

Impact of Work Culture and Interpersonal Relationships on Employee Job Satisfaction in Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract—Employee job satisfaction is a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness and institutional performance in higher educational institutions. Among the various factors influencing employee satisfaction, work culture and interpersonal relationships play a pivotal role in shaping employees' attitudes, motivation, and commitment. The present study examines the impact of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction among staff members in higher educational institutions. A descriptive and explanatory research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 199 teaching and non-teaching staff members using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, Chi-square test, correlation analysis, One-Way ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis were employed for data analysis.

The findings reveal that employees hold favourable perceptions regarding work culture, interpersonal relationships, and overall job satisfaction. The study further indicates that both work culture and interpersonal relationships have a significant positive influence on employee job satisfaction, with interpersonal relationships emerging as the strongest predictor of satisfaction. The results emphasize the importance of creating supportive organizational environments characterized by effective communication, teamwork, trust, recognition, and employee participation. The study concludes that fostering a positive work culture and healthy interpersonal relationships can significantly enhance employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and institutional effectiveness in higher educational institutions.

Index Terms—Work Culture, Interpersonal Relationships, Job Satisfaction, Higher Educational Institutions, Employee Satisfaction, Organizational Support, Teamwork, Organizational Effectiveness.

I. Introduction

Higher education institutions play a vital role in knowledge creation, human resource development, and socio-economic progress. The effectiveness of these institutions largely depends on the commitment, competence, and satisfaction of their employees. Both teaching and non-teaching staff contribute significantly to achieving institutional objectives, and their level of job satisfaction directly influences the quality of education, administrative efficiency, and overall organizational performance. Consequently, understanding the factors that shape employee job satisfaction has become an important area of research in educational management and human resource development.

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees experience positive feelings and attitudes toward their jobs and work environment. Satisfied employees are generally more motivated, productive, committed, and willing to contribute beyond their formal responsibilities. Conversely, dissatisfaction may lead to reduced productivity, absenteeism, stress, and increased turnover intentions. Among the numerous factors influencing

employee satisfaction, work culture and interpersonal relationships have emerged as two of the most critical determinants of employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Work culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that govern employee behavior within an organization. A positive work culture characterized by trust, open communication, recognition, fairness, and employee participation creates an environment where employees feel valued and supported. Such a culture encourages collaboration, enhances motivation, and promotes organizational commitment. In higher educational institutions, a healthy work culture is particularly important because employees are expected to perform diverse roles involving teaching, research, administration, and student support services.

Interpersonal relationships represent another important aspect of employees' work experiences. Positive relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and management contribute significantly to employees' emotional well-being and job satisfaction. Teamwork, mutual respect, cooperation, and effective communication foster a sense of belonging and create a supportive work environment. In educational institutions, where collaborative efforts and knowledge sharing are essential, healthy interpersonal relationships can improve employee morale, facilitate problem-solving, and enhance institutional effectiveness.

The changing dynamics of the higher education sector, including increased competition, technological advancements, accreditation requirements, and evolving employee expectations, have further emphasized the need to create supportive organizational environments. Employees increasingly seek workplaces that not only provide adequate compensation and career opportunities but also promote positive relationships and a culture of trust, collaboration, and professional growth. Therefore, institutions need to understand the extent to which work culture and interpersonal relationships influence employee job satisfaction.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines the impact of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions. The study seeks to provide empirical evidence on how organizational practices and workplace relationships contribute to employee satisfaction and offers insights for developing effective human resource strategies that enhance employee well-being, organizational commitment, and institutional excellence.

II. Need for the Study

Employees are the most valuable assets of higher educational institutions, and their job satisfaction plays a crucial role in determining institutional effectiveness and service quality. In the contemporary educational environment, institutions are facing challenges such as increased competition, technological changes, accreditation requirements, and rising employee expectations. These challenges have made it essential for institutions to create supportive work environments that promote employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Work culture and interpersonal relationships significantly influence employees' attitudes, motivation, and overall work experience. A positive work culture characterized by trust, recognition, communication, and participation enhances employee morale and productivity. Similarly, healthy interpersonal relationships with colleagues and supervisors foster cooperation, teamwork, and a sense of belonging among employees. Inadequate organizational support and poor workplace relationships, however, may result in stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced performance.

Despite the importance of these factors, limited studies have comprehensively examined the combined influence of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions. Therefore, the present study seeks to understand how these factors shape employees' perceptions

and satisfaction levels and provides insights for developing effective human resource practices that enhance employee well-being, organizational commitment, and institutional excellence.

III. Problem Statement

Higher educational institutions depend significantly on the commitment, satisfaction, and performance of their employees to achieve academic excellence and organizational effectiveness. However, the changing dynamics of the education sector, increasing workload, technological advancements, and rising employee expectations have created challenges in maintaining employee satisfaction and engagement. In many institutions, issues related to organizational culture, communication, recognition, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships affect employees' perceptions of their work environment and their overall job satisfaction.

A supportive work culture and healthy interpersonal relationships are essential for fostering motivation, collaboration, and organizational commitment. Conversely, poor workplace relationships, lack of recognition, ineffective communication, and inadequate organizational support may lead to dissatisfaction, stress, reduced productivity, and increased turnover intentions. Although several studies have examined job satisfaction in educational settings, limited research has investigated the combined impact of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions.

Therefore, there is a need to examine how work culture and interpersonal relationships influence employee job satisfaction and to identify the organizational practices that can enhance employee well-being and institutional effectiveness. The present study seeks to address this gap by investigating the impact of these factors on job satisfaction among staff members in higher educational institutions.

IV. Review of Literature

Employee job satisfaction has been widely studied in organizational behavior and human resource management literature, with researchers emphasizing the importance of work environment and interpersonal relationships in shaping employee attitudes and performance. Herzberg (1968), through the Two-Factor Theory, argued that factors such as recognition, achievement, and positive working conditions significantly influence employee satisfaction and motivation. Similarly, Spector (1997) stated that job satisfaction is determined by employees' perceptions of their work environment, supervision, and organizational support.

Research has consistently highlighted the role of work culture in enhancing employee satisfaction. Armstrong (2021) emphasized that a positive organizational culture characterized by trust, communication, fairness, and employee involvement contributes significantly to employee commitment and organizational effectiveness. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) further suggested that supportive work environments and adequate organizational resources improve employee engagement and satisfaction.

Interpersonal relationships have also emerged as a critical determinant of job satisfaction. De Simone, Planta, and Cicotto (2018) found that positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors significantly improve employee well-being and organizational commitment. Healthy interpersonal relationships encourage teamwork, cooperation, and knowledge sharing, thereby creating a supportive work environment and enhancing employee morale.

In the context of educational institutions, Singh and Jain (2018) reported that leadership support, collegial relationships, and opportunities for professional development positively influence employee satisfaction. Nair et al. (2021) further observed that effective communication, mutual respect, and collaborative work practices contribute significantly to employee satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

In the Indian context, Chandrasekar (2024) examined the impact of job satisfaction on productivity in the food industry and reported that employees working in supportive environments with adequate recognition and organizational support demonstrated higher levels of satisfaction and productivity. Similarly, Chandrasekar and Natarajan (2021) investigated stress management practices in the KISCOL industry and found that workplace relationships and organizational support significantly influence employee well-being and performance.

The literature therefore indicates that both work culture and interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in determining employee job satisfaction. Factors such as communication, teamwork, recognition, trust, and organizational support contribute significantly to employees' positive work experiences and overall organizational effectiveness, particularly in higher educational institutions.

V. Research Gap

Previous studies have established that work culture and interpersonal relationships significantly influence employee satisfaction and organizational performance. However, most studies have examined these factors independently or have focused on employees in corporate and industrial sectors. In the context of higher educational institutions, limited research has comprehensively examined the combined impact of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction. Further, empirical studies comparing employees' perceptions of organizational culture, teamwork, communication, and workplace relationships in higher educational institutions remain inadequate, particularly in the Indian context.

Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive study that investigates how work culture and interpersonal relationships jointly influence employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by providing empirical evidence and offering insights for developing employee-centric organizational practices that enhance job satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

VI. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of work culture on employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions.
2. To assess the impact of interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction.
3. To determine the relationship between work culture, interpersonal relationships, and employee job satisfaction.
4. To compare employees' perceptions of work culture and interpersonal relationships across different categories of staff in higher educational institutions.
5. To suggest appropriate organizational practices for enhancing employee job satisfaction through a supportive work culture and positive interpersonal relationships.

VII. Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on examining the impact of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions. The study covers both teaching and non-teaching staff and evaluates various dimensions of work culture, including communication, recognition, organizational support, participation, and fairness, along with interpersonal factors such as teamwork, collegial relationships, mutual respect, and supervisor support.

The study aims to understand employees' perceptions regarding their work environment and workplace relationships and to determine how these factors influence their overall job satisfaction. The findings of the

study are expected to provide valuable insights for institutional administrators and human resource managers in designing employee-centric policies and practices that enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and institutional effectiveness in higher educational institutions.

VIII. Research Methodology

Research methodology provides a systematic framework for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to achieve the objectives of the study. The present study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions.

8.1 Research Approach

The study employs a quantitative research approach, as it facilitates the collection of measurable data and enables the application of statistical techniques to determine the relationship between work culture, interpersonal relationships, and employee job satisfaction.

8.2 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and explanatory research design. The descriptive design is used to understand employees' perceptions regarding work culture, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction, while the explanatory design examines the influence of the independent variables on employee satisfaction.

8.3 Nature of the Study

The present study is empirical in nature, as it is based on primary data collected directly from employees working in higher educational institutions.

8.4 Sources of Data

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data: Primary data were collected from teaching and non-teaching staff members through a structured questionnaire.

Secondary Data: Secondary data were collected from books, research articles, journals, conference proceedings, reports, and online databases related to work culture, interpersonal relationships, and employee job satisfaction.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises teaching and non-teaching staff members working in higher educational institutions.

Sampling Technique

The respondents were selected using the Simple Random Sampling Technique, which provided equal opportunity for all employees to participate in the study and ensured adequate representation of different categories of staff.

Sample Size

A total of 199 respondents participated in the study.

8.5 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

Section A: Demographic profile of the respondents, including age, gender, educational qualification, designation, work experience, and department.

Section B: Statements measuring employees' perceptions regarding work culture, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction.

8.6 Measurement Scale

The study employed a five-point Likert Scale to measure respondents' perceptions.

8.7 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed among teaching and non-teaching employees of higher educational institutions. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of their responses was assured. The completed questionnaires were collected and screened for completeness before analysis.

8.8 Data Processing and Analysis

The collected data were coded, classified, tabulated, and entered into statistical software for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyze the data.

8.9 Statistical Tools Used

Percentage Analysis:

To describe the demographic profile of the respondents.

Descriptive Statistics

Mean and Standard Deviation were used to examine employees' perceptions regarding work culture, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction.

Chi-Square Test

To examine the association between demographic variables and employee job satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis

To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between work culture, interpersonal relationships, and employee job satisfaction.

One-Way ANOVA

To compare the perceptions of employees across different demographic groups and institutions.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To determine the extent to which work culture and interpersonal relationships influence employee job satisfaction.

8.10 Period of Study

The study was conducted during the Academic Year 2025–2026.

8.11 Scope of Analysis

The analysis focuses on assessing the influence of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction among teaching and non-teaching staff members in higher educational institutions. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for institutional administrators and human resource managers in developing employee-centric practices that enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and institutional effectiveness.

8.12 Variables of the Study

The present study examines the influence of organizational and relational factors on employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions. Based on the review of literature and the objectives of the study, two independent variables, namely Work Culture and Interpersonal Relationships, and one dependent variable, namely Employee Job Satisfaction, were identified. Each variable comprises multiple dimensions that collectively determine employees' perceptions and satisfaction levels within the organizational setting.

Table 8.12.1: Variables of the Study

Source: Computed

The above table presents the variables considered in the study. The study includes two independent variables Work Culture and Interpersonal Relationships and one dependent variable Employee Job Satisfaction. Work culture is represented by dimensions such as communication, recognition, organizational support, participation, and fairness, which collectively reflect the institutional environment experienced by employees. Interpersonal relationships encompass teamwork, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, trust, and opportunities for expressing ideas, indicating the quality of workplace interactions. Employee job satisfaction is measured through various dimensions, including overall satisfaction, professional growth, organizational commitment, and intention to continue employment. The framework facilitates an examination of how organizational culture and workplace relationships influence employee satisfaction in higher educational institutions.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework illustrates the proposed relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. It assumes that a positive work culture and healthy interpersonal relationships significantly contribute to enhancing employee job satisfaction. The framework serves as the basis for analyzing the extent to which these organizational and relational factors influence employees' satisfaction levels.

Table 8.12.2: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Computed

The conceptual framework indicates that employee job satisfaction is influenced by two major factors: work culture and interpersonal relationships. A supportive work culture characterized by effective communication, recognition, fairness, and organizational support is expected to enhance employees' positive perceptions of their jobs. Similarly, healthy interpersonal relationships, reflected through teamwork, mutual trust, cooperation, and supportive supervision, are anticipated to improve employees' sense of belonging and satisfaction. The framework therefore proposes that both organizational culture and workplace relationships play a significant role in determining employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions.

IX. Data Analysis and Interpretation

9.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine employees' perceptions regarding work culture, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction. The mean and standard deviation values indicate the level of agreement and the consistency of respondents' opinions regarding the study variables.

Table 9.1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 199)

Source: Computed

The above table indicates that employees have favourable perceptions regarding all the study variables. Interpersonal relationships recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 4.14), followed by work culture (Mean = 4.08) and employee job satisfaction (Mean = 4.01). The relatively low standard deviation values indicate consistency in employees' responses. The findings suggest that positive workplace relationships and supportive organizational culture contribute significantly to employee satisfaction in higher educational institutions.

9.2 Chi-Square Analysis

The Chi-square test was employed to examine the association between demographic variables and employee job satisfaction.

Hypotheses

H0: There is no significant association between demographic variables and employee job satisfaction.

H1: There is a significant association between demographic variables and employee job satisfaction.

Table 9.2: Association between Demographic Variables and Employee Job Satisfaction

Source: Computed

The Chi-square analysis reveals that age and work experience have a significant association with employee job satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). However, gender, educational qualification, and designation do not significantly influence employees' satisfaction levels. The findings indicate that job satisfaction tends to vary according to employees' age and professional experience.

9.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between work culture, interpersonal relationships, and employee job satisfaction.

Table 9.3: Correlation Matrix

Note: $p < 0.01$

Source: Computed

The correlation matrix reveals strong positive relationships among all the study variables. Work culture exhibits a strong positive relationship with employee job satisfaction ($r = 0.724$), while interpersonal relationships demonstrate an even stronger association with employee job satisfaction ($r = 0.758$). The findings suggest that improvements in organizational culture and workplace relationships are likely to enhance employee satisfaction.

9.4 One-Way ANOVA

One-Way ANOVA was employed to determine whether significant differences exist in employee job satisfaction among staff members belonging to different institutions.

Hypotheses

H0: There is no significant difference in employee job satisfaction among different institutions.

H1: There is a significant difference in employee job satisfaction among different institutions.

Table 9.4: One-Way ANOVA for Employee Job Satisfaction

Source: Computed

The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference in employee job satisfaction among different institutions ($F = 4.582$, $p = 0.004$). The findings imply that institutional practices, work environment, and management approaches contribute to variations in employee satisfaction levels.

9.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of work culture and interpersonal relationships on employee job satisfaction.

Dependent Variable: Employee Job Satisfaction

Independent Variables: Work Culture and Interpersonal Relationships

Table 9.5: Multiple Regression Results

Model Summary:

Source: Computed

The regression model is statistically significant ($F = 214.356$, $p < 0.001$) and explains approximately 68.7% of the variation in employee job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.687$). Both work culture ($\beta = 0.398$, $p < 0.001$) and interpersonal relationships ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$) significantly influence employee job satisfaction. Among the two predictors, interpersonal relationships emerge as the strongest determinant of employee job satisfaction, followed by work culture. The findings indicate that supportive workplace relationships and a positive organizational culture substantially enhance employee satisfaction in higher educational institutions.

X. Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are as follows:

The majority of the respondents reported favourable perceptions regarding work culture, interpersonal relationships, and overall job satisfaction in higher educational institutions.

The descriptive analysis revealed that interpersonal relationships recorded the highest mean score, followed by work culture and employee job satisfaction, indicating positive perceptions of workplace relationships and organizational environment.

Employees perceived teamwork, cooperation, and mutual respect as important contributors to their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The Chi-square analysis indicated that age and work experience have a significant association with employee job satisfaction, suggesting that satisfaction levels vary across different stages of employees' careers.

Gender, educational qualification, and designation did not show a significant association with employee job satisfaction, indicating that satisfaction is influenced more by organizational factors than by personal characteristics.

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between work culture and employee job satisfaction, indicating that supportive organizational practices contribute significantly to employee satisfaction.

Interpersonal relationships exhibited a strong positive relationship with employee job satisfaction, demonstrating that healthy relationships with colleagues and supervisors enhance employees' work experiences.

The ANOVA results indicated significant differences in employee job satisfaction across institutions, suggesting that institutional policies and work environments influence employees' perceptions and satisfaction levels.

The multiple regression analysis revealed that both work culture and interpersonal relationships significantly predict employee job satisfaction.

Among the predictor variables, interpersonal relationships emerged as the strongest determinant of employee job satisfaction, followed by work culture.

The regression model explained a substantial proportion of the variation in employee job satisfaction, indicating that organizational culture and workplace relationships collectively play a significant role in enhancing employee satisfaction.

XI. Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed:

Higher educational institutions should foster a positive work culture characterized by trust, fairness, transparency, and employee participation.

Management should strengthen communication channels and encourage open dialogue between employees and administrators.

Institutions should promote teamwork and collaborative work practices through team-building activities and cross-functional initiatives.

Recognition and appreciation programmes should be implemented to acknowledge employees' contributions and achievements.

Institutional leaders should adopt supportive and participative leadership practices that encourage employee involvement in decision-making.

Regular professional development programmes and interpersonal skill training should be organized to enhance communication, teamwork, and conflict management abilities.

Effective grievance redressal mechanisms should be established to address workplace issues and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.

Institutions should create an inclusive and supportive work environment that promotes mutual respect, trust, and cooperation among employees.

Employee satisfaction surveys should be conducted periodically to identify emerging concerns and formulate appropriate interventions.

Human resource policies should be periodically reviewed and aligned with employees' expectations to strengthen job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

XII. Conclusion

The success and effectiveness of higher educational institutions largely depend on the satisfaction and commitment of their employees. The present study demonstrates that work culture and interpersonal relationships significantly influence employee job satisfaction in higher educational institutions. Employees who experience supportive organizational practices, effective communication, recognition, teamwork, and positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors tend to exhibit higher levels of satisfaction and commitment.

The findings further indicate that interpersonal relationships exert a comparatively stronger influence on employee satisfaction than organizational practices alone, emphasizing the importance of fostering collaborative and trust-based workplace environments. A positive work culture, combined with healthy workplace relationships, creates an environment that enhances employee well-being, motivation, and organizational effectiveness.

Therefore, higher educational institutions should adopt employee-centric policies that promote communication, teamwork, recognition, and participative management practices. By nurturing a supportive work culture and encouraging positive interpersonal relationships, institutions can enhance employee job satisfaction, strengthen organizational commitment, and achieve long-term institutional excellence and sustainability.

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