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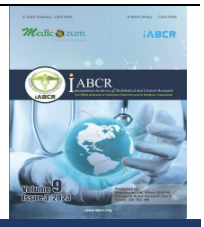

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The Road to Professional Fulfillment: Insights from a Career Satisfaction Survey of Medical Institute Faculty in Pakistan

Ruhina Salman[1], Sarmad Pirzada[2], Saima mohsin[3], Syed Saud Hasan[4] Dabeeran Zehra[5] Shamsul Arfin Qasmi[6]

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Jinnah Medical College, Peshawar | [2] Southern Illinois Health Internal Medicine Carbondale Illinois USA | [3]Research & Development, Association for biorisk Management, Pakistan | [4] Professor, Department of Pharmacology Dow Medical College, (DUHS), Karachi | [5] Senior Lecturer, Department of Pharmacology, Dow Medical College, (DUHS), Karachi | [6] Assistant Director EH&S NYU Langone Health New York USA

ABSTRACT

Background: *Faculty member satisfaction levels play a central role as it directly impact the educational quality and productivity of these institutions. Understanding the factors contributing to faculty job satisfaction and unhappiness must be identified to support the development of strategies aimed at enhancing the overall institutional performance.*

Objectives: *To identify the challenges faced by faculty members in performing their professional duties within the constraints of the existing salary framework.*

Methodology: *A systematic survey was designed to evaluate the gaps and challenges in the current scenario. The study aims to gain insights from the faculty, working in private and public sector colleges. It was developed to further the relationship between faculty and human resource departments, functioning and focus on faculty retention. It consisted of 32 questions distributed to the target audience via Google Forms. The data was collected and analyzed by using the SPSS.*

Results: *Respondents represented various academic ranks:31% Professors, 20% Associate Professors, 23.5% Assistant Professors, 16.5% lecturers, and 9% non-teaching staff. Overall, 56% were satisfied with the senior administration of their institute, while 44% were either dissatisfied or uncertain. Salary, bonuses, and incentives were identified as key factors influencing job satisfaction.*

Conclusion: *The management of medical colleges should prioritize human resource management services that enhance faculty job satisfaction. Medical colleges can improve job satisfaction and staff retention by offering better salary packages, sufficient supervisory support, promoting team-building activities, opportunities for career advancement, favorable working conditions, and strengthening organizational culture and policies within medical institutions.*

Keywords: *Medical Faculty, Employee satisfaction, Professional fulfillment*

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***Corresponding Author**

Dr. Saima Mohsin
Ph. D. in Molecular Medicine,
Research & Development section,
Association for Biorisk Management (ABM),
Email: saimamohsin@hotmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Career satisfaction refers to the emotional state and attitude of employees toward their work. Level of satisfaction directly impacts a person's holistic well-being and productive output in every profession across all professions. In medical institutes a quest for professional contentment bears crucial importance for faculty members, given their considerable contributions to the field of healthcare education and research. Nevertheless, a systematic exploration is necessary to recognize the factors that impact job satisfaction among faculty members working at Pakistani medical institutes.[1] Literature suggests that the unresolved concerns faced by faculty in medical colleges limit their ability to accomplish their career milestones and negatively affect their commitment and enthusiasm toward their work.[2] The awareness of institutional relationships inspires employees' dedication and commitment to achieving the organization's goals. The growth of higher education institutions' educational systems toward the achievement of efficiency and effectiveness in the processes of learning and education is largely dependent on the job satisfaction of the educators they employ. Several studies conducted in developing nations to explore the impact of various job satisfaction factors on employee attitudes and organizational performance. In this context, financial stability and perceived organizational practices are considered best indicators of job satisfaction, as the competitiveness of this sector largely

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relies on the commitment and engagement of its workforce.[2,3]

As the main pillars of these educational institutions, the faculty members must have a high degree of job satisfaction, as they are responsible for effectively delivering both theoretical and practical knowledge to students across a variety of disciplines.[3,4] Numerous studies have shown that job satisfaction positively affects the psychological adjustment, reduces stress, and improve practical and professional performance among faculty members. Conversely, a lack of job satisfaction also hinders professional growth for both employees and institutions. When employees are satisfied with their jobs, they tend to develop a positive attitude toward their responsibilities and work environment.[4-7] To understand the faculty perceptions regarding factors that influence career satisfaction in Pakistani medical institutes, can help academic institutions and policymakers to develop strategies to enhance the overall well-being and job fulfillment. Such strategies may include fostering supportive work environment, promoting a collaborative and innovative culture, offering reasonable pay packages, and providing adequate opportunities for professional development.

A crucial aspect of performance is employee satisfaction in medical institutions. The aim of this study is to contribute to the existing knowledge on career satisfaction among faculty members in Pakistani medical institutes, with the goal to strengthen healthcare education and research outcomes in the country.

The monitoring of job satisfaction is essential for the continued development of the educational systems. Staff satisfaction directly influences employee performance, and, in turn, the quality of services provided, making it a key indicator of an institution's success. To shed light on this important issue, a survey was conducted regarding career satisfaction among faculty members of various medical institutes to explore the factors influencing their overall well-being, workplace environment, and opportunities for professional advancement. This study investigates the variables related to work satisfaction in Pakistani Medical institutions.

METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study was conducted using convenient sampling via 32 questions based online questionnaire through Google survey forms among Professors, Associate professors, Assistant professors, and Lecturers from Medical colleges around the country. Sample size came out to be 196 which was calculated via WHO sample size calculator 1.1 using Confidence Level of 95% and anticipate population proportion 50%. The reliability of the Likert scale was estimated using Cronbach's alpha, which showed all variables to have a maximum score > 0.75, indicating the high level of reliability or consistency. The study was completed in three months, and it is assumed that the responses to the survey questions on the Google form reflect the respondents' true attitudes.

Questionnaire Design and Reliability Testing

The questionnaire included a mix of demographic queries and Likert scale-based questions to capture attitudes and perceptions. To establish reliability, the Likert scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All variables demonstrated a reliability score > 0.75, indicating high internal consistency. This robust reliability metric strengthens confidence in the survey's ability to accurately measure the intended constructs.

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Data collection was conducted over three months. Participants were invited via professional networks and email to ensure a diverse and geographically representative sample. Confidentiality was maintained, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. It is assumed that the responses provided through Google Forms accurately reflect the participants' genuine attitudes and experiences.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 23). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used for demographic variables. Inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA), were employed to examine relationships and differences among variables, as appropriate.

RESULTS

As per information gathered from the received feedbacks against this survey it is revealed that the reporting respondents from teaching faculty have different academic ranks; wherein 31% (62/200) are Professors, 20% (40/200), Associate Professors, 23.5% (47/200) are Assistant Professors, 16.5% (33/200) are Lecturer and remaining respondents are from non-teaching faculty that are 9% (18/200).

The basic demographic characteristics of respondents against their received feedbacks are depicted in Table 1. To check the impact of received personal information of faculty members against job satisfaction, we made hypothesis testing and got following results:

- Academic rank has positive and significant effect on job satisfaction of academic professional (p-value=0.000). Figure 1.
- Years of service has positive and significant effect on job satisfaction of academic professional (p-value=0.000).
- Marital status has positive and significant effect on job satisfaction of academic professional (p-value=0.000).

All the asked questions were divided into following eight categories. Analysis of results and received feedbacks against each category separately & summarized their results.

1. Information about faculty member
2. Organizational culture and policy
3. Supervisory support
4. Team cohesion
5. Career growth
6. Working conditions
7. Compensatory package
8. Job satisfaction

Among the respondents, 80% (160/200) reported satisfaction with the clarity of institution's mission, while the remaining 20% (40/200) were either not satisfied or unaware of the institution's mission. A statistically significant association was observed between clarity of the institution's mission & job satisfaction (p-value=0.000), indicating that variables are significantly related. This finding suggests that a clear

institutional mission positively influences the job satisfaction of academic professionals.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	n	Percentage (%)
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%
Name of department of Respondent		
Cardiology	10	5.00%
Community Medicine	30	15.00%
General Surgery	23	11.50%
Medicine	11	5.50%
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	14	7.00%
Pathology	25	12.50%
Pharmacology	15	7.50%
Psychiatry	12	6.00%
Forensic Medicine	15	7.50%
Anatomy	24	12.00%
Physiology	10	5.00%
Bio-Chemistry	11	5.50%

Regarding departmental leadership, 59.5% (119/200) of respondents reported that their department had effective leadership at all levels, whereas 40.5% (81/200) responded either "No" or "Don't know." Statistical analysis demonstrated a significant association between effective departmental leadership and job satisfaction (p = 0.000), indicating that these variables are dependent and statistically significant. This finding suggests that effective leadership within departments has a positive and significant impact on the job satisfaction of academic professionals. Further analysis was conducted to assess the impact of responses to the following questions on job satisfaction:

1. Are the administrative procedures at your institute appropriately communicated? (p = 0.000)
2. Do you have the ability to influence academic decisions in the institute? (p = 0.000)
3. Does your institute provide maternity leave (females only)? (p = 0.000)
4. Does your institute provide academic leave? (p = 0.376)

The results indicated that responses to the first three questions showed a positive and statistically significant association with job satisfaction among academic professionals (p = 0.000). In contrast, responses regarding the provision of academic leave did not demonstrate a statistically significant association with job satisfaction (p = 0.376), suggesting that both these variables are independent.

The second category of the survey focused on organizational culture and policy, which was summarized through the question: *"How satisfied are you with the organizational culture and policies of your institute?"* The responses were distributed as follows:

- 13% (26/200) responded very satisfied
- 14.5% (29/200) responded somewhat satisfied
- 25% (50/200) responded a neutral response
- 47.5% (95/200) responded somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied

Statistical analysis revealed a strong association between satisfaction with organizational culture and policies and overall job satisfaction (p = 0.000). This indicates that organizational culture and institutional policies have a significant and positive effect on the job satisfaction of academic professionals.

The summarized results for the third category i.e. Supervisory Support are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Supervisory Support

Feedback Questions	# of Respondents	Percentage	P-value
Are you satisfied with the senior administration of your institute?			
Yes	112	56.00%	0.000
No	67	33.50%	
Don't Know	21	10.50%	
Are your inputs and opinions valued by your departmental seniors?			
Yes	141	70.50%	0.000
No	42	21.00%	
Don't Know	17	8.50%	
How satisfied are you with supervisory support?			
1. Very satisfied	90	45.00%	0.000
2. Somewhat satisfied	24	12.00%	
3. Neutral	56	28.00%	
4.Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0.00%	
5.Very dissatisfied	30	15.00%	

Among the respondent, 56% (112/200) reported being satisfied with the senior administration of their institute, while remaining 44% (88/200) were either not satisfied or were unaware about senior administration. There is a strong association between satisfaction with senior administration & job satisfaction (p-value=0.000); indicating that the variables are dependent and statistically significant. These findings suggests that satisfaction with senior administration has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction of academic professionals. In response to the question *"Are your inputs and opinions valued by your departmental seniors?"* 70.5% (141/200) of respondents answered "Yes," while 29.5% (59/200) responded either "No" or "Don't know." Statistical analysis revealed a strong association between respondents' feedback and overall job satisfaction (p = 0.000), indicating that the variables are dependent and statistically significant. This finding suggests that valuing faculty inputs and opinions by departmental seniors has a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of academic professionals.

The third category of the survey, Supervisory Support, was further summarized through the question: *"How satisfied are you with supervisory support?"* The responses were distributed as follows:

- 45% (90/200) responded very satisfied
- 12% (24/200) responded somewhat satisfied

- 28% (56/200) responded neutral
- 15% (30/200) responded very dissatisfied

Statistical analysis showed a strong association between satisfaction with supervisory support and overall job satisfaction (p = 0.000), indicating that these variables are dependent and statistically significant. This finding suggests that supervisory support has a positive and significant influence on the job satisfaction of academic professionals. The summarized results for the remaining categories are presented below:

- Team cohesion → showed positive and significant effect on job satisfaction
- Career growth → demonstrated a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction
- Working conditions→ showed positive and significant association with job satisfaction
- Compensatory package→ also showed positive and significant effect on job satisfaction

After comprehensively analysis of all variables, it was observed that the majority of respondents, 54% (108/202) working in medical colleges of Pakistan reported being very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their job. Additionally, 31% (62/202) of respondents reported a neutral level of satisfaction indicating that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their jobs. The remaining 15% (30/202) are either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Overall, the analysis of all the factors examined in this study, have a positive and statistically significant effect on job satisfaction among faculty members. A summary of these findings is presented below in Table 3. To assess the efficacy of this study, the respondents feedback was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale and its reliability was estimated using Cronbach's alpha. The estimated value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.794, showing a high level of reliability and consistency. The reliability analysis results are presented in Table 4.

DISCUSSION

The survey results provided insights into the factors influencing career satisfaction among faculty members in Pakistani medical institutes. According to the findings, the most important determinants of career satisfaction are opportunities for professional growth, effective and comprehensive leadership, and a supportive work environment. Additionally, other factors including competitive salary, work life balance, recognition, and access to institutional resources were found to have a significant impact on career satisfaction.[8-11] These results underscore the importance of both organizational and individual-level factors in shaping faculty well-being and engagement.

The findings of this study provided valuable insights into the factors shaping career satisfaction among faculty members in Pakistani medical institutions. Professional development opportunities, effective leadership, and a supportive work environment emerged as key determinants for job satisfaction. Additionally, competitive compensation, work-life balance, recognition, and access to essential resources significantly were also found to significantly influence faculty career satisfaction. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction and are align with existing literature reported in both local and international contexts.[12]

Table 3: Organizational Culture and Policies

Feedback Questions	# of Respondents	Percentage	P-value
How satisfied are you with organizational culture and policies?			
1. Very satisfied	26	13.00%	0.000
2. Somewhat satisfied	29	14.50%	
3. Neutral	50	25.00%	
4.Somewhat dissatisfied	59	29.50%	
5.Very dissatisfied	36	18.00%	
How satisfied are you with supervisory support?			
1. Very satisfied	90	45.00%	0.000
2. Somewhat satisfied	24	12.00%	
3. Neutral	56	28.00%	
4.Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0.00%	
5.Very dissatisfied	30	15.00%	
How satisfied are you with team cohesion?			
1. Very satisfied	102	51.00%	0.000
2. Somewhat satisfied	52	26.00%	
3. Neutral	43	21.50%	
4.Somewhat dissatisfied	3	1.50%	
5.Very dissatisfied	0	0.00%	
How satisfied are you with career growth?			
1. Very satisfied	74	37.00%	0.000
2. Somewhat satisfied	43	21.50%	
3. Neutral	46	23.00%	
4.Somewhat dissatisfied	7	3.50%	
5.Very dissatisfied	30	15.00%	
How satisfied are you with working conditions?			
1. Very satisfied	4	2.00%	0.000
2. Somewhat satisfied	57	28.50%	
3. Neutral	48	24.00%	
4.Somewhat dissatisfied	53	26.50%	
5.Very dissatisfied	38	19.00%	
How satisfied are you with Compensatory Package?			
1. Very satisfied	15	7.50%	0.000
2. Somewhat satisfied	100	50.00%	
3. Neutral	0	0.00%	
4.Somewhat dissatisfied	3	1.50%	
5.Very dissatisfied	82	41.00%	

Table 4: Item Reliability Statistics

Feedback Questions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
How satisfied are you with organizational culture and policies?	3.25	1.275	.755
How satisfied are you with supervisory support?	2.28	1.418	.770
How satisfied are you with team cohesion?	1.74	.848	.781
How satisfied are you with career growth?	2.38	1.398	.755
How satisfied are you with working conditions?	3.32	1.138	.817
How satisfied are you with your compensation and fringe benefits?	2.31	.674	.769
How satisfied are you with Compensatory Package?	3.19	1.560	.791
How satisfied are you with your job?	2.44	.991	.714

The challenges identified in this study, such as heavy workloads, bureaucratic hurdles, and insufficient research funding, are consistent with findings from other developing countries. Previous studies corroborate that faculty members in resource-constrained settings often face similar obstacles, which can impede their ability their performance and professional development. These systemic issues highlight the need for policy-level interventions to alleviate administrative burdens and prioritize institutional research funding, as supported by literature advocating for institutional reforms.[11] Furthermore, this study documented certain

challenges in the context of Pakistani medical institutions, the study highlights that faculty face particularly burdensome workloads, administrative hurdles, and inadequate funding for research.

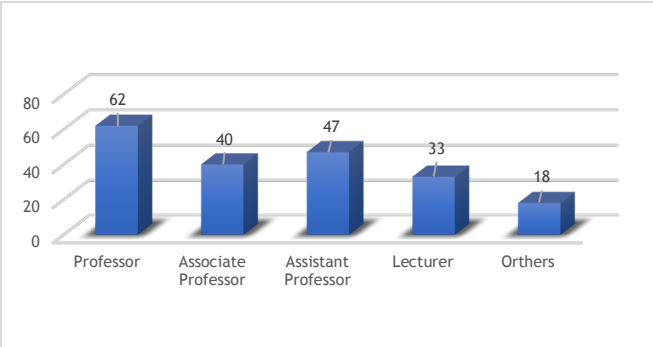

Figure 1: Academic Rank of Respondents

Higher education institutions rely heavily on their faculty members. Improved job satisfaction and retention can significantly reduce the costs associated with recruitment while enhancing institutional efficiency. For instance, a 5% increase in faculty retention can lead to a 10% decrease in costs and up to 65% gains in operational efficiency.[13,14] Recent studies in Pakistan have highlighted the importance of professional growth and leadership in shaping faculty satisfaction, reinforcing the assertion that opportunities for career advancement and a nurturing workplace culture are essential. Similarly, other research emphasizes that competitive salaries and favorable working conditions play a central role in motivating faculty members and fostering institutional loyalty.[14,15]

This exploratory study examined the relationship between job satisfaction and factors, such as work-life balance as well as Herzberg's internal and external factors. The findings indicated a significant correlation between faculty satisfaction and factors including organizational culture, compensation, career progression, working conditions, supervisory support, and team cohesion.[16] The results are consistent with other studies in Pakistan, which highlight a lack of effective measures to improve job satisfaction. Faculty in medical colleges undergo continuous professional training, and the loss of skilled professionals due to dissatisfaction represents a substantial institutional loss. Employees seek growth opportunities; and failure to provide such opportunities can lead to poor performance and an unstable workforce.[17,18] Compensation is a crucial motivational factor, with studies from Nigeria and Pakistan emphasizing its significant role in influencing faculty job satisfaction. Similarly, working conditions also significantly impact job satisfaction by reducing stress and supporting well-being. Contrary to Herzberg's assertion that improved in the working conditions can also enhance employee commitment. Strong institutional relations and organizational loyalty are pivotal for achieving educational goals.

Faculty job satisfaction is a key determinant of the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education institutions. Numerous studies in developing countries have examined the influence of job satisfaction on employee attitudes and overall organizational performance, highlighting its central role in maintaining a motivated and productive academic workforce.[19,20] The curriculum for pre-service teachers includes emotional intelligence training. Multiple regression analysis indicated that team cohesion, career growth, working conditions, organizational culture, and compensation package were significant predictors of faculty job satisfaction. Pearson's correlation showed that high satisfaction with the compensation package (0.682), career progression (0.622), supervisory support (0.595), and organizational culture and policies (0.649).[21]

CONCLUSION

These results showed that academic job satisfaction is positively associated with compensation package, supervisory support, team cohesiveness, career advancement, working conditions, and organizational culture and policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A competitive salary package that reflects the experience and qualifications of faculty members should be included as part of the institution's retention strategy.
- Medical college management should prioritize key human resource management domains to enhance faculty job satisfaction and promote long-term employee retention.

Authors' contributions:

RS; Research idea and study design, SSH; literature search, final drafting and revision: SP; data analysis/interpretation: SM; statistical analysis/interpretation and draft revision: DZ; Literature search: SAQ; Research idea and study design, data acquisition, mentorship, final drafting. Each author contributed important intellectual content during manuscript drafting or revision, and agrees to ensure that questions pertaining to the accuracy or integrity of any portion of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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