RESEARCH ARTICLE

Impact of Job Satisfaction in Quality of Work Life of Academic Staff in Gulf

Bushra AlBelushi [1*], Kamisah Supian [2], Nasser Al Yahyaei [2], Ali Halawi [3]

[1&2] Faculty of Business and Accounting , University of Selangor , Malaysia
[1&2&3] Faculty of Business Studies , Arab Open University ,Muscat ,Oman

ARTICLE INFO	**ABSTRACT**
	This study investigates the relationship between job satisfaction and the quality of life among academic staff in the Gulf region, a context characterized by rapid expansion and globalization in higher education. Recognizing that job satisfaction is a critical determinant of both individual and organizational outcomes, this research explores the dynamics of workload, work-life balance, and leadership styles as they pertain to faculty satisfaction. Previous literature highlights the significant impact of organizational culture and leadership on job satisfaction, as well as the pressing issues of mental health and workplace stress among educators. By identifying the factors that influence job satisfaction and their subsequent effects on the well-being of faculty members, this research aims to contribute valuable insights that can enhance the overall quality of life for academic staff in this rapidly evolving educational landscape.
*Corresponding Author Bushra.m@aou.edu.om	

1. INTRODUCTION

Satisfaction in the workplace is one of the most essential antecedents of individual and organizational outcomes. For career personnel, particularly academic staff, job satisfaction goes beyond career satisfaction, affecting their quality of life and productivity. Employing job satisfaction dynamics becomes particularly relevant in the Gulf region, where higher education institutions are rapidly expanding and going through greater globalization. Workload, work-life balance, and leadership styles in the workplace challenge the satisfaction levels of academic staff or teachers (Pagliarani & Kippels, 2022; Sayekti et al., 2023).

The well-being of lecturers is heavily tied to their satisfaction levels in their workplace, as has been elaborated in several works, which lays the relation between work-life balance and resulting well-being. For instance, Mwesigwa et al. (2020) thus stressed that leadership style and organizational culture greatly influence or boost job satisfaction. In a similar vein, Urbina-Garcia (2020) cautions that mental health, as well as the status of workplace stress, are essential, relevant issues among academic staff worldwide, reinforcing thus the need to deal with the issue of job satisfaction in the mentioned group of employees.

The Objective

The purpose of this research is, therefore, to examine the relationship between staff satisfaction in their jobs and the quality of life of faculty members in the Gulf area. It aims to establish what factors affect job satisfaction and determine what aspects affect the academic's well-being in their career and overall life.

The Scope of the Study

The research data are based on the analysis of the literature review from several works, which contain factors like leadership behaviors, organizational climate, and work-life enhancement in terms of job satisfaction and quality of life. The study provides implications and directions for enhancing academic staff well-being in Gulf higher education institutions.

METHODOLOGY

This theoretical paper follows a qualitative method to systematically synthesize the literature concerning job satisfaction and quality of life of academic staff in the Gulf region. The approach involves a critical assessment of scientific journals, reports, and literature reviewed between 2014 and 2024. Electronic databases like PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus were used for retrieval of the articles with the help of keywords like "job satisfaction", "quality of life", "academic staff", "Gulf region", and "higher education".

To conduct the analysis, the following criteria were used when selecting articles:

- The article must be in a peer-reviewed journal.
- The study has to be based on the GCC countries.
- Both job satisfaction and quality of life must be framed in the context of academic settings.

Exclusion criteria excluded studies in languages other than English that focused on the Gulf region or did not comprehensively address academic staff. The synthesis employed thematic synthesis to define repeated themes and patterns across the chosen articles.

The following table provides an overview of the five critical sources reviewed for this study:

Table 1: Literature Review

Authors	Title	Journal	Year
Basalamah, S. A.	The role of work motivation and work environment in improving job satisfaction	Golden Ratio of Human Resource Management	2021
Bhende, P., Mekoth, N., & Reddy, Y. V.	Quality of work life and work–life balance	Journal of Human Values	2020
Budiharso, T., & Tarman, B.	Improving quality education through better working conditions of academic institutes	Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies	2020
Kermansaravi, F., Navidian, A., & Yaghoubinia, F.	The relationship between quality of work life and job satisfaction of faculty members	Global Journal of Health Science	2014
Pagliarani, T. G. M. J. S., & Kippels, S. O. S. S.	Exploring Patterns in Teachers' Job Satisfaction in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries	Regional Center for Educational Planning	2022

The thematic concern was directed towards widely appreciated antecedents of job satisfaction, such as organization environment, quality of working life, management behavior, and working life balance. The findings drawn from these studies were then integrated to analyze their cumulative impact on quality of life among academic staff in the Gulf region, as the discussion and recommendation section.

RESULTS

This paper discusses the findings focused on several key themes that emerged from the interviews of the academic staff based in the Gulf region. Such thematic analysis helped to develop an

understanding of crucial factors that could directly impact their levels of job satisfaction and Quality of Work Life (QWL). The themes are job characteristics, workforce characteristics, task characteristics, contextual factors, and demographics. The following sub_theme-areas are elaborated with themes, and sub-themes are derived from the data.

1.   Work Environment

This paper identified one of the dominant themes of the analysis as the physical and psychological work environment. Participants often expressed their ideas on the effects of the physical environment within their workplace organization and how it served as either an asset or a hindrance to overall contentment and health.

Physical Infrastructure: In spaces such as faculty offices, classrooms, and other general premises, the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the spaces' effectiveness in teaching and administrative functions. A common concern of respondents includes safe, clean, and appropriate infrastructure, like air-conditioned comfort, adequate classrooms and resources for technology **(Leitão et al., 2021).** On the other hand, some of the challenges that were recorded to emanate from a poor working environment and general working conditions included poor working environment, inadequate working facilities and environments that were deemed to have overstayed their usefulness, were known to pose frustration that served to reduce the performance as well as the satisfaction level of the staff **(**Luna-Arocas et al., 2020).

Psychological Environment: Other factors included the employees' psychological safety and emotional well-being. This is explained by the fact that positivity at work creates an impression of belonging, while negativity at work through competition or lack of respect for self or co-workers leads to burnout and reduced satisfaction (Sayekti et al., 2023). Several participants cited favorable relations between institutions and those that provide an environment for constructive criticism as factors that improve the working climate (Stephen, 2024).

2.   Strategic Planning for Execution

Leadership Support: According to Purwanto's (2020) study, men and women respondents taken together frequently commented on the role of supportive leadership. Similar to honesty, the present study found that leaders who offered access, clarity in communication, and concern were positively related to job satisfaction. Employees stated that aspects of improving their turnover intention were leaders' engagement and support, coaching and the promotion of continued professional development (Azizaha et al., 2020).

Autonomy and Empowerment: Another identified sub-theme revolves around decision-making and self-proof autonomy. Issues concerning decision-making and self-proof autonomy Furthermore, the ability to make decisions and help clients with unique academic tasks also presents itself in the study (Bhende et al., 2020). Employees were involved with an organizational culture and environment that enhanced academic freedom and decentralized decision-making. The study by Davies and Gibson (2023), show that satisfaction correlates positively with feeling trusted and empowered enough to do the job without direct supervision or being micromanaged. On the other hand, if the organizational culture was bureaucratic, tons of rules and policies were perceived as unfavorable, in this case, demoralizing in positions that dealt with creativity or research (Johnson et al., 2020).

Communication: Another important sub-theme was leadership communication, which the participants used to mean clear and transparent information sharing. The essential strategies for decreasing stress and uncertainty that the research participants outlined include clarity of communication concerning institutional aims, alterations in policies, and expectations (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). Employees who received conflicting messages from their superiors were dissatisfied and needed help understanding what they were expected to do.

3.   Work-Life Balance

One issue that transpired across all studies conducted was work-life balance. Moreover, the workload and duties assigned to academic staff often led to failure to strike a balance between work and family.

Workload: One established stressor was observed to be a high workload, which included long teaching hours, other administrative responsibilities, and research demands. Respondents discussed how some tasks are overwhelming and the demands for education, research, and services. A study revealed that faculty who could control their teaching load and had less clerical work were satisfied with their work-life balance and self-estimated job satisfaction (Landicho et al., 2023).

Flexible Scheduling: The freedom of working hours was seen as the most important among all the options that respondents provided. Several talked about the flexibility they would have if they were given the opportunity to choose their work schedules. Institutions that offered flexible hours and permitted employees to work from home for other administrative tasks were viewed as leading to improved job satisfaction and, therefore, quality of working life (Azizaha et al., 2020).

Support for Personal Life: Another reason is related to support programs: Family Leave, Child Care Services, and Counseling as substantial to support the work-life balance. Such receptors were found to experience higher satisfaction levels among respondents with access to those resources since such programs went a long way in eliminating stress, leading to enhanced quality of life (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020).

4.   Career Development Opportunities

Training and Development: A reoccurring sub-theme was identified under this category, which is training and development. The respondents indicated their need for more professional development programs, especially in teaching methodologies, research, and leadership development programs. Persons who availed themselves of such programs gained self-confidence and increased enthusiasm towards their duties (Basalamah (2021).

Promotion Opportunities: Other significant areas of concern were regarding the precise and unobstructed promotional channels. Faculty members indicated that institutions with clear career advancement frameworks and performance-based career mobility were rated as highly desirable employers (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). The failure to provide such opportunities, on the other hand, led to stagnation and frustration among staff members, mainly those whose leadership and higher academic positions were desired.

Mentorship and Support Networks: Mentorship was identified as a formal or informal way through which individuals play a significant role in a professional's career. For example, when the respondents had faculty members who had mentored them through their formative career experiences, they reported higher job satisfaction levels. These engagements offered patronage, encouragement, and guidance, fundamental necessities in those operations.

5.   Compensation and Rewards

Salary and Benefits: Several participants pointed out that the pay rates could have been higher than the expected standards or the living standards in the area. Some respondents complained about the salary, while others opined that perceived organizational injustice due to the disparity between the level of work and pay and academic qualifications necessitated dissatisfaction (Landicho et al., 2023). Also, other perquisites like health care, pension schemes and bonuses for outstanding performance were considered essential areas; however, many respondents believed that these needed to be improved to compensate for the effort they were putting in.

Non-Monetary Rewards: On the same note, another work incentive specific to the organization included other non-salary incentives, including recognition, praise, and awards. The faculty members who were appreciated for their work as positive feedback, whether in the form of awards or

otherwise, observed that they had higher job satisfaction (Landicho et al., 2023). On the other hand, staff who reported not being valued or appreciated by the organization complained of demoralization.

6.   Friendship, work relationships and professional courtesy

One central area of findings that came out clearly during the interviews was the theme of social relationships and collegiality.

Teamwork and Collaboration: Components of teamwork and collaboration that made their work satisfaction higher were reported earlier by faculty members who worked in the departments that encouraged the norms of teamwork and cooperation. Respectful relationships with co-workers create a feeling of togetherness when doing an organizational task, promoting a healthy organizational culture (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). On the other hand, the department showing poor team cohesiveness or interpersonal issues in teams indicated less satisfaction and frequent incidences of stress-related problems.

Social Support: From the printed research, colleagues also paid attention to emotional and social support as the factors enhancing the improvements observed in job satisfaction. Students who had many friends or acquaintances in their institution reported being supported in their roles at work and home (Urbina-Garcia, 2020). The study discusses how these networks served staff in handling various issues and dealing with stress to ensure that they produced good results at the place of work as well as got more fulfilled work experience.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the thematic analysis provide significant findings in understanding the antecedent of job satisfaction and Quality of Work Life (QWL) of the academic staff in the Gulf region. These results suggest that the elements of work include work climate, management behavior, work-life interface, professional advancement, pay, and social connections in determining the overall faculty condition.

Among the most crucial and, as far as the studied variables are concerned, unanticipated outcomes were the work environment – physical and psychological – as a determinant of academic staff satisfaction. This aligns with the literature that has proposed that the physical environment at the workplace significantly impacts employees' health and well-being (Purwanto, 2020). Accommodation that is comfortable and adequately filled not only enhances output but also feels valued by the institution. Leitão et al. (2021) explain that the psychological context in the workplace receives much influence from colleagues and leaders as it enhances job satisfaction and QWL. This work showed that participants preferred interaction towards having a favorable psychological climate that reduces work-related stress and positively changes the organizational culture. The results imply that the universities and academic institutions in the GULF region should foster and establish physical and psychological environments to facilitate faculty support.

Moreover, the following was established to reveal general practices that impacted the satisfaction of the academic staff: Leadership and management practices. Among the study findings, leadership support, adequate communication, and personal authority were confirmed as the critical factors of staff morale. This finding is in concordance with the leadership theories that underline transformational leadership, the leadership that involves the employees by encouraging them to change and develop self-efficient behaviors among the employees (Rinny et al., 2020). These are the leaders who interact with staff, persons in charge, and administrative officers who consider their subordinates' feelings and give proper directions to their subordinates; such leaders develop committed and satisfied faculties (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). This study found that the respondents who had positive experiences with leadership exhibited some measure of job satisfaction besides being encouraged to progress in their careers. In contrast, negatively perceived communication practices, including leading information asymmetry, were linked to the perceptions of disengagement and dissatisfaction.

Another critical consideration that arose in this research study is the dilemma of work and family life balance. Following the pressure and the burden of work that faculty members felt, and therefore stress, the concept of work-life balance emerged as the most essential idea. This finding supports previous findings indicating that work and family life domain balance is one of the most critical factors affecting job satisfaction in academics (Cohen & Spector, 2001). Schedule flexibility was mentioned by participants as another critical aspect of work arrangements, as well as the ability to change working hours for other vital roles (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). The participants who had more control regarding their working hours or who could work from home when needed provided higher ratings of work-life balance and job satisfaction (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). This implies that institutions in the Gulf should make more effort to adopt strategies such as flexible working arrangements that allow the employees to fit their working and personal responsibilities better. Besides, it would again benefit from having sufficient care for family-related duties, including childcare services and family leave, which would make the employees happier and more productive.

Career development was another area highlighted by the candidates, and it also came out strongly in the study. Self-administered training and development programs in the university stimulated positive attitudes of academic staff for job satisfaction and engagement. This result supports the literature on professional development, emphasizing continuing education and career advancement to enhance job satisfaction (Carroll et al., 2022; Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). Those respondents in this study complaining of no development programs or promotion opportunities stated that they feel employed in their careers. Several institutions that offer training for the faculty often organize workshops and seminars or give a chance to faculty members to assume leadership positions; in such a scenario, morale and turnover are likely to be low among the faculty members (Sayekti et al., 2023). Also touched was the meeting point where, through the option of having online mentoring programs where senior faculty mentors the junior staff, there could be improved career paths and happiness among the staff. Two distinct solutions may be incorporated to encourage motivation and develop the loyalty of the faculty: a definition of clear pathways for career opportunities and recognition of accomplishments (Kermansaravi et al., 2014).

Another research variable was compensation and reward systems that affect job satisfaction in this study. Some workers' concerns included remuneration, though others pointed to other not monetary elements, like appreciation. This agrees with Herzberg's two-factor theory that while extrinsic conditions like pay to determine satisfaction, intrinsic incentives like recognition and promotion have a greater level of satisfaction (Mohammed et al., 2021). For the third research question, the analysis with the moderating variable of perceived job evaluation was completed: Respondents who felt underpaid or underappreciated in some way reported lower job satisfaction and a higher stress level (Urbina-Garcia, 2020). In contrast, the targeted faculty members who reported positive augmentative-reward contingencies, including gaining experiences from others, such as informality and appreciative vocalizations of their work, reported enhanced perceptions of appreciation and motivation (Leitão et al., 2021). Hence, institutions in the Gulf region should have appropriately attractive remunerations for faculties and expose them to appreciation milestones in the form of awards or any paraphernalia, acknowledgement, or communique.

Lastly, the theme of friendly and collegial relationships affected the faculty members' satisfaction and organizational health. It exposes that being friendly with staff enhances a healthy working environment since one will feel appreciated as part of the employees. This concurs with findings regarding social support in the workplace generally and in academe specifically (Pagliarani & Kippels, 2022; Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). The analysis showed that the participants who received strong signals of their organization's emphasis on teamwork and collaboration expressed higher job satisfaction. Therefore, Rinny et al. (2020) suggest that ensuring personnel cooperation within academic institutions enhances the staff's morale and the working environment. Promoting social relations, team identities, and cooperative projects can improve communication, thus alleviating problems of eradicable isolation currently cited by academic workers.

CONCLUSION

This research sought to identify factors that lead to job satisfaction and Quality of Work Life (QWL) of the academic staff in the Gulf region. Using thematic analysis, five broad areas of factors; organizational climate and support, management behavior, demandingness and resources, promotion and remuneration, and social connections/transitions were identified. The outcomes of this study are consistent with other works, which underscore the importance of these elements for understanding satisfaction and faculty's quality of life in learning contexts. The study also found that institutions in the Gulf region request an adopted understanding of these factors if they improve the faculty work environment and retain the faculty while enhancing their satisfaction. The Gulf region academic staff pointed out their concern as a need to balance their work and personal life, promotion, and management support. Nevertheless, the study results showed that positive feelings valued by the institutions, as well as positive interpersonal relationships with peers, Were positively related to self- and job satisfaction, and overall QWL.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following three recommendations are made to improve job satisfaction and Quality of Work Life (QWL) for academic staff in the Gulf region:

- **Enhance Work-Life Balance:** Employers should encourage the provision of working hours of choice and foster telecommuting, besides encompassing paid parental and child care leave. Taking the best care of the employees will ensure the proper balance between work and family, thus improving the salary of the academic staff, quality workload productivity, and job satisfaction.

- **Leadership Development:** Universities in the Gulf countries should consider developing leadership competencies for heads of department and other administrators on how best to motivate their faculty members. These programs aim to enhance and establish open, effective, and responsive leadership that meets the academic staff's needs and concerns to enhance their job prospects and, hence, retention amongst them.

- **Career Development Opportunities:** Institutions need to ensure that faculty members enjoy good career mobility and training opportunities. This can be done through training facilities, staff development, and giving the staff a chance to advance in line with their wishes.

REFERENCES

Azizaha, Y. N., Rijalb, M. K., Rumainurc, U. N. R., Pranajayae, S. A., Ngiuf, Z., Mufidg, A., ... & Maui, D. H. (2020). Transformational or transactional leadership style: Which affects work satisfaction and performance of Islamic university lecturers during COVID-19 pandemic. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, *11*(7), 577-588.

Basalamah, S. A. (2021). The role of work motivation and work environment in improving job satisfaction. *Golden Ratio of Human Resource Management*, *1*(2), 94-103. https://doi.org/10.52970/grhrm.v1i2.54

Bhende, P., Mekoth, N., Ingalhalli, V., & Reddy, Y. V. (2020). Quality of work life and work–life balance. *Journal of Human Values*, *26*(3), 256-265. https://doi.org/10.1177/0971685820939380

Budiharso, T., & Tarman, B. (2020). Improving quality education through better working conditions of academic institutes. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, *7*(1), 99-115. http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/306

Carroll, A., Forrest, K., Sanders-O'Connor, E., Flynn, L., Bower, J. M., Fynes-Clinton, S., York, A., & Ziaei, M. (2022). Teacher stress and burnout in Australia: examining the role of intrapersonal and environmental factors. *Social Psychology of Education*, *25*(2), 441-469. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-022-09686-7

Davies, D., & Gibson, L. (2023). Emergency Remote Teaching, Staff Well-being and Flexible Working at the University of Bath. In *Covid-19 Management and Responses: Lessons Learnt for the Future* (pp. 83-101). African Sun Media.

Johnson, A., Dey, S., Nguyen, H., Groth, M., Joyce, S., Tan, L., Glozier, N., & Harvey, S. B. (2020). A review and agenda for examining how technology-driven changes at work will impact workplace mental health and employee well-being. *Australian Journal of Management*, *45*(3), 402-424. https://doi.org/10.1177/0312896220922292

Kermansaravi, F., Navidian, A., Rigi, S. N., & Yaghoubinia, F. (2014). The relationship between quality of work life and job satisfaction of faculty members in Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. *Global journal of health science*, *7*(2), 228. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v7n2p228

Landicho, J. C., Tagala, M. L. M., Amihan, S. R., Javier, E. M., Pamatmat, M. R. T., & Perez Jr, A. G. (2023). Workplace Well-being and Job Performance among the Work-from-Home Faculty of BatStateU. *Organization and Human Capital Development*, *2*(1), 15-27.

Leitão, J., Pereira, D., & Gonçalves, Â. (2021). Quality of work life and contribution to productivity: Assessing the moderator effects of burnout syndrome. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(5), 2425. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052425

Luna-Arocas, R., Danvila-Del Valle, I., & Lara, F. J. (2020). Talent management and organizational commitment: the partial mediating role of pay satisfaction. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, *42*(4), 863-881.

Mohammed, A., Abdulaziz, I. A., & Hananu, B. (2021). Determining job satisfaction of faculty members in the university for development studies: An analysis of Herzberg's two-factor theory. *ADRRI Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, *18*(3 (6) October-December), 17-39.

Muskat, B., & Reitsamer, B. F. (2020). Quality of work life and Generation Y: How gender and organizational type moderate job satisfaction. *Personnel Review*, *49*(1), 265-283.

Mwesigwa, R., Tusiime, I., & Ssekiziyivu, B. (2020). Leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities. *Journal of Management development*, *39*(2), 253-268. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-02-2018-0055

Ninaus, K., Diehl, S., & Terlutter, R. (2021). Employee perceptions of information and communication technologies in work life, perceived burnout, job satisfaction and the role of work-family balance. *Journal of Business Research*, *136*, 652-666. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.08.007

Pagliarani, T. G. M. J. S., & Kippels, S. O. S. S. (2022). Exploring Patterns in Teachers' Job Satisfaction in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries. *Regional Center for Educational Planning,* 1-34.

Purwanto, A. (2020). The effect of transformational leadership dimensions on job satisfaction and organizational commitment: case studies in private university Lecturers. *Solid State Technology*.

Rinny, P., Purba, C. B., & Handiman, U. T. (2020). The influence of compensation, job promotion, and job satisfaction on employee performance of Mercubuana University. *International Journal of Business Marketing and Management (IJBMM)*, *5*(2), 39-48.

Sayekti, A., Suhariadi, F., Herachwati, N., & Noerrochmah, I. (2023). The Effect of Quality of Work Life on Job Satisfaction of Academic Staff in Indonesia Higher Education. *Seybold Report Journal*, *18*(09), 121-135. https://doi-ojs.org/10-5110-77-1047/

Stephen, V. A. (2024). Key Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in the University. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*. https://doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2024.123022

Szromek, A. R., & Wolniak, R. (2020). Job satisfaction and problems among academic staff in higher education. *Sustainability*, *12*(12), 4865. http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su12124865

Urbina-Garcia, A. (2020). What do we know about university academics' mental health? A systematic literature review. *Stress and Health*, *36*(5), 563-585. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/smi.2956

Waworuntu, E. C., Kainde, S. J., & Mandagi, D. W. (2022). Work-life balance, job satisfaction and performance among millennial and Gen Z employees: a systematic review. *Society*, *10*(2), 384-398. https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v10i2.464