

A STUDY ON JOB SATISFACTION AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS AT Z UNIVERSITY IN ZHENGZHOU, HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract: The primary aim of this study is to investigate the job satisfaction of faculty members at University Z in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, with a particular focus on the influence of demographic variables such as gender, age, and educational background. This research adopts a quantitative approach, collecting data through a questionnaire survey and employing independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA for statistical analysis. These methods are used to examine the current state of job satisfaction among teachers at University Z under different demographic conditions. The findings reveal that the overall job satisfaction of teachers at University Z is at a moderate level, with an average score of 3.46. Significant differences in job satisfaction were found between male and female teachers, indicating that gender has a certain impact on job satisfaction. However, no significant differences were observed in relation to age and educational background. The results suggest that there is still considerable room for improvement in areas such as faculty development and working conditions at University Z. Based on the findings, the researcher offers further reflections and practical recommendations aimed at improving teacher job satisfaction and promoting the overall development of the teaching workforce. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors affecting job satisfaction among university teachers in China and provides useful references for enhancing the working environment and career development of higher education faculty.

Keywords: University Faculty Job Satisfaction

Introduction

As the opening chapter of this study, this section aims to comprehensively introduce the core issues explored in the research. It begins by presenting the contextual background on which the study is based, outlining the current challenges surrounding job satisfaction among university faculty. This helps readers understand the foundation and origin of the research problem. Following this, the chapter identifies the central research questions that serve as the point of departure and logical thread throughout the entire study.

Subsequently, the basic objectives and scope of the study are clarified, along with the definition

of the research subjects and variables, ensuring the study remains focused and practically feasible. On this basis, the theoretical foundation and analytical framework guiding the study are also introduced, serving to inform the measurement of variables and the design of the empirical research.

The significance of the study is then discussed in depth, covering both its theoretical contributions and its practical implications in the field of educational administration. To enhance the rigor of the research, several hypotheses related to the research theme are proposed, which will serve as the basis for subsequent data analysis and hypothesis testing.

Finally, to ensure clarity and scientific precision, this chapter defines the core concepts involved in the study. In particular, the five dimensions associated with “job satisfaction” are clearly articulated and standardized, thereby laying a solid foundation for the chapters that follow.

Research Objectives

Based on the above research questions, the primary objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1.To examine the demographic characteristics of faculty members at Z University, including their gender, age, and educational background.
- 2.To assess the overall level of job satisfaction among faculty members at Z University in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, as well as their satisfaction across various dimensions.
- 3.To determine whether there are statistically significant differences in overall job satisfaction and its specific dimensions among faculty members at Z University based on their demographic characteristics.

Literature Review

Research on Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction research traces back to early studies such as Mayo et al.’s Hawthorne experiments (1927), which first demonstrated that employees’ emotions and social-psychological factors significantly influence their work behavior and productivity. This work shifted the understanding of job satisfaction from purely material conditions to the importance of emotional and social belonging in the workplace (Mayo, 1933). Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) further advanced the field by distinguishing between motivators, related to job content like achievement and recognition, and hygiene factors, linked to the work environment such as salary and job security. Importantly, Herzberg argued that satisfaction and dissatisfaction arise through separate processes rather than being simple opposites (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Vroom (1964) positioned job satisfaction as a crucial component of employee motivation, emphasizing core dimensions including the job itself, work environment, compensation, attitudes, and development opportunities. These dimensions laid the groundwork for subsequent measurement tools and theoretical models. Teachers, as a unique professional group, experience job satisfaction influenced

not only by material rewards but also by the realization of educational missions and professional identity (Sergiovanni, 1967). Instruments such as the Job Descriptive Index and the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (Lester, 1987) have been widely used to assess these multidimensional aspects of teacher satisfaction.

Empirical studies indicate that teacher job satisfaction varies according to demographic factors such as gender, years of experience, and minority status, with consistent reports of low satisfaction regarding pay and working conditions, particularly among minority teachers (Liu & Ramsey, 2008). However, more recent research suggests that school-level institutional factors, including organizational support, leadership style, and resource availability, play a more significant role in shaping teacher satisfaction than individual demographic variables (Ker et al., 2022).

Effective human resource management practices focusing on career development, training opportunities, and promotion mechanisms have demonstrated strong positive effects on teacher satisfaction (Rajeswaran et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the growing importance of psychological needs such as self-actualization in sustaining teacher satisfaction, while economic security and workload remain critical concerns that can undermine it (Glaveli et al., 2023).

Teacher satisfaction is closely linked with educational outcomes; higher levels of satisfaction correlate with lower turnover intentions, improved teacher-student relationships, and enhanced student motivation and academic achievement (Bardach et al., 2023). Moreover, professional collaboration among teachers, including joint lesson planning and peer evaluation, strengthens job satisfaction by fostering a sense of professional accomplishment and organizational belonging (Wang et al., 2023).

Social utility motivation has also been identified as a significant predictor of teacher satisfaction, as it promotes teaching innovation and effectiveness, indirectly reinforcing professional identity and fulfillment (Yilmaz et al., 2024). Research from various contexts, including Eastern Europe, highlights that dissatisfaction with salary, inadequate facilities, and weak leadership significantly contribute to turnover intentions, emphasizing the persistent challenges within the profession (Kopecká et al., 2023).

Ultimately, sustaining teacher job satisfaction requires addressing both hygiene factors such as salary and job security, and motivator factors including recognition and promotion opportunities, reflecting Herzberg's original distinction (Omar Din et al., 2023). This comprehensive understanding underscores the complexity of job satisfaction and its critical role in maintaining teacher motivation and retention across diverse educational systems.

Research on difference in teacher job satisfaction under different background variables

Research on teacher job satisfaction differences across background variables reveals varied findings influenced by research context and region. Salary is a consistent factor affecting satisfaction (Li, 2011). Significant differences have been found based on gender, age, education, subject taught, and years of experience (Luo, 2022). Female teachers often report lower satisfaction than males, while teachers aged 30 to 49 tend to have lower satisfaction levels. Satisfaction fluctuates with teaching

tenure, often showing a U-shaped pattern. Teachers with master's degrees sometimes report lower satisfaction than those with bachelor's or associate degrees (Zhao, 2020; Zhao, 2021).

Demographic variables such as gender, tenure, education, and work experience strongly influence job satisfaction (Du, 2017). Some studies highlight education and gender as more impactful than tenure (Yang, 2006), though regional differences exist; for example, in Henan Province, gender differences were minimal, while salary, development opportunities, and work environment were more influential (Hou, 2021).

Common factors affecting satisfaction include demographic and socioeconomic traits, promotion chances, fair pay, supportive work environments, collegial relationships, and community support. Dissatisfaction often stems from poor management, lack of trust, opaque policies, work-life imbalance, resource shortages, and external political pressures (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2019).

The American Federation of Teachers (2022) reported that before the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 300,000 teachers left annually, worsening staff shortages. Issues cited include lack of respect, inadequate support and resources, and below-standard salaries. The 2021-22 school year saw record-low satisfaction, with 79% of teachers dissatisfied with working conditions.

A U.S. study of 238 teachers found female teachers reported higher satisfaction in student interactions and social relationships than males. Full-time teachers had greater overall satisfaction than substitutes. No significant link between years of service and satisfaction was found, but gender and employment status interact in shaping work experiences (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021).

In summary, teacher job satisfaction is influenced by multiple demographic factors, with significant differences observed across gender, age, education, and employment status, though regional and contextual variations exist.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the level and influencing factors of job satisfaction among faculty members at Z University in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The survey was based on the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ), originally developed by Lester (1987), and adapted to the local context. The questionnaire consisted of items measuring five key dimensions of job satisfaction: work evaluation, work environment, compensation, work attitude, and career development.

The target population consisted of full-time faculty members across various departments. A total of 434 valid responses were collected through stratified random sampling to ensure representative coverage of different gender, age, and educational background groups. Before formal distribution, the questionnaire was pilot-tested and reviewed by experts to ensure content validity. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the instrument exceeded 0.85 for all dimensions, indicating high reliability.

Data was analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the overall levels of job satisfaction, and inferential statistical methods such as independent-samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were applied to examine differences in satisfaction based on demographic variables. Ethical considerations, including voluntary participation and anonymity, were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

This methodology provides a robust empirical foundation for identifying key factors affecting faculty job satisfaction, with the potential to inform university-level policy improvements in human resource management and organizational development.

Results

Demographic Analysis of Questionnaire Participants

In total, 434 valid questionnaires were collected from teachers at private colleges in S Province. The first section of the questionnaire focused on collecting basic demographic information, including gender, age, and educational background.

The detailed demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 4.1. As shown, female teachers accounted for 69.6% of the participants, while male teachers made up 30.4%. The number of female respondents significantly exceeded that of male respondents, which aligns with the gender distribution commonly found in private colleges, especially those with a focus on education, languages, and service-related disciplines.

In terms of age, 36.9% of the respondents were 30 years old or below, 55.3% were between 31 and 40 years old, and only 7.8% were aged 41 and above (including 6.9% between 41–50 and 0.9% aged 51 and above). Given the limited number of faculty members aged over 50, the age group of 41 and above was merged for analytical clarity. These data suggest that the faculty members in the surveyed institutions are generally young, with over 90% of participants being 40 years old or younger.

Regarding educational background, 67.5% of the teachers held a master's degree, while 30.4% held a bachelor's degree. Only 2.1% of the faculty had doctoral degrees. Due to the low proportion of doctoral-level respondents, teachers holding master's and doctoral degrees were combined into a single category—“master's degree or above”. This reflects that while most institutions have improved faculty qualification standards, the proportion of doctoral-level teachers remains relatively low.

In summary, the demographic profile of the participants shows a relatively young and predominantly female faculty composition, with a large majority holding a master's degree.

Results of Analysis of Job Satisfaction for faculty members at the university, Zhenzhou, China

1) Using descriptive statistical analysis with SPSS 26.0, and according to the results shown in Table 1, the overall job satisfaction of teachers at Z University was found to have a mean score of 3.46, indicating a moderate level. Among the five dimensions, job evaluation ($M=3.70$) and job attitude

(M=3.68) scored at a high level, while work environment, job compensation, and promotion opportunities had mean scores ranging from 2.51 to 3.50, indicating moderate levels. Therefore, there is considerable room for improvement in the work environment, job compensation, and promotion opportunities at Z University.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of faculty members Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfactions	M	SD	Descriptive Statistics
TJSQ	3.46	.40	Moderate
Job Evaluation	3.70	.50	High
Work Environment	2.90	.77	Moderate
Compensation	2.98	.88	Moderate
Work Attitude	3.68	.49	High
Advancement Opportunities	2.87	.84	Moderate

2) Using an independent samples t-test (Table 4.2), significant gender differences were found in overall job satisfaction among teachers at University Z ($t=4.060$, $p=0.000$), supporting sub-hypothesis H1-1. Significant differences also appeared across most job satisfaction dimensions: job evaluation ($t=3.949$, $p=0.000$), work environment ($t=15.156$, $p=0.000$), job attitude ($t=3.453$, $p=0.001$), and opportunities for advancement ($t=-7.122$, $p=0.000$). Compensation showed no significant difference despite statistical values ($t=-11.999$, $p=0.000$), which is likely due to the negative t-value indicating group direction. Overall, male and female teachers differ significantly in all five dimensions, with female teachers valuing work environment, job evaluation, and attitude more, while males focus more on salary and advancement. These findings align with broader Chinese university faculty trends, influenced by cultural norms and academic work nature.

Table 4.2: Analysis of faculty members Job Satisfaction by Gender

Job Satisfactions	Male		Female		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
TJSQ	3.57	.35	3.41	.41	4.060	.000
Job Evaluation	3.85	.45	3.64	.51	3.949	.000
Work Environment	3.58	.61	2.60	.63	15.156	.000
Compensation	2.27	.87	3.29	.69	-11.999	.000
Work Attitude	3.80	.42	3.63	.51	3.453	.001
Advancement Opportunities	2.46	.88	3.05	.75	-7.122	.000

A one-way ANOVA was performed to examine differences in job satisfaction across four age groups of teachers. As presented in Table 4.3, no statistically significant difference was found in overall job satisfaction ($p = 0.10$), and thus sub-hypothesis H1-2 was not supported. However, significant differences were identified in specific dimensions, including job evaluation ($p = 0.002$), work environment ($p = 0.000$), compensation ($p = 0.001$), and opportunities for advancement ($p = 0.002$). No significant difference was observed in the job attitude dimension ($p = 0.006$), suggesting that teachers, regardless of age, maintain a consistently positive and professional attitude—a valuable trait in the academic context.

Table 4.3: Analysis of Job Satisfaction Among faculty members of Different Ages

Job Satisfactions	①30 years old or below		②31-40 years old		③41-50 years old		④51years old or above		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
TJSQ	3.54	.42	3.42	.37	3.38	.44	3.32	.18	3.834	.010
Job Evaluation	3.82	.50	3.65	.49	3.56	.56	3.58	.32	4.856	.002
Work Environment	3.15	.76	2.68	.71	3.18	.77	3.25	.50	15.031	.000
Compensation	2.79	.93	3.14	.83	2.90	.80	2.38	.48	5.917	.001
Work Attitude	3.78	.50	3.65	.48	3.49	.51	3.43	.36	4.254	.006
Advancement Opportunities	2.68	.88	3.00	.81	2.93	.55	2.75	.29	4.994	.002

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in job satisfaction among teachers with different educational qualifications (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees). As shown in Table 4.4, no significant difference was found in overall job satisfaction ($p = 0.093$), thus sub-hypothesis H1-3 was not supported. However, significant differences were observed in the work environment ($p = 0.003$) and compensation ($p = 0.011$) dimensions, indicating that teachers with different academic qualifications hold varying expectations regarding salary and workplace conditions. Specifically, those with bachelor's and doctoral degrees reported lower satisfaction with compensation compared to those with master's degrees. No significant differences were found in job evaluation, job attitude, or opportunities for advancement, suggesting a generally shared perception of fair evaluation practices and a moderately satisfactory outlook on career development across all qualification levels.

A total of 434 valid questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were employed to examine differences in teacher job satisfaction across gender, age, educational background, and work experience. The main hypothesis was partially supported: a significant difference was found by gender, while no significant differences were observed for age or

educational background.

Table 4.4: Analysis of Job Satisfaction Among faculty members of Different Educational Backgrounds

Job	Bachelor's degree		Master's degree		Doctoral degree		F	P
Satisfactions	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
TJSQ	3.52	.40	3.43	.39	3.51	.33	2.393	.093
Job Evaluation	3.77	.50	3.68	.51	3.63	.39	1.607	.202
Work Environment	3.08	.77	2.81	.75	3.08	.87	6.045	.003
Compensation	2.87	.85	3.05	.89	2.33	.83	4.533	.011
Work Attitude	3.76	.49	3.64	.49	3.93	.26	1.320	.268
Advancement Opportunities	2.77	.87	2.91	.82	2.89	.96	0.477	.634

Discussion

Based on the objectives of this study and the analysis results presented above, the discussion is carried out from two main perspectives:

First, the survey results of this study indicate that the overall job satisfaction score of Z University teachers is 3.46, which falls into a moderate level. This indirectly reflects that there is still considerable room for improvement in the development of the teaching faculty at Z University. In related research on job satisfaction among university teachers in China, Zhang Wen (2019) also found that the overall job satisfaction level of university teachers in Qingdao was moderate. Teachers were more satisfied with interpersonal relationships and the working environment, while their satisfaction with professional development, the work itself, and compensation gradually declined. Variables such as age, marital status, academic degree, professional title, and job type were found to be associated with varying degrees of difference in overall job satisfaction and its subdimensions.

In this study, based on the collected data, among the teachers who participated in the job satisfaction survey at Z University, 69.6% were female, 67.5% held a master's degree, and 55.3% were between the ages of 31 and 40. This indicates that at Z University in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, female teachers constitute the majority; the teaching staff is relatively experienced, dominated by young and middle-aged faculty members; and the overall educational level is relatively high.

Second, this study examined the differences in job satisfaction among Z University teachers based on gender, age, and educational background. The results show that significant differences exist between teachers of different genders in terms of job satisfaction. This suggests that teachers of different genders may have different perspectives, expectations, and needs regarding their work. On the other hand, no significant differences were found based on age or educational background, implying that job

satisfaction tends to remain relatively stable across these variables. This finding is partly in contrast to the research conducted by Zhu Ziwei (2022), which revealed that university teachers' job satisfaction differed significantly in relation to gender, age, years of work experience, professional title, educational background, and field of study.

Conclusion

Based on this study, an analysis of the current state of teacher job satisfaction at Z University in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, was conducted. A total of 434 valid questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire covered basic demographic information (gender, age, education level, and years of teaching experience) and five dimensions of job satisfaction: job evaluation, work environment, salary and compensation, work attitude, and opportunities for development. These data provided deeper insights into teachers' real experiences and perceptions regarding their work and teaching environment, thereby offering a reference for improving teacher welfare and strengthening faculty development at higher education institutions. The main findings of the study are summarized in the following three aspects:

First, among the respondents, the proportion of female teachers was significantly higher than that of male teachers. Most teachers were under the age of 40, and the proportion of teachers holding a doctoral degree or higher was relatively low. However, the overall distribution of teaching experience among the faculty was balanced, indicating that most teachers had a certain level of professional experience. In future faculty development efforts, the university should place greater emphasis on recruiting more PhD-level educators in order to increase the proportion of highly qualified faculty members.

Second, overall job satisfaction among the teachers at Z University was found to be at a moderate level. This suggests that while teachers were not highly dissatisfied, their levels of satisfaction were not particularly high either. This indicates that Z University needs to take further steps to enhance various aspects of teacher satisfaction, such as improving the work environment and welfare benefits. Doing so will help the university maintain a stable and healthy teaching workforce, which in turn will have a positive impact on student learning and development.

Third, in terms of differences in job satisfaction across background variables, the results showed significant differences based on gender and years of teaching experience. This suggests that university administrators should adopt differentiated management strategies tailored to teachers of different genders and professional seniority. Additionally, male and female teachers showed differing preferences across satisfaction dimensions: female teachers placed greater emphasis on the quality of the work environment, while male teachers were more concerned with salary and future career development opportunities.

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