

FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CHINESE UNIVERSITIES.

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ABSTRACT

The happiness and efficiency of university faculty and staff are directly correlated to their level of job satisfaction (JS). When JS is lacking, it can have a negative impact on both individual and institutional performance, leading to low morale among employees, disloyalty, frequent staff turnover, and ongoing strikes by university unions. Staff retention, productivity, and service quality may all be enhanced by raising work happiness, which in turn boosts academic quality at institutions. The purpose of this research was to identify the elements that contribute to academic staff work happiness and to determine the relative importance of these aspects in determining total job satisfaction. In the realm of advanced career development, this research incorporates expert viewpoints and practical expertise, supported by a thorough examination of academic literature, peer reviews, and document analysis. We used these approaches to get to the bottom of what really matters when it comes to academic work happiness. We aimed to build comprehensive thoughts and ideas for identifying key factors and enhancing knowledge on job satisfaction at all levels beyond the university environment by synthesising insights and ideas from seasoned academic literature with empirical data. This would foster better organisational outcomes. Thus, this paper's pursuit of knowledge-based recommendations is to call on educational institutions to establish fair working conditions for all faculty members, regardless of their racial or cadre background, and to implement management practices that help university employees feel fulfilled in their work. University employees' levels of work satisfaction are predicted by a number of important characteristics, which are laid forth in this research. Additionally laying the groundwork for future studies.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, University, Chinese Universities, Academics, China.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Oxford Learners Dictionary, an individual is said to have job satisfaction when they are engaged in employment that they take pleasure in. In the context of research, the term “academic job satisfaction” refers to the positive mental health and pleasure that faculty members experience in response to the responsibilities and obligations that they are assigned. Recent studies have shown that an employee’s degree of happiness with their job may have a beneficial influence on their level of devotion to their job and the quality of service they provide to customers.

Organisations that wish to measure the happiness and engagement of their employees are required to take job satisfaction into consideration. Job satisfaction is an essential metric for businesses that want to enhance the quality of life of their employees while they are on the job and retain a greater number of their employees. In a world where academic competitiveness, the pursuit of academic excellence, effective service delivery, a conducive and exciting academic atmosphere, and scholarly motivation are all prevalent, it is of the utmost importance to recognise and manage the elements that impact work satisfaction among academic staff. Even among employees that perform the same job and have duties that are equivalent to one another, a research study discovered that degrees of satisfaction vary (Caringal-Go et al., 2022). The research goes on to suggest that there are two different kinds of job satisfaction: intrinsic, which originates from inside, and extrinsic, which originates from external factors such as the firm and the working environment.

A number of interconnected factors, such as biopsychosocial factors, environmental multidimensional factors (such as environmental conflicts, recession, and government policies and laws), and organisational factors (such as facilities/structures, materials, networks, leaders, etc.), present a challenge to the level of job satisfaction experienced by faculty and staff. According to the findings of another study, the low levels of job satisfaction experienced by faculty members are a consequence of poor staff welfare and an inadequate standard benchmark for staff welfare programs. They have an effect on the level of job satisfaction experienced by staff members as well as the capacity of the institution to accomplish its objectives. Taking this into consideration, it is of the utmost importance that the objectives and system of the University be investigated and addressed without delay; otherwise, the loyalty of the personnel may be called into question. In addition, an employee's positive attitude towards both their specific function and the business as a whole is reflected in their organisational commitment, which is comparable to an extension of employee satisfaction with their work. Satisfaction with one's work is directly correlated to level of performance. Consequently, in order for universities to preserve their attractiveness and competitiveness on a worldwide scale, academic institutions must pay particular attention to the degree of work satisfaction among academic personnel. In light of this, it is necessary to conduct a research that is both well-planned and exhaustive in order to gain an understanding of the factors that influence the level of job satisfaction experienced by university employees (Aksoy et al., 2022).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the course of the last several decades, China's higher education system has seen rapid expansion in an effort to maintain its position as a market leader on a worldwide scale. In spite of the fact that university professors play a significant role in achieving these goals, there is a lack of information about the degree to which they are content with their work, particularly in the context of China. There are a number of elements that have a significant impact on the motivation and retention of faculty members. These aspects include the workload, pay rate, work environment, and leadership. It is impossible to maintain academic excellence and

institutional success without having a grasp of the elements that influence the level of satisfaction one derives from their employment. This study's primary objective is to locate and investigate these components within the context of Chinese educational institutions. In a global economy that is highly competitive, the objective is to deliver insights that can improve working circumstances and assist academic staff in developing their professional responsibilities. In terms of the many cooperative groups that are available the subject of job happiness is a hotly disputed one due to the fact that it has an impact on the productive behaviours of employees, the performance output of educational institutions, and even poses a threat to the very existence of the institution. Employees at universities are frequently polled to determine how satisfied they are with their work and how satisfied their subordinates are with the responsibilities they have under their supervision. Workers express higher levels of job satisfaction when they believe they are contributing to the success of the organisation in which they are employed.

Additionally, there are a number of contemporary challenges that have an effect on the work-life balance of university staff members who employ remote workers. These include difficulties in separating work and family life, interruptions in the home office, a lack of clarity in professional responsibilities, an inadequate number of tools, procrastination, and difficulties in effectively communicating with others. These factors have contributed to the problem of work satisfaction, which has grown troublesome. In light of this, in order for university personnel to be content in their positions, the institutions must promptly study staff work plans and initiatives that could assist in the implementation of practical working approaches (Ali et al., 2023).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The participants of this study are the academics who operate in Chinese universities. The purpose of this research is to specify the factors that contribute to the degree of job satisfaction that these people experience. The supervision of a workforce that is both dynamic and effective is critical to the delivery of high-quality teaching and research. Job satisfaction is a vital element in ensuring the resumed presence of this workforce. Despite the fact that China's higher instruction design is growing increasingly significant, there is a dearth of knowledge on the factors that contribute to the contentment of university instructors in their work. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that have a significant impact on the level of job satisfaction experienced by academics. These factors include the work environment, compensation, workload, opportunities for career progression, and executive support. The purpose of this study is to radiate light on these concerns so that university officials and legislators may have a better understanding of how to improve working circumstances, raise the encouragement of faculty members, and reduce turnover rates. In the conclusion, the study donates to the dissemination of information regarding the significance of selecting a welcoming classroom setting in which professors and staff associates at Chinese universities have the prospect to develop both privately and professionally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Making sure workers are satisfied in their jobs is a top priority for companies across all sectors and sizes. Many businesses and their managers place a premium on knowing if their employees are content in their jobs. When workers are able to contribute to the company's success in a manner that truly matters to them, they are more invested in their work and happier overall. People report high levels of job satisfaction when they like and get purpose from their work. A favourable mental and emotional condition called "work satisfaction" occurs when employees have a favourable view of their occupations. Quantifying an employee's work satisfaction and performance is, at its heart, what it's all about. The effectiveness of an organisation is influenced by the degree to which its employees are satisfied with their jobs, which in turn impacts their perceptions of their careers and specific facets of their work. What researchers mean when researchers talk about "job satisfaction" is the subjective experience of contentment with one's work. One definition of job satisfaction is an upbeat emotional reaction to one's work environment (Dey et al., 2020).

Academic staff members must have a genuine passion for teaching if they are to consistently fulfil the responsibilities of a competent educator. Academic staff workers, such as instructors, are entrusted with several responsibilities, such as creating and delivering daily courses, evaluating student work, and monitoring their progress and achievements. Academic staff members must also ensure that they are current on any pertinent news and advancements in the area of education, in addition to the aforementioned (Biney & Cheng, 2021).

Mentoring and serving as a role model for students are dual responsibilities that many people in academia face. Because they have such a profound impact on the minds of future leaders, teachers' levels of job satisfaction in the classroom are important. Money incentives often take the form of salary and benefits. When people talk about benefits, they often mean things like non-monetary recompense. Salary and benefits packages are a major form of employee recognition in the workplace. Efficiency and production are both enhanced for employees. Researchers found that academic personnel reported much higher work satisfaction after receiving a combined base income and benefits.

According to the study's authors, monetary compensation has a strong correlation with work happiness. This finding agrees with what Dulebohn discovered. Researchers have shown that people report higher levels of work satisfaction and basic need satisfaction when they have a reliable source of income. The research shows that employees report greater levels of work satisfaction when they get fringe benefits in addition to base pay and allowances. The same research also found a strong correlation between financial incentives like bonuses and employee satisfaction with their jobs. When wages and benefits are inadequate, it can lead to work dissatisfaction. By "the work environment," researchers mean the physical location where workers carry out their duties (Cao et al., 2022).

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the effect of the work environment on the academic performance of universities in China?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The quantitative data study operated the most recent interpretation of SPSS, 25. The possibility ratio and 95% confidence interval were employed to evaluate the strength and direction of the statistical association. The researchers established a statistically significant threshold of $p < 0.05$. An explanatory analysis was conducted to ascertain the principal elements of the data. Quantitative techniques are often employed to evaluate data obtained by surveys, polls, and questionnaires, as well as data processed by computing tools for statistical analysis.

Sampling

Participants in the research completed questionnaires to furnish data for the study. Utilising the Rao-soft algorithm, researchers identified a study group consisting of 1,398 individuals, resulting in a total of 1,512 questionnaires. The researchers received 1486 responses, excluding 74 for incompleteness, resulting in an overall sample size of 1412.

Data and Measurement

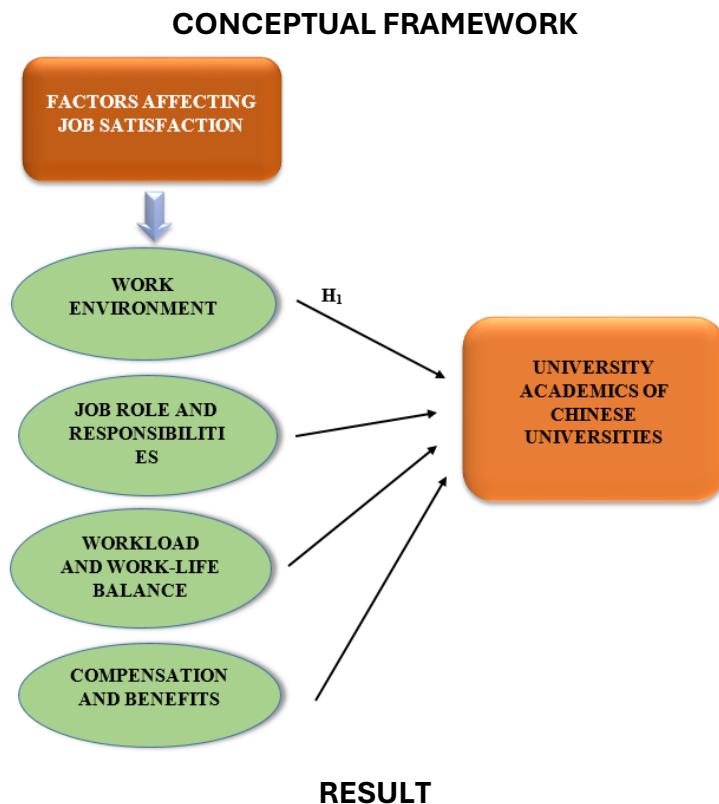
This research employed a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. Section A of the survey solicited fundamental demographic information, whereas Section B employed a 5-point Likert scale to gather responses about attributes associated with online and offline channels. The secondary data was extracted from many sources, mostly internet databases.

Statistical Software

The statistical analysis was conducted with SPSS version 25 and Microsoft Excel.

Statistical Tools

The method of descriptive analysis was employed to understand the fundamental characteristics of the data under examination. The researcher must analyse the data using ANOVA.



Factor Analysis: Identifying concealed variables within observable data is a prevalent use of Factor Analysis (FA). It is standard procedure to employ regression coefficients for assessment in the absence of clear visual or diagnostic indicators. Models are essential for success in Financial Analysis. Modelling fundamentally involves errors, interferences, and identifiable connections. Datasets produced by multiple regression analyses can be assessed with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test. Researchers affirm that the model and the variables in the sample are representative. The figures indicate the presence of redundancy in the data. Data is more comprehensible when presented in smaller quantities. Any number within the range of 0 to 1 may serve as the KMO output. A KMO value between 0.8 and 1 is deemed an adequate sample size. Kaiser thinks that these are the permissible ranges: Kaiser has outlined further entrance standards.

A dismal range of 0.050 to 0.059 and a lamentable range of 0.60 to 0.69

The standard range for middle grades is 0.70 to 0.79.

Exhibiting a quality point score ranging from 0.80 to 0.89.

The interval from 0.90 to 1.00 astonishes them.

The results of Bartlett's sphericity test are as follows: The chi-square statistic is around 190, with a significance level of 0.000.

This substantiates that assertions made for sampling reasons are authentic. The researchers employed Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to ascertain the significance of the correlation matrices. A result of 0.893 on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure indicates a competent sample. Bartlett's sphericity test yields a p-value of 0.00. The association matrix lacks a unique value, hence passing Bartlett's circularity test.

Table 1. Assessment of Sampling Adequacy using KMO and Bartlett's Test (Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin measure is 0.893).

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.893
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity further confirmed the significance of the association requirements. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is 0.893. Employing Bartlett's sphericity test, researchers achieved a p-value of 0.00. A significant outcome from Bartlett's sphericity test revealed that the correlation matrix is invalid.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Factors affecting Job Satisfaction: When it comes to today's workplaces, employee happiness is the deciding factor in whether they stay or hunt for a new job. Autonomy, professional advancement chances, and workplace interactions are a few of the many aspects that contribute to an individual's level of job satisfaction. One in five workers who left their employment were unhappy in their positions, according to Statista. Since it might cost up to 33 percent of an employee's pay to replace them, this is a huge issue for companies. As opposed to a workplace where they are always being held to a higher standard, employees prefer an atmosphere that is thankful and polite. Keeping this in mind, moving ahead, it should be a focus to promote employee happiness by enhancing the whole experience for employees. When workers are content, they are more invested, driven, and productive. The morale and culture of your whole organisation will improve if enough workers are pleased. That is why, as a leader in human resources, you must prioritise employee happiness. Aspects like as performance, compensation, good working conditions, health insurance, promotion, recognition, position, and future prospects are outcomes. Consequences of the job, as well as being aware of the real outcomes of the tasks performed (Dey et al., 2020).

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Academic Performance of Universities in China: China's colleges and universities have achieved great progress in academics, both at home and abroad. These colleges and institutions have reached this level of achievement. They are some of the best schools in China, and their relevance is rising in the QS World Rankings and the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings of universities throughout the world. Tsinghua University, Peking University, and Zhejiang University are some of the best schools in China. If researchers look at the rankings of universities throughout the world in 2024, researchers can see that both Tsinghua and Peking are among the top fifteen most respected schools. Many schools in China have received the best score possible (A+) for their work in a variety of fields, including astronomy, dentistry, education, and aerospace science and technology, to name a few. There are a lot of big drivers behind these quick changes, such government-sponsored initiatives like the "Double First-Class" policy, which aims to improve schools and fields of study. There are a multitude of things that may have caused the big jump in student achievement. Some of these things are more money for research, increased cooperation between countries, and better instruction. At the same time, elite collaborations like the C9 League, which is sometimes called China's Ivy League, are just as important for keeping the quality of education high and encouraging new ideas in all fields. This is due to the fact that the C9 League is in charge of promoting high-quality education (Caringal-Go et al., 2022).

FACTOR

Work Environment: Those looking for work, especially those with disabilities, face a number of challenges in the ever-changing context of their work environment, which can either help them or get in the way of their ability to do their jobs. It includes both the social and physical factors that influence how well accommodations work and how well an individual performs on the job. A person's physical surroundings, as well as the social and physical factors inside them, make up what is known as their work environment. Employee health, job happiness, performance, relationships at work, and morale might all take a hit. Finding a job that values a healthy work environment is possible if researcher have a good grasp of the concept of a working environment and what constitutes a healthy one. Everyone benefits from a more upbeat, focused, and productive work atmosphere, including the bosses and workers. There are a lot of variables, including the physical layout of the workplace, the tools and equipment used there, the amount of light and noise, the temperature and ventilation, the degree of security, and the ability to listen to music while working. The social and cultural components of an organization's culture, its communication style, the dynamics between coworkers and managers, and the amount of encouragement and praise given to employees are just as important as the physical elements in determining an employee's experience on the job. Productivity, creativity, and contentment among workers are all enhanced by an upbeat workplace. It is characterised by a dedication to the health and happiness of its employees, open lines of communication, strong teams, respect, and diversity. When employees are unhappy and stressed out at work, it can lead to burnout and poor morale, both of which have an effect on productivity (Chen, 2023).

Relationship between Work Environment and Academic Performance of Universities in China: There is a significant correlation between the working circumstances in China and the academic performance of students working in that country. There is a definite correlation between a well-organised and supportive work environment, with leadership that is transparent and honest, sufficient resources for research, academic freedom, cooperation, and a decent work-life balance, and greater levels of productivity and motivation among faculty members. It is more probable that academics will be able to teach well, carry out significant research, and contribute to the growth of their institutions if they have the perception that they have a robust network of both personal and professional support. A vast variety of educational resources are made available to students at China's most prestigious educational institutions, such as Tsinghua University and Peking University. Money, initiatives that make it simpler for students from different nations to meet, and chances for professional development are all examples of the resources that are available. The use of these measures has resulted in enhancements being made to both their subject-specific excellence and their overall rankings. People may experience feelings of exhaustion and a decrease in their academic output if they are subjected to unfavourable working conditions, such as an excessive amount of work, an insufficient amount of freedom, or stress brought on by bureaucracy. It is for this reason that Chinese educational institutions have a responsibility to ensure that their workplaces are filled with joy in order to maintain their academic grandeur and maintain their competitiveness on the international arena (Chukwusa, 2019).

Based on the above discussion, the researcher established the following hypothesis to evaluate the link between Work Environment and Academic Performance of Universities in China.

“H₀: There is no significant relationship between Work Environment and Academic Performance of Universities in China”

“H₁: There is a significant relationship between Work Environment and Academic Performance of Universities in China”

Table 2. H1 ANOVA Test.

ANOVA					
Sum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	429	5651.514	1054.977	.000
Within Groups	492.770	982	5.357		
Total	40081.390	1411			

This inquiry will provide significant results. The F statistic is 1054.977, with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 alpha criterion. The hypothesis asserts that *“H₁: There is a significant relationship between Work Environment and Academic Performance of Universities in China”*. The alternative hypothesis is affirmed, whereas the null hypothesis is dismissed.

DISCUSSION

Researchers in China set out to measure how contented university professors are in their jobs. Academic job satisfaction is based on how one feels about their work emotionally. The causes behind this phenomena in China are the areas where Western experts agree on their relevance, and several research have proven a correlation between job satisfaction and less obvious work. So, it's essential to do this in order to put broad notions to the test in relation to Chinese culture. Western assumptions concerning organization's truthfulness. Academics' perspectives on work satisfaction and its impacts in universities have been studied via a mixed-methods approach that considers individual differences, job-related factors (both internal and external), and environmental influences. Research outcomes and stories. According to study results, there are a number of elements that contribute to academics' happiness in their current positions. This study has uncovered all of these characteristics, and their relationships help pinpoint trouble regions. The Impact of Productivity rising consciousness of the negative effects of employment prompted some of the study's suggested reforms. The study's concluding findings are displayed here. To start, there are the experimental results and the 208 Final Thoughts. Following that, the scholars will discuss the author's individual impact on the field as well as the policy suggestions. Draws attention to the results obtained by academics doing studies in the area of education. Finally, the study's caveats are discussed. After that, the researcher will go over some recommendations that might serve as a foundation for further studies based on this research. Afterwards, the findings of the current inquiry are presented.

CONCLUSION

With an emphasis on the role that the work environment plays in moulding academic performance, the goal of this study was to discover the fundamental components that affect academic job satisfaction among faculty members working in teaching positions at Chinese universities. Specifically, the study was going to look at how the work environment affects academic performance. According to the data, there is a considerable correlation between good work conditions and higher exam marks, just as it is the case at the most prominent institutions in China. This is particularly true in the case of the Chinese educational system. One of the things that was brought to light was the relevance of variables such as work-life balance, academic freedom, the availability of research resources, and transparent leadership in the process of creating faculty motivation and the success of the institution. When taken into consideration in conjunction with China's continuous attempts to enhance its educational system and its objectives of becoming a worldwide leader in higher education, these findings take on a larger degree of importance than they would otherwise have. It has been demonstrated via study that Western organisational ideas may be successfully implemented in a Chinese environment. This is despite the fact that cultural subtleties have an influence on the outcomes. It is feasible for university administrators and lawmakers to increase staff retention, academic productivity, and overall institutional success by addressing the elements that contribute to enjoyment in the workplace. This makes it possible for the university to achieve these goals. It

is advised that future studies explore these aspects across a wide range of industries and types of institutions in China. This will allow for a more thorough knowledge of these aspects.

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