

Original Article

Workplace Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction in Universities of Southern Mindanao, Philippines

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Abstract. This study investigates workplace factors influencing job satisfaction among faculty and staff at a private university in Southern Mindanao, Philippines, and addresses the limited empirical evidence on employee satisfaction in private higher education institutions in Region XII. Using a descriptive–correlational research design, data were collected from 66 regular and probationary employees through a validated structured questionnaire employing a four-point Likert scale. Five workplace factors were examined: job security, training and development, remuneration, communication, and work environment. Descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation analysis were utilized to assess overall job satisfaction and its relationship with the identified factors. Results indicate that employees were generally satisfied with their jobs ($M = 3.12$). All five workplace factors demonstrated very high, positive, and statistically significant relationships with overall job satisfaction ($p < .05$). Among these, communication emerged as the most influential factor, despite receiving the lowest mean score ($M = 3.04$), suggesting a critical gap between its perceived importance and institutional effectiveness. Training and development opportunities obtained the highest satisfaction rating ($M = 3.31$), highlighting the role of professional growth in sustaining employee engagement. The findings further reveal that both monetary and non-monetary factors jointly shape job satisfaction, with persistent concerns related to communication clarity, recognition, and workload distribution. This study provides empirical evidence on the determinants of job satisfaction in private higher education institutions and offers practical insights for institutional leaders in designing targeted human resource policies to enhance employee well-being, organizational commitment, and sustainable institutional performance.

Keywords: Communication; Development and training opportunities; Job satisfaction; Job security; Remuneration; Work environment.

Employees play a critical role in determining organizational effectiveness, particularly in knowledge-intensive institutions such as universities, where human capital directly shapes academic quality, service delivery, and institutional sustainability. Job satisfaction has consistently been linked to employee performance, commitment, retention, and overall organizational success, while dissatisfaction has been associated with burnout, absenteeism, and declining service quality (Judge et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In higher education settings, these outcomes are especially consequential, as academic and non-academic staff operate under increasing performance demands, administrative workloads, and accountability pressures.

Recent international research indicates that job satisfaction in higher education is influenced by a combination of monetary and non-monetary workplace factors, including job security, opportunities for professional development, remuneration, communication, and the work environment (Mampuru et al., 2024). However, the complexity of academic institutions means that these factors often interact in distinct ways, shaped by institutional context, governance structures, and resource availability. Studies conducted after 2019 emphasize that non-monetary factors—particularly communication quality, leadership support, and developmental opportunities—are increasingly salient predictors of job satisfaction in educational organizations (Kudzedzi & Otwey, 2025).

In the Philippine context, empirical studies have similarly demonstrated that faculty and staff job satisfaction is influenced by both extrinsic rewards and psychosocial workplace conditions. Bongalonta (2022) found that fair compensation, manageable workloads, and supportive leadership significantly contribute to faculty satisfaction in state universities. More recent findings further highlight the importance of institutional support, work environment, and communication practices in shaping employee satisfaction and performance in higher education institutions (Suminguit et al., 2025). Despite these contributions, existing Philippine studies have largely focused on public universities or specific employee groups, leaving private higher education institutions underrepresented in the literature.

Private universities operate within a particularly competitive and dynamic environment, characterized by heightened expectations for academic excellence, financial sustainability, and service quality. These pressures often translate into increased workloads, evolving performance standards, and intensified administrative responsibilities for both faculty and non-teaching staff. Consequently, understanding the workplace factors that influence job satisfaction in private higher education institutions is critical, not only for employee well-being but also for institutional effectiveness and long-term sustainability. However, empirical evidence on job satisfaction among both academic and non-academic employees at private universities, particularly in Southern Mindanao, remains limited.

UST-General Santos, a developing campus of a long-established private university, provides a relevant context for examining these issues. As the institution continues to expand and adapt to changing academic and organizational demands, identifying the factors that shape employee job satisfaction becomes essential for informed policy development and human resource planning. Addressing gaps in communication effectiveness, professional development, remuneration, job security, and the work environment can support institutional efforts to foster a motivated and committed workforce.

Therefore, this study aims to examine workplace factors that influence job satisfaction among faculty, administrative, and support staff at UST-General Santos. Specifically, it investigates the level of job satisfaction across five work-related dimensions—job security, training and development, remuneration, communication, and work environment—and analyzes how these relate to overall job satisfaction. By providing empirical evidence from a private higher education institution in Southern Mindanao, this study contributes to the limited local literature. It offers practical insights for university leaders on designing targeted interventions to enhance employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and sustainable institutional performance.

Theoretical Framework

Since it positively relates to workers' performance, commitment, motivation, and retention, job satisfaction is one of the most important concepts of organizational behavior and human resource management. According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state that results from an employee's evaluation of their job or work-related activities. However, Unhappy employees are associated with high absenteeism, burnout, and turnover, according to Judge et al. (2001). Satisfied staff are generally more productive and loyal, providing the best possible service, especially in modern organizations such as educational institutions.

The first theoretical framework guiding this study is Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, developed in 1959. These authors divide work-related factors into two classes: motivators and hygiene factors. There are certain intrinsic factors, such as recognition, achievement, responsibility, and opportunities for growth or advancement, which help motivate employees and help them become engaged and satisfied with their jobs. In contrast, hygiene factors are extrinsic variables that tend to mitigate unhappiness but do not create happiness, including work-related policies, supervision, and the work environment (Kurt, 2022). This hypothesis postulates that strong intrinsic

motivators and good hygiene factors drive a happy workforce. For UST-General Santos, this model allows identification of which work factors lead to satisfaction and which only prevent dissatisfaction.

Situational Learning Theory, proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), describes learning as an inseparable relationship between context and the social environment. Knowledge, according to the theory, is not transmitted but created by active participation in the practical activities of the community of practice. Learners take on more central roles in their relationships as they acquire experience and expertise. This view holds that learning and professional development must occur as far as possible within an authentic setting-a setting not different from the workplace- in ways that account for skills acquisition and integration into the social and professional community of the business.

The Job Characteristics Model, developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), provides a theoretical framework for evaluating how specific job characteristics affect employee performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction comes about when these five intrinsic motivating factors-skill variety, task identity, task relevance, autonomy, and feedback-are supported in the workplace. Increasing these core elements will lead to a more productive workplace and higher levels of job satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

The prepositions put forward in this research based on the motivator-hygiene theory, situated learning theory and job characteristics model are: (1) motivator- hygiene theory: In this theory, the motivational construct (pay and benefits, recognition, and achievement, job security and interaction with co-employees) can predict employees' level of job satisfaction in the areas of job securities, Remuneration and Communication. (2) Situated learning theory: In this theory, the construct of learning (individual acquisition of professional skills) can predict employees' level of satisfaction in the areas of training and development opportunities. (3) Job characteristics model: In this theory, the workplace construct (satisfaction with the work environment) can predict an employee's level of job satisfaction in the area of work environment. The Herzberg motivator theory was used to analyze the primary elements that affect one's job. Job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction are treated as two distinct constructs. For employees to be happy in their jobs, motivators such as pay, benefits, recognition, and achievement are needed. By contrast, job dissatisfaction is related to hygiene factors such as organizational policies and structure, job security, working conditions, and managerial controls.

Situated learning theory explains how employees acquire professional skills and how these skills contribute to their performance. This theory enables employees to enhance their knowledge by applying it in practice. At the same time, the job characteristics model suggests that employees can enhance their performance by modifying the job itself. This theory suggests that when employees fully engage, they can create an environment that fosters their success in their role and ultimately perform at a high level, ultimately being satisfied with their position. Collectively, these theoretical prepositions form an integrated conceptual framework that interprets how motivational, developmental, and job-related factors interact to influence employee job satisfaction. This framework provided a basis for examining the determinants of job satisfaction among UST General Santos employees and supports the study's objective of generating evidence-based knowledge to inform private higher education's policy and management strategies.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the job satisfaction of academic staff, support staff, and administrators of UST General Santos. Specifically, the research study needed to find answers to the following questions:

RQ1. What is the level of job satisfaction of academic staff, support staff, and administrators in terms of job security, development and training, remuneration, communication, and work Environment

RQ2. What are the factors that may influence the job satisfaction of academic staff, support staff, and administrators?

RQ3. Is there a significant relationship among all the work factors of job level satisfaction?

RQ4. What is the proposed program that would improve and maintain the job satisfaction level of academic staff, support staff, and administrators, especially in the areas that affect their job satisfaction?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design to examine the level of job satisfaction among employees at UST-General Santos and to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and selected workplace factors. The descriptive component assessed employees’ perceived satisfaction. In contrast, the correlational component analyzed the strength and direction of relationships between job satisfaction and the identified work-related factors: job security, training and development, remuneration, communication, and work environment. No variables were manipulated, and data were collected at a single point in time using a structured survey questionnaire.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants consisted of 66 faculty members, administrative personnel, and support staff employed at UST-General Santos during Academic Year 2024–2025. Of the 78 employees, only those who met the inclusion criteria were considered eligible to participate in the study. Inclusion criteria required respondents to be regular or probationary employees who were actively working during the data collection period and who voluntarily consented to participate. Employees who were contractual or part-time, on extended leave, or who declined or failed to complete the questionnaire were excluded from the study. The required sample size was determined using Slovin’s formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding a minimum of 66 respondents. Convenience sampling was utilized due to accessibility and institutional constraints, allowing participants to be selected based on availability and willingness to participate. While this sampling technique limits generalizability, it is appropriate for exploratory studies within a bounded institutional context.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a modified survey questionnaire adapted from Toreno (2023), originally developed to assess job satisfaction among non-teaching personnel. The instrument was revised to suit the higher education context of UST-General Santos and to capture satisfaction across five workplace dimensions: job security, training and development opportunities, remuneration, communication, and work environment. Responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied), with no neutral midpoint to encourage decisive responses. Content validity was established through expert review by specialists in human resource management and educational administration. Revisions were made based on their recommendations to ensure the items were clear, relevant, and contextually appropriate. Reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, which indicated high internal consistency across all subscales, confirming the instrument’s suitability for measuring job satisfaction constructs (Gavidia & Mariño, 2024).

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted over one month following institutional approval. Participants were informed of the study’s objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, and measures taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Questionnaires were administered either in person or online through Google Forms, depending on respondents’ availability and preference. Completed responses were screened for completeness, and incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. Data were encoded into a spreadsheet and prepared for statistical analysis.

Statistical Tools

Statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, and weighted means, were used to summarize respondents’ demographic profiles and job satisfaction levels. Pearson’s r correlation coefficient was employed to determine the relationship between overall job satisfaction and the five workplace factors. All statistical tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical research standards. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. No form of coercion, pressure, or institutional influence was applied. To protect confidentiality, no personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were anonymized. Data were securely stored and used exclusively for academic and research purposes.

Results and Discussion

Job Satisfaction

Table 1 presents the overall level of job satisfaction of employees at UST-General Santos. The results indicate that employees were generally satisfied with their jobs, with a grand mean of $M = 3.12$. Among the five workplace factors examined, development and training opportunities obtained the highest mean score ($M = 3.31$), indicating a very satisfactory level. This finding supports recent studies emphasizing the role of continuous professional development in enhancing employee engagement and commitment in higher education institutions (Mampuru et al., 2024). In contrast, communication recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.04$), although it remained within the “satisfied” range. This result suggests that while communication systems are generally functional, gaps exist in clarity, feedback mechanisms, and responsiveness. Similar findings have been reported in recent higher education studies, where communication quality was identified as a critical yet frequently underdeveloped determinant of job satisfaction (Kudzedzi & Otwey, 2025).

Table 1. Overall Average Weighted Mean

Job Satisfaction in UST General Santos	Weighted Mean	Description
Job Security	3.07	Satisfied
Development/Training Opportunities	3.31	Very Satisfied
Remuneration	3.13	Satisfied
Communication	3.04	Satisfied
Work Environment	3.07	Satisfied
Grand Average Weighted Mean	3.12	Satisfied

Job Security

As shown in Table 2, employees expressed satisfaction with job security, with an average weighted mean of $M = 3.07$. The ease of utilizing leave credits received the highest rating ($M = 3.29$), reflecting supportive institutional policies. These results align with contemporary findings indicating that perceived job stability enhances psychological well-being and organizational loyalty among university employees (Alam & Asim, 2019). However, recognition through awards for exemplary performance yielded the lowest mean score ($M = 2.95$), suggesting that formal recognition mechanisms may require strengthening. Recent literature emphasizes that recognition functions as an intrinsic motivator and is closely associated with sustained job satisfaction and performance.

Table 2. Employee Job Satisfaction at the University of Santo Tomas-General Santos about Job Security

Job Security	Weighted Mean	Description
There are available avenues for promotion.	2.97	Satisfied
Leave credits can be used easily by the employees.	3.29	Very Satisfied
Employees receive recognition for accomplishments.	3.03	Satisfied
Programs for self-development are provided.	3.11	Satisfied
Employees receive awards for exemplary job performance.	2.95	Satisfied
Average Weighted Mean	3.07	Satisfied

Development and Training Opportunities

Table 3 indicates that development and training opportunities were the most positively evaluated workplace factor, with an overall mean of $M = 3.31$. Support for attending seminars and skill-enhancing training programs received the highest rating ($M = 3.61$). This finding reinforces recent evidence that access to structured training opportunities significantly contributes to employee competence, motivation, and retention in higher education institutions (Mampuru et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the relatively lower mean score for considering higher educational attainment in promotion decisions ($M = 3.05$) suggests ambiguity in career progression pathways. Studies conducted after 2020 highlight that unclear promotion criteria may undermine employee motivation and long-term organizational commitment (Duru et al., 2023).

Table 3. Employee Job Satisfaction at the University of Santo Tomas-General Santos about Training and Development Opportunities

Development and Training Opportunities	Weighted Mean	Description
The company supports attendance at seminars/trainings that enhance skills.	3.61	Very Satisfied
Employees with higher degrees are considered for career advancement.	3.05	Satisfied
Seminar topics are suited to employee needs.	3.42	Very Satisfied
Training programs provided are adequate.	3.20	Satisfied
Research and development are welcome.	3.27	Very Satisfied
Average Weighted Mean	3.31	Very Satisfied

Remuneration

As shown in Table 4, remuneration was rated satisfactory, with a weighted mean of $M = 3.13$. The timely release of salaries and benefits received the highest score ($M = 3.77$), underscoring the importance of compensation system reliability. This finding is consistent with recent research indicating that timely and transparent compensation enhances trust and organizational credibility (Bhati, 2021). However, satisfaction with salary adequacy relative to workload ($M = 2.88$) and cost of living ($M = 2.74$) was lower. These results raise concerns about perceived pay equity, which recent studies have linked to reduced motivation and increased turnover intentions in academic institutions (Alam & Asim, 2019; Butt et al., 2021).

Table 4. *Job Satisfaction of Employees at the University of Santo Tomas–General Santos in the Area of Remuneration*

Remuneration	Weighted Mean	Description
Salaries and benefits are given on time.	3.77	Very Satisfied
The monthly salary is reasonable for the workload and quality of work.	2.88	Satisfied
I am happy with the salary increase, given the current cost of living in our country.	2.74	Satisfied
Pay slips show detailed computation of deductions.	3.53	Very Satisfied
Employees can express concerns about their salaries.	2.73	Satisfied
Average Weighted Mean	3.13	Satisfied

Communication

Table 5 shows that communication received the lowest overall mean among the five workplace factors ($M = 3.04$). While employees generally reported receiving clear instructions from supervisors ($M = 3.23$), job description monitoring ($M = 2.67$) and responsiveness to employee suggestions ($M = 2.95$) were rated lower. These findings point to issues of role ambiguity and feedback insufficiency, which have been identified as sources of stress and reduced job satisfaction in organizational settings (Kudzedzi & Otwey, 2025). Recent studies further emphasize that effective internal communication fosters trust, transparency, and employee engagement, particularly in higher education institutions undergoing organizational change (Qiao et al., 2024).

Table 5. *Job Satisfaction of Employees at the University of Santo Tomas–General Santos in the Area of Communication*

Communication	Weighted Mean	Description
I receive clear instructions from my superiors.	3.23	Satisfied
Memorandums are comprehensive and understandable.	3.18	Satisfied
There is smooth communication of job-related matters between co-workers.	3.15	Satisfied
Suggestions and complaints are considered and addressed.	2.95	Satisfied
Job descriptions are strictly monitored.	2.67	Satisfied
Average Weighted Mean	3.04	Satisfied

Work Environment

Table 6 indicates that employees were satisfied with their work environment, with an overall mean of $M = 3.07$. Physical workplace conditions and safety received high satisfaction ratings ($M = 3.67$ and $M = 3.64$, respectively). These findings support contemporary evidence that a safe and comfortable work environment positively influences employee well-being and productivity (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Surayah Noor Arzahan et al., 2025). Conversely, staffing adequacy ($M = 2.59$) emerged as a concern, suggesting potential workload imbalances. Recent literature has linked excessive workload and insufficient staffing to burnout and decreased job satisfaction among university employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Table 6. *Job Satisfaction of Employees at the University of Santo Tomas–General Santos in the Area of Work Environment*

Work Environment	Weighted Mean	Description
There is sufficient staff to avoid work overload.	2.59	Satisfied
Tasks and workloads are fairly segregated.	2.65	Satisfied
The workplace is well-lit and has comfortable facilities.	3.67	Very Satisfied
Public transport is available for travel to the workplace.	2.80	Satisfied
The workplace has safe surroundings.	3.64	Very Satisfied
Average Weighted Mean	3.07	Satisfied

Table 7 presents respondents' perceptions of factors influencing their job satisfaction. Communication was identified as the most influential factor (98%), followed by training and development opportunities (97%), job security (96%), and work environment (96%). Although remuneration ranked lowest (90%), it remained a significant determinant of job satisfaction. These findings align with recent studies indicating that while financial compensation is important, non-monetary factors often exert a stronger influence on employee satisfaction in

higher education contexts (Butt et al., 2021).

Table 7. *Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction*

Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction	Frequency (Yes)	Frequency (No)	Percentage (Yes)	Percentage (No)
Does your level of job satisfaction depend on job security?	63	3	96%	4%
Do opportunities for training and growth affect your level of job satisfaction?	64	2	97%	3%
Do remuneration and benefits affect your job satisfaction?	59	7	90%	10%
Does communication influence your job satisfaction?	65	1	98%	2%
Does the workplace affect how satisfied you are with your job?	63	3	96%	4%

Correlational Analysis and Theoretical Integration

Table 8 summarizes the results of the Pearson correlation analysis. All five workplace factors demonstrated very high, positive, and statistically significant relationships with overall job satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). The strongest correlations were observed for work environment ($r = 0.893$) and remuneration ($r = 0.892$), followed by job security ($r = 0.874$), communication ($r = 0.837$), and development and training ($r = 0.802$). These results indicate that job satisfaction among employees at UST-General Santos is shaped by a combination of interrelated workplace factors. Improvements in any one dimension are likely to produce positive effects on overall job satisfaction. The findings support contemporary organizational theories emphasizing the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction and the need for integrated human resource strategies (Herzberg, 1966; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Table 8. *Overall Result of Pearson Correlation in Work Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction*

Job Satisfaction Factor	Pearson r	p-value	Correlation Strength
Job Security	0.874	$p < 0.05$	Very High
Development/Training	0.802	$p < 0.05$	Very High
Remuneration	0.892	$p < 0.05$	Very High
Communication	0.837	$p < 0.05$	Very High
Work Environment	0.893	$p < 0.05$	Very High

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

This study examined workplace factors influencing job satisfaction among faculty, administrative, and support staff at UST-General Santos, a private higher-education institution in Southern Mindanao. The findings demonstrate that while employees are generally satisfied with their jobs, job satisfaction is shaped by a complex interaction of monetary and non-monetary workplace factors. All five examined dimensions—job security, training and development, remuneration, communication, and work environment—were found to have very high, positive, and statistically significant relationships with overall job satisfaction, underscoring the multidimensional nature of employee satisfaction in higher education settings.

From a theoretical perspective, the results provide empirical support for established organizational theories, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and contemporary job design and motivation frameworks, by confirming that non-monetary factors play a critical role in sustaining employee satisfaction even when basic financial needs are met. Notably, communication emerged as the most influential factor affecting job satisfaction, despite receiving the lowest satisfaction rating. This finding highlights the central role of transparent, responsive, and participatory communication in fostering trust, role clarity, and organizational commitment within academic institutions.

Practically, the findings suggest that institutional leaders should prioritize integrated human resource strategies that extend beyond compensation adjustments. While timely and reliable remuneration remains important, targeted interventions to improve internal communication systems, strengthen recognition mechanisms, clarify role expectations, and address workload distribution are likely to yield substantial gains in employee satisfaction. The proposed UST-GenSan CARE (Commitment, Advancement, Recognition, and Engagement) Program offers a structured, evidence-based framework to address these priorities and translate empirical findings into actionable institutional policies.

This study contributes to the limited body of empirical literature on job satisfaction in private higher education institutions in the Philippine context, particularly by including both academic and non-academic employees in the analysis. However, the study is not without limitations. The use of convenience sampling and a single-institution setting may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research is encouraged to employ

longitudinal, multi-institutional designs, use probability sampling, and incorporate qualitative methods to capture deeper insights into employees' lived experiences. Additionally, examining the mediating or moderating roles of leadership style, organizational culture, and work-life balance may further enrich the understanding of job satisfaction dynamics in higher education.

Overall, by identifying the key workplace factors influencing job satisfaction, this study offers valuable insights for institutional leaders and policymakers seeking to foster a motivated, engaged, and resilient workforce. Sustained attention to both human and organizational dimensions of work will be essential in promoting employee well-being and ensuring the long-term effectiveness and competitiveness of private higher education institutions.

Contributions of Authors

Author 1: conceptualization, data gathering, content writing, data analysis

Author 2: conceptualization, data gathering, content writing

Author 3: conceptualization, data gathering, data analysis, content writing

Author 4: advising, technical supervision, content refinement, methodological alignment

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the conduct, analysis, or publication of this case study.

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