

Factors influencing faculty job satisfaction: A quantitative study of private medical colleges in Karachi

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Abstract

Objective: To identify key factors influencing academic job satisfaction among faculty members of private medical colleges in an urban setting.

Method: The cross-sectional, quantitative study was conducted from October to November 2021 at the Department of Community Health Sciences, Fazaia Ruth Pfau Medical College, Karachi, and comprised faculty members associated with 13 private medical colleges in Karachi. Data was collected using a 32-item questionnaire that was scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Key predictors of job satisfaction were identified and evaluated. Data was analysed using SPSS version 23.

Results: Of the 200 subjects surveyed, 106(52.7%) were males. The overall mean age was 29.4±5.2 years. There were 145(72.5%) respondents who were married, 106(53%) had employed spouses, 102(51%) were either professors or associate professors, and 93(46.5%) had professional experience of 1-5 years. Three principal factors were identified; career growth opportunities, working conditions and compensatory packages ($p<0.001$). The lowest mean satisfaction score was observed for compensatory packages (1.74±0.84), followed by working conditions (2.28±1.41) and career growth (2.38±1.39).

Conclusion: Improving compensatory packages, working conditions and career growth opportunities were found to be crucial for enhancing job satisfaction among faculty members in Karachi-based private medical colleges.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Faculty, Private medical colleges, Karachi, Factor analysis. (JPMA 74: 1418; 2024)

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Introduction

A crucial component of higher education is faculty job satisfaction, which has a direct bearing on the quality of education given to the students.¹ It refers to how faculty members perceive their work at cognitive and behavioural levels. This is intricately linked with better academic performance² and a higher retention rate. In Pakistan, one of the main concerns of academic institutions is the difficulty in retaining faculty, particularly in the private sector based in urban areas. Studies have found that the brain-drain mostly affects developing nations, including Pakistan.³

In Pakistan, the higher education sector encompasses both public and private institutions. Over the past two decades, there has been a substantial growth in the number of universities in the country. As of 2021, data indicates that there are a total of 247 universities in Pakistan; 147 public and 100 private universities.⁴ Overall, there are 123 universities dedicated to medical education, according to the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC).⁵ Despite the

significant presence of medical universities, there exists a dearth of research examining faculty job satisfaction within Pakistani medical colleges.

Among the 123 medical universities, 76 are privately owned.⁵ In the province of Sindh, there are 17 private medical colleges, and within this subset, 13 are situated in Karachi.⁵

Most of the relevant studies have been conducted in public medical colleges, or in hospital-based settings.^{6,7} A study explored residents' perceptions of the work environment during their postgraduate medical training in Pakistan.⁸ Another study explored the impact of lack of respect in workplace and non-professional attitudes on job satisfaction among nurses in Pakistan.⁹ A few studies conducted in private medical colleges were either focussed on the level of job satisfaction of faculty during the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic¹⁰ or assessed faculty job satisfaction in medical and dental colleges both in the private and public sectors.¹¹ There are several reasons why it is important to include private medical colleges in research on faculty job satisfaction in Pakistan. First, the number of private medical colleges in the country has surpassed that of public medical colleges, with 41 public and 66 private medical colleges,⁵ indicating their dominant role in influencing the course of medical education in Pakistan.

Second, faculty job satisfaction may vary due to the impact

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of private medical colleges' autonomy, flexibility in curriculum and decision-making, and different working conditions, resources and funding streams compared to public colleges. This impact can lead to different levels of job satisfaction among faculty members.

Additionally, the studies cited above did not investigate the specific factors that influence faculty job satisfaction in private medical colleges, such as working conditions, opportunities for professional development, compensation package, supervisory support, cohesion within the team, and organisational culture as parts of a conceptual framework.

The current study was planned to fill the gap in literature by investigating faculty job satisfaction in private medical colleges in an urban setting in Pakistan, and to identify the factors that influenced job satisfaction.

Subjects and Methods

The cross-sectional, quantitative study was conducted from October to November 2021 at the Department of Community Health Sciences, Fazaia Ruth Pfau Medical College, Karachi. After approval from the institutional ethics review board, the sample size was determined with 95% confidence interval (CI) and 6% margin of error based on a previous study in which 68% of faculty members were dissatisfied with their job.¹² The sample was raised using non-probability sampling. Those included were faculty members of either gender associated with 13 private medical colleges across Karachi who had at least one year of work experience at the same institution. Part-time or adjunct faculty and those on leave during the study period were excluded.

Informed consent was taken and data was collected using a predesigned 32-item closed-ended questionnaire in the light of relevant literature.¹³ The questions were scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=very satisfied to 5=very dissatisfied. Analyses was conducted using SPSS version 23.

Data suitability for factor analysis was confirmed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure¹⁴ and Bartlett's test of sphericity.¹⁵

Principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was performed to identify the key factors influencing job satisfaction, revealing three principal factors accounting for 82.22% of the total variance in job satisfaction responses. The first factor explained 41.97% of the variance, the second 21.84%, and the third 18.41%. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.72 to 0.84, confirming high internal consistency (Table 1).¹⁶

Table-1: Factor analysis of employee job satisfaction exploring key dimensions and psychometric properties.

| Factor Name | Item Loading | Communalities (Extraction) | % of Variance (Cumulative) | Cronbach's reliability coefficient | Eigen value |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Career growth | 0.850 | 0.740 | 41.974 | 0.84 | 2.099 |
| Working conditions | 0.795 | 0.634 | 21.841 | 0.77 | 1.092 |
| Compensatory package | 0.710 | 0.722 | 18.418 | 0.74 | 0.921 |
| Organisational culture and policies | 0.720 | 0.865 | 10.641 | 0.75 | 0.532 |
| Team cohesion | 0.564 | 0.601 | 7.127 | 0.72 | 0.356 |

Following the PCA, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression analyses were conducted to further explore the influential factors on faculty's job satisfaction level. This was complemented by Pearson product-moment correlation tests among the extracted factors to assess their relationships with the dependent variable — faculty's job satisfaction.

Likert scale data was used as interval data in line with previous studies^{17,18} for analysing job satisfaction among faculty members, employing both parametric Pearson correlation coefficients, and non-parametric Spearman's rho.¹⁹ Notably, correlations within the compensation package — Pearson at 0.681 and Spearman at 0.667 — showed consistent results across these methodologies, enhancing the credibility of treating Likert scale data as interval data for sophisticated statistical analysis. $P < 0.05$ was considered significant.

Results

Of the 200 subjects surveyed, 106(52.7%) were males. The overall mean age was 29.4 ± 5.2 years. There were 145(72.5%) respondents who were married, 106(53%) had employed spouses, 102(51%) were either professors or associate professors, and 93(46.5%) had professional experience of 1-5 years (Table 2).

Of the total, 88(44%) faculty members reported dissatisfaction with their jobs. Compensation package had the lowest mean satisfaction score 1.74 ± 0.84 , followed by working conditions 2.28 ± 1.41 and career growth (2.38 ± 1.39). Team cohesion 3.19 ± 1.56 and supervisory support 3.32 ± 1.13 recorded the highest satisfaction scores (Table 3).

The reported mean values, though typically unconventional for ordinal data, were justified by the Central Limit Theorem, which supports the approximation of normality in large samples²⁰ as observed in our preliminary tests ($W = 0.895, p < 0.0001$).

Significant correlations were observed for job satisfaction with compensation package ($r = 0.68, p = 0.005$), working conditions ($r = 0.64, p = 0.008$) and career growth ($r = 0.62, p = 0.010$) (Table 4).

The median satisfaction score for compensation package was 2 (IQR: 1.134), indicating a slightly higher central tendency than the mean score of 1.74±0.84.

Table-2: Sociodemographic characteristics (n=200).

| Variables | n (%) |
|--|-------------|
| Academic Rank of Respondent | |
| Professor | 62 (31.00) |
| Associate professor | 40 (20.00) |
| Assistant professor | 47 (23.50) |
| Lecturer | 33 (16.50) |
| Others | 18 (9.00) |
| Years of service of the Respondents | |
| 1 - 5 years | 93 (46.50) |
| 6 - 10 years | 23 (11.50) |
| 11 - 15 years | 23 (11.50) |
| 16 - 20 years | 17 (8.50) |
| > 20 years | 44 (22.00) |
| Marital Status | |
| Married | 145 (72.50) |
| Unmarried | 37 (18.50) |
| Divorced | 4 (2.00) |
| Separated | 3 (1.50) |
| Widowed/Widower | 11 (5.50) |
| Spouse Employment Status | |
| Employed | 106 (53.00) |
| Unemployed | 68 (34.00) |
| No Answer | 26 (13.00) |
| Departments | |
| Clinical | 70 (35.00) |
| Basic sciences | 130 (65.00) |

Table-3: Mean satisfaction scores and frequencies for key factors influencing employee satisfaction.

| Factors | Frequency (%) | Mean satisfaction score |
|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| Compensatory package (CP) | 57.50 (28.75) | 1.74±0.84 |
| Working conditions (WC) | 42.96 (21.84) | 2.28±1.41 |
| Career growth | 75.97 (38) | 2.38±1.39 |
| Team cohesion (TC) | 98.09 (49) | 3.19±1.56 |
| Organisational culture and policies (OCP) | 36.67 (18.34) | 3.25±1.27 |
| Supervisory support (SS) | 79.17 (39.6) | 3.32±1.13 |

Table-4: Correlations between job satisfaction factors and faculty job satisfaction level (n=200).

| Variables | Mean±SD | OCP | WC | CP | CG | SS | TC |
|---|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Organisational culture and policies (OCP) | 3.25±1.27 | | | | | | |
| Working conditions (WC) | 2.28±1.41 | 0.439 | | | | | |
| Compensatory package (CP) | 1.74±0.84 | 0.513 | 0.254 | | | | |
| Career growth (CG) | 2.38±1.39 | 0.536 | 0.602 | 0.399 | | | |
| Supervisory support (SS) | 3.32±1.13 | 0.014 | 0.010 | 0.005 | 0.315 | | |
| Team cohesion (TC) | 3.19±1.56 | 0.265 | 0.206 | 0.193 | 0.085 | 0.068 | |
| Academics' job satisfaction (AJS) | 2.44±0.99 | 0.298 | 0.649 | 0.682 | 0.622 | 0.595 | 0.481 |

p<0.05

Table-5: Multiple linear regression analysis exploring predictors of faculty job satisfaction.

| Variables | R2 | Adjusted R2 | F – Value | Std. Beta Value | t-value | p-value |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| Control variables | 0.886 | 0.882 | 3.09 | | | |
| Compensatory package | | | | 0.519 | 19.948 | 0.001 |
| Working conditions s | | | | 0.238 | 7.284 | 0.001 |
| Career growth | | | | 0.228 | 7.036 | 0.001 |
| Supervisory support | | | | 0.207 | 5.492 | 0.001 |
| Organisational culture and policies | | | | 0.191 | 7.054 | 0.001 |
| Team cohesion | | | | 0.117 | 4.032 | 0.001 |

p<0.05

Multiple linear regression demonstrated a robust model fit with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.886, indicating that the model explained 89% of the variance in job satisfaction. Compensation package emerged as the strongest predictor of job satisfaction (β=0.519), followed by working conditions (β=0.238) and career growth (β=0.228) (p<0.001) (Table 5).

Discussion

The current study aimed at exploring the determinants of job satisfaction level among faculty members at private medical institutions in Karachi. The sample predominantly consisted of married, senior academics with >5 years of service, providing a solid base to examine experienced faculty's perspectives.

The results were in contrast with a previous study¹² conducted in a private medical university in Karachi in which 68% of the doctors were not satisfied with their job. One possible reason is the difference in work environment and job responsibilities. Doctors may face more stress and pressure due to the nature of their work, such as long working hours, high workload, and dealing with life-and-death situations.

The current study identified key factors influencing job satisfaction, notably compensation, working conditions and career progression, which was consistent with literature.²¹ However, unlike studies in more economically stable contexts where compensation may not emerge as a primary concern, the current findings suggested it played a critical role in overall job satisfaction. This difference underscores the economic challenges in Pakistan, highlighting the higher valuation of financial rewards possibly due to the country's economic instability compared to countries like Singapore,²² where compensation does not significantly impact job satisfaction.

Interestingly, while compensation was ranked highly in terms of its influence on job satisfaction, the mean satisfaction scores revealed that faculty members were relatively satisfied with their current packages.

This apparent contradiction might reflect a subtle reality where faculty members, despite acknowledging their contentment with the existing packages, still consider improved compensation a priority for enhancing job satisfaction.^{23,24} This indicates a broader context where even satisfactory aspects of employment are seen as areas for potential enhancement to

achieve higher satisfaction levels.

The importance of working conditions was also affirmed, aligning with other studies that emphasised the impact of work-life integration on job satisfaction among healthcare professionals.²⁵ However, the mixed results from European studies²⁶ suggested that variations in measuring job satisfaction and differing workplace environments can influence perceptions, highlighting the need to consider geographic and cultural factors when evaluating these findings.

Career progression also emerged as a significant factor, with evidence suggesting that institutions that actively engage in career management report higher levels of job satisfaction among their staff.²⁷ Career development opportunities were correlated with increased job satisfaction, productivity and professional growth, emphasising the role of career advancement in fostering a satisfied workforce.

Incorporating Herzberg's two-factor theory, our results indicated that both motivators and hygiene factors played essential roles in shaping job satisfaction among academic staff in Pakistan. Interestingly, factors like compensation and working conditions seemed to exert a stronger influence than motivators, which could be reflective of the specific socioeconomic conditions in Pakistan.^{28,29} This insight suggested that while motivators were crucial for positive job sentiments, addressing the factors effectively can prevent dissatisfaction, and is critical in the context of developing countries.

Practical implications from the current study suggest several strategies for improving faculty job satisfaction. Medical universities in Pakistan should consider enhancing compensatory packages to match faculty qualifications and performance adequately. Furthermore, improving working conditions by providing better resources and support for teaching and research activities is recommended. Promotional and training opportunities should be made more accessible to encourage career development and recognition, fostering a positive organisational culture that promotes teamwork and innovation.

The current study has limitations. It focussed solely on faculty members from private medical colleges in Karachi, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings. Besides, the study used non-probability sampling method for raising the sample. It is recommended that future studies employ probability sampling approach and involve a larger, more diverse sample to validate the current findings.

Conclusion

Compensation packages, working conditions and career growth opportunities were found to have a significant impact on faculty's job satisfaction level in private medical colleges based in Karachi. To improve the level, and, subsequently, retention and educational quality, it is essential for administrations to prioritise competitive compensation, improve working conditions, and provide clear career advancement opportunities.

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Author Contribution:

AAK: Concept, data curation, formal analysis, writing, critical review, literature search, methodology, original draught writing and editing.

SAQ: Writing, critical review, literature search, original draught writing and editing.

MA: Literature review, methodology, writing and editing.

IAK: Data curation, literature research, original draught writing, and editing.

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