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Determinants of Job Satisfaction among University Teachers at the Central Department of Education

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Abstract

This paper assesses the influencing factors of job satisfaction among university teachers at the Central Department of Education at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Job satisfaction refers to the level of pleasure or contentment an individual experiences in their job. Professional stress is a psychological state influenced by the nature of the job, the work environment, compensation, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors. The level of job satisfaction is influenced by various factors, such as employee well-being, motivation, commitment, and performance. This paper uses a cross-sectional research design and a questionnaire based on Paul Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey model. This model focuses on various aspects such as pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, and working conditions, among others, to assess employee satisfaction. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and variables such as age and job tenure. This paper revealed an ambivalent level of overall job satisfaction among teachers, with no significant relationship found between overall job satisfaction and age and job tenure, although a few significant correlations were obtained with some of the dimensions of job satisfaction. The findings highlight the complexity of job satisfaction and the importance of considering various factors within the unique cultural and educational context of Tribhuvan University. By examining the state of job satisfaction within the academic community of the Central Department of Education, the research provides a foundation for future initiatives aimed at encouraging a more positive and supportive work environment.

Keywords: job satisfaction, university teachers, academic environment, compensation and benefits, higher education

Determinants of Job Satisfaction among University Teachers at the Central Department of Education

Job satisfaction is an employee's positive emotional response to their job, driven by the fulfillment of their needs, expectations, and work goals. Locke (1969) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Job satisfaction is the joy and fulfillment experienced from one's work, encompassing tasks, positive relationships, recognition, growth opportunities, and alignment with the organization's mission(Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Job satisfaction significantly impacts an individual's motivation, productivity, and overall well-being by boosting inspiration, engagement, and dedication to their work, reducing stress, and reducing the likelihood of job seeking (Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Jackson, 2018; Nagar, 2012). Job satisfaction is a critical factor influencing employee retention and job performance, shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. As a result, organizations increasingly prioritize job satisfaction among their workforce (Ali & Ahmad, 2017; Moloantoa, 2015). Higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with improved employee performance, reduced turnover, and overall organizational success (Malik et al., 2010; Moloantoa, 2015). In higher education, understanding the factors that affect university teachers' job satisfaction is particularly important, as their professional well-being directly influences teaching effectiveness and the quality of educational outcomes (Aydintan & Koç, 2016; Clinciu, 2023; Ghazi et al., 2011). Demographic factors play a key role in shaping faculty job satisfaction, with age and job tenure being particularly influential (Amarasena et al., 2015). Older and more experienced faculty often report higher satisfaction due to professional maturity, job stability, and established roles. Similarly, longer tenure provides familiarity, job security, and stronger institutional attachment, enhancing overall satisfaction. While findings vary, age and tenure consistently emerge as important determinants of faculty job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction among university faculty has been widely studied across South Asia, Africa, and other regions, revealing that both personal and professional factors contribute to faculty well-being, although their influence varies by context. Among demographic variables, age and job tenure are frequently examined, yet findings remain mixed.

Several studies indicate a positive association between age and job satisfaction. Shukla and Singh (2015), and Bashir and Gani (2021) report that older faculty members tend to be more satisfied, often attributed to greater job stability, accumulated professional experience, and well-established academic and social networks. Similarly, research by Malik et al. (2010) and Khan et al. (2021) demonstrates that longer job tenure correlates with higher

satisfaction, reflecting enhanced job security, confidence, and clarity of professional roles. Ghafoor (2012) supports this view, finding that more experienced faculty report greater satisfaction, particularly among permanent staff, emphasizing the role of job tenure over age. Chirchir (2016) and Islam and Akter (2019) further confirm that older, more experienced faculty report higher satisfaction, highlighting professional maturity and career progression as important factors.

Conversely, other studies suggest that age and tenure do not consistently predict satisfaction. Sharma and Jyoti (2009), Rahman and Parveen (2006), Topchyan and Woehler (2021), and Amarasena et al. (2015) found weak or non-significant relationships, indicating that institutional support, leadership practices, and professional development opportunities may overshadow demographic influences. Chapagain (2021) and Koirala and Khatiwada (2024) in the Nepali context argue that access to decision-making, academic resources, and intrinsic motivation are stronger determinants than age or tenure. Sakiru et al. (2017) and Ashraf (2020) also emphasize that demographic factors influence organizational outcomes indirectly through mechanisms such as compensation and job satisfaction rather than directly.

Studies of university teachers' job satisfaction across countries consistently show moderate levels. Toker (2011) reported moderately high satisfaction among Turkish academicians, with social status valued most and compensation least, while age and tenure influenced satisfaction. Chapagain (2021) found that Nepalese faculty were moderately satisfied, with intrinsic factors contributing more than extrinsic ones; affiliation with public institutions and higher qualifications also enhanced satisfaction.

Similarly, Pan et al. (2015) and Ahmad and Abdurahman (2015) observed moderate satisfaction among Chinese and Malaysian university teachers, indicating generally positive but improvable work environments. Gautam and Sharma (2020) highlighted that faculty valued responsibility, achievement, and recognition, and suggested improving both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Shafi (2016) and Tahir and Sajid (2019) reported dissatisfaction with pay, promotion, and working conditions, though teaching responsibilities and career growth remained satisfying.

Abdullah and Akhtar (2016) found a moderate positive relationship between university teachers' job satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), particularly altruism and civic virtue, which accounted for 21.3% of the variance in job satisfaction. Differences in OCB and satisfaction were observed across gender, university type, job type, age, qualifications, and experience.

Further research highlights the broader implications of job satisfaction for teaching effectiveness and institutional commitment. Kelley and Knowles (2016), Khan et al. (2021), and Zaman et al. (2014) highlight that satisfied faculty engage more effectively with students and curricula, enhancing overall educational quality. Similarly, factors such as academic freedom, workload, compensation, work-life balance, and cultural expectations significantly shape satisfaction, alongside age and tenure (Jawabri, 2017; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Rienties et al., 2013; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). The literature shows that age and job tenure affect faculty job satisfaction differently across studies.

Regarding theoretical perspectives, Patricia and Asoba (2021) discuss several major motivational theories; however, the present study specifically focuses on job satisfaction and dissatisfaction through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains motivation by distinguishing between autonomous and controlled motivation and emphasizes how work environments influence motivation and self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2012). The theory highlights three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential for well-being and effective performance. Because SDT has been widely supported across education and work settings, it provides a strong framework for understanding job satisfaction.

Age and job tenure are frequently studied as determinants of faculty job satisfaction; findings are mixed, with some studies showing positive effects and others reporting weak or non-significant relationships. Most research has focused on broader faculty populations across multiple institutions, leaving a gap in context-specific studies within Nepal, particularly at the central department of education. Few studies have examined how age and job tenure independently influence satisfaction within a single department or discipline. Addressing this gap can inform targeted policies to enhance faculty satisfaction, retention, and performance.

This paper examines the influence of age and job tenure on job satisfaction among university faculty in the central department of education. This study is guided by the following null hypothesis:

H_01 – The overall job satisfaction of teaching staff is not significantly related to their age and job tenure.

The following research method will be used to explore the issue:

Methodology

This study followed a post-positivist paradigm and adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Descriptive statistics and correlation were employed to examine the relationship

between faculty members' job satisfaction and their demographic characteristics at Tribhuvan University. The descriptive component outlines the overall level of job satisfaction, while the correlational component explores the associations between job satisfaction and selected demographic variables, age, and job tenure.

The sample for this study comprised all faculty members of the Central Department of Education at Tribhuvan University, using a census sampling technique to ensure comprehensive representation and enhance the study's reliability. While 132 faculty members were in 2021, the final dataset included 104 participants, excluding those who did not respond to the questionnaire or declined to participate.

The study depends on primary data collected from faculty members using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises closed-ended items to measure job satisfaction, along with demographic questions covering age and job tenure. The study utilized the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), a well-established and reliable instrument for measuring job satisfaction. The JSS, developed by Spector, categorizes job satisfaction into three levels: dissatisfaction, ambivalence, and satisfaction (Spector, 1985). It scores across nine dimensions, including pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, working conditions, colleagues, nature of work, and communication, providing comprehensive insights into various aspects of job satisfaction (Ibrahim et al., 2014; Stankovska et al., 2017). A higher JSS score indicates greater job satisfaction. The score range for the total job satisfaction score (TJSS) in JSS is 36 to 216, and it can be converted into three categories of job satisfaction: 36 to 108 (Dissatisfaction); 108 to 144 (Ambivalent); 144 to 216 (Satisfaction). For each of the nine dimensions, with a range from 4 to 24, scores of 4 to 12 are dissatisfied, 16 to 24 are satisfied, and between 12 and 16 are ambivalent (Spector, 1985).

The findings were supported by secondary data from relevant literature, including research articles, institutional reports, and policy documents, which helped strengthen the study's theoretical framework. The study used SPSS for data analysis, employing descriptive statistics to summarize job satisfaction levels and Pearson correlation coefficients to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and demographic factors such as age and tenure. The results of the research based on the above-mentioned methodology are provided in the ensuing section.

Results

The descriptive statistics for age, job tenure, and total score of job satisfaction and scores across nine dimensions of job satisfaction have been presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Age, Job Tenure, Overall Job Satisfaction (TJSS), and Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. TJSS	104	139.56	21.37
2. Pay	104	13.98	4.72
3. Promotion	104	14.62	4.17
4. Supervision	104	16.92	4.11
5. Fringe Benefits	104	14.38	4.31
6. Contingent Rewards	104	13.18	3.95
7. Operating Conditions	104	13.19	3.49
8. Coworkers	104	18.09	3.46
9. Nature of Work	104	20.33	3.67
10. Communication	104	14.87	3.60
11. Age (in years)	104	46.89	7.43
12. Job Tenure (in years)	104	16.57	7.21

Note. TJSS = Total Job Satisfaction Score

The mean age of the respondents was 46.89 years ($SD = 7.43$), and the mean job tenure was 16.57 years ($SD = 7.21$). Likewise, the total job satisfaction score (TJSS) had a mean of 139.56 ($SD = 21.37$), indicating an ambivalent level of overall job satisfaction among faculty members. When examining specific dimensions of job satisfaction, Nature of Work scored the highest mean ($M = 20.33$, $SD = 3.67$), followed by Coworkers ($M = 18.09$, $SD = 3.46$) and Supervision ($M = 16.92$, $SD = 4.11$), and all of these three scores belonged to the satisfied level (score from 16 to 24). This suggests that faculty members are most satisfied with the intrinsic aspects of their work, the support from colleagues, and the quality of supervision.

On the other hand, dimensions such as Operating Conditions ($M = 13.19$, $SD = 3.49$), Contingent Rewards ($M = 13.18$, $SD = 3.95$), and Pay ($M = 13.98$, $SD = 4.72$) received comparatively lower mean scores, and all of these three scores belonged to an ambivalent level of satisfaction. This indicates that faculty members were less satisfied with the extrinsic aspects of their job, including the physical work environment, financial incentives, and rewards.

The remaining three dimensions had scores in the ambivalent level as well: Promotion ($M = 14.62$, $SD = 4.17$), Fringe Benefits ($M = 14.38$, $SD = 4.31$), and Communication ($M = 14.87$, $SD = 3.60$).

Overall, the results suggest that faculty satisfaction is higher in relational and intrinsic job aspects than in material or organizational support aspects.

Job Satisfaction and Age

To examine the relationship between age and overall job satisfaction as well as its specific dimensions, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The results are summarized in Table 2, showing the strength and direction of the associations between age and total job satisfaction (TJSS) along with its individual components.

Table 2

Correlation (r) for TJSS and Dimensions of Job Satisfaction, and Age

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Age
Age	46.89	7.43	-
TJSS	139.56	21.37	-.114
Pay	13.98	4.72	-.043
Promotion	14.62	4.17	.069
Supervision	16.92	4.11	-.117
Fringe Benefits	14.38	4.31	-.249*
Contingent Rewards	13.18	3.95	-.192
Operating Conditions	13.19	3.49	-.125
Coworkers	18.09	3.46	-.144
Nature of Work	20.33	3.67	.017
Communication	14.87	3.60	.182

Note. TJSS= Total Job Satisfaction Score, *Significant at 0.05 level

The results indicated no significant relationship between age and overall job satisfaction, $r (102) = -0.114$, $p = .249$.

However, when analyzing individual dimensions, a significant negative correlation was observed only between age and fringe benefits $r (102) = -0.249$, $p = .011$, suggesting that as age increases, satisfaction with fringe benefits decreases. For the remaining dimensions of job satisfaction pay, promotion, supervision, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication, no significant relationships were found with age, indicating that satisfaction in these areas is not strongly influenced by faculty

members' age. For example, the correlation with pay was $r(102) = -.043, p = .667$, with promotion was $r(102) = .069, p = .484$, with supervision was $r(102) = -.117, p = .238$, with contingent rewards was $r(102) = -.192, p = .051$, with operating conditions was $r(102) = .125, p = .208$, with coworkers was $r(102) = -.144, p = .144$, with nature of work was $r(102) = .017, p = .862$, and with communication was $r(102) = .182, p = .065$. These findings suggest that while most aspects of job satisfaction are not significantly influenced by age, fringe benefits may require particular attention, as satisfaction in this area tends to decline as faculty age. The null hypothesis for overall job satisfaction and age was accepted. However, the null hypotheses for age with fringe benefits were rejected. All remaining null hypotheses related to age were accepted.

Job Satisfaction and Job Tenure

To examine the relationship between job tenure and overall job satisfaction as well as its specific dimensions, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The results are summarized in Table 3, showing the strength and direction of the associations between job tenure and total job satisfaction (TJSS) along with its individual components.

Table 3

Correlation (r) for TJSS and Dimensions of Job Satisfaction, and Job Tenure

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Job Tenure
Job Tenure	16.57	7.21	-
TJSS	139.56	21.37	-.187
Pay	13.98	4.72	-.155
Promotion	14.62	4.17	.027
Supervision	16.92	4.11	-.135
Fringe Benefits	14.38	4.31	-.274*
Contingent Rewards	13.18	3.95	-.295*
Operating Conditions	13.19	3.49	-.084
Coworkers	18.09	3.46	-.159
Nature of Work	20.33	3.67	.027
Communication	14.87	3.60	.076

Note. TJSS= Total Job Satisfaction Score, *Significant at 0.05 level

The results indicated no statistically significant relationship between job tenure and overall job satisfaction among faculty members at the Central Department of Education,

Tribhuvan University, $r(102) = -0.187, p = 0.058$. This suggests that the length of service alone does not significantly influence overall job satisfaction levels.

However, when analyzing individual dimensions of job satisfaction, two significant negative correlations emerged: fringe benefits: $r(102) = -0.274, p = 0.005$, and contingent rewards: $r(102) = -0.295, p = 0.002$. These results indicate that as job tenure increases, satisfaction with fringe benefits and contingent rewards tends to decrease. It may imply that long-serving faculty members feel their contributions are not matched with adequate benefits or performance-based incentives.

For the remaining dimensions, no significant relationships were found, for example, the correlation with pay was $r(102) = -.155, p = .115$, with promotion was $r(102) = .027, p = .785$, with supervision was $r(102) = -.135, p = .171$, with operating conditions was $r(102) = -.084, p = .397$, with coworkers was $r(102) = -.159, p = .106$, with nature of work was $r(102) = .027, p = .788$, and with communication was $r(102) = .076, p = .446$. The null hypothesis for overall job satisfaction and job tenure was accepted. However, the null hypotheses for job tenure with fringe benefits and contingent rewards were rejected. All remaining null hypotheses related to job tenure were accepted.

Discussion

The present study examined how faculty age and job tenure relate to overall job satisfaction and its specific dimensions at the Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University. The findings reveal that faculty members reported moderate to high overall job satisfaction ($M = 139.56, SD = 21.37$), with higher satisfaction in intrinsic and relational aspects such as Nature of Work, Coworkers, and Supervision, and lower satisfaction in extrinsic factors including Pay, Contingent Rewards, and Operating Conditions. These results are consistent with prior studies in Nepal and internationally, which show that faculty derive greater satisfaction from meaningful work and collegial support than from material incentives (Chapagain, 2021; Shafi, 2016; Tahir & Sajid, 2019; Toker, 2011).

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), these patterns indicate that faculty members' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are largely fulfilled through intrinsic work tasks, supportive supervision, and positive coworker relationships. Satisfaction is therefore maintained through internal motivation and the quality of interpersonal and professional engagement, while lower satisfaction with extrinsic factors suggests areas where institutional support may be limited. SDT emphasizes that external rewards alone are insufficient for sustaining long-term motivation if they do not support these core psychological needs.

The analysis also showed that age and job tenure were not significantly associated with overall job satisfaction, suggesting that demographic variables alone do not strongly influence faculty satisfaction. However, satisfaction with fringe benefits declined with increasing age ($r = -0.249$, $p = .011$), and longer tenure was associated with reduced satisfaction with fringe benefits and contingent rewards. These findings suggest that while intrinsic aspects of the work continue to support stable satisfaction, extrinsic rewards and recognition may become less fulfilling over time, particularly for senior faculty. This may reflect unmet expectations regarding institutional recognition, benefits, and incentive structures in public universities, contrasting with some studies that report higher satisfaction among long-serving faculty (Ghafoor, 2012; Khan et al., 2021; Malik et al., 2010).

Interpreted through SDT, the findings reinforce the idea that job satisfaction is primarily driven by the fulfillment of psychological needs rather than by demographic characteristics or tenure alone. While tenure may enhance competence and job security, a lack of adequate extrinsic recognition can undermine feelings of fairness and competence, reducing satisfaction. Accordingly, maintaining a balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators is crucial, particularly for long-serving and older faculty.

Practical implications of these results suggest that universities can sustain and enhance faculty job satisfaction by promoting autonomy in teaching, constructive supervision, and collegial collaboration, while also addressing extrinsic deficits through fair compensation, transparent promotion policies, and improved benefits. By combining intrinsic motivation with effective extrinsic support, institutions can foster a more balanced and enduring work satisfaction, enhancing both faculty well-being and institutional effectiveness.

Conclusion

Faculty members at the Central Department of Education experience moderate to high job satisfaction, driven primarily by intrinsic and relational aspects of work. Age and tenure do not significantly influence overall satisfaction, although satisfaction with extrinsic rewards, particularly fringe benefits and contingent rewards decline among older and longer-serving faculty. Interpreted through Self-Determination Theory, these findings suggest that fulfilling core psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is key to sustaining motivation and well-being, while extrinsic recognition remains important for long-term engagement. Universities can enhance faculty satisfaction by combining meaningful work and collegial support with fair and transparent reward systems, ensuring both intrinsic and extrinsic needs are addressed.

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