# Beyond Paychecks and Promotions: A Multidimensional Determinants of Job Satisfaction in Higher Education Institutions

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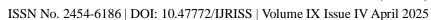**Davao del Norte State College, Panabo City, Davao del Norte**

## ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction plays a vital role in driving organizational success by influencing employee motivation, productivity, and retention. Within higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly in the Philippine context, the satisfaction of both teaching and non-teaching personnel is essential for delivering quality education and institutional performance. Anchored on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this study assessed the level of job satisfaction among permanent employees in HEIs within the Davao Region, Philippines identifying key factors contributing to morale and work engagement. Using a descriptive quantitative design, the study employed a validated 7-point Likert Scale survey distributed to 122 permanent employees across multiple HEIs. The survey measured satisfaction across eight dimensions: compensation and welfare benefits, work environment, career and promotion opportunities, leadership style, communication and job clarity, work-life balance, training and development, and teamwork and job security. Statistical analysis revealed consistently high levels of satisfaction, particularly in areas such as leadership style (WM = 6.41), work engagement (WM = 6.23), and rewards and promotion opportunities (WM = 6.27). Respondents reported feeling supported by their supervisors, valued in their work environment, and satisfied with their compensation and benefits (WM = 6.21). Notably, the highest satisfaction ratings emerged in statements related to collegial relationships, fair reward systems, and leadership accessibility. These findings affirm that both hygiene factors (e.g., compensation and job security) and motivators (e.g., recognition and professional growth) significantly influence job satisfaction in HEIs. The study concludes that strategic human resource interventions that prioritize these factors can enhance employee well-being, institutional loyalty, and service delivery. The implications call for continuous monitoring and improvement of workplace conditions to sustain a motivated and committed academic workforce amidst evolving educational demands.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction, higher education institutions, employee engagement, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, human resource management, Davao Region, leadership style

## INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction remains a pivotal element in ensuring organizational success, directly influencing employee performance, motivation, retention, and overall well-being (Judge et al., 2020). In recent studies, Smith et al. (2023) emphasized a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee motivation, while Johnson (2023) highlighted its role in enhancing organizational productivity and efficiency. Within the education sector, particularly in higher education institutions (HEIs), job satisfaction among academic and administrative personnel significantly affects teaching quality, institutional performance, and service delivery (Vasantham & Swaminathan, 2019; Schaufeli, 2019). These findings underscore the importance of continuously evaluating and improving the work experiences of employees to maintain institutional effectiveness.

Globally, research from developed countries such as the United States and Australia affirms that satisfied employees tend to exhibit stronger organizational citizenship behaviors, reduced absenteeism, and greater long-term commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2019; Aguinis, 2019). Job satisfaction also serves as a buffer against high turnover, which is often costly due to the additional burden of recruitment, training, and loss of institutional knowledge (Judge et al., 2020). In the Philippine context, job satisfaction is closely tied to factors

such as compensation, work-life balance, leadership style, job security, and opportunities for advancement (Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi, 2019; Akhtar, 2020). These elements are particularly important in competitive labor markets, where retaining skilled and experienced personnel is essential for sustained organizational growth.

In the Davao Region, a thriving and diverse economy highlights the essential role of HEIs in shaping the region's human capital. As the education sector continues to evolve amid new challenges and rising expectations, understanding the job satisfaction of permanent employees—both teaching and non-teaching—becomes increasingly important. A localized study assessing the level of job satisfaction among permanent employees can identify specific factors influencing morale and performance. Findings will be critical in developing strategic human resource interventions aimed at improving workplace conditions, strengthening employee engagement, and enhancing institutional outcomes.

## Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Motivation-Hygiene Theory) provides a robust framework for examining employee job satisfaction in higher education settings. The theory distinguishes between motivators—intrinsic factors that enhance satisfaction, such as recognition, career advancement, leadership style, and professional development—and hygiene factors, which include compensation, benefits, work environment, job security, and communication. While motivators drive engagement and growth, hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction when adequately addressed (Herzberg, 1968). Applying this theory allows for a systematic analysis of which elements significantly influence satisfaction and which merely mitigate dissatisfaction. It aligns well with the study's goal of identifying actionable insights to improve HR policies related to work-life balance, teamwork, and employee well-being. Herzberg's model thus offers a clear and practical lens for evaluating job satisfaction and guiding institutional strategies toward a more engaged and productive workforce.
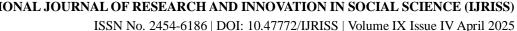
## Statement of the Problem

This study purposely examines the relation of various factors contributing to the satisfaction of permanent employees in HEIs in Davao Region, Philippines. The study sought to answer the following:

1.  What is the level of job satisfaction among the permanent employees in terms of:

1.1.    Compensation and Welfare Benefits.

1.2.    Work Environment.

1.3.    Career and Promotion Opportunities.

1.4.    Leadership Style.

1.5.    Communication and Job Clarity.

1.6.    Work Life Balance.

1.7.     Training and Development.

1.8.    Teamwork and Job Security?

2.  Determine which of the dimensions significantly influence customer satisfaction in the HEIs in Davao Region, Philippine?

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction is influenced by multiple interrelated factors within the workplace, with compensation and welfare benefits standing out as fundamental drivers. Equitable pay, competitive incentives, and comprehensive welfare programs are linked to higher employee satisfaction and retention (Sowmya &

Panchanatham, 2021). In higher education institutions, aligning these benefits with employee expectations can significantly reduce turnover and improve morale. Furthermore, a supportive work environment—encompassing physical conditions, collegial relationships, and organizational culture—greatly enhances employee well-being and engagement (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2019). When combined with clear career progression paths and fair reward systems, job satisfaction tends to improve as employees feel valued and motivated to grow within the organization (Zhang et al., 2020).

Leadership style, communication, and opportunities for professional development also play pivotal roles in shaping job satisfaction. Transformational leadership—marked by inspiration, empathy, and support—positively correlates with employee morale and commitment (Breevaart et al., 2019). Effective communication and job clarity further reinforce satisfaction by ensuring roles are understood and expectations are transparent (Men & Yue, 2019). Equally important are work-life balance and job security, both of which significantly impact stress levels and job stability perceptions (Haar et al., 2019; Afsar & Umrani, 2020). Lastly, access to continuous training and development opportunities supports career growth and enhances overall job fulfillment (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2020). By addressing these multidimensional factors, institutions can design strategic HRM interventions that sustain a motivated and engaged workforce.

# METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** A descriptive research design was employed to systematically examine the key factors influencing job satisfaction among employees in higher education institutions.

**Locale of the Study:** The study was conducted within higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Davao Region, Philippines, providing insights into the local context of employee satisfaction.

**Research Instruments:** The quantitative phase utilized a 7-point Likert Scale researcher-developed interview guide, which was validated by subject-matter experts and demonstrated high reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.95.

**Data Collection Procedures:** Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys administered to 122 permanent employees, including teaching and non-teaching staff, across multiple higher education institutions.

**Statistical Treatment:** The statistical treatment involved the use of the weighted mean, a measure of central tendency where some data points contribute more than others, and the Likert Scale to assess employee agreement or disagreement with job satisfaction levels, where respondents select from a range of options, typically numbered from 1 to 7, to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Below are the results of an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing the job satisfaction of HEIs employees, highlighting various aspects such as compensation and welfare benefits, work engagement, leadership style, communication and job clarity, work-life balance, training and development, and teamwork and job security.

**Level of Satisfaction in terms of Compensation and Welfare Benefits**

As shown in Table 1, respondents expressed strong agreement (WM = 6.21) regarding the adequacy of compensation and welfare benefits. The statement "I receive benefits that are comparable to those of my colleagues" ranked highest with a score of 6.31, indicating that employees perceive the institution's benefits packages as competitive and comparable to those of their peers. This high level of satisfaction underscores the importance of attractive compensation packages in fostering employee morale and retention (Vasantham & Swaminathan, 2019). The positive perception of these benefits likely contributes to the institution's ability to maintain a committed workforce.
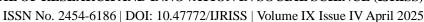
Table 1. Compensation and Welfare Benefits

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| I believe that my salary is commensurate with the work I do. | 6.28 | Agree | 2 |
| I am content with the allowances I receive from the institution. | 6.18 | Agree | 4 |
| I receive benefits that are comparable to those of my colleagues. | 6.31 | Agree | 1 |
| I am satisfied with the programs and facilities provided for recreational purposes. | 6.03 | Agree | 5 |
| I have a high chance for promotion on my job. | 6.26 | Agree | 3 |
| Composite Mean | 6.21 | | |

**Level of Satisfaction in terms of Work Engagement**

Table 2 reveals that work engagement, with a composite mean of 6.23, is also a significant factor in employee satisfaction. The highest-ranked item, "I like the people I work with and enjoy spending time with them" (WM = 6.44), suggests a strong sense of camaraderie among employees, which is crucial for creating a positive work environment. High levels of work engagement are positively correlated with better performance and lower turnover rates (Schaufeli, 2019). This finding indicates that employees have successfully fostered a supportive and collaborative workplace culture that encourages employee involvement and enthusiasm.
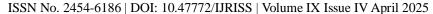
Table 2. Work Engagement

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| I like the people I work with and enjoy spending time with them. | 6.44 | Agree | 1 |
| I find it easier to do a good job because of the rules and procedures in my institution. | 6.00 | Agree | 5 |
| I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in the work that I contribute to the organization. | 6.21 | Agree | 4 |
| I am part of an environment where all units cooperate seamlessly to achieve our shared goals. | 6.23 | Agree | 3 |
| I also feel free to offer comments and suggestions on my performance. | 6.26 | Agree | 2 |
| Composite Mean | 6.23 | | |

**Level of Satisfaction in terms of Reward and Promotion Opportunities**

As indicated in **Table 3**, employees expressed moderate to strong agreement (WM = 6.27) regarding the institution's reward and promotion systems. The statement "I find the recognition and reward system in our institution to be fair and just" ranked highest (WM = 6.36), suggesting that employees feel recognized for their efforts in a fair manner. This perception of fairness in recognition is vital for enhancing motivation and long-term commitment (Aguinis, 2019). Effective reward systems are essential for sustaining high employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

Table 3. Rewards and Promotion Opportunities

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| When I perform well, my supervisor or institution provides recognition. | 6.23 | Agree | 3 |
| I believe that my hard work is appropriately rewarded. | 6.23 | Agree | 4 |
| The institution has a system in place to reward employees who do exceptional work. | 6.23 | Agree | 2 |
| I find the recognition and reward system in our institution to be fair and just. | 6.36 | Agree | 1 |
| I find that the institution provides me with sufficient reward and promotion opportunities based on merit and fitness. | 6.18 | Agree | 5 |
| Composite Mean | 6.27 | | |

## Level of Satisfaction in terms of Leadership Style

Table 4 highlights that employees generally agree (WM = 6.41) with the leadership style within the institution. The highest-ranked statement, "My supervisor is approachable and available for questions or guidance" (WM = 6.54), reflects the high level of employee satisfaction with the accessibility and support provided by supervisors. Positive leadership, particularly approaches that emphasize support and openness, significantly boost employee satisfaction and performance (Northouse, 2019). HEIs leadership likely contributes to a strong sense of employee well-being and organizational commitment.

Table 4. Leadership Style

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| My supervisor provides clear communication about expectations and goals. | 6.23 | Agree | 5 |
| My supervisor is approachable and available for questions or guidance. | 6.54 | Strong Agree | 1 |
| My supervisor supports me in my day-to-day work. | 6.49 | Agree | 2 |
| My supervisor encourages decision-making power for employees. | 6.41 | Agree | 3 |
| My supervisor considers employees' input into organizational decisions. | 6.36 | Agree | 4 |
| Composite Mean | 6.41 | | |

## Level of Satisfaction in terms of Communication and Job Clarity

Table 5 shows that communication and job clarity (WM = 6.26) are also critical factors influencing employee satisfaction. The highest-ranked statement, "The goals and objectives of my organization, including its mission, vision, and values, are clear to me" (WM = 6.58), highlights the importance of clear organizational communication in enhancing job satisfaction. Clarity in job roles and expectations reduces ambiguity and increases employee confidence in their work, ultimately boosting productivity and job satisfaction (Men, 2019).

Table 5. Communication and Job Clarity

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| The institution communicates effectively with regular and clear updates, feedback, and information exchange. | 6.18 | Agree | 3 |
| Work assignments and targets are fully explained, with detailed instructions, timelines, and expectations outlined. | 6.03 | Agree | 5 |
| The goals and objectives of my organization, including its mission, vision, and values, are clear to me. | 6.58 | Strongly Agree | 1 |
| My job responsibilities have been clearly defined, including my tasks, roles, and responsibilities, as well as the resources and support available to me. | 6.42 | Agree | 2 |
| I am highly satisfied with the efficiency of our communication and the clarity of job processes. | 6.11 | Agree | 4 |
| Composite Mean | 6.26 | | |

## Level of Satisfaction in terms of Work Life Balance

As shown in Table 6, employees report moderate satisfaction (WM = 6.08) with their work-life balance. The highest-ranked statement, "I am content with the outcome of my work, which aligns the set targets" (WM = 6.23), reflects satisfaction with work performance in relation to personal well-being. Achieving a healthy work-life balance is crucial for employee retention and productivity (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2020). HEI's supportive policies likely help employees balance their professional and personal lives, enhancing their overall job satisfaction.

Table 6. Work Life Balance

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| I am still able to allocate quality time to my spouse, family, and friends while balancing my job responsibilities. | 5.85 | Agree | 4 |
| I receive significant support from my institution that enables me to perform my family responsibilities. | 6.15 | Agree | 3 |
| My job allows me to maintain a healthy lifestyle by getting sufficient sleep, exercising regularly, and consuming nutritious meals. | 5.85 | Agree | 5 |
| I am content with the outcome of my work, which aligns the set targets. | 6.23 | Agree | 1 |
| I enjoy working on projects that align with my interests, enhancing my work-life balance. | 6.31 | Agree | 2 |
| Composite Mean | 6.08 | | |

## Level of Satisfaction in terms of Training and Development

Table 7 reveals that employees are satisfied (WM = 6.24) with the training and development opportunities offered by the institution. The statement, "The investment in my professional growth has significantly boosted my morale, enhancing my job performance" (WM = 6.28), received the highest satisfaction score, emphasizing the positive impact of professional development on employee motivation. This finding aligns with the importance of continuous training for employee engagement and organizational success (Tannenbaum & Yukl, 2020).

Table 7. Training and Development

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| I had opportunities for professional development in the past six months. | 6.26 | Agree | 2 |
| The investment in my professional growth has significantly boosted my morale, enhancing my job performance. | 6.28 | Agree | 1 |
| The training and development programs have helped me in performing my job effectively. | 6.21 | Agree | 4 |
| The training and development programs have helped me to adapt to changes in the workplace with ease. | 6.18 | Agree | 5 |
| I feel that my institution values and prioritizes my professional development, which has been a great source of motivation for me. | 6.26 | Agree | 3 |
| Composite Mean | 6.24 | | |

## Level of Satisfaction in terms of Teamwork and Job Security

Lastly, as shown in **Table 8**, results indicate high satisfaction (WM = 6.49) with teamwork and job security. The statement, "The institution instills a sense of confidence and stability among the workforce" (WM = 6.56), ranked highest, suggesting that employees feel secure and valued within the institution. Effective teamwork and job security are essential for creating a positive work environment that fosters collaboration and long-term commitment (Salas, Cooke, & Rosen, 2019; Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2019). Maintaining focus on these aspects will be crucial for HEI's continued success in retaining and motivating its employees.

Table 8. Teamwork and Job Security

| Variables | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| My supervisor encourages collaboration with my subordinates that results to positive impact on my work. | 6.33 | Agree | 5 |
| My colleagues provide ample encouragement, which creates a friendly and supportive work environment. | 6.44 | Agree | 4 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The institution fosters a safe environment where employees can feel confident in their abilities. | 6.56 | Strongly Agree | 2 |
| The institution instils a sense of confidence and stability among the workforces. | 6.56 | Strongly Agree | 1 |
| The institution fosters a culture of collaboration where employees are encouraged to work together to achieve common goals. | 6.54 | Strongly Agree | 3 |
| Composite Mean | 6.49 | Agree | |

**Teamwork and Job Security Dimensions Significantly Influence Customer Satisfaction**

The results reveal that Teamwork and Job Security emerged as the most influential factor affecting employee satisfaction in HEIs across the Davao. These results underscore the significance of psychological safety and team cohesion in academic institutions. When employees feel secure in their roles and supported by peers, engagement and institutional commitment are heightened (Salas, Cooke, & Rosen, 2019). Moreover, job security has been consistently linked to lower stress and turnover, and higher performance (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2019). In HEIs, where knowledge work thrives on collaboration and continuity, fostering a stable and cooperative work environment enhances employee well-being and organizational output. These findings suggest that teamwork and job security are not merely retention tools but strategic levers for improving institutional performance and customer satisfaction.
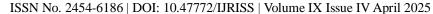
## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that job satisfaction among permanent employees in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Davao Region is significantly influenced by a range of interrelated factors. The consistency of strong agreement across multiple dimensions, including reward systems, communication, job clarity, and work-life balance, affirms the relevance of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in understanding employee motivation and satisfaction. These results underscore the importance of nurturing both hygiene factors and motivators to cultivate a committed and high-performing workforce (Herzberg, 1968). Notably, employees showed strong appreciation for leadership that is approachable, supportive, and inclusive (Northouse, 2019), while also valuing camaraderie and institutional recognition of efforts (Aguinis, 2019; Schaufeli, 2019). Collectively, these findings support global and local literature suggesting that satisfied employees are more engaged, loyal, and productive, ultimately contributing to enhanced institutional effectiveness (Judge et al., 2020; Vasantham & Swaminathan, 2019; Smith et al., 2023).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the favorable levels of job satisfaction across key domains, it is recommended that HEIs in the Davao Region further institutionalize and reinforce human resource management strategies that sustain and enhance these strengths. Leadership development programs should be prioritized, promoting supportive and participatory management styles that continue to foster a culture of openness and mutual respect (Breevaart et al., 2019; Northouse, 2019). Additionally, investment in competitive compensation, clear communication structures, and well-structured reward and promotion systems should be maintained and refined, ensuring alignment with employee expectations and institutional goals (Sowmya & Panchanatham, 2021; Aguinis, 2019). Regular job satisfaction assessments should be conducted to capture evolving needs, especially as the education landscape adapts to new challenges. Targeted improvements in underperforming or lower-ranking areas, such as recreational facilities or merit-based promotion mechanisms, could further enhance employee morale. Ultimately, a data-driven and employee-centered HR approach will enable HEIs to not only retain skilled professionals but also to position themselves as leading institutions that prioritize well-being, productivity, and excellence in service delivery (Harter et al., 2019; Haar et al., 2019).

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