



MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION OF ACADEMIC STAFF AS DETERMINANTS OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Motivation and job satisfaction of academic staff are widely recognized as critical factors influencing the quality of teaching, research productivity, and institutional sustainability in higher education. In the context of ongoing reforms and increasing managerial demands, understanding the determinants of academic motivation has become particularly important. This study investigates the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors and job satisfaction among academic staff in higher education institutions. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to university lecturers and professors. The findings reveal that intrinsic motivational factors exert a stronger influence on job satisfaction than extrinsic factors. The study concludes that sustainable improvements in educational quality require higher education policies and management practices that prioritize academic motivation and professional well-being.

Keywords: Academic staff, motivation, job satisfaction, educational quality, higher education management.



Introduction

Higher education institutions play a decisive role in national socio-economic development, innovation, and human capital formation. At the center of this system are academic staff, whose motivation and job satisfaction directly affect teaching quality, research performance, and student learning outcomes. In recent years, higher education systems worldwide have undergone significant reforms aimed at improving accountability, efficiency, and global competitiveness. While these reforms have introduced new performance standards and evaluation mechanisms, they have also intensified academic workloads and administrative responsibilities.

In transitional and reform-oriented contexts, such as Uzbekistan, these changes have created both opportunities and challenges for academic staff. Increased expectations regarding research output, digital reporting, and quality assurance may influence motivation in complex ways. Therefore, examining motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff is essential for understanding how educational reforms impact institutional performance and educational quality.

The present study aims to analyze the key motivational factors affecting academic staff job satisfaction and to identify their implications for higher education management and policy.

2. Literature Review

Academic motivation has been extensively studied within organizational and educational psychology. Classical theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) provide a conceptual foundation for understanding motivation in academic work environments.

Research consistently distinguishes between intrinsic motivation—derived from autonomy, intellectual engagement, and professional fulfillment—and extrinsic motivation, which includes salary, promotion, and working conditions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Studies show that intrinsic motivation is particularly important in academic professions due to the nature of teaching and research activities (Bland et al., 2005).



Empirical evidence suggests a strong relationship between job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and organizational commitment (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Oshagbemi, 2000). Conversely, low job satisfaction has been associated with burnout, reduced engagement, and turnover intentions (Shin & Jung, 2014). Recent studies also emphasize the role of leadership style, quality assurance pressure, and administrative workload in shaping academic motivation (Teelken, 2012; Sabagh et al., 2018).

Despite growing interest in this area, limited empirical research has examined academic motivation within the context of higher education reforms in Central Asia, highlighting the need for context-specific studies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a **quantitative, cross-sectional research design** to examine the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff in higher education institutions. A survey-based approach was selected due to its suitability for capturing perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported motivational factors across a relatively large population. The design allowed for the identification of patterns and relationships between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, organizational support, and overall job satisfaction.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population consisted of full-time academic staff employed at public higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. These included lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors across various academic disciplines. A **stratified random sampling technique** was used to ensure proportional representation of academic ranks and fields of study.

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed electronically and in printed form. Of these, 180 valid responses were received and included in the final analysis, resulting in a response rate of 90%. The sample size was considered adequate for statistical analysis and regression modeling.



3.3 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a **structured questionnaire** adapted from validated instruments used in previous studies on academic motivation and job satisfaction. The questionnaire comprised four main sections:

1. **Demographic information** (age, gender, academic rank, years of experience)
2. **Intrinsic motivation** (professional autonomy, recognition, intellectual fulfillment, professional development)
3. **Extrinsic motivation** (salary, workload, physical working conditions, institutional resources)
4. **Organizational support and job satisfaction**

All motivational and satisfaction items were measured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through expert review by senior academics in educational management. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using **Cronbach's alpha coefficients**, which demonstrated satisfactory reliability:

- Intrinsic motivation: $\alpha = 0.87$
- Extrinsic motivation: $\alpha = 0.81$
- Organizational support: $\alpha = 0.79$
- Job satisfaction: $\alpha = 0.85$

These values exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating good reliability.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using statistical software. The analysis involved:

- Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations)
- Pearson correlation analysis to examine relationships between variables
- Multiple regression analysis to determine the predictive power of motivational factors on job satisfaction

Statistical significance was assessed at $p < 0.05$.



4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics revealed that academic staff reported relatively high levels of intrinsic motivation ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.64$), particularly in relation to professional autonomy and intellectual engagement. In contrast, extrinsic motivation received lower ratings ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.71$), with dissatisfaction most evident in salary levels and workload balance.

Overall job satisfaction was moderate ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.68$), suggesting that while academic staff remain committed to their profession, structural and managerial challenges affect their overall satisfaction.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated statistically significant relationships between motivation and job satisfaction. Intrinsic motivation showed a **strong positive correlation** with job satisfaction ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), while extrinsic motivation exhibited a **moderate positive correlation** ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). Organizational support was also positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$).

These findings indicate that higher levels of motivation are associated with greater job satisfaction among academic staff.

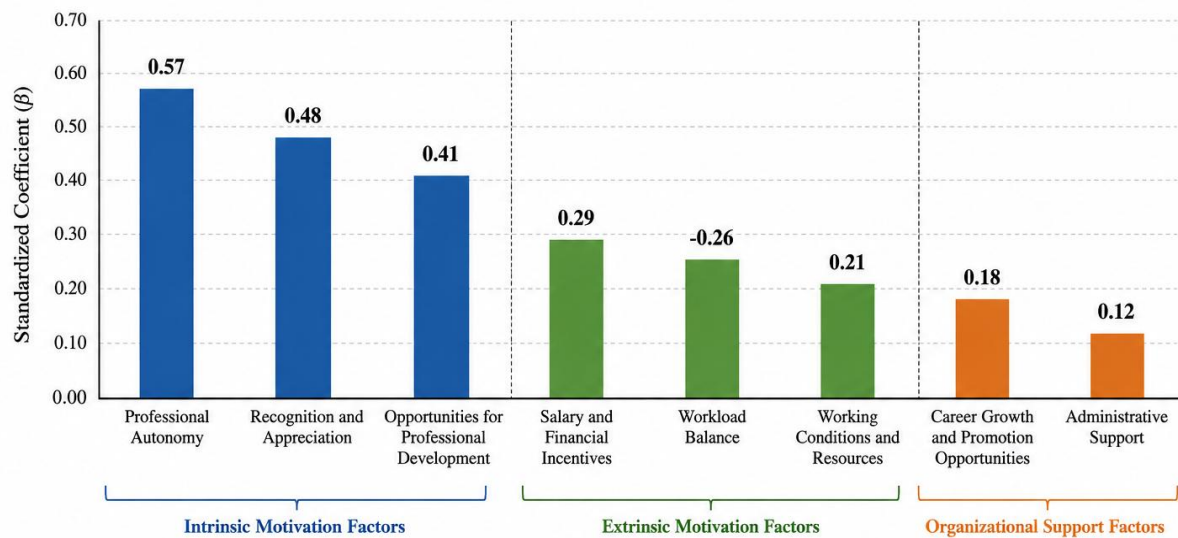
4.3 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the relative influence of motivational factors on job satisfaction. The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 62.4$, $p < 0.001$) and explained **52% of the variance** in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.52$).

Intrinsic motivation emerged as the strongest predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$), followed by extrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) and organizational support ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$). Workload balance demonstrated a **negative standardized coefficient** ($\beta = -0.26$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that excessive workload significantly reduces job satisfaction.

These results are visually summarized in **Figure 1**, which illustrates the standardized regression coefficients for each motivational factor.

Figure 1.
Influence of Motivational Factors on Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff
(Standardized Regression Coefficients)



Note. β = standardized regression coefficient; dependent variable: job satisfaction; $N = 180$; $R^2 = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$.

Figure 1 illustrates the relative influence of different motivational factors on academic staff job satisfaction based on multiple regression analysis. Among intrinsic factors, professional autonomy ($\beta = 0.57$) has the strongest positive impact, followed by recognition and appreciation ($\beta = 0.48$) and opportunities for professional development ($\beta = 0.41$). Among extrinsic factors, salary and financial incentives ($\beta = 0.29$) and workload balance ($\beta = -0.26$) significantly affect job satisfaction, with excessive workload showing a negative influence. Organizational support factors, such as career growth opportunities and administrative support, have a smaller but still positive impact.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that motivation is a critical determinant of job satisfaction among academic staff in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. Consistent with self-determination theory and Herzberg's two-factor model, intrinsic motivation was found to exert the strongest influence on job satisfaction. Academic staff derive satisfaction primarily from professional autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for intellectual and professional growth.

The relatively lower scores for extrinsic motivation highlight persistent structural challenges within the higher education system, particularly in terms of remuneration and workload management. The negative impact of excessive workload on job satisfaction is especially significant, as ongoing reforms have increased administrative responsibilities for academic staff without proportionate institutional support.



Organizational support, while exerting a smaller effect compared to intrinsic factors, remains an important contributor to job satisfaction. Transparent promotion systems, effective leadership, and supportive management practices can enhance academic motivation and mitigate the negative effects of workload pressure.

These findings have important implications for educational management and policy. Reforms aimed solely at performance measurement and accountability may unintentionally undermine academic motivation if motivational needs are not adequately addressed. Therefore, higher education leadership should adopt a holistic management approach that integrates motivational strategies into institutional governance.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction of academic staff in higher education institutions within the context of ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan. The findings confirm that motivation is a critical determinant of job satisfaction and, consequently, of educational quality. In particular, intrinsic motivational factors—such as professional autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for intellectual and professional development—were found to exert a stronger influence on job satisfaction than extrinsic factors, including salary and material conditions.

The results further indicate that while academic staff demonstrate a high level of professional commitment, excessive workload, growing administrative responsibilities, and an overreliance on quantitative performance indicators negatively affect their motivation and overall job satisfaction. These findings suggest that higher education reforms focused predominantly on accountability and performance measurement may unintentionally undermine academic engagement if motivational dimensions are not adequately addressed.

From a policy perspective, the study highlights the necessity of integrating academic staff motivation into national higher education reform strategies implemented by the Ministry of Higher Education of Uzbekistan. Motivation should be recognized not as an individual or secondary concern, but as a strategic resource that directly contributes to institutional effectiveness and educational



quality. National reform frameworks and quality assurance systems would benefit from explicitly incorporating indicators related to academic motivation, job satisfaction, and professional well-being.

Moreover, the alignment of quality assurance and performance evaluation systems with motivational principles is essential. Evaluation mechanisms should move beyond a purely compliance-driven model and adopt a development-oriented approach that values teaching innovation, mentoring, curriculum development, and academic contribution alongside research output. Transparent, fair, and supportive evaluation practices can enhance trust, reduce professional stress, and strengthen intrinsic motivation among academic staff.

In conclusion, sustainable improvement in the quality of higher education in Uzbekistan depends not only on structural reforms and performance metrics, but also on the extent to which academic staff are motivated, supported, and professionally valued. By adopting a human-centered and motivation-sensitive approach to educational management and policy, higher education institutions and governing bodies can foster a more committed academic workforce and achieve long-term educational excellence.

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