

Employment Benefits of Academics in Malaysian Universities

Rohana Abdul-Rahman*

School of Law, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia

Nurli Yaacob

School of Law, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia

Asmah Laili Yeon

School of Law, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia

Abstract

Academics employed in either public or private university in Malaysia may be subject to different contract of service and scheme of employment. Due to this variance, academics receive different employment benefits. Such variation can also create differences and imbalance between universities in the context of workloads assigned to academics in both types of universities. Thus, objective of this article is to analyze employment benefits (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) of academics in Malaysian universities and their satisfaction with the employment benefits that they receive. This article employs a mixed method approach i.e. qualitative and quantitative. For quantitative approach, a survey was conducted among academic staffs in Malaysian public and private universities. Qualitative approach by way of interviews were conducted among management of selected universities. The results show that all academic staff in public and private universities in Malaysia received pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits. For public universities these benefits are mostly standardized. However, pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits for academics in private universities are different from public universities and between themselves. The job specification which involves teaching, supervision, research, consultation and administrative works as found in the KPIs of all academics are not similar. It is recommended that to strike a balance between benefits (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) and workloads received by academics, the workloads of academics should be designed to have a particular focus on specification of work such as research and supervision, teaching and administration tracks. Therefore, this article suggests that the relevant authorities consider a new remuneration scheme and benefits based on tracks and yearly staff performance achievement for academics in Malaysia.

Keywords: Academics; Employment benefits; Pecuniary; Non-pecuniary; Workloads; Universities.



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1. Introduction

Generally, academics in Malaysian universities receive employment benefits subject to their respective scheme of employment. In Malaysia, universities can be divided into public and private university. Public universities can be further classified into several categories namely APEX University, Research University, Comprehensive University and Focused University. These universities have different visions, missions, objectives and workloads via annual performance indicators (KPIs) for the respective universities as well as their academics. Public universities are subject to University and University Colleges Act 1971 (AUKU 1971) and also classified as a statutory body. The Statutory Bodies (Discipline & Surcharge) Act 2000 is applicable to public universities in case of disciplinary action and surcharge.

On the other hand, a private university is subject to the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (PHEI 1996). In case of disciplinary provisions of academics in private universities, they have their own rules and guidelines. Both AUKU 1971 and PHEI 1996 contain provisions on the establishment, registration, management, regulation and quality control of education on universities and student activities.

The employment benefits received by academics can be categorised into pecuniary and non-pecuniary. In general, pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits are based on a standard employment scheme for public servants managed by the Malaysian Public Service Department. In case of private universities, the universities' management have autonomous power in managing their university, hence, the pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits for their academics are within their jurisdiction.

Due to the different setup of the universities, it creates diversity in the contract of service for academics. Generally, the academic contract of service should contain clear and comprehensive terms of service including provision of pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits being offered to them. However, existing academic service contracts rarely explain in detail such benefits in their service contract or agreement (Miller, 1981).

Furthermore, the contract of service for academics also require different KPIs from the academics. Therefore, it creates differences and imbalance between universities in the context of benefits and workloads granted to academics in Malaysian public and private universities.

Even though public universities adopted standard employment scheme and contract of service but the specification of work for academics in various public universities can be different. In other word, salary scheme for academics in public universities may be the same but work specifications could be different. The same scenario can be observed in private universities because their academics are subject to different salary scheme and work specifications. It can be concluded that the pecuniary, non-pecuniary benefits and workloads could be different for academics in public and private universities in Malaysia. Based on the scenario, the objective of the paper is to analyze employment benefits (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) of academics in Malaysian Universities and their satisfaction with the employment benefits that they receive.

2. Literature Review

According to Goic and Mimica, employment benefits or compensation includes salary, bonus, health insurance and incentives elements (Goic and Mimica, 2012). In the context of this study, employment benefits refer to pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits eligible for serving academics (both permanent or contract tenure) in Malaysian universities. Pecuniary benefits include benefits in monetary terms such as salary, bonus and all types of allowances payable under the scheme of employment. On the other hand, non-pecuniary benefits refer to non-monetary terms such as health insurance, leave, retirement, transportation and accommodation.

Public University academic staff enjoy employment benefits in the form of salary, allowances, incentives and promotion based on their contribution to the university in teaching, supervision, research, publication and administrative work (Basarudin *et al.*, 2016). Amongst these different types of benefits, salary has become a significant issue to the academic staff (Austin and Gamson, 1983). Euben has recommended the concept of merit pay. It denotes the practice of allocating annual salary increases to individual academic staff based on the quality of their performance. Such practice encourages academic staff to dedicate their efforts to quality combination of research, teaching, and service activities, in accordance with the objectives of the university, thereby strengthening the university and improving the benefits gained by students and society. A fundamental difficulty arises from the countless nature of the quality of teaching, research, and service (Euben, 2003).

In an effort to inspire members of the public service to be more efficient, productive and more initiative, the Malaysian Government need to introduce a new salary planning schedule called the Malaysian Remuneration Scheme (MRS) (Morris *et al.*, 2004). This was also intended to avoid brain drain among those in the public service including education, and reward deserving cases. Academic staffs in public universities are government employees under the MRS and are allocated to salary bands within it. Its promotion and pay are based on the assessment of the individual's job performance. It attempts to give incentives in order to improve individual and organizational performance. However, according to the survey reported in Morris a large component of employees is dissatisfied about pay and promotional policies, and have clear notions of withdrawal. This, in turn, will be reflected in the increase of staff turnover rates (Morris *et al.*, 2004).

On the other hand, Juster and Duncan addressed on the benefit of non-pecuniary form. Non-pecuniary benefits in employment consist of the fringe benefits that can be equally costly to the employer as the provision of income in the form of direct wage payments (Juster and Duncan, 1975). Fringe benefits are defined as 'goods, services, or deferred money income received by the employee, but paid for by the employer' (Juster and Duncan, 1975). The list of such items includes pension plans, medical insurance, paid vacation and disability insurance, sick leave, profit sharing, free or subsidized meals, vehicle parking, stock options, and so on (Juster and Duncan (1975).

According to Comm and Mathaisel, to attract and preserve an effective and committed workers and colleges, universities must offer competitive levels of compensation to their academic staff, and they must recognize their successes (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003). This commitment to the faculty members enhances performance, which, in turn, is a key component to improving academic quality (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003). Moreover, employment benefits are vital because income must reflect efforts (Epstein and Ward, 2006).

Based on this literature review, it is essential to analyze the practice in Malaysian universities pertaining to the issues of academics' employment benefits and their satisfaction in order to understand and improve on such provisions both in public and private universities.

3. Research Methodology

This study used quantitative and qualitative approaches. For quantitative approach, a survey was conducted among academic staffs in Malaysia involving public and private universities. On the other hand, the qualitative approach by way of interviews were conducted among management of universities to get more in-depth and detailed information to support and complement the information obtained through the survey.

Two types of data were used to achieve the objectives of the study, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data consists of questionnaire for survey and interview. This primary data was collected through questionnaires and individual face-to-face in-depth interviews. Meanwhile, the secondary data consists of books, journals and other documents. This secondary data was collected from the Sultanah Bahiyah Library, mostly through online database. The survey was conducted among academic staffs involving 10 public universities and 4 private universities in Malaysia through online questionnaires. The respondents were randomly chosen from the list of academic staffs provided by the said universities. Majority of the respondents are Malay, Muslim, female, permanent staff, duration of service between 11-15 years and from senior lecturer category (DS51/DS52). A total number 307 respondents were from public universities while only 30 respondents were from private universities. Since the response rate was

low, follow up has been done for three times. Finally, a total number of 337 academic staff responded to the questionnaires.

The interview involved 29 respondents. The respondents are the management of public or private universities for example the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development and Innovation), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics), or the Registrar. The sample of universities was chosen by states in Malaysia. The respondents are UUM, KUIN and AIMST in Kedah, UniMAP in Perlis, USM in Penang, UM in Kuala Lumpur, IUM, UiTM and UNITAR in Selangor, USIM in Negeri Sembilan, UMT in Terengganu, UTM in Johor and UNIMAS in Sarawak. For ethical reasons, the participants' consent to participate in the research and to be audio taped was sought before the commencement of the interview. Participants were guaranteed the confidentiality of their details and the freedom to withdraw their consent at any stage of the interview.

The semi-structured interview was employed because it is flexible and enables the researchers to formulate sets of pre-determined questions in advance and probing techniques employed based on the participant's responses (Gray, 2004). The participants' convenience determined the scheduling of the interviews. The interviews lasted between one to one and half hour. The interviews were in Bahasa Malaysia, recorded and transcribed verbatim by the authors. To avoid loss and for confidentiality purposes, the transcribed data were saved on a flash drive and other secure places. The transcripts were later printed for ease of analysis.

Data from questionnaires was analysed by using SPSS version 13. Interview data was manually managed and its analysis thematically conducted as suggested by Maxwell (Maxwell, 2013). According to Braun and Clarke, thematic analysis "provides a flexible and useful tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account (Braun and Clarke, 2006)." The data was coded and categorized, and themes and sub-themes were developed.

Instruments for survey and interview protocol were developed based on rules and guidelines applicable for academic staffs and also based on past instruments. For the purpose of validity of the instruments, pilot test was conducted among 20 academic staffs in Universiti Utara Malaysia.

4. Findings

The findings are divided into two categories, namely pecuniary benefits and non-pecuniary benefits. Each category is sub-divided into the views of universities management and academic staffs of the public and private universities in Malaysia.

4.1. University Management Views on Pecuniary Benefits

Generally, all public universities adopt identical circular concerning pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits issued by the Public Service Department. Pecuniary benefits refer to the types of allowances such as housing allowance, cost of living allowance, critical allowance (for professional academics), paid medical and maternity leave which are provided by public and private universities to academic staff.

For the pecuniary benefits, only five public universities responded to the questions and agreed that these benefits are given to respective academic staff. As for private universities, only two out of four universities' management responded to the questions in regards to the pecuniary benefits. One private university provides housing allowance only to foreign academic staff, while the other private university provides special allowances to academic staff based on their salary scheme.

According to some public universities' management, the University Board of Directors has the power to determine the pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits other than the kind of benefits provided by the Malaysian Public Services Department.

In summary, remuneration and pecuniary benefits in public universities are based on the equivalent scheme issued by the Public Service Department whereas the private universities have their own scheme.

4.2. Academics Views on Pecuniary Benefits

The pecuniary benefits received by the academics are salary and bonus; and other allowances including public service allowance, entertainment allowance, housing allowance and others as shown in Table 1 and 2 below.

Table-1. Salary and Bonus

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not Sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total
a). I am satisfied with the monthly basic salary scales and existing emolument	29	80	25	79	8	221
b). I am satisfied with the current annual salary increase.	28	68	23	93	9	221
c). I am satisfied with the existing annual bonuses	43	80	32	60	6	221
d). I am satisfied with existing benefits and service schemes.	18	63	23	105	11	220

A total number of 337 academic staffs from public and private universities involved in the survey. However, only 220 and 221 academic staffs had answered questions relating to pecuniary benefits. The questions relating to pecuniary benefits are regarding satisfaction on monthly basic salary and existing emoluments; the increase of current annual salary; existing annual bonuses; and existing benefits and service schemes.

Majority of the respondents (109) responded strongly disagree and disagree that they are satisfied with the monthly basic salary scales and existing emoluments. While 87 respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the monthly basic salary scales and existing emoluments received by them. Majority respondents (102) responded strongly disagree and disagree that they are satisfied with the increase of current annual salary. A total number of 96 academic staffs strongly disagree and disagree with the current annual salary increase.

The finding also shows that majority of the respondents (123) disagree and strongly disagree regarding satisfaction with the existing annual bonuses. Whereas 102 academic staffs strongly agree and agree with the existing annual bonuses. Regarding existing benefits and service schemes, majority of the academic staffs (116) strongly agree and agree with it. A total number of 81 respondents disagree and strongly disagree with existing benefits and service schemes.

Table-2. Other Allowances

No	Types of Allowances	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
1	Public Service Allowance	Yes	114	58
		No	83	42
2	Public Service Allowance	Yes	144	71
		No	59	29
3	Housing Allowance	Yes	201	96
		No	8	4
4	Cost of Living Allowance	Yes	189	91
		No	19	9
5	Special Grade Allowance	Yes	7	4
		No	190	96
6	Territory Allowance	Yes	4	2
		No	193	98
7	House Maid Allowance	Yes	7	4
		No	190	96
8	Annual House Maintenance Allowance	Yes	5	3
		No	192	97
9	Critical Allowance	Yes	16	8
		No	182	92
10	AdministrativePost Allowance	Yes	66	33
		No	135	67
11	Acting Allowance	Yes	3	1.5
		No	194	98.5

The above Table 2 shows that there are 11 types of allowances provided for academic staffs in Malaysia. For public service allowance, 114 academic staffs noted that they have this kind of allowance. On the other hand, 83 academic staffs responded that they did not have this public service allowance. Regarding entertainment allowance, 144 academic staffs have this allowance. However, 59 respondents did not have entertainment allowance. Majority respondents (201) have housing allowance while eight respondents did not have this kind of allowance. Majority of the respondents (189) also have cost of living allowance (COLA) while only 19 respondents did not have this allowance. Regarding special grade allowance, majority (190) academic staffs did not have this allowance. However, only seven academic staffs enjoy this special grade allowance. 193 (majority) of the respondents have no territory allowance. Only four respondents have this territory allowance.

As for maid allowance, majority (190) academic staffs did not have this kind of allowance while only seven academic staffs have this maid allowance. Yearly house maintenance allowance is also one of the allowances provided for the academic staffs. Majority (192) of the academic staffs did not have this allowance while only five academic staffs enjoy this allowance. A total number of 182 (majority) academic staffs did not have critical allowances. However, only 16 academic staffs have this critical allowance. A total number of 135 academic staffs did not have administration work allowances while only 66 academic staffs have this kind of allowances. For acting allowance, a total number of 194 staff academics did not have this allowance. Only three academic staffs have this acting allowance.

4.3. University Management View on Non-Pecuniary Benefits for Academics

Generally, the management of public universities in Malaysia adopted the non-pecuniary benefits for academics as provided by the Public Service Department. Non-pecuniary benefits refer to leave entitlement, medical benefits, retirement benefits, incentives and transportation assistance.

A few public universities also allocate group medical insurance benefit to academic staff even though such benefit is not listed nor provided by the Public Service Department. On the other hand, most private universities allocate non-pecuniary benefits to their respective academic staff. However, such benefits may differ from those provided by the public universities due to different scheme and objectives of the respective universities.

4.4. Views of University Academic Staff on Non-Pecuniary Benefits

On top of pecuniary benefits, the academic staffs were asked about their view on non-pecuniary benefits. Non-pecuniary benefits include health insurance, leave, retirement, transportation and accommodation. The Table 3 below shows that majority (135) of the academic staff surveyed were generally satisfied with non-pecuniary benefits in their current service scheme.

The Table 3 below further illustrates that most of them (155) were satisfied with the leave entitlements in their current service scheme. However, 127 of the academic staff are not satisfied with the scheme for attending seminar and conference in their current service scheme.

Table-3. Views of University Academic Staff on Non-Pecuniary Benefits

Views of Academic Staff	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Unsure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	Total
a) I am satisfied with non-pecuniary benefits in the current service scheme.	10	32	44	121	14	221
b) I am satisfied with leave benefits in the current service scheme.	9	23	34	136	19	221
c) I am satisfied with the scheme of attending seminar and conference in the current service scheme.	47	80	30	57	7	221

Based on the above Table 3, academic staffs were well aware of the non-pecuniary benefits that they are entitled to receive according to their respective service scheme. They are also satisfied with the current scheme of leave, incentives and other benefits. However, there is room for improvement in the current service scheme. The survey indicates that the entitlements and incentives may vary quite significantly in public and private universities. This variant may be due to the different nature and objectives of the universities resulting in different package of benefits and incentives.

The following Table 4 demonstrates leave entitlements as provided by university service scheme. The type of leave may also vary from one university to another. Majority of academic staff agreed that they enjoy annual leave, sick/medical leave, replacement leave and full study leave. On the other hand, very few academic staff responded for Organ Donation Leave and Caring for Child Leave.

Table-4. Analysis of Leave Benefits from the Perspective of University Academic Staff

Type of Leave	Frequency
Weekly Rest Day	45
Annual Leave	214
Sick/Medical Leave	193
Leave without pay	90
Leave on half-pay	54
Maternity Leave	85
Maternity leave (for Husband)	79
Leave because Death of a Close Family Member	89
Organ Donation Leave	11
Pilgrimage leave	109
Full study leave	124
Sabbatical leave	95
Industrial Attachment Leave	66
Critical Illness Leave (Tuberculosis, Leprosy and Cancer)	35
Unrecorded/off record leave	99
Replacement Leave	165
Attending Military Training leave	13
Leave for Sitting for Examination	20
Attending Part-Time Course leave	18
Leave to attend the Association of Professional Associations	18
Caring for child leave	15
Emergency leave	104
Replacement Benefits of Annual leave	82
None	1

Based on the above Table 4 on leave entitlement, academic staffs in both public and private universities enjoy annual leave, sick/medical leave, replacement leave and full study leave. Since all public universities adopt the leave entitlement provided by Public Service Department, most academic staff in public universities responded that such leave entitlements are available in their respective universities. However, due to ignorance or cannot-be-bothered attitude, some academics in public universities abstained from agreeing on the leave entitlements in their universities. Even though the leave entitlements are provided, such academics may not be using or even aware of their existence.

Table-5. Benefits of Medical, Housing, Transportation and Welfare from Academic Staff Perspective

Types of Benefits	Frequency
Benefits of Medical Treatment	211
Benefits of Dental Treatment	200
Benefits of Transport Assistance	15
Benefits of University Residential Assistance	15
Retirement Benefits	56
Benefits of the Staff Welfare Fund	95
Benefits of Housing Assistance	10
None	4

The above Table 5 illustrates the types of benefits eligible for academic staff in public and private universities depending on their respective service scheme. Majority of them (211) agreed that medical and (200) dental benefits are available under their service scheme. A small number of academics responded that university residential (15), housing (10) and transport assistance (15) are available under their service scheme. There were also some academics (4) who recorded none of the benefits are available.

Table-6. Benefits in the Form of Loan Scheme and Incentives from the Perspective of Academic Staff

Types of Scheme	Frequency
Scheme to attend seminar and conference	159
Training Scheme (Advanced Studies)	128
Group Insurance Scheme	148
Housing Loan Scheme	115
Vehicle Loan Scheme	103
Computer Loan Scheme	96
Incentive for Lecturer/Tutor who successfully completed PhD Studies according to approved timeline	58
None	42

From the above Table 6, majority of the academic staff agreed that their universities provide certain incentives in the form of funding for seminar and conference (159), group insurance scheme (148) and training scheme (128). Certain university service scheme has also offer incentives in the form of housing, vehicle and computer loans. Academics who graduate-on-time for PhD studies are also recognized under a special incentive scheme. However, some other academics (42) opined that none of the scheme listed are offered by their universities.

In general, all academic staff carry out their duties based on the service scheme offered by their respective universities upon reporting duty and also from time to time as informed by their employer. The enforcement of academic work and duties are clearly set out by the details of their key performance index and service scheme provided by their respective universities. Such service scheme may vary from public and private universities. Even between public universities the scheme can vary depending on the objectives and incentives of the university.

5. Discussion and Recommendation

Pecuniary benefits are the most important elements in terms of benefits for public and private employees including academic staffs. The findings of this study show that all public universities adopted the standard salary scheme and pecuniary benefits by the Malaysian Public Services Department. However, the private universities have their own specific employment contract, salary scheme and other types of pecuniary benefits provided to academic staffs and it is different between universities. Meanwhile, all academic staff in public universities enjoy similar non-pecuniary benefits except in certain scheme such as medical benefits and housing assistance. Academics in private universities enjoy different package of non-pecuniary benefits.

The findings also show that majority of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that they are satisfied with the monthly basic salary scales and existing emoluments together with the increase of current annual salary. Meanwhile, smaller number of respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the monthly basic salary scales and existing emoluments together with the increase of current annual salary.

This is an indication that the workload of the academic staffs is not compatible with the pecuniary benefits especially salary and allowances they received. Another reason for dissatisfaction is the workloads or responsibilities of an academic staff are no longer confined within the boundaries of teaching, research and service. This has been supported by Safiah and others who said that their work is not only classified by teaching, research and services, but

it goes beyond that (Sidek *et al.*, 2012). In other words, the academic work has expanded from traditional teaching to include few other tasks (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). The academic staffs are not satisfied with the pecuniary benefits probably as their promotion is not based on 'time based' factor as compared to other scheme of services. For academic staff to be promoted, they have to achieve academic excellence as determined by their promotion criteria, which in reality could be quite hard to comply with.

The findings also reveal that majority of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree regarding satisfaction with the existing annual bonuses. The reason of the disagreement is because the amount of bonus is too small. Moreover, the one-month bonus might seem to be mandatory if the amount of wages is paid weekly, not monthly basis. On the other hand, a smaller number of academic staffs strongly agree and agree with the existing annual bonuses. The reason might be the academic staffs from private universities received greater amount of bonus every year. Majority of the respondents strongly agree and agree regarding existing benefits and service schemes. There might be different opinion regarding overall scheme provided for academic staffs especially in public universities. For public sector, there is more risk averse than those in private sector and incentives provided in public sector should be less high powered than the private sector (Proper and Wilson, 2003).

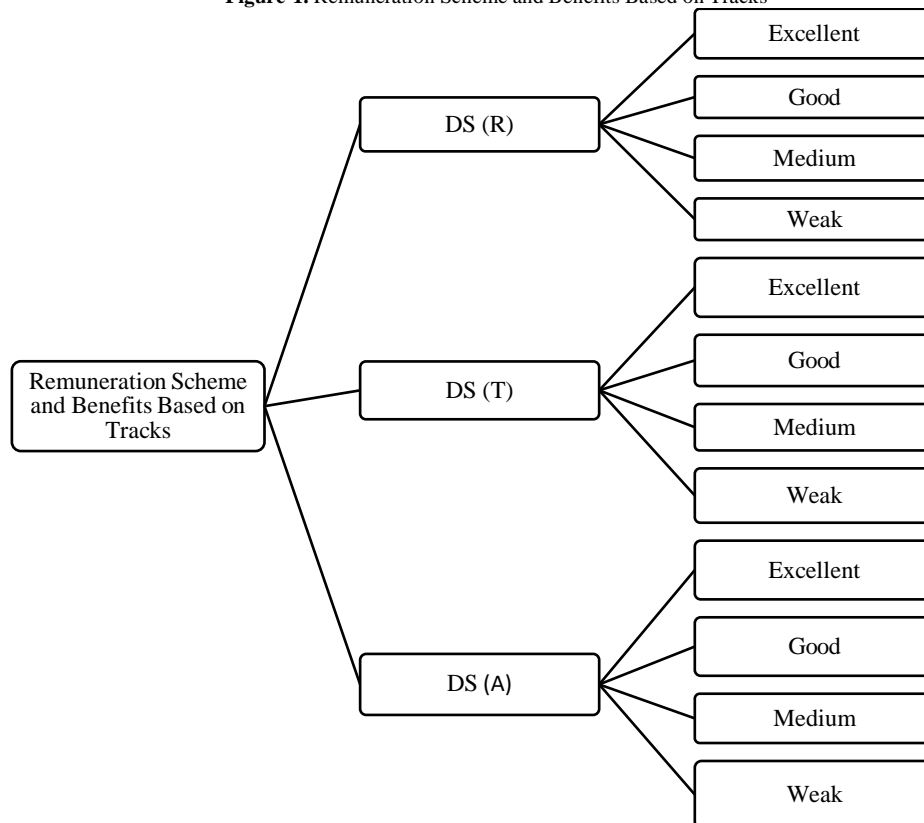
As for allowances, basically the allowances provided for academic staffs in the public universities are similar since they are subject to Public Service Department. As noted above, the academic staffs from private universities have their own scheme of allowances. The finding of the study show that majority of the academic staffs have four kinds of allowances namely public service allowance, entertainment allowances, housing allowances and cost of living allowances. This may be due to majority of the respondents are academic staffs from public universities who are receiving the same allowances provided by Public Service Department. Most of the respondents did not receive the other three allowances namely special grade allowance, house maid allowance, and annual house maintenance allowance. The reason is, these categories of allowances are only for academic staffs holding the post of professor and only a small number of respondents hold the post of professors responded to the survey. A small number of respondents have territory allowance, critical allowance, administrative post allowance and acting allowance. Maybe a small number of respondents involved in this study are from Peninsular Malaysia who are working in Sabah and Sarawak and *vice versa* and eligible for territory allowance. For administrative post allowance and acting allowance, normally only a few academic staffs involve in administrative work or acting for someone who holds administrative work. Finally, may be only a small number of respondents have professional qualifications which made them entitled for critical allowance.

In terms of non-pecuniary benefits, most academic staff in public and private universities responded that they enjoy annual leave, sick/medical leave, replacement leave and full study leave. As noted above, these leave entitlements are provided for by Public Service Department. Nevertheless, the survey evidenced some academics did not mark for such leave benefits. This is probably due to ignorance or cannot-be-bothered attitude. It is argued that even though the leave entitlements are provided, such academics may not be using or even aware of their existence.

On the other hand, it is good to note that academic staffs in the universities are protected with benefits in the form of medical and dental coverage. They also responded that certain incentives such as funding for seminar and conference, group insurance scheme and training scheme are also available. Housing, vehicle and computer loans are made available in some of the universities' service scheme. However, it is disheartening to note that some academics opined that none of the non-pecuniary incentives listed in Table 6 are offered by their universities.

Although there are mixed responses on the non-pecuniary benefits, majority of the academic staff are satisfied with the current non-pecuniary benefits and incentive scheme of leave, incentives and other benefits according to their respective service scheme. Nonetheless, there is always room for improvement. The survey indicates that the entitlements and incentives may vary quite significantly in public and private universities. This variant may be due to the different nature and objectives of the universities resulting in different package of benefits and incentives even though the academics are assigned with similar roles and responsibilities.

Further, to strike a balance between academic workloads and benefits received by academics, the workloads of academics should be designed to have a particular focus on specification of work such as research and supervision, teaching and administration tracks. The remuneration scheme and benefits earned shall be based on the workloads (professional tracks) of academics. This is supported by the research findings of Jusoff and Abu Samah (Jusoff and Abu, 2009). The proposed remuneration scheme and benefits based on the respective tracks can be illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure-1. Remuneration Scheme and Benefits Based on Tracks

From the above Figure 1, it is proposed that the contract of service should be based on the three tracks, namely research and supervision, teaching and administration. Regarding remuneration scheme and benefits, it is proposed that it shall be based on staff performance achievement. This staff performance achievement shall be divided into four categories - excellent, good, medium and weak. The 'excellent' category is the academic who has achieved the performance of yearly performance index set by the university i.e. 90%-100%. Meanwhile, the achievement of 'good' category refers to the academic who achieve yearly performance index at 80%-89%. As for 'medium' category the marks are 70%-79%, while 'weak' performance is within the range 69% and below. For excellent performance, benefits and incentives should be given to academics such as bonuses, excellent awards and other benefits as a token of appreciation for assisting their respective universities to achieve the yearly key performance indicator. These benefits and awards should be granted to academics whose score the highest marks even though he/she might have repeatedly received the benefits and awards every year. "The highest achiever takes all" and rotation basis should not be practiced because it will give a negative signal and demotivate the excellent academics. A competitive level of benefits must be offered and the universities must recognize their achievements (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003). A systematic appraisal scheme is significant for individual career development and may result a greater accountability, motivational improvement through recognition of good performance and the identification of training needs (Smith, 1995).

It is also recommended that a standard contract of service for academics in public and private universities to be implemented because the nature and scope of work of academics are identical, unless there are significant differences in job specifications or workloads between both universities. Variation of benefits offered by universities will open the gate of competition between universities. The excellent academics will engage themselves with the university that can offer them higher and attractive benefits whereas universities with less benefit will get medium performance academics. The end result is reflected on the students. They are the victim because they do not have the opportunity to be guided and exchange knowledge with the excellent academics in their universities.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that all academic staff in public and private universities in Malaysia received pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits. For public universities these benefits are mostly standardized. However, pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits for academics in private universities are different from public universities and between themselves. The job specification which involves teaching, supervision, research, consultation and administrative works as found in the KPIs of all academics are not similar. This can be a reason for dissatisfaction amongst the academics regarding their existing remuneration and workload. This study suggests a new remuneration scheme and benefits based on tracks and yearly staff performance achievement.

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