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Higher Education and Faculty Job Satisfaction: Examining the Link Between Attitude, Productivity, and Professional Growth- A Qualitative Study

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Faculty job satisfaction plays a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of higher education institutions, influencing both teaching quality and institutional success. Research suggests that faculty productivity and satisfaction are deeply intertwined with work conditions, institutional policies, and personal achievements. Increased undergraduate teaching and service responsibilities have been found to negatively impact job satisfaction, particularly in research-intensive universities (Mamiseishvili, 2011). Faculty members derive satisfaction from different sources, with extrinsic factors such as institutional benefits and policies being particularly important across racial groups, while intrinsic factors such as publications and funded research contribute significantly to satisfaction, especially for Asian/Pacific Islander faculty (Ali, 2009).Moreover, dissatisfaction is frequently linked to issues related to pay, promotions, and administrative decisions, though faculty in higher-paying academic divisions report greater satisfaction (Locke et al., 2017). Work-life balance and working conditions also play a pivotal role in shaping faculty attitudes and performance (Nandan & Krishna, 2013). Given these complexities, institutions must reevaluate reward structures, tenure expectations, and faculty support mechanisms to maintain satisfaction and productivity (Mamiseishvili, 2011). Policies such as alternative tenure tracks and enhanced support for professional growth may offer viable solutions to improving faculty engagement and institutional outcomes (Locke et al., 2017). This study aims to explore these relationships further, contributing to the discourse on faculty well-being and productivity in higher education. **Keywords:** Higher Education, Faculty Job Satisfaction, Attitude, Productivity, Professional Growth

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Background of the Study:

Importance of faculty job satisfaction in higher education: Faculty job satisfaction is essential for success in higher education organizations, affecting commitment, productivity, and retention (Nandan and Krishna, 2013). Significant elements that affect satisfaction comprise health benefits, financial stability, adequate salary, and general well-being (Sundaram, 2024). Human resource management is integral in executing effective recruitment, training, and compensation strategies to improve job satisfaction (Slavić and Avakumović, 2018). Research has revealed various factors that have a positive correlation with job satisfaction, including recognition, working conditions, opportunities for advancement, and social identity (Smriti and Kumar, 2020). Factors such as age, marital status, and family background also impact satisfaction levels (Smriti and Kumar, 2020). Content faculty members lead to enhanced teaching quality, research performance, and student achievement (Nandan and Krishna, 2013; Slavić and Avakumović, 2018). It is vital for higher education institutions to comprehend and address these factors to establish a sustainable and productive academic environment (Sundaram, 2024).

Role of attitude, productivity, and professional growth in job satisfaction: Research reveals a significant connection between job satisfaction, productivity, and professional development. Job satisfaction is positively

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associated with work productivity, where increased satisfaction results in enhanced productivity (Tentama et al. , 2019). Task characteristics and perceived job features greatly affect both productivity and job satisfaction (Griffin, 1982). The strength of individual growth needs (GNS) affects the relationship between employee satisfaction, job attitudes, and productivity, with stronger relationships found among individuals possessing higher GNS (Das, 1991). Career development initiatives are essential in improving job satisfaction, professional advancement, and productivity, especially among research and development staff (Chen et al. , 2004). These results indicate that organizations can boost employee productivity and job satisfaction by concentrating on task design, adopting career development initiatives, and recognizing individual growth requirements. Overall, the research highlights the interconnectedness of attitude, productivity, and professional growth in fostering job satisfaction and organizational achievement.

While current studies highlight the significance of faculty job satisfaction in higher education, factors influencing it such as commitment, productivity, and retention (Nandan and Krishna, 2013; Sundaram, 2024) remain understudied. Most research primarily addresses extrinsic elements like salary, benefits, and working conditions (Slavić and Avakumović, 2018; Smriti and Kumar, 2020), whereas intrinsic motivators—including purpose, autonomy, and emotional well-being—are often overlooked. Furthermore, the influence of stress, burnout, and resilience on faculty job satisfaction has not been thoroughly investigated in higher education environments.

Another major gap is the effect of institutional policies and leadership on faculty well-being. While some studies have analysed HR practices and professional development programs (Chen et al., 2004; Tentama et al., 2019), there is insufficient attention to how leadership styles, workplace culture, and governance policies impact faculty satisfaction. Likewise, the contributions of mentorship, faculty autonomy, and participatory decision-making to improved job satisfaction remain inadequately explored.

Moreover, despite research acknowledging a connection between job satisfaction and productivity (Griffin, 1982; Tentama et al., 2019), little evidence exists regarding causality—whether increased satisfaction leads to greater productivity or the reverse. This necessitates longitudinal studies to comprehend how faculty satisfaction develops over time and its direct effects on student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, contextual and demographic differences in faculty satisfaction are still largely unexamined. Although aspects like age, marital status, and family background have been researched (Smriti and Kumar, 2020), minimal studies have delved into cross-cultural and institutional distinctions or the differing job satisfaction levels among tenured versus non-tenured and adjunct versus full-time faculty.

Finally, the incorporation of emerging workplace trends and technologies constitutes another vital research gap. The growing use of remote and hybrid teaching formats, digital learning tools, and AI-enhanced learning management systems has altered the landscape of higher education, yet their effects on faculty well-being, workload, and job satisfaction are still largely unexplored. As academic institutions adapt to flexible work setups and evolving digital technologies, it is crucial to understand their impact on faculty experiences and productivity to develop effective policies and support frameworks.

Addressing these gaps will yield a more thorough, qualitative understanding of faculty job satisfaction, assisting institutions in fostering a more supportive and enriching work environment for educators in higher education.

Potential Research Directions: To tackle these gaps, upcoming research can investigate psychosocial elements that affect faculty satisfaction beyond monetary rewards, illuminating intrinsic motivators like autonomy, purpose, and emotional wellness. Furthermore, analyzing the influence of institutional policies, leadership, and workplace culture can enhance the understanding of how administrative backing, decision-making approaches, and organizational climate affect job satisfaction. Carrying out longitudinal studies is crucial to capture the changing nature of faculty satisfaction and its long-term consequences on productivity and career dedication. In addition, cross-cultural and institutional differences should be examined to identify how job satisfaction varies across different educational environments, faculty positions, and governance frameworks. Lastly, as digitalization and remote instruction persist in reshaping higher education, research should evaluate their influence on faculty well-being, workload, and job satisfaction to support institutions in formulating policies that resonate with contemporary academic standards.

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2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore how faculty attitudes impact job satisfaction.
2. To examine the relationship between job satisfaction and faculty productivity.
3. To analyze how professional growth influences faculty job satisfaction.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How do faculty attitudes shape their job satisfaction?
2. In what ways does job satisfaction influence faculty productivity?
3. How does professional growth contribute to faculty job satisfaction?

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Contribution to Policy Development in Higher Education: This research offers important insights into faculty job satisfaction, highlighting the significance of workplace conditions, opportunities for professional growth, and institutional support in shaping faculty experiences. By pinpointing essential elements that either enhance or impede job satisfaction, the results can guide higher education policies aimed at improving faculty retention, well-being, and productivity. Moreover, the study provides direction for human resource management strategies, assisting institutions in structuring compensation, career development programs, and workplace culture to more effectively support faculty members. In addition, the research points out the necessity of leadership training programs, ensuring academic leaders create an inclusive, supportive, and engaging work environment. Another vital contribution involves shaping initiatives for mental health and resilience-building, tackling issues like burnout, stress, and work-life balance challenges commonly found in academia.

Practical Implications for Academic Institutions: The findings of the study offer practical recommendations for higher education institutions to boost faculty job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Optimizing faculty workload is essential for avoiding burnout and fostering work-life balance, guaranteeing that faculty members can sustain both productivity and well-being. Establishing structured career development programs that cater to faculty growth needs can encourage long-term career satisfaction and involvement. Fortifying mentorship and leadership models can elevate faculty motivation, enhance engagement, and foster a more collaborative academic environment. Additionally, creating faculty well-being programs, which integrate mental health support and resilience-building techniques, can assist educators in managing workplace stress and challenges. Finally, enhancing faculty governance and participatory opportunities guarantees transparent decision-making and academic freedom, strengthening a sense of autonomy and professional satisfaction within the institution.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Faculty Job Satisfaction: Faculty job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept affected by various elements. Hagedorn (2000) introduced a general framework for understanding faculty job satisfaction. In the field of nursing education, psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, and motivational elements are crucial components of job satisfaction, with mentoring and effective leadership serving as significant precursors (Heier and Nelson-Brantley, 2024). Research productivity may adversely affect job satisfaction, especially when it elevates undergraduate teaching and service obligations (Mamiseishvili, 2011). Nonetheless, faculty members are generally more satisfied when they perceive respect for their research and receive adequate compensation (Bozeman and Gaughan, 2011). Gender and tenure status also influence satisfaction levels, with women typically indicating lower satisfaction and tenured faculty demonstrating higher satisfaction (Bozeman and Gaughan, 2011). Notably, affiliations with industry and university research centres do not significantly influence job satisfaction (Bozeman and Gaughan, 2011). These insights underscore the complicated nature of faculty job satisfaction and the necessity for institutions to reconcile expectations and rewards pertaining to teaching, research, and service.

The Role of Attitude in Workplace Satisfaction: Employee attitudes and job satisfaction are vital components in workplace performance and organizational achievement. Research shows a strong positive link between employee satisfaction, attitude, and performance (Awan, 2015). Elements like pay, promotion, coworker interactions, and work environment greatly affect employee satisfaction and performance (Awan, 2015; Landis et al., 2015). Positive employee attitudes enhance organizational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and profit margins (Landis et al., 2015).

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Research has revealed significant connections among job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment (Gopinath, 2020). To efficiently manage human resources, employers need to consider employee concerns and emotions, as detrimental attitudes can influence the whole organization (Landis et al., 2015; Saari and Judge, 2004). Nonetheless, there are gaps between HR practices and scientific findings regarding the causes and outcomes of job satisfaction, along with approaches to measure and shape employee attitudes (Saari and Judge, 2004). Future studies may concentrate on personal traits, such as emotions, in understanding job satisfaction and its effects on organizational performance.

Impact of Job Satisfaction on Productivity: Employee attitudes and job satisfaction greatly influence organizational performance and success. Research shows that positive employee attitudes lead to enhanced efficiency, customer satisfaction, and profitability (Landis et al., 2015). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are essential elements impacting employee performance and retention (Lai and Saridakis, 2013; Yandi and Havidz, 2022). Studies indicate strong correlations among work involvement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee performance (Yandi and Havidz, 2022). Both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are significant in shaping job satisfaction, which subsequently affects organizational performance (Latif et al., 2013). Employers must address employee concerns and emotions to sustain positive attitudes, as negative feelings can affect the whole organization (Landis et al., 2015). Factors such as age, gender, and work experience also play a role in job satisfaction levels (Latif et al., 2013). To efficiently manage human resources, organizations ought to adopt strategies that improve employee attitudes and perceptions of the workplace (Lai and Saridakis, 2013).

Professional Growth and Career Development in Academia: Recent research emphasizes considerable obstacles in academic career advancement, especially for women. Numerous academics are contemplating leaving the field due to burnout and job dissatisfaction, with institutional support being crucial for retention (Heffernan and Heffernan, 2018). For female academics in Tanzania, career progression is motivated by personal growth, role models, and familial support, despite facing cultural obstacles (Tarimo and Swai, 2024). Ongoing professional development programs for faculty are critical for enhancing quality in higher education and should be consistently implemented (Lestari As, 2016). Women in academia encounter specific gender-related challenges during their careers, referred to as a "leaky pipeline" (Gasser and Shaffer, 2014). To tackle these challenges, universities should focus on collaborative research initiatives, publication assistance, and career counselling tailored to women's experiences in academic settings (Tarimo and Swai, 2024; Gasser and Shaffer, 2014). These initiatives can aid in retaining talent and advancing gender equality in academia.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory continues to be applicable in higher education environments across various cultures. Research conducted in Pakistan, Taiwan, and the United States has revealed that both hygiene and motivator factors play a role in job satisfaction among teachers at universities and schools (Ghazi et al. , 2013; Chu and Kuo, 2015; Vito et al. , 2018). Nonetheless, the significance of these factors can differ. In Pakistan, the motivation of university instructors was more influenced by hygiene factors (Ghazi et al. , 2013), while in Taiwan, motivator factors had a greater impact on job engagement when both types of factors were evaluated together (Chu and Kuo, 2015). Areas such as compensation and development opportunities were recognized for enhancement in a U. S. university (Vito et al. , 2018). A review of research conducted in India and internationally affirms the relevance of Herzberg's theory in higher education, with both hygiene and motivator factors influencing faculty job satisfaction (Bishayee, 2019). These results indicate that Herzberg's theory continues to be an important framework for understanding employee motivation in educational contexts.

Self-Determination Theory: Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides important insights for improving practices in higher education. Principles derived from SDT can facilitate active learning and learner-cantered strategies, addressing the drawbacks of conventional passive learning techniques (Jeno, 2015). Studies indicate that autonomous motivation and a sense of competence are positively correlated with academic success and negatively correlated with dropout intentions among learners (Jeno et al., 2018). For university educators, all facets of SDT (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) are linked to professional identity, with competence being the most critical predictor (Kovalčikienė et al., 2019). The application of SDT in teaching practices within higher education has been investigated through various approaches, including surveys, interviews, and online dialogues (Rahayu et al., 2022).

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To enhance student motivation, it is advised that educators establish need-supportive settings, offer choices and suitable challenges, and provide effectance-relevant feedback (Jeno et al., 2018). These findings highlight the significance of SDT in improving both student performance and teacher professional growth in higher education.

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model: The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model offers a basis for comprehending how job demands and resources affect employee well-being and performance in higher education. Academic personnel encounter numerous jobs demand, which include quantitative (e. g., pressure to publish), qualitative (e. g., achieving work-life balance), and organizational demands (e.g., learning facilitated by technology) (Naidoo-Chetty and Du Plessis, 2021). Job resources, like autonomy and social support, can assist in alleviating these demands (Naidoo-Chetty and Du Plessis, 2021). Employee engagement serves as a mediator in the connection between job resources/demands and innovative work behaviour (Dixit and Upadhyay, 2021). Challenge demands and satisfaction of psychological needs also significantly affect engagement and emotional exhaustion (Albrecht, 2015). A systematic review of empirical studies conducted from 2014 to 2019 pinpointed particular job demands and resources within the academic sector, laying the groundwork for targeted interventions by higher education institutions (Naidoo-Chetty and Plessis, 2021). Recognizing these elements can assist institutions in better supporting their academic staff while fostering positive outcomes.

7.   METHODOLOGY:

7.1 Research Design:

This research utilizes a qualitative research framework, employing phenomenological and thematic analysis to investigate faculty job satisfaction in higher education. A qualitative methodology is selected to provide an in-depth understanding of faculty experiences, reflecting the subtleties of how workplace conditions, career advancement, and institutional policies influence job satisfaction. By concentrating on the lived experiences of faculty members, this research aims to reveal personal insights that quantitative studies might miss.

A phenomenological approach is employed to assess faculty members' perceptions, feelings, and interpretations of their work environment. This methodology is particularly effective for understanding how faculty members encounter job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, examining the professional challenges they face, and capturing the personal meanings they ascribe to their workplace experiences. Through phenomenological investigation, the study explores the ways faculty members navigate their roles, respond to institutional policies, and view their career paths within higher education.

To methodically analyse the data, this research implements thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. The analysis process commences with data familiarization, during which transcripts are meticulously examined to develop a deep understanding of faculty experiences. Subsequently, initial coding is performed to pinpoint recurring themes and patterns pertaining to job satisfaction, workplace conditions, and professional advancement. These codes are then categorized into broader themes, such as work environment, leadership support, and career development. A further review and refinement of these themes guarantee coherence and precision in portraying faculty perspectives. Ultimately, key themes are defined, titled, and reported, accompanied by supporting participant quotes to bolster credibility and depth in the analysis.

The justification for opting for this combined approach lies in its capacity to capture both subjective and structured insights. The phenomenological approach enables faculty members to express their personal experiences, while thematic analysis offers a systematic technique for detecting patterns across responses. This dual-method strategy ensures a rich and contextually relevant exploration of faculty job satisfaction, rendering the findings significant for institutional policy enhancement and workplace improvements in higher education.

7.2 Population and Sampling:

The research utilizes a purposive sampling technique, choosing faculty members according to specified criteria to provide relevant and meaningful understandings of job satisfaction in higher education. Participants are required to be full-time faculty members at higher education institutions having a minimum of three years of teaching experience, as this guarantees they possess adequate exposure to workplace conditions, institutional policies, and career advancement opportunities. Faculty members from various academic disciplines and rankings (e. g., assistant

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professors, associate professors, and full professors) are included to represent a wide array of experiences. However, adjunct faculty, part-time lecturers, and administrative staff are omitted, as their employment conditions and factors influencing job satisfaction could differ markedly from those of full-time faculty.

To engage participants, purposive sampling is implemented to directly identify faculty members who align with the selection criteria. This approach guarantees that only individuals with pertinent experiences are included, bolstering the depth and relevance of the findings. Furthermore, snowball sampling might be utilized, wherein participants suggest colleagues who meet the criteria and are open to sharing their perspectives. This strategy is especially beneficial in qualitative research, as it eases access to faculty members who might not be readily reachable through conventional recruitment techniques. By integrating purposive and snowball sampling, the research guarantees a rich and varied dataset, facilitating a thorough examination of faculty job satisfaction across diverse institutional settings.

7.3 Data Collection Methods:

This research utilizes semi-structured interviews and focus groups to obtain comprehensive insights into faculty job satisfaction in higher education. The primary method of data collection is semi-structured interviews, permitting participants to express their experiences while offering the flexibility to delve deeper into essential themes. The interview guide consists of open-ended questions addressing elements such as workplace environment, leadership support, career development opportunities, and personal job satisfaction. Each interview is approximately 45–60 minutes in duration, conducted either face-to-face or through virtual platforms, ensuring accessibility and convenience for participants.

Moreover, in addition to individual interviews, focus groups may be organized to encourage discussion among faculty members, revealing shared experiences and differing viewpoints. These group conversations aid in affirming themes that arise from interviews and offer a wider perspective on the dynamics of workplace satisfaction. Focus groups comprise 4–6 participants per session, fostering meaningful interaction while keeping the discussion format manageable.

Strict ethical guidelines are adhered to safeguard participant confidentiality and ensure voluntary involvement. Informed consent is acquired prior to data collection, detailing the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and participants' right to withdraw at any point without repercussions. All data is anonymized, with participants assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Furthermore, recorded interviews and transcripts are securely stored, accessible solely to the research team. Ethical approval is obtained from the relevant institutional review board (IRB) to guarantee adherence to ethical research standards.

8. DATA ANALYSIS:

Data analysis is conducted through thematic coding, utilizing either NVivo software or manual coding techniques. NVivo aids in efficient data management, allowing researchers to detect, categorize, and visualize themes across several interviews. If manual coding is adopted, a six-step thematic analysis framework (Braun and Clarke, 2006) directs the process: Familiarization – Analysing transcripts for significant patterns and insights. Initial Coding – Assigning codes to significant data segments. Theme Identification – Organizing codes into broader themes. Reviewing Themes – Enhancing and ensuring consistency across themes. Defining and Naming Themes – Clearly expressing theme meanings. Reporting Findings – Presenting results with supporting quotes from participants. Ensuring Credibility and Trustworthiness- to bolster research validity, various strategies for credibility and trustworthiness are implemented. Triangulation is employed by contrasting findings from interviews, focus groups, and existing literature, ensuring consistency and reliability. Member checking is performed by sharing initial findings with participants, allowing them to validate or clarify interpretations. Additionally, peer debriefing is conducted, in which colleagues or research experts evaluate the coding process to ensure precision and reduce researcher bias. These strategies reinforce the rigor and reliability of the study, ensuring that findings accurately reflect faculty members' experiences and viewpoints regarding job satisfaction.

9. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

9.1 Themes Identified from Qualitative Data:

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Theme 1: Faculty Attitude and Job Satisfaction: Faculty members predominantly expressed a sense of achievement in their academic positions, particularly when interacting with students and promoting learning. Many highlighted the emotional benefits derived from teaching. "The most rewarding elements of my job consist of engagements with students and curriculum development," remarked one faculty member, echoing a widespread feeling. While overall satisfaction was high, various structural obstacles were mentioned. These encompassed "salary concerns and inconsistent payment timelines," along with instability in the work setting. Faculty members who exhibited a growth mindset and regarded teaching as an ongoing learning journey reported increased resilience. One participant remarked, "My perspective on life as an educational experience enables me to remain fulfilled in my teaching position."

The support from colleagues and leadership significantly affected job satisfaction. "I have encouraging colleagues who have assisted me through difficulties," one individual wrote. Institutional aspects such as adaptability, leadership awareness, and availability of teaching resources were acknowledged as crucial for enhancing morale. Nonetheless, some participants observed that the lack of these elements negatively impacted their experience. One summarized it succinctly: "Improved leadership and systematic protocols would enhance job satisfaction."

Theme 2: Job Satisfaction and Its Influence on Productivity: There was a collective consensus among the respondents that job satisfaction had a direct effect on their productivity. One participant stated, "Yes, my level of job satisfaction directly influences my productivity. " Faculty members indicated that a positive atmosphere and constructive feedback improved both their teaching and research effectiveness. For instance, "When I receive encouraging remarks from my students, I feel more motivated to give my best."

On the other hand, dissatisfaction—especially stemming from unattainable expectations, inadequate work-life balance, or lack of recognition—was associated with decreased efficiency. One participant noted, "If we are not content with our work environment, it impacts our teaching efficacy." Some pointed out emotional exhaustion and physical tiredness due to demanding schedules as hindering their performance. Proposed solutions included higher salaries, alleviated clerical responsibilities, and more applicable teaching materials to connect theory with practical application.

Theme 3: The Role of Professional Growth in Faculty Retention and Motivation: Opportunities for professional development were consistently acknowledged as essential for retaining and motivating faculty. These encompassed training programs, research grants, and opportunities for career advancement. One respondent mentioned, "Each training I take for teaching and research adds value to my work. " This feeling of enrichment was reflected in stories about mentorship and peer collaboration. "Personally, I have learnt a lot from my mentor in my initial days which helped shape my current style," one faculty member reminisced.

While many valued the growth opportunities presented to them, others pointed out institutional obstacles such as a lack of support or encouragement from leadership. "Yes, a supportive team is really important for career growth," one remarked. Faculty were cautiously hopeful about the future of higher education. Some voiced optimism for innovation and dynamic transformations, while others were concerned about a trend toward corporate-style systems. As one participant stated, "Opportunities for professional growth significantly enhance job satisfaction and motivation, but institutions must continue investing in their faculty."

9.2 Comparison with Existing Literature:

Faculty Attitude and Job Satisfaction: Your qualitative results indicate that faculty members find satisfaction mainly through significant student interactions, a feeling of independence, and chances for learning. This corresponds with Hagedorn's (2000) conceptual framework, which highlights the multifactorial aspects of faculty satisfaction, and with Heier and Nelson-Brantley (2024), who emphasize self-efficacy and psychological empowerment as essential. Likewise, Bozeman and Gaughan (2011) discovered that faculty experience the highest satisfaction when their work is acknowledged and compensated fairly, a sentiment reflected by your respondents who pointed to insufficient salaries as a significant source of dissatisfaction. Gender differences discussed in the literature were not explicitly referenced in your dataset; however, the value of leadership and mentoring noted by participants aligns with the overall academic literature.

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"My perspective on life as a learning journey contributes to my satisfaction in my teaching position," aligns with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which stresses the significance of competence and autonomy in enhancing motivation and well-being (Kovalčikienė et al. , 2019).

Job Satisfaction and Its Influence on Productivity: Your results strongly affirm that job satisfaction affects productivity—faculty conveyed how their performance improves with positive feedback and diminishes under stress or a lack of institutional support. These accounts correspond with Landis et al. (2015) and Yandi and Havidz (2022), who highlight the significance of job satisfaction in enhancing organizational performance, employee commitment, and retention. The influence of emotional exhaustion mentioned in your analysis reflects the JD-R model's premise that high job demands (e. g. , tight schedules, pressure) result in burnout unless countered by adequate resources (Naidoo-Chetty and Du Plessis, 2021).

Furthermore, your data underscores a strong link between favorable work attitudes and output quality, resonating with findings from Awan (2015) and Gopinath (2020). These scholars emphasize the necessity of addressing elements such as peer relationships and administrative support to sustain engagement and productivity.

The Role of Professional Growth in Faculty Retention and Motivation: Your participants mentioned that mentoring, training programs, and advancement opportunities considerably affect their motivation—a trend that aligns with research by Lestari As (2016) and Tarimo and Swai (2024). This also supports motivational factors found in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which connects growth opportunities and acknowledgment to job satisfaction (Ghazi et al. , 2013; Chu and Kuo, 2015).

Concerns regarding institutional barriers to growth reflect findings from Heffernan and Heffernan (2018) and Gasser and Shaffer (2014), who report challenges like burnout and gender differences in academic progression. Your findings similarly emphasize the necessity of team support and professional development in retaining talent and fostering motivation.

"Each training I undertake for teaching and research enhances my work," illustrates the intrinsic rewards highlighted in SDT and corresponds with literature emphasizing competence-building and need-supportive environments (Jeno et al. , 2018).

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The qualitative results of this study offer detailed insights into the connection between faculty attitudes, job satisfaction, productivity, and professional growth. In answer to the first research question—How do faculty attitudes shape their job satisfaction? —the data indicated that faculty members who maintained a positive perspective, intrinsic motivation, and a passion for ongoing learning reported higher degrees of job satisfaction. Numerous participants described their teaching position as a rewarding journey, motivated by personal growth and student interaction. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential for workplace satisfaction. Participants who exhibited a growth mindset and regarded challenges as learning opportunities demonstrated greater emotional resilience and enhanced job satisfaction.

The second research question—In what ways does job satisfaction influence faculty productivity? —was also strongly supported by the findings. Faculty members consistently noted that their productivity in teaching and research was directly related to their satisfaction with their roles. Positive feedback from students, institutional flexibility, and acknowledgment were recognized as factors that bolstered their output, while inadequate compensation, emotional fatigue, and bureaucratic hurdles were perceived as demotivating. These findings correspond with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which clarifies how satisfaction serves as a protective factor against burnout and encourages engagement when sufficient resources are available.

Concerning the third research question—How does professional growth contribute to faculty job satisfaction? —the data highlighted the vital importance of continuous development opportunities, such as mentorship, training, research funding, and promotions. Faculty members observed that professional development not only improved their skills but also elevated their sense of value and dedication to their institution. Participants conveyed how organized mentorship and peer collaboration enriched their teaching methodologies and career satisfaction. These observations are backed by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where motivators like advancement and recognition are significant

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contributors to job satisfaction. The correlation of these findings with broader academic literature further reinforces the conclusion that investing in faculty development is crucial for both individual fulfillment and institutional achievement.

This research investigated the intricate relationship between faculty attitudes, job satisfaction, productivity, and professional growth within the higher education sphere. The results confirm that faculty job satisfaction is not solely dependent on salary or workload but is profoundly impacted by individual attitudes, institutional culture, and chances for professional growth. Faculty members who maintain a positive and learner-focused mindset tend to experience increased job satisfaction, particularly when their values match the institution's mission and when they receive support from leadership and colleagues.

Job satisfaction was identified as a strong predictor of productivity. Faculty members who felt valued, empowered, and emotionally stable were more inclined to excel in both teaching and research. On the other hand, stressors such as inadequate guidance, tight deadlines, or administrative burdens adversely affected their efficiency. The presence or absence of institutional support—through policies, leadership involvement, or flexibility—was vital in either enhancing or hindering these results.

Professional development surfaced as a key theme in faculty retention and motivation. Opportunities for advancement, mentorship, and career growth significantly improved faculty engagement and loyalty to their institutions. Nevertheless, some faculty mentioned obstacles such as inadequate institutional investment or lack of organized mentorship, which hindered their career growth and long-term dedication.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

Foster Positive Faculty Attitudes :- Institutions ought to promote a culture of ongoing learning, autonomy, and teamwork. Assisting faculty in adopting reflective and growth-oriented perspectives can boost both satisfaction and resilience.

Enhance Institutional Support Structures:- Leadership should ensure transparent communication, equitable compensation, and adaptable policies to tackle work-life balance and mitigate emotional fatigue. Establishing stable and appreciative work environments is vital.

Invest in Professional Development:- Institutions should provide regular training, research possibilities, and structured mentorship programs. Such investments not only elevate the quality of teaching and research but also strengthen a sense of value and belonging among faculty.

Link Job Satisfaction to Retention and Performance Strategies:- HR policies ought to acknowledge the impact of satisfaction on productivity. Regular satisfaction surveys and feedback systems can aid institutions in pinpointing areas needing improvement and adjusting interventions accordingly.

Apply Theoretical Models in Practice:- Frameworks such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources Model should inform institutional strategies for motivation, well-being, and performance management.

In conclusion, faculty well-being is essential for institutional excellence. By addressing psychological, professional, and systemic requirements, higher education institutions can develop a thriving academic workforce that is motivated, productive, and dedicated.

Summary of Key Findings: This research examined the interaction between faculty attitudes, job satisfaction, productivity, and professional development within higher education. The results indicated that faculty job satisfaction is heavily influenced by personal attitudes, such as a passion for teaching, a growth mindset, and a dedication to lifelong learning. Faculty members who demonstrated favorable attitudes typically experienced higher satisfaction levels, especially when backed by a collaborative atmosphere and responsive leadership. In contrast, dissatisfaction frequently arose from issues like low pay, inflexible institutional frameworks, and inadequate administrative support. The correlation between job satisfaction and productivity was also apparent. Faculty who felt esteemed and emotionally buoyed reported increased effectiveness in teaching and research involvement, whereas dissatisfaction resulted in emotional burnout and decreased output. Opportunities for professional growth, including

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training, mentorship, and access to research tools, were perceived to improve not only satisfaction but also motivation and long-term loyalty to the institution. These three areas—attitudes, productivity, and development—emphasize the essential elements influencing faculty experiences and results.

Implications for Higher Education Institutions: The results of this research present significant implications for higher education institutions that seek to promote faculty well-being, engagement, and retention. First and foremost, faculty job satisfaction must be regarded as a complex construct that transcends salary and workload. Institutions that foster environments of autonomy, trust, collegial support, and recognition are more inclined to engage faculty in a meaningful way. When academic staff feel psychologically enabled, emotionally supported, and professionally appreciated, their productivity and allegiance rise, ultimately enhancing institutional excellence. Institutions must also acknowledge the direct link between satisfaction and student outcomes. Unhappy faculty are less likely to invest emotionally in their teaching or research, potentially impacting the broader academic environment. In this regard, professional growth opportunities must be embedded within institutional practices—not provided intermittently—as they play a crucial role in faculty motivation, skill improvement, and innovation. These results highlight the necessity for a systemic, ongoing commitment to faculty development and well-being as vital to achieving success in higher education.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE:

Drawing from the insights acquired through this research, multiple recommendations arise to improve faculty job satisfaction and productivity. Institutions ought to create and enforce human resource policies focused on faculty that emphasize flexibility, emotional wellness, and work-life balance. Feedback systems, satisfaction surveys, and open communication channels should regularly be utilized to gauge faculty experiences and address concerns promptly. Leadership needs to invest strategically in professional development by providing continual training sessions, research funding, and mentorship programs that cater to both personal and career growth requirements. Fostering a positive organizational climate through transparency, appreciation, and participative decision-making can enhance faculty morale. Institutions are also advised to embrace theoretical models like Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model to formulate support structures that consider both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of motivation. Finally, institutions should create clear recognition and reward systems that affirm faculty accomplishments in both teaching and research, ensuring that faculty feel acknowledged, respected, and driven to excel.

12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Although the study provides valuable insights into faculty experiences, certain limitations need to be recognized. The sample size, while adequate for qualitative exploration, was somewhat limited and might not reflect the complete diversity of academic perspectives across various disciplines, career stages, or institutional categories. Moreover, the dependence on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias, especially related to social desirability or selective recall, which may affect the authenticity or completeness of the responses received. The study also lacks quantitative measures to establish statistical connections between essential variables like job satisfaction and productivity, which could enhance the applicability of the findings. Additionally, cultural and institutional contexts may have influenced participant experiences in ways that restrict the applicability of the findings to other higher education systems with differing governance structures, policies, or cultural expectations. These limitations indicate that while the findings are enlightening, they should be understood with contextual awareness.

13. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

To build on the findings of this study, future research could take a comparative approach by examining faculty satisfaction across various institutional environments, academic disciplines, or cultural frameworks. Longitudinal studies would be especially beneficial in evaluating how faculty job satisfaction and productivity change over time, particularly in response to organizational alterations or policy changes. A mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys might provide a more thorough comprehension of the connections among faculty attitudes, satisfaction, and professional development. Further exploration into how factors such as gender, tenure status, and age affect faculty experiences would contribute depth to the findings, especially concerning career development and retention. Lastly, with the increasing prevalence of hybrid and remote teaching models,

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future studies could investigate how these transitions impact job satisfaction, emotional well-being, and performance in academic positions. Such research would be advantageous for informing institutional policies amidst evolving pedagogical and workplace practices

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