation program was to conduct a needs assessment. Assessing the perceptions of agricultural education professionals about faculty compensation levels and practices may provide valuable information to faculty and administrators which will help ensure compensation strategies result in recruiting, retaining, and rewarding the best agricultural education faculty.

Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive and correlational study was to examine the perceptions of faculty in agricultural education of faculty compensation levels and practices. This research attempts to provide a better understanding of factors that are related to faculty perceptions toward compensation levels and practices, and further attempts to provide useful information that will help agricultural education departments develop and implement more effective compensation systems. The specific objective were to as follows: 1) describe perceptions of post-secondary agricultural education professionals by faculty compensation levels; 2) describe perceptions of post-secondary agricultural education professionals by compensation practices; and 3) describe faculty compensation levels and practices by selected personal characteristics.

Methodology

The research design used for this study was descriptive and correlational in nature. This study had two dependent variables and four independent variables. The dependent variables were the perceptions of faculty compensation levels and the perceptions of compensation practices. The independent variables included whether salaries were perceived as being fair when compared to salaries of others interdepartmentally, others of the same rank in other departments, others of the same discipline at other universities, and whether or not overall faculty compensation levels were considered fair.

Systematic sampling procedures were used for this study (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The sample number was derived using the table "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities"

(Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The sample was drawn from approximately 400 non-emeritus agricultural education professionals across the United States who were listed in the American Association for Agricultural Education Directory of University Faculty, September 2001 edition. The sample consisted of 196 people. A random starting place was selected and every other name was pulled for the sample population.

The research instrument was designed based on the review of literature (Fink & Longenecker, 1998). The first section of ten statements was designed to measure the perceptions of faculty compensation levels. The second section of ten statements was designed to measure the perceptions of compensation practices. The participants were asked to indicate their agreement with these 20 statements by marking their response on a five point Likert-type scale. The points on the scale were 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. The third section of the instrument was designed to gather personal information on participants. A panel of experts at Texas A&M University established face and content validity. The instrument was pilot tested with 13 faculty members in the Animal Science Department at Texas A&M University. Reliability was estimated by calculating a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Reliability for faculty compensation levels was estimated at .88 for faculty compensation levels and .89 for compensation practices. Data for this study were collected using a mailed questionnaire. A response rate of 79.6% ($n=154$) was obtained.

Nonresponse error was controlled by comparing early responses to late responses (Lindner, Murphy & Briers, 2000). The last wave of respondents ($f=30$) were compared to the first wave of respondents ($f=124$) on the variables of faculty compensation levels and compensation practices. There were no significant differences between early and late respondents and faculty compensation levels, $t(154)=1.78, p>.05$ and compensation practices, $t(154)=.31, p>.05$. It was, therefore, concluded that results could be generalized to the target population, and nonresponse error was not a threat to the external validity of the study.

Alpha for all statistical procedures was set *a priori* at .05. To assess the magnitude of statistical differences, effect sizes were calculated, interpreted, and reported (Cohen, 1988). Faculty compensation levels, compensation practices, and personal characteristics were analyzed and described by calculating frequencies and percentages by level of response. A compensation level score and a compensation practice score were computed by summing the respective item responses: to make comparisons by personal characteristics, to reduce measurement error, and to provide a "richer" representation of the variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

Findings

The following section presents findings by objective. Overall, 64% of the respondents perceived that compensation levels were too low. Thirty-five percent of faculty perceived that compensation levels were just right and one respondent replied that compensation levels were too high. Approximately 60% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their salaries were fair when compared to others within their department. Almost 50% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed their salary was fair when compared with others of their same rank in other departments. Less than 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their salaries were fair when compared to others in their discipline at other universities.

Objective 1

As shown in Table 1, more respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with faculty compensation levels than did those who agreed or strongly agreed ($M=2.61$). One hundred six (69.2%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that current compensation levels have resulted in decreased levels of work-related frustration. Ninety-seven respondents (63.0%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that current compensation levels for faculty have led to less bitterness/anger, and 90 respondents (58.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that current compensation levels for faculty have led to more trust in the organization.

Table 1
Perceptions of Faculty Compensation Levels (n=154)

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Current compensation levels for faculty have resulted in motivation of work ethic	8	5.2	50	32.5	32	20.8	56	36.4	8	5.2
Current compensation levels have resulted in faculty retention	11	7.1	61	39.6	27	17.5	51	33.1	4	2.6
Current compensation levels have resulted in more willingness to take on new challenges	19	12.3	56	36.4	35	22.7	39	25.3	5	3.2
Current compensation levels for faculty have resulted in feelings of being appreciated	15	9.7	63	40.9	40	26.0	35	22.7	1	.06
Current compensation levels for faculty have led to decreased stress	12	7.8	63	40.9	43	27.9	32	20.8	4	2.6
Current compensation levels for faculty have led to a rise in morale in supervisory ranks	11	7.1	65	42.2	44	28.6	32	20.8	2	1.3
Current compensation levels for faculty have led to more trust in the organization	26	16.9	64	41.6	42	27.3	21	13.6	1	.6
Current compensation levels for faculty have resulted in a willingness to change/try new things	9	5.8	74	48.1	51	33.1	19	12.3	1	0.6
Current compensation levels for faculty have led to less bitterness/anger	15	9.7	82	53.2	39	25.3	18	11.7	0	0.0
Current compensation levels have resulted in decreased levels of work-related frustration	27	17.6	79	51.6	34	22.2	13	8.5	0	0.0

Note: $M=2.61$, $SD=.67$; 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Objective 2

Table 2 shows that 90 respondents (58.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that their organization conducted effective and professional performance reviews on faculty. Eighty-seven respondents (56.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that their organization set realistic and effective performance goals for faculty members. Ninety-seven participants (63.0%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their organization provided attractive merit pay percentages for faculty members. Eighty-three participants (53.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their organization provided adequate compensation rewards for goal attainment.

Table 2
Faculty Perceptions of Compensation Practices (n=154)

<i>Statement</i>	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
My organization sets realistic and effective performance goals for faculty members	8	5.2	32	20.8	27	17.5	77	50.0	10	6.5
My organization conducts effective and professional performance reviews on faculty	11	7.1	34	22.1	19	12.3	65	42.2	25	16.2
My organization's compensation system is internally consistent with respect to assistant, associate and full professors	17	11.0	42	27.3	27	17.5	61	39.6	7	4.5
My organization accurately measures goal attainment for faculty performance	12	7.8	50	32.5	30	19.5	55	35.7	7	4.5
My organization sets clear and unambiguous performance standards and goals for all faculty	20	13.0	54	35.1	25	16.2	49	31.8	6	3.9
My organization compensates faculty in a manner that is commensurate with responsibilities	22	14.3	54	35.1	26	16.9	50	32.5	2	1.3
My organization creates performance ratings that are accurate and unbiased for all faculty	15	9.7	41	26.6	50	32.5	45	29.2	3	1.9
My organization makes adjustments to faculty salaries to avoid salary compression	21	13.7	43	28.1	39	25.5	40	26.1	10	6.5
My organization provides attractive merit pay percentages for faculty members	26	16.9	71	46.1	17	11.0	35	22.7	5	3.2
My organization provides adequate compensation rewards for goal attainment	20	13.0	63	40.9	34	22.1	33	21.4	4	2.6

Note: $M= 2.90$, $SD=.77$, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Objective 3

Participants tended to be undecided ($M=3.33$) with respect to salary fairness as compared to other in their department. Table 3 shows there was a statistically significant difference between mean faculty compensation level scores when compared to whether the participants perceived interdepartmental salaries to be fair, $F(4,148)=9.18$. A large effect size ($f=.50$) was found. Participants who strongly disagreed or disagreed that interdepartmental faculty salaries were fair tended to have lower faculty compensation level scores than did those who agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 3 shows statistically significant difference mean compensation practice scores when compared to the whether participants perceived interdepartmental salaries to be fair, $F(4,148)=10.84$, $p<.05$. A large effect size ($f=.54$) was found. Participants who strongly disagreed or disagreed that interdepartmental faculty salaries were fair tended to have lower compensation practice scores than did those who agreed or strongly agreed. Participants who were undecided tended to have lower compensation practice scores than did those who strongly agreed.

Table 3
Perceptions of Salary Fairness when Compared to Others within the Department (n=152)

<i>Interdepartmental salary is fair^a</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Faculty Compensation Levels^b</i>					
Strongly Disagree	17	2.23	.86	9.18*	.00
Disagree	28	2.20	.48		
Undecided	17	2.59	.64		
Agree	70	2.72	.54		
Strongly Agree	21	3.13	.74		
<i>Compensation Practices^c</i>					
Strongly Disagree	17	2.27	.92	10.84*	.00
Disagree	28	2.50	.60		
Undecided	17	2.67	.86		
Agree	70	3.08	.59		
Strongly Agree	21	3.43	.69		

Note: Two participants did not indicate a response. ^a $M=3.33$, $SD=1.24$; $M^b=2.61$, $SD=.67$, $f=.50$; $M^c=.2.90$, $SD=.77$, $f=.54$; * $p<.05$

Participants tended to be undecided ($M=3.10$) with respect to salary fairness as compared to others of the same rank in other departments. Table 4 shows there were statistically significant differences between mean faculty compensation level scores when compared to whether the participants perceived salaries to be fair when compared to other of the same rank in other departments, $F(4, 147)=7.25, p<.05$. A small effect size ($f=.20$) was found. Participants who strongly disagreed or disagreed that faculty salaries were fair when compared to others of similar rank in other departments tended to have lower faculty compensation level scores than did those who agreed or strongly agreed. Participants who were undecided if faculty salaries were fair when compared to others of the same rank in other departments tended to have lower faculty compensation level scores than did those who strongly agreed.

Table 4 shows statistically significant difference between mean compensation practice scores when compared to whether participants perceived faculty salaries to be fair when compared to others of the same rank in other departments, $F(4,147)=7.91, p<.05$. A small effect size ($f=.20$) was found. Participants who strongly disagreed that faculty salaries were fair when compared to others of the same rank in other departments tended to have lower compensation practice scores than did those who agreed or strongly agreed. Participants who disagreed or were undecided that faculty salaries were fair when compared to others of the same rank in other departments tended to have lower compensation practice scores than did those who strongly agreed.

Table 4
Perceptions of Salary Fairness when Compared to Others of Similar Rank (n=151)

<i>Similar Rank Salary is Fair^a</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Faculty Compensation Levels^b</i>					
Strongly Disagree	18	2.19	.86	7.25*	.00
Disagree	38	2.38	.57		
Undecided	23	2.55	.65		
Agree	57	2.77	.59		
Strongly Agree	16	3.16	.58		
<i>Compensation Practices^c</i>					
Strongly Disagree	18	2.41	.89	7.91*	.00
Disagree	38	2.71	.68		
Undecided	23	2.70	.71		
Agree	57	3.07	.66		
Strongly Agree	16	3.56	.60		

Note: Two participants did not indicate a response; ^a $M=3.10, SD=1.23$; ^b $M=2.61, SD=.67, f=.20$; ^c $M=2.90, SD=.77, f=.22$; * $p<.05$

Participants tended to undecided ($M=2.92$) with respect to salary fairness as compared to others in my discipline at other universities. Table 5 shows a statistically significant difference between mean faculty compensation level scores when compared to whether participants perceived salaries as fair when compared to others in their discipline at other universities, $F(4, 146)=7.54, p<.05$. A small effect size ($f=.21$) was found. Participants who strongly disagreed that faculty salaries were fair when compared to others of the same discipline at other universities tended to have lower faculty compensation level scores than did those who were undecided, agreed or strongly agreed. Participants who disagreed that faculty salaries were fair when compared to others in the same discipline at other universities tended to have lower faculty compensation level scores than did those who agreed.

Table 5 shows a significant difference between mean compensation practice scores when compared to whether the participants perceived salaries to be fair when compared to others in the same discipline at other universities, $F(4,146)=5.60, p<.05$. A small effect size ($f=.15$) was found. Participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed that faculty salaries were fair when compared to others in the same discipline at other universities tended to have lower compensation practice scores than did those who agreed.

Table 5
Perceptions of Salary Fairness when Compared to Other Universities (n=151)

<i>Fair Salary as Compared to Other Universities^a</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Faculty Compensation Levels^b</i>					
Strongly Disagree	27	2.15	.14	7.54*	.00
Disagree	34	2.45	.09		
Undecided	32	2.65	.11		
Agree	40	2.89	.09		
Strongly Agree	18	2.94	.18		
<i>Compensation Practices^c</i>					
Strongly Disagree	27	2.45	.14	5.60*	.00
Disagree	34	2.70	.11		
Undecided	32	3.00	.13		
Agree	40	3.24	.10		
Strongly Agree	18	3.01	.23		

Note: Three participants did not respond. ^a $M=2.92, SD=1.30$; ^b $M=2.61, SD=.67, f=.21$; ^c $M=2.90, SD=.77, f=.15$; * $p<.05$

Table 6 shows there are statistically significant differences between mean faculty compensation level scores when pertaining to how participants rated their perceptions of the faculty compensation level in the organization, $t(148)=5.02, p<.05$. A medium effect size ($d=.79$) was found. Participants who perceived faculty compensation level scores to be about right had higher scores than those who indicated too low. Mean compensation practice scores statistically differed by participants' perceptions of faculty compensation, $t(148)=4.47, p<.05$. A medium effect size ($d=.74$) was found. Participants who perceived faculty compensation practices scores to be about right had higher scores than those who indicated too low.

Table 6
Perceptions of Faculty Compensation Levels (n=149)

<i>Faculty compensation levels in the organization are...</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Faculty Compensation Levels^a</i>					
About right	52	2.96	.58	5.02*	.00
Too low	96	2.43	.64		
<i>Compensation Practices^b</i>					
About right	52	3.26	.64	4.47*	.00
Too low	96	2.69	.77		

Note: Five participants did not indicate a response, 1 participant responded that faculty compensation levels were too high, $M^a=2.61, SD=.67, d=.79$; $M^b=2.90, SD=.77, d=.74$; * $p<.05$

Conclusions and Implications

The following conclusions were drawn and implications made, based on the study objectives. The results address the need, as described by Buford and Lindner (2002), Barkema and Bomez-Mejia (1998) and Engleberg (1991), for organizations to periodically examine and assess faculty members' perceptions of their organization's compensation programs. This information may be useful in designing and implementing compensation strategies and procedures that are consistent internally and are competitive externally, that value employee contributions, and that reward faculty for performance. The first objective in designing an effective compensation program that supports an organization's strategic objectives is to ensure internal consistency and external competitiveness.

Overall, 64% of the respondents perceived that compensation levels were too low. An implication exists that compensation levels for faculty members in agricultural education may not be externally competitive with what other types of institutions pay employees that have similar competencies and value to the organization (Buford & Lindner, 2002). Additional research needs to be conducted to determine externally competitive compensation levels. Faculty members need to voice their concerns about their feelings of compensation and rewarded performance. By voicing their concerns with current compensation strategies and suggesting possible solutions, faculty and administrators may be able to proactively address this concern before problems arise. Faculty members with low compensation level scores may also consider other employment opportunities or ask for a raise.

According to Hammond *et al.*, (1999) unfavorable faculty perceptions toward their

compensation programs lead to lower levels of motivation, satisfaction, and work ethic. An implication exists that by raising compensation levels, agricultural education faculty will have increased motivation, satisfaction, and work ethic. Compensation levels may be having a negative impact on the abilities of departments of agricultural education to attain strategic objectives (Fink and Longenecker, 1998). Additional research is needed to determine if increased compensation levels will result in higher levels of motivation, satisfaction, and work ethic.

A majority of agricultural education faculty perceived that current compensation practices were unfair or inequitable. More participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with compensation practices than those who agreed or strongly agreed. Faculty perceived that current compensation levels have resulted in increased levels of work frustration, decreased willingness to change/try new things, decreased trust in the organization, and increased stress. Fink and Longenecker (1998) found that ineffective compensation practices have the potential to create perceptions of unfairness and inequities in pay. They recommended that compensation practices be modified and adapted over time, depending on how well the employees perform. An implication exists that faculty perceptions of unfairness and inequality may be decreased by providing adequate compensation rewards for goal attainment, providing attractive merit pay increases, making adjustments to salaries to avoid salary compression, and creating performance ratings that are accurate and unbiased for all faculty. As departments of agricultural education implement these recommendations, research such as this should be conducted to ascertain if desired results are occurring.

Agricultural education faculty tended to be undecided with respect to salary fairness. This finding suggests that the criterion of internal consistency has not been met. Faculty members who perceived that their salaries were fair, as compared with salaries of others in their department, tended to have higher faculty compensation level scores and compensation practice scores. Those who strongly agreed or agreed that salary was fair when compared to others in the department, others of the same rank in other departments, and others of the same discipline at other universities, tended to have the highest faculty compensation and practice scores. Similarly, participants who perceived that their salary was fair as compared with others of the same rank and as compared to others in their discipline at other universities tended to have higher faculty compensation level scores and compensation practice scores. An implication exists that job satisfaction, motivation, and performance can be improved by increasing faculty perceptions of internal consistency with respect to salary (Buford & Lindner, 2002).

It is recommended that departments of agricultural education conduct compensation audits periodically to ensure that current compensation programs are internally consistent, are externally competitive, value employee contributions, and reward faculty for performance. Additional research is needed to describe if increased faculty perceptions with respect to compensation levels and practices will result in increased job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. Research is further needed to describe if more externally equitable salaries will have similar results.

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