

DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING JOB SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS: AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Higher levels of job satisfaction (JS) are associated with greater levels of enjoyment and productivity among academics and support staff at universities. In JS's absence, morale among staff members drops, disloyalty spikes, employee turnover rates climb, and university unions go on strike, all of which dampen organisational and individual productivity. Academic quality, staff retention, productivity, and service quality are all positively impacted by higher levels of work satisfaction. The purpose of this research was to identify the most important aspects of academic staff work satisfaction and to rank them according to their impact on academic staff members' happiness on the job. This study combines professional viewpoints and practical abilities in the area of advanced career development based on a thorough examination of academic literature, peer evaluations, and document analysis. Researchers were able to determine what aspects of academic work most greatly impact job satisfaction by using these strategies. Researcher's goal was to build comprehensive theories and frameworks for identifying key success factors and deepening researcher's knowledge of work satisfaction in contexts outside of academic institutions by integrating concepts and insights from existing academic literature with empirical data. This would lead to better outcomes for the business. Consequently, this paper will be making knowledge-based recommendations by calling on universities to employ management practices that make university employees happy with their job and to create equitable working conditions for all faculty members, regardless of their racial or cadre background. In order to quantify how satisfied university employees are with their jobs, this study puts forth a number of important criteria. On top of that, researchers are clearing the path for future studies.

Keywords: University, Exploratory Investigation, Academics, Chinese Universities, Employee Contentment.

1. INTRODUCTION

When discussing academic studies, the term "academic job satisfaction" is used to describe the positive emotional and mental condition that faculty members describe because of their work and the obligations researchers have taken on. Recent studies suggest that individuals who find happiness in their work are more likely to dedicate themselves fully to their work and deliver exceptional service to clients. The tasks themselves, the level of independence, the importance of approval, and the company's culture are all factors that could affect this inclination. Organisations should consider job satisfaction if researchers want to know how engaged and happy their employees are. Job satisfaction should be a key performance indicator for employers that care about their workers' well-being and enjoyment on the job. Recognising and effectively managing the factors that impact academic staff's job satisfaction is crucial in a world where academic competition, academic accomplishment, effective service delivery, a

dynamic academic environment, and scholarly motivation are all commonplace. Research has shown that even among workers doing substantially similar tasks, levels of satisfaction may vary. Factors like one's boss or the company's culture that aren't under one's control are the sources of extrinsic work happiness. When it comes to intrinsic job satisfaction, however, it's the individual's own traits and experiences on the job that really matter. Academics and staff report higher levels of job satisfaction due to a multitude of interconnected reasons. These elements affect the organization's capacity to accomplish its goals, as well as the health and safety of its workers when researchers are on the clock. Therefore, finding out the university's goals and organisational structure is a top priority. If this doesn't happen, the employees' allegiance might be questioned. How much of an impact does being a university professor have on people's lives? For a cooperative university to succeed in the long run, Researcher was hoping researcher might elaborate on why happy workers are crucial. Indicative of a healthy company is the degree to which employees are satisfied with their work. If schools do nothing to make their teachers happier in their work, researchers risk seeing a decline in output. A person's level of dedication to the business is another sign of how much researchers appreciate their work and the organisation as a whole. Similarly, when people are happy in their jobs, researchers end up staying there longer. The extent to which an individual is able to carry out their responsibilities competently is proportionate to their degree of work satisfaction. Thus, educational institutions must prioritise the satisfaction of their academic staff members if researchers want to remain competitive and attractive on a worldwide basis. Meticulous planning and thorough analysis can enhance researchers understanding of the elements that impact university workers' job satisfaction (Zhou et al., 2024).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the last few decades, China's system of higher education has seen rapid growth. If China wants to maintain its status as the world's leading market, it must pursue this growth. There is a lack of data on how satisfied university professors are with their work, especially in the Chinese setting, even though researchers are vital to achieving these goals. The motivation and retention of faculty members are greatly affected by a multitude of variables. Several distinct elements are included in these considerations. A few things that come under this category include workload, pay rate, work environment, and leadership. It is difficult to maintain academic excellence and institutional success without a solid grasp of the variables that dictate the amount of joy that person derives from their job. The primary goal of this research is to catalogue and investigate these elements as researchers pertain to Chinese educational institutions. The objective of this attempt is to provide insights that may improve working circumstances and assist academic personnel in fulfilling their professional responsibilities in the face of a highly competitive global market (Wang et al., 2025). Considering all the many types of cooperative groups researcher might form the issue of employment satisfaction is often the source of intense dispute since it affects employees' productive behaviours, educational institutions' performance and production, and even the survival of the institution itself. In order to gauge how happy university staff are with their positions and how happy their subordinates are with the responsibilities placed upon them, questionnaires are often sent out to staff. Staff members are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs when researchers believe their efforts are contributing to the growth of their employer. Moreover, university staff members who employ remote workers face a variety of contemporary challenges that affect their work-life balance. A lot of diverse things contribute to these difficulties. Problems with work-life balance, home office disruptions, unclear professional responsibilities, insufficient resources, putting things off till later, and poor social skills are just a few of the potential obstacles. The issue of work happiness has grown in recent years, and these factors have contributed to it.

Therefore, universities should investigate staff work plans and initiatives that can help establish realistic working ways as soon as possible if researchers want their employees to be happy in their careers. To keep everyone content in their jobs, this is essential (Morris & Mo, 2023).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Chinese university academics that are taking part in the research are helping with these enquiries. The aim of this research is to ascertain the attributes that enhance the job satisfaction of these employees, which is a principal objective of the study. It is very important to lead a team that is both effective and active in order to make sure that both the teaching and the research are of the highest quality. The degree of job satisfaction among this workforce is a critical determinant of their likelihood to return to their former place of employment. Even though China's higher education system is growing increasingly important, not enough is known about what makes university teachers happy at work. This group includes things like executive support, the work environment, the amount of work that has to be done, the pay rate, and the chances for career growth. The aim of this research is to elucidate the aforementioned topics to assist university administrators and legislators in comprehending how to improve working conditions, increase faculty motivation, and reduce turnover rates. In conclusion, the study findings raise awareness of the need to cultivate an inclusive learning environment in Chinese schools. This setting should provide faculty and staff the possibility to develop as people and as professionals.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Having contented workers is important for any company, no matter how large or little. Managers and businesses alike would benefit greatly from knowing if their employees are content in their current roles. When researchers know they are making a difference to the company's performance, workers are happier and more invested in their employment. When individuals appreciate their work and can see the impact researchers are having, researchers tend to be happy in their careers. For employees, "work satisfaction" is the emotional and mental well-being that comes from seeing their occupations in a good light. It all comes down to gauging an employee's level of contentment and output on the job. Worker happiness affects how researchers feel about their jobs and their careers, which in turn affects how successful a company is. Researchers have defined "job satisfaction" as the subjective experience of being fulfilled by one's work. The state of being emotionally and mentally fulfilled with one's employment is one definition of job satisfaction. In order to consistently provide excellent instruction, faculty and staff workers must really like their work. According to Chen et al. (2023), instructors are entrusted with several responsibilities within the academic community, including creating and delivering daily courses, evaluating student work via formative assessments, and monitoring students' progress towards learning outcomes. The primary duty of faculty members is to keep themselves updated on all pertinent news and advancements in the area of education. Academics often find themselves in a unique position to provide as both a guide and an inspiration to their pupils. Since researchers mould the minds of future leaders, it is critical that teachers like what they do. Incentives in the form of wages and benefits packages are common. When people talk about benefits, they typically mean anything other than money. Workers' compensation and perks are major factors in determining their worth to the company. Productivity and efficiency among workers are enhanced. The study's authors found that academic personnel were much more satisfied with their jobs after receiving a wage with benefits. Financial compensation and contentment in one's work life, according to the study's authors, go hand in hand. These findings are correct. People are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and have their basic requirements met when they have a reliable source

of income, according to studies. According to the study, employees report higher work satisfaction when they get fringe benefits in addition to their basic salary and allowances (Du et al., 2023). The same study also found a high correlation between financial incentives (such as bonuses) and employee satisfaction with their employment. Low wages and insufficient perks could make workers unhappy in their employment. When academics talk about "the working environment," they mean the physical location where people actually carry out their roles (Stephen, 2024).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the impact of workload and work-life balance on university academics of Chinese universities?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

• Research Design:

The quantitative data analysis used the most recent version of SPSS, 25. The odds ratio and 95% confidence interval were used to evaluate the strength and direction of the statistical association. The researchers established a statistically significant threshold of $p < 0.05$. An analytical assessment was conducted to determine the main components of the data. Quantitative approaches are often used to evaluate data obtained from surveys, polls, and questionnaires, as well as data evaluated using computer statistical tools.

• Sampling:

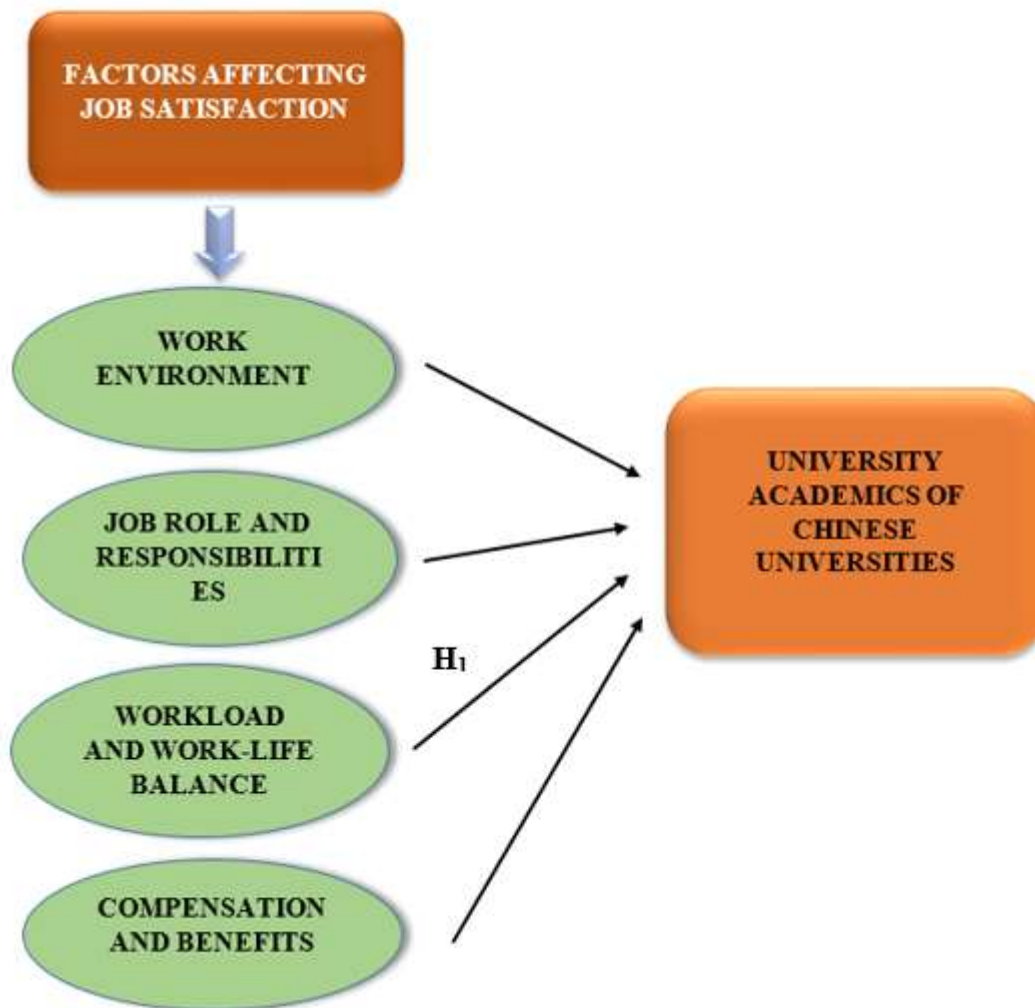
Research participants filled out questionnaires to provide data for the research. Utilising the Rao-soft approach, researchers identified a cohort of 1,398 individuals, resulting in a total of 1,512 enquiries. The researchers received 1486 responses, excluding 74 for incompleteness, resulting in a final sample size of 1412.

• Data and Measurement:

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

- **Statistical Software:** The statistical study was conducted with SPSS version 25 and Microsoft Excel.
- **Statistical Tools:** The descriptive analysis method was used to understand the fundamental characteristics of the data under examination. The researcher must analyse the data using ANOVA.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULT

• Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis (FA) is often used to discern hidden factors within visible data. Employing regression coefficients for assessment is standard procedure in the absence of clear visual or diagnostic indicators. Models are essential for success in Financial Analysis. Modelling naturally involves errors, interferences, and identifiable linkages. Datasets produced from multiple regression analyses may be assessed via the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test. Researchers contend that the model and the variables in the sample are indicative. The data demonstrates redundancy. Data is more comprehensible when presented in smaller quantities. Any number ranging from 0 to 1 may serve as the KMO output. A KMO value between 0.8 and 1 is deemed adequate for sample size. Kaiser asserts that these are the permissible ranges:

Kaiser has specified further entrance standards.

A dismal range of 0.050 to 0.059 and an awful range of 0.60 to 0.69

The typical 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.

Table 1: Assessment of Sampling Adequacy with KMO and Bartlett's Test; the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is 0.889.

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 verifies that the assertions provided for sampling purposes are authentic. The researchers used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to assess the significance of the correlation matrices. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure score of 0.889 indicates an adequate sample. The p-value obtained from Bartlett's sphericity test is 0.00. The association matrix lacks a unique value, hence fulfilling Bartlett's circularity test.

Table: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.889
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity further substantiated the significance of the association criterion. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is 0.889. Employing Bartlett's sphericity test, researchers acquired a p-value of 0.00. Bartlett's sphericity test findings suggested that the correlation matrix is defective.

❖ **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

🚦 **Factors affecting Job Satisfaction**

In today's competitive job market, employee happiness is the deciding factor in whether workers stay or hunt for work elsewhere. Several aspects influence an employee's level of job satisfaction. These factors encompass their level of autonomy, opportunities for professional advancement, and the quality of their relationships with colleagues. One in five workers who left their employment were unhappy with them, according to Statista. The expense of replacing an employee might approach 33% of their compensation, which is a big worry for firms. Instead of working in a critical and judgemental atmosphere, employees would prefer a supportive and encouraging one. Therefore, moving forward, it has to be a top focus to increase employee happiness by bettering their whole experience. People are more productive and dedicated when they like what they do for a living. When enough workers are happy, it shows in the morale and culture of the business. Therefore, as a human resources executive, researcher must prioritise researcher's workers' happiness. Employment has several advantages, such as a

steady income, better working conditions, health insurance, possibilities to progress professionally, recognition from peers and superiors, social standing, and prospective promotions (Li et al., 2025).

❖ DEPENDENT VARIABLE

University academics of Chinese universities

China's colleges and universities have made significant academic strides, both nationally and internationally. These educational institutions have achieved this level of accomplishment. Researchers are swiftly becoming one of the most prominent institutions in China, according to worldwide rankings such as the QS World University Rankings and Times Higher Education (THE). Tsinghua, Peking, and Zhejiang are among the world's top universities. Peking University and Tsinghua University are both ranked among the top fifteen universities in the world in 2024, according to rankings of universities. A+ is the highest possible grade that numerous Chinese universities have achieved in a wide range of disciplines, including aerospace science and technology, education, dentistry, astronomy, and many more. Among the many significant factors hastening these shifts is the role of publicly funded programmes like the "Double First-Class" initiative, which seeks to enhance educational institutions and related disciplines. There are a number of possible explanations for the remarkable uptick in pupils' performance. Researchers need more funding for research, improved educational opportunities, and increased international collaboration. There is no more significant cooperation than the C9 League, also referred to as China's Ivy League, when it comes to maintaining a high standard of education and disseminating innovative ideas across all disciplines. This is so because it is the duty of the C9 League to advocate for reputable organisations (Yiming et al., 2024).

❖ FACTOR

🚦 Workload And Work-Life Balance

A company's technique to ensure employee responsibility is called "workload balancing". Tasks should be dispersed to improve work-life balance, reduce overwork, and maximum production. Work-life balance is achieved when personal and professional demands are balanced. Researcher should have time for job, family, hobbies, health, and enjoyment. Today's fast-paced, always-on culture requires a healthy work-life balance to sustain mental, emotional, and physical health. Finding a balance between work and life reduces stress, among other benefits. When workers find balance, researcher can give their best at work while also spending time with family and friends. Prioritising work-life balance boosts organisational performance. American firms lose \$300 billion yearly due to employee absenteeism, attrition, and lost productivity owing to workplace stress, according to the American Institute of Stress. Workloads reveal workplace stress. Due to work demands, people frequently endure mental fatigue. He also said that people are concerned about stress and job load, therefore researchers need to perform a comprehensive investigation to discover solutions. Some workers feel overworked when given many tough tasks. One aspect is excessive in quantity or quality: Quantitative overload may result from too many tasks. Qualitative overload may also arise in difficult tasks (Gu & Lu, 2023).

✚ Relationship between Workload and Work-Life Balance and University academics of Chinese universities

The connection between the amount of work teachers have to do, how researcher balance their work and personal lives, and the academic achievement of students in Chinese schools is gaining steam in the investigation. Throughout the course of the last several years, China's educational institutions, including colleges and universities, have been subjected to an increasing amount of pressure to enhance their research output, faculty quality, and global standing. This has resulted in an increase in the number of research goals, the amount of time spent teaching, and the amount of administrative work that has to be done. A significant number of academics struggle to balance their professional and personal lives, which has a detrimental impact on their well-being, happiness, and productivity in the workplace. If faculty members are unable to maintain a healthy equilibrium between their professional and personal lives, it may have an impact on the overall academic success of the institution. It's possible that burnout, stress, and a lack of passion might result in fewer research projects, less effective teaching, and a higher turnover rate among staff members. It is possible that kids will have higher academic performance if schools take measures to reduce the amount of work that instructors are required to complete and assist them in achieving a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. The possibility of ground-breaking research and great teaching is increased when academics are provided with help, when researchers have access to leisure and family participation opportunities, and when researchers are able to focus on their own personal development. As a result of the fact that university administrators in China's highly competitive higher education system want to assist students in doing well in school for an extended period of time, it is of the utmost importance that researchers be aware of the connections between academic accomplishment, work-life balance, and workload (Cheng & Zhu, 2023).

The researcher formulated the following hypothesis to assess the relationship between Workload and Work-Life Balance and University academics of Chinese universities.

“H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Work-Life Balance and University academics of Chinese universities”

“H₁: There is a significant relationship between Work-Life Balance and University academics of Chinese universities”

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	424	5453.517	1020.111	.000
Within Groups	492.770	987	5.346		
Total	40081.390	1411			

This inquiry will provide significant results. The F statistic is 1020.111, with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 alpha level. The hypothesis asserts that *“H₁: There is a significant*

relationship between Work-Life Balance and University academics of Chinese universities”

The alternative hypothesis is affirmed, whereas the null hypothesis is dismissed.

9. DISCUSSION

Finding out how satisfied university professors are with their jobs was the driving force behind the study in China. Academic job satisfaction stems from having an emotional connection to one's work. Several studies have shown a correlation between contented employees and less visible work, and Western experts concur that this tendency has significant Chinese roots. In order to put broad assumptions about Chinese culture to the test, a survey is an absolute need. Western assumptions on the credibility of the initiator. Academics' perspectives on work satisfaction and its impacts in higher education have been studied using a mixed-methods approach that considers contextual factors, individual differences, and internal and external variables connected to the job. The experiment yielded results and compelling stories. According to survey data, there are several elements that contribute to the happiness of academics in their present roles. Researchers can now identify all of these characteristics, and by examining the relationships between them, researchers may pinpoint problematic regions, all because of this study. As people became more conscious of the negative aspects of employment, some of the suggestions put out by the study reflected that. The full findings of the study may be seen here by the researcher. First up are the experimental results and the 208 Final Thoughts. Following the author's impact on the field and policy suggestions, the academic community will delve into the topic. The article highlights the findings from various academic studies conducted on the topic of education. At last, researchers discuss the study's drawbacks. Next, the researcher will provide some recommendations that might serve as the cornerstone of future studies that expand upon the present ones. Following that, researchers will go into the specifics of the current investigation's findings.

10. CONCLUSION

Given the importance of the workplace in shaping students' academic achievements, this research set out to identify the factors that have the most impact on academic job satisfaction among Chinese university faculty. How does one's work environment impact their academic performance? That was meant to be the study's main emphasis. The results show that, much as at China's most prestigious universities, there is a strong relationship between positive working conditions and students' enhanced academic achievement. An excellent example of this phenomenon is the Chinese educational system. In order to motivate academics and ensure the institution's performance, factors including work-life balance, academic freedom, research resource availability, and transparent leadership are crucial. As China strives to become a global leader in higher education, these results take on more importance when considered in the context of the country's ongoing efforts to improve its educational system. Scientific research has demonstrated the effective application of Western organisational concepts in a Chinese context. Nevertheless, this is true regardless of whether cultural nuances impact the results. If university administrators and legislators focus on what makes employment enjoyable, researchers may be able to increase retention rates, academic performance, and the institution's overall effectiveness. As a result, the university is able to accomplish its objectives. Future research, involving several Chinese organisations and companies, should consider these factors together. Researchers can learn more about these details because of this.

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