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A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN SELECT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH TAMILNADU

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Abstract: This study investigates the factors influencing employee satisfaction in higher education institutions in South Tamilnadu, focusing on the working environment. Data were collected from 137 employees using a quantitative approach, using structured surveys. Reliability tests for the variables showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.811 for the working environment and 0.842 for employee satisfaction. Descriptive statistics indicated generally high satisfaction levels and positive perceptions of the working environment, although some areas showed lower satisfaction. The regression analysis revealed a strong relationship between the working environment and employee satisfaction (R = 0.867), with the working environment explaining 75.2% of the variation in satisfaction (R^2 = 0.752). Significant predictors of employee satisfaction included professional growth, training and development, institutional leadership, and support for work-life balance, while long working hours also had a notable impact. ANOVA results highlighted significant differences in satisfaction levels based on age groups. The study concludes that enhancing professional growth opportunities, improving training and development programs, and addressing work-life balance are crucial for boosting employee satisfaction. However, the study is limited by its regional focus, reliance on self-reported data, and cross-sectional design. Future research should consider longitudinal approaches, incorporate additional variables, and explore different institutional contexts for a more comprehensive understanding of employee satisfaction.

Index terms: Employee Satisfaction, Working Environment, Professional Growth, Work-Life Balance

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of Human Resource Management (HRM) has grown significantly in the modern era of technological advancement, where organizations seek to develop distinctive competencies through well-skilled employees, strong organizational cultures, and effective management processes. HRM is recognized as a strategic function essential for achieving both organizational and individual goals. Unlike other resources, human resources are unique in their ability to generate unlimited value through better ideas, and they appreciate over time as employees gain experience and skills. The significance of human resources is further highlighted by the necessity to ensure fair and humane treatment in accordance with labor laws.

In higher education, particularly within institutions in South Tamil Nadu, the role of HRM is crucial in fostering job satisfaction among faculty members. Employee satisfaction is vital to organizational health, influencing faculty retention, productivity, and overall institutional success. In academic settings, satisfied teachers are more likely to create a positive learning environment, leading to better student outcomes. Factors contributing to job satisfaction include job security, recognition, work environment, and opportunities for professional growth.

This study investigates the factors influencing employee satisfaction in higher education institutions in South Tamilnadu. Focusing on the working environment, the research explores how various aspects such as professional growth, training, leadership, and work-life balance contribute to overall employee satisfaction. By analyzing the relationship between these variables, the study aims to provide insights into how institutions can enhance their work environments to improve staff contentment and retention. The findings offer valuable implications for management practices within educational institutions, highlighting areas for improvement and strategies to boost employee satisfaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mohamed HazeemMohmadSidik (2017) presents a theoretical framework for job satisfaction in higher education institutions, focusing on seven interconnected elements, which includes leadership, workload, and interpersonal communication. **Gopinath (2020)** investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among academic leaders in Tamil Nadu and found a positive correlation between the two. **TatjanaJanovac D (2020)** studied employer satisfaction with higher

education in Serbia, highlighting the gap between academic achievements and business sector needs. **Swathi D (2020)** examined the impact of job satisfaction on employee motivation and performance, emphasizing the importance of understanding employee perceptions. **Dhanabhakyam (2022)** investigated employee satisfaction in fine arts and science institutions in Kerala during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting the impact of remuneration and work environment on satisfaction levels. **AneeqaAfaq (2022)** studied job satisfaction among academic faculty in Pakistan, identifying job stability as the most critical factor influencing satisfaction. **Yank (2022)** examined faculty satisfaction in private higher education institutions in India, identifying key factors like equitable treatment, transparency, and job stability. **GamzeKasalak (2022)** analyzed the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction in higher education institutions, finding a positive and moderate effect across different continents and cultures. **Galina Z. (2023)** explored job satisfaction among employees at the University of Tyumen, emphasizing working conditions, career advancement, and fairness as key factors. Higher satisfaction is linked to increased comfort and productivity. **Medina Nilasari B (2023)** analyzes job satisfaction among employees at Universitas Trisakti in Jakarta, finding high satisfaction in interpersonal relationships but low satisfaction in career advancement opportunities. **Damas Dominic Suta (2023)** reviewed the concept of work-life balance, particularly in challenging environments like law enforcement, and called for greater focus on this issue in emerging nations. **Divya Shukia&Nisha Acharya (2024)** investigated non-monetary factors affecting job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Jaipur, highlighting the importance of training, relationships, and recognition. **Ridhi Rani (2024)** examined the relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction among educators in Hyderabad, revealing gender disparities in motivation but not in job satisfaction. **Ruqia Fatima (2024)** investigated the factors affecting job satisfaction at Silicon Labs in Hyderabad, focusing on professional development, communication, and work-life balance. **Hephzibah Roselin S (2024)** explored the importance of work-life balance for married women faculty members in southern India, linking it to performance and job satisfaction.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design of this study is **descriptive**. The study aims to describe the current levels of employee satisfaction in higher education institutions in South Tamilnadu and to analyze the impact of various factors of the working environment on employee satisfaction. A quantitative approach is employed to gather and analyze data from a sample of employees, allowing for a detailed examination of the relationships between variables. The study focuses on understanding how specific aspects of the working environment influence overall employee satisfaction.

The study follows a **survey method**, where data is collected from employees at a single point in time to assess their satisfaction levels and perceptions of the working environment. The research is primarily quantitative, using structured questionnaires to gather data on employee satisfaction and various working environment factors.

3.2 Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique is used to select the sample for this study. The population of employees in higher education institutions in South Tamilnadu is first divided into different strata based on factors such as department, job role, and institution type. From each stratum, a random sample is drawn to ensure that the sample represents the diversity within the population. This method ensures that all relevant subgroups are adequately represented in the sample, leading to more accurate and generalizable results.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size for this study is 137 employees from various higher education institutions in South Tamilnadu. The sample size is determined based on considerations of statistical power, ensuring that the study has sufficient respondents to detect significant effects and relationships between variables. The size of 137 is also manageable for detailed analysis and provides a robust dataset for applying various statistical tools.

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees in the selected higher education institutions. The questionnaire is designed to capture information on various dimensions of the working environment and overall employee satisfaction. It includes both closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis and a few open-ended questions to gather additional qualitative insights. The data collection process ensures anonymity and confidentiality to encourage honest and accurate responses from the participants.

3.5 Data Collection Tool

The primary data collection tool used in this study is a **structured questionnaire**. The questionnaire is developed based on existing literature on employee satisfaction and the working environment, with modifications to suit the specific context of higher education institutions in South Tamilnadu. It includes Likert scale questions to measure satisfaction and working environment factors, allowing for the quantification of responses for statistical analysis. The questionnaire is pre-tested with a small group of employees to ensure clarity and reliability before full-scale data collection.

3.6 Variables

Dependent: Employee Satisfaction

Independent: Working Environment

IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 Results of Reliability Test for Working Environment of Employees

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.811	10

Table 4.1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha value for the working environment variables (ten statements) is 0.811. This indicates a high level of internal consistency among the 10 items measuring the working environment. A value above 0.8 is generally considered good, suggesting that the items are reliably measuring the same underlying construct.

Table 4.2 Results of the Reliability Test for Satisfaction of Employees

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.842	10

Table 4.2 presents the Cronbach's Alpha value for the satisfaction variables is 0.842. This also indicates a high level of internal consistency among the 10 items measuring employee satisfaction. With a value above 0.8, it confirms that the items are consistently reflecting the satisfaction construct.

Table 4.3 Results of Descriptive Statistics for Employee Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
S1 (Current Job Satisfaction)	137	4.38	0.686
S2 (Happiness)		4.14	0.824
S3 (Workload manageable)		3.96	0.841
S4(Overwhelmed by the demands		3.86	0.892
S5(Open and transparent communication		4.38	0.757
S6(Contributions acknowledged)		4.25	0.919
S7(Teamwork)		4.32	0.810
S8 (Peer group support)		4.12	0.900
S9 (Institute support)		4.26	0.748
S10(Needs addressed)		4.24	0.815

Tale 4.3 gives the descriptive statistics for employee satisfaction reveal that the mean scores for all ten satisfaction indicators are above 3.86 on a 5-point scale, indicating a generally high level of satisfaction among employees. The highest mean scores are observed for S1 and S5 (both at 4.38), suggesting particular strengths in those areas. The standard deviations range from 0.686 to 0.919, indicating moderate variability in responses. Overall, these results suggest that employees are generally satisfied, with certain areas showing particularly high satisfaction.

Table 4.4 Results of Descriptive Statistics for Working Environment

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
W1(Overall work environment)	**137**	4.41	.600
W2 (Physical workspace conductivity)		4.33	.696
W3 (Facilities and resources)		4.27	.788
W4 (Salary)		3.73	.956

W5(Professional growth)		4.23	.848
W6(Training and development)		4.21	.924
W7(Institutional leadership)		4.26	.757
W8 (Institutes support work life balance)		3.91	.973
W9 (long working hours)		3.62	1.116
W10(Frequency of recognition for work)		4.18	.839

From Table 4.4, the descriptive statistics for the working environment variables (W1 through W10) indicate generally high mean scores, with most variables scoring above 4.0 on a 5-point scale, suggesting overall positive perceptions. The highest mean score is for W1 (4.41), indicating strong satisfaction in that area. Standard deviations range from 0.600 to 1.116, with W9 (long working hours) having the highest variability (SD = 1.116), suggesting diverse opinions among employees. The relatively lower mean scores for W4 (3.73) and W9 (3.62) indicate potential areas for improvement in those aspects of the working environment.

Table 4.5 Model Fit Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.867[a]	0.752	0.733
a. Predictors: (Constant): Working Environment			

R- Relationship between dependent and independent variables
R^2 - % of the variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables

Table 4.5 shows the results of the model summary considering employee satisfaction as the dependent variable and working environment as the independent variable. The table 'R' represents the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Here the value of 'R' is found to be 0.867, indicating an 86.7% relationship between employee satisfaction and the working environment for higher educational institutions in South Tamilnadu. Similarly, the R square represents the extent to which the independent variable explains the dependent variable. In the model, the R square is 0.752, which indicates that the working environment of higher educational institutions in South Tamilnadu explains 7.52% of the variation in employee satisfaction. The adjusted R square is found to be positive which is 0.733.

Table 4.6 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.788	10	2.879	38.529	<0.001[b]
	Residual	9.489	127	0.075		
	Total	38.278	137			
a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant): Working Environment						

Table 4.6 presents the results of ANOVA where the sig value is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis H01: "There is no impact of working environment on employee satisfaction" is rejected. The ANOVA results demonstrate that the regression model is highly significant ($F = 38.529$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the predictors working environment significantly impact employee satisfaction. With a regression sum of squares of 28.788 compared to a residual sum of squares of 9.489, the model explains a substantial portion of the total variance in satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H01) stating that the working environment does not impact employee satisfaction is rejected, confirming that the working environment plays a crucial role in determining employee satisfaction.

Table 4.7 Results of Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.961	0.219		4.383	0.000
	W1 (Overall work environment)	0.030	0.048	0.034	0.632	0.528
	W2 (Physical workspace conductivity)	0.028	0.044	0.037	0.639	0.524

	W3 (Facilities and resources)	0.051	0.043	0.077	1.204	0.231
	W4 (Salary)	0.041	0.031	0.075	1.331	0.185
	W5(Professional growth)	0.141	0.039	0.227	3.617	0.000**
	W6 (Training and development)	0.126	0.033	0.220	3.814	0.000**
	W7 (Institutional leadership)	0.134	0.042	0.192	3.175	0.002**
	W8 (Institutes support work life balance)	0.122	0.036	0.224	3.424	0.001**
	W9 (long working hours)	0.053	0.021	0.111	2.455	0.015**
	W10 (Frequency of recognition for work)	0.057	0.035	0.090	1.638	0.104
a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction						

Table 4.7 highlights the coefficients which shows the impact of various predictors on employee satisfaction. Significant predictors ($p < 0.05$) include Professional Growth (W5, $\beta = 0.227$, $p < 0.001$), Training and Development (W6, $\beta = 0.220$, $p < 0.001$), Institutional Leadership (W7, $\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.002$), Work-Life Balance Support (W8, $\beta = 0.224$, $p = 0.001$), and Long Working Hours (W9, $\beta = 0.111$, $p = 0.015$). These factors significantly influence employee satisfaction, while other predictors (W1, W2, W3, W4, and W10) do not show a significant impact. This suggests that enhancing professional growth, training, leadership, work-life balance, and managing working hours can effectively improve employee satisfaction.

The regression equation is as follows:

Employee Satisfaction = ∞ + 0.141 Professional growth + 0.126 Training and development + 0.134 Institutional leadership + 0.122 Support for Work-life balance + 0.053 Long working hours + εt

V.MAJOR FINDINGS

- The ANOVA results show that the working environment significantly impacts employee satisfaction ($F = 38.529$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H01).
- Significant predictors of employee satisfaction include Professional Growth, Training and Development, Institutional Leadership, Work-Life Balance Support, and Long Working Hours.
- Mean scores for employee satisfaction indicators are high, with the lowest mean being 3.86 and the highest being 4.38.
- Mean scores for working environment variables are generally positive, with most above 4.0. W1 has the highest mean score (4.41), while W4 and W9 have relatively lower means (3.73 and 3.62).
- The model summary shows a strong positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables ($R = 0.867$) and that 75.2% of the variation in employee satisfaction is explained by the model ($R^2 = 0.752$).
- Reliability tests show high internal consistency for both the working environment (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.811) and satisfaction variables (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.842).
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VI.RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance Professional Growth and Training and Development programs to further improve employee satisfaction.
- Strengthen Institutional Leadership and support for Work-Life Balance, as these are significant predictors of satisfaction.
- Address the issue of Long Working Hours by considering flexible work arrangements or better workload management.
- Focus on improving aspects related to W4 and W9, which have lower satisfaction scores.
- Maintain and build on the areas with high satisfaction scores to sustain overall employee satisfaction.
- Ensure that the positive aspects of the working environment, as reflected in the high mean scores, are preserved and promoted.
- Utilize the strong explanatory power of the model to continuously monitor and adjust strategies aimed at enhancing employee satisfaction.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant impact of the working environment on employee satisfaction within higher education institutions in South Tamilnadu. The findings reveal a strong relationship between various factors such as professional growth, training and development, institutional leadership, and support for work-life balance, and the overall satisfaction of employees. The statistical analysis demonstrates that these elements collectively explain a substantial portion of the variation in employee satisfaction, with long working hours also plays a critical role. The research emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive working environment to enhance employee satisfaction. However, the study is limited by its regional scope, reliance on self-reported data, and cross-sectional design, suggesting the need for further research in diverse contexts and with more robust methodologies

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