Developing Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Jilin, China

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to investigate the independent variables that affect the job satisfaction of teachers at a private foreign language university in Jilin Province, China, and to propose strategies for improvement to enhance the quality of education and promote educational reform. **Research design, data, and methodology**: The study employed a questionnaire survey of 90 full-time teachers, covering aspects such as spirituality, teaching competency, core evaluations, school effectiveness, self-efficacy, and adaptive space. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire content, the Index of Item-Objective Congruence methodology was utilized to scrutinize each question, ensuring that it appropriately and validly measured various aspects of job satisfaction among university teachers. Following this, 30 full-time lecturers underwent a 20-week Strategic Plan. Afterward, the quantitative results from post-SP and pre-SP were analyzed in the paired-sample t-test for comparison. **Results:** The study's findings supported two hypotheses: teaching competency and core evaluations significantly affect teachers' job satisfaction, while the other four were rejected. Finally, the results from the paired-sample t-test for comparison demonstrated significant differences in both teaching competency and core evaluations between the post-SP and pre-SP stages. **Conclusions:** The results provide a theoretical basis and practical guidance for higher education institutions to develop effective strategies to enhance teachers' job satisfaction and advance educational reform.

Keywords: Teaching Competency, Core Evaluations, Job Satisfaction, Strategic Plan

JEL Classification Code: I23, J28, L2

1. Introduction

Teachers' job satisfaction is related to individual career development and forms the cornerstone of educational quality. Research indicates that various factors, including the type of institution, opportunities for professional development, and the digital transformation of education, influence teachers' job satisfaction. In private higher education institutions, job satisfaction is closely associated with publishing productivity and academic rank (Hesli & Lee, 2013). Furthermore, the digital transformation of education triggered by COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of the quality of technical services in online learning environments. Professional development activities, such as teacher education, seminars, and workshops, are crucial for improving job performance and satisfaction. However, participation is often limited, suggesting that educational institutions must encourage teachers to participate more actively in professional development (Kasule et al., 2016).

Private higher education in China is a pivotal player in the education system. With the revision of the 'Private Education Promotion Law,' it has entered a stage of standardized development. Despite a slight decrease in their numbers, private higher education institutions remain a crucial part of educational diversity and innovation, a fact that is important for all stakeholders to be aware of (Hao, 2015; Liu, 2020).

Jilin Province boasts a diversified and robust educational system that places a strong emphasis on the balance between

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basic and vocational education. The province is home to 64 higher education institutions, including 37 general undergraduate colleges and 27 higher vocational colleges, reflecting this comprehensive approach to education (Chang et al., 2012).

Teacher job satisfaction (TJS) is a key component of the educational process and profoundly impacts teaching methods and academic excellence (Bennett, 2019). Teachers with high job satisfaction are likelier to exhibit positive behaviors, such as engagement, dedication, and care for students, essential for creating an effective learning environment (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2016).

The study of job satisfaction has a long history, starting from the Hawthorne studies in the 1920s and 1930s and gradually developing various theories, such as Herzberg's "Two-Factor Theory" and Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," which provide a foundation for our understanding of job satisfaction (Landy, 1989).

This study explores the factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction at a private foreign language university in Jilin Province to help the management address current challenges. By improving teachers' job satisfaction, this study aims to enhance the quality of education and promote educational reform. Research shows that teachers' job satisfaction is influenced by six key factors: Spirituality, Teaching Competency, Core Evaluations, School Effectiveness, Self-Efficacy, and Adaptive Space.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Spirituality

The spiritual factor, which encapsulates the mental stress and psychological challenges encountered by college teachers, is a critical determinant of their job satisfaction (Singla et al., 2021). This includes the pressures of work, the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, career progression opportunities, and the intrinsic satisfaction derived from their profession.

Work pressure, a prevalent mental factor, originates from the demands of teaching, the rigors of scientific research, and management responsibilities (Ye, 2022). Specifically, the burden of teaching duties, the variability in student proficiency, the demands of academic publishing, and the challenges of research project applications contribute to this pressure. Sungkitsin et al.(2023) indicates that increased work pressure is inversely related to job satisfaction among college teachers.

Interpersonal relationships, another common spiritual factor, involve interactions with colleagues, students, and institutional leaders (Zheng et al., 2022). Tolossa and Negussie (2023) emphasize that more positive interpersonal dynamics correlate with higher levels of job satisfaction for teachers.

Beyond work pressure and relationships, spiritual factors such as career development and the overall perception of job satisfaction significantly influence a teacher's contentment (Mittal et al., 2024). Career development, which presents opportunities and challenges for professional growth, and the subjective evaluation of one's work contribute to the multifaceted construct of job satisfaction (Tirana et al., 2023).

In essence, spiritual factors profoundly affect the job satisfaction of college teachers. The interplay between work pressure, interpersonal relationships, career development, and job satisfaction paints a complex picture of the mental landscape of college educators. As such, the hypothesis is posited as:

H1: Spirituality has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.2 Teaching Competency

Teaching Competency, a fundamental attribute of educators, is intrinsically connected to the quality and efficacy of their teaching (Hermoso & Brobo, 2023). Proficient teachers are more adept at fulfilling students' educational needs, stimulating their interest and enthusiasm, and enhancing job satisfaction. Conversely, a lack of Teaching Competency can lead to difficulties addressing student requirements, negatively impacting learning outcomes and teacher satisfaction (Hermoso & Brobo, 2023).

The capability of teachers to manage challenges within the educational process, such as curriculum design and instructional strategy selection, directly relates to their Teaching Competency and influences their work pressure (Hasna et al., 2023). Educators with robust competencies are better equipped to alleviate work pressures, whereas those lacking may experience increased stress, detrimentally affecting job satisfaction.

Furthermore, Teaching Competency is a determinant of work performance. Teachers who excel in this area are more likely to achieve better teaching results, garner recognition, and receive rewards, boosting job satisfaction (Hasna et al., 2023). In contrast, those struggling with Teaching Competency may face criticism and punishment, adversely impacting their satisfaction (Barkah & Sarwandianto, 2023).

Given the pivotal role of Teaching Competency in shaping job satisfaction, the hypothesis is posited as:

H2: Teaching competency has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.3 Core Evaluations

Core evaluations, encompassing teaching, research, and service, are instrumental in invigorating teachers' professional drive and enhancing their engagement in educational and scholarly pursuits (Cerbin-Koczorowska et al., 2023). In a case study at a private foreign language university in Jilin Province, core evaluations' comprehensive and precise nature was linked to high teacher satisfaction, reflecting the institution's commitment to rigorous and fair assessment standards.

Teacher job satisfaction, a pivotal element of the educational framework, is significantly influenced by core evaluations, human resource strategies, continuous professional development, and the overall organizational climate (Noori, 2023). Empirical evidence from Sri Lanka underscores the positive correlation between investment in teacher training and job satisfaction, thereby highlighting the sector's impact on professional contentment (Navaneethakrishnan & Kengatharan, 2023). Similarly, a study in East Jakarta revealed the critical role of organizational climate and teacher commitment in shaping job satisfaction, underscoring the environmental factors' contribution to overall teacher well-being (Bunyamin, 2023).

Moreover, core evaluations catalyze teachers' professional development, which is essential for enhancing their competencies in teaching, research, and service roles (Roseni & Koroshi-Shano, 2021). The high satisfaction with core evaluations among teachers in Jilin's private foreign language university suggests stringent self-expectations and institutional expectations for ongoing professional growth.

In essence, core evaluations substantially influence teachers' job satisfaction and can stimulate motivation, elevate satisfaction, and foster professional advancement. Educational institutions must refine their evaluation mechanisms to ensure they are comprehensive and accurate, enhancing teacher satisfaction. Based on this synthesis, the hypothesis is posited as:

H3: Core evaluations have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.4 School Effectiveness

School effectiveness is a critical determinant of university teachers' job satisfaction. It encompasses the institution's ability to fulfill its mission and goals through its management, teaching quality, resources, and culture (Shaikh et al., 2023; Zhang & Tungsawat, 2023). The degree to which a school achieves these objectives directly influences teacher satisfaction.

Faculty satisfaction with the management system and

teaching quality is foundational to their trust and sense of belonging. A well-organized management system and high teaching standards can boost job satisfaction by fostering a sense of recognition and support (Mohammad, 2023). Conversely, deficiencies in these areas can lead to dissatisfaction (Andal & Jovellano, 2023).

Providing teaching resources is another facet of school effectiveness that impacts job satisfaction. Teachers who are content with their jobs tend to perform better, contributing positively to student success (Turda, 2023). Effective human resource practices, including training and development, are linked to higher job satisfaction, emphasizing the need for schools to support educators with adequate resources (Rajeswaran et al., 2023). Leadership and the work environment also significantly influence teacher satisfaction, underscoring the necessity for a conducive teaching atmosphere (Mapacpac & Yango, 2023).

Campus culture's unique values, ideas, and behaviors further affect job satisfaction. A positive, innovative, and collaborative culture can enhance teacher comfort and satisfaction, while a conservative and stagnant culture can have the opposite effect, highlighting the need for change (Ismail et al., 2022; Norman et al., 2022).

Given the multifaceted influence of school effectiveness on teacher job satisfaction, educational institutions must enhance their effectiveness across all dimensions to create a better working environment and improve overall teaching quality. Based on this understanding, the hypothesis is posited as:

H4: School effectiveness has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.5 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, the confidence in one's ability to perform tasks, is a key factor in teachers' job satisfaction (Cayupe et al., 2023). It is influenced by elements like transformational leadership, work culture, and organizational commitment, which collectively shape the level of self-efficacy and, consequently, job satisfaction (Mohammad, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the crucial role of self-efficacy, as teachers need this confidence to navigate new challenges and maintain their satisfaction in the face of unprecedented circumstances (Cerbin-Koczorowska et al., 2023).

Teacher job satisfaction reflects their subjective assessment of their educational endeavors' value, significance, and potential. It is closely tied to teacher self-efficacy, where confidence in one's work abilities can foster a positive work attitude and enhance teaching effectiveness. Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy will likely be

more engaged and committed to their work, improving job satisfaction. Additionally, a strong sense of self-efficacy can bolster teachers' sense of identity and belonging to their school and working environment, further elevating their satisfaction. Given the integral role of self-efficacy in shaping teachers' job satisfaction, the hypothesis is posited as:

H5: Self-efficacy has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.6 Adaptive Space

Adaptive space, a pivotal element influencing teachers' job satisfaction, significantly enhances teaching efficiency and the utility of space (Tsoumpri, 2023). It allows for innovative teaching methods, leading to a sense of pride and accomplishment as it improves the quality of education and provides a superior learning experience for students. The work environment, including adaptive space, is interlinked with educators' competence and satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of a supportive environment for job satisfaction and performance (Pentury & Usmany, 2023).

Adaptive space facilitates better teaching by enabling teachers to adjust their methods according to students' needs, resulting in increased job satisfaction as teachers see tangible outcomes from their efforts (Hardy et al., 2022). It also bolsters teachers' self-efficacy and confidence in effectively performing teaching tasks, which is vital for the success of inclusive education programs and is influenced by factors such as real learning tasks, job satisfaction, and incentive structures (Yilmaz & Lee, 2023).

Furthermore, adaptive space significantly reduces work pressure for teachers, thereby enhancing job satisfaction (Schipper et al., 2023). It aids in teachers' professional development by exposing them to new ideas and teaching techniques, improving their professional quality and job satisfaction. It also increases work involvement by providing a more attentive and quality-focused teaching process in a comfortable environment, reducing work pressure and enhancing job satisfaction (Morris & Imms, 2022; Randi, 2022; Schipper et al., 2023).

The study, employing a quantitative approach, will use a structured questionnaire to gather data from 120 lecturers across four faculties, ensuring up-to-date insights into factors influencing job satisfaction. Based on these considerations, the hypothesis is posited as:

H6: Adaptive space has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

The research framework is intricately designed to analyze the factors influencing university teachers' job satisfaction. It encapsulates six pivotal elements: Spirituality, Teaching Competency, Core Evaluations, School Effectiveness, Self-Efficacy, and Adaptive Space. These elements are meticulously organized within a conceptual model that serves as a compass for data collection and analysis. The framework is crafted to address the research queries and achieve the study's objectives, visually representing the interrelationships and dynamics, as depicted in Figure 1.
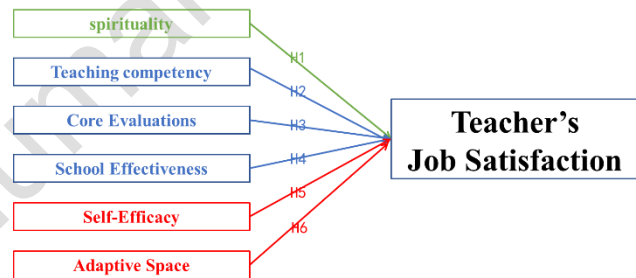

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

H1: Spirituality has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H2: Teaching competency has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H3: Core evaluations have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H4: School effectiveness has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H5: Self-efficacy has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H6: Adaptive space has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

3.2 Research Methodology

The research commenced with a comprehensive survey of the entire research population (n=317), consisting of full-time lecturers (n=90) at a private foreign language university in Jilin Province, China. This initial phase aimed to gather data crucial for understanding job satisfaction's prevailing levels and facets. The collected data was subjected to rigorous hypothesis testing employing multiple linear regression analysis. This statistical approach was utilized to examine the significance of the relationships posited by the research hypotheses, with only those meeting the p-value

threshold of < 0.05 being retained. Before the full implementation of the survey, a pilot test was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument. The IOC was applied to guarantee that each survey item was congruent with the research objectives and theoretical constructs.

The second phase involved a pre-SP survey of 90 full-time lecturers within the range of supported hypotheses. The third phase introduced the Strategic Plan (SP), which was implemented with 90 participants.

Following the confirmation of significant hypotheses, the research entered the development phase of a Strategic Plan. This plan was designed to proactively enhance the factors identified as pivotal to job satisfaction within the academic community.

In the final phase, 90 SP participants completed a survey that generated the necessary data to conduct a paired sample T-test analysis to compare pre - and post-SP outcomes.

Throughout this research journey, the emphasis was consistently on meticulous data collection, rigorous quantitative analysis, and the iterative refinement of research methodologies. This systematic approach provided profound insights into the factors influencing university teachers' job satisfaction and contributed to the development of strategic initiatives to enhance the educational environment and outcomes.

3.3 Research Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

3.3.1 Research Population

The researcher meticulously selected a cohort of 120 full-time lecturers from Jilin International Studies University as the research population for the study "Factors Impacting University Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Higher Education—A Case Study of a Private Foreign Languages University in Jilin Province, China." According to the university's records (Jilin International Studies University, 2022), this number represents a significant proportion of the total teaching staff, ensuring a robust and representative sample for the research. These lecturers, hailing from various academic disciplines within the foreign language domain, were actively engaged in teaching throughout the academic year 2022, thus providing contemporary and pertinent insights into the factors influencing their job satisfaction.

The university's academic structure comprises several faculties, with a notable presence of lecturers in the departments of Advanced Translation, English, Oriental Languages, and Western Languages. These departments were strategically chosen for their size and prominence within the institution, offering a diverse and comprehensive

sample that reflects the broader academic community. The selection of these faculties aims to capture a wide array of experiences, perspectives, and factors that contribute to the job satisfaction of university teachers in the specialized context of foreign language higher education in China. In total, 120 full-time lecturers received the survey. After a thorough review of the responses, it was determined that all submissions were valid, contributing to the authenticity and reliability of the research findings.

3.3.2 Sample size

Following the authoritative guidance of Hair et al. (2014) on regression analysis, which advocates for a minimum of 10 observations per variable to guarantee analytical reliability, this study has determined the necessity of engaging at least 60 participants. Given that the conceptual framework posits six variables, this number suffices to ensure robust statistical power. Nonetheless, the study has deliberately enlarged its sample scope to pursue a more exhaustive and inclusive dataset. Consequently, the research now encompasses the entire population of 90 full-time lecturers at the university, fostering a more representative and extensive exploration of the subject matter. This expansion is set to enrich the study's findings and enhance the generalizability of its conclusions.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedures

Stage 1: Purposive Sampling

Ninety full-time lecturers were selectively sampled from four major faculties at the university, accounting for a practical subset of the 317 possible candidates. The faculties in focus, the Faculty of Advanced Translation (24/84), the Faculty of English (24/85), the Faculty of Oriental Language (22/78), and the Faculty of Western Language (20/70), were chosen due to their significant role in the university's language education mission and the diverse perspectives they offered on job satisfaction.

Stage 2: Convenience Sampling

For the pre-survey, a questionnaire was distributed to these 90 lecturers through both offline methods, such as direct delivery or institutional mail, and online methods, including social media, DingTalk, WeChat, and email. This approach aimed to maximize response rates and accommodate the lecturers' preferences and availability. From the distributed questionnaires, 100 responses were collected, with 90 found to be valid after a meticulous screening for completeness and eligibility.

Stage 3: Strategic Plan (SP) Development and Evaluation

The researcher shaped the strategic planning initiatives by utilizing the outcomes from the Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis of the questionnaire data.

The same 90 lecturers were strategically selected to provide invaluable feedback on the proposed strategic

interventions. Following the strategic planning phase, these lecturers were invited to complete a follow-up questionnaire to critically evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the strategic interventions, providing a reflective assessment of the planning outcomes.

This mixed-methods approach balanced obtaining in-depth, targeted insights and fulfilling the requirement for a comprehensive and reliable dataset, which is essential for the study's validity and the generalizability of its findings within the strategic planning framework.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Design of Questionnaire

The researcher developed the survey questionnaire through a systematic three-step approach:

Step 1: Identifying Questionnaire Sources

The questionnaire's foundation was established by identifying sources from three openly published articles, ensuring a research-based structure.

Step 2: Adjusting for University Teachers' Context

The questionnaire was tailored to the context of university teachers, ensuring that the content was relevant and resonated with their experiences and perspectives.

Step 3: Implementing IOC

The Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was implemented to refine the questionnaire items, ensuring they accurately reflected the constructs they were intended to measure.

The questionnaire was meticulously designed to assess the factors affecting university teachers' job satisfaction comprehensively.

3.4.2 Components of Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was expertly designed to thoroughly assess the factors influencing job satisfaction among university teachers, structured into three clear parts:

Part 1: Demographic Screening

This part commenced with demographic questions that gathered basic yet crucial background information about the respondents, including gender and academic discipline, ensuring they were part of the targeted research population.

Part 2: Agreement Rating

Respondents were then asked to rate their level of agreement with various statements pertinent to the study's constructs. This was facilitated through a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," allowing for a detailed and nuanced reflection of their attitudes and perceptions towards each factor.

Part 3: Pre-survey Assessment

The final part of the questionnaire was dedicated to a pre-survey assessment designed to gauge the current levels of the

study's variables. This comprehensive evaluation was conducted across all relevant domains to ensure a holistic understanding of job satisfaction factors.

The questionnaire was pre-tested to refine items based on the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index, ensuring each question's clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Throughout the process, ethical considerations were paramount, with participants being fully informed about the study, assured of their anonymity and confidentiality, and aware of their right to withdraw at any time.

3.4.3 IOC Results

To ensure rigorous validity, the questionnaire underwent an expert review by a panel of five, including three Chinese education professionals—two vocational teachers and a career planner—and two international organizational development PhDs. They applied the IOC methodology to rate the alignment of each item with established job satisfaction and educational psychology constructs.

The experts evaluated the items ' relevance to the study's objectives using a +1 for congruence, 0 for questionable, and -1 for incongruence. An IOC score above 0.67 was set as the pass mark, reflecting expert consensus on item validity for inclusion. The analysis confirmed the questionnaire's content validity, with all items passing, signifying their appropriateness in measuring the job satisfaction of university teachers. This process guaranteed that the survey instrument was a valid and comprehensive tool for the research objectives.

3.4.4 Pilot survey and Pilot test results

A questionnaire with 39 questions was administered to 30 respondents for reliability testing. The test results and correlation are shown in the table below. All items of this research tool have passed the reliability test with a score of 0.6 or above.

Table 1: Pilot Test Result

Variables	No. of Items	Sources	Cronbach's Alpha	Strength of Association
Spirituality	7	Forsythe (2016)	0.807	Good
Teaching Competency	7	Kellermeyer (2009)	0.803	Good
Core Evaluations	5	Kellermeyer (2009)	0.767	Acceptable
School Effectiveness	5	Shaikh et al. (2023)	0.764	Acceptable
Self-Efficacy	5	Floyd (2023)	0.730	Acceptable
Adaptive Space	5	Floyd (2023)	0.742	Acceptable
Job Satisfaction	5	Floyd (2023)	0.777	Acceptable

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Demographic Profile

This questionnaire collected little demographic information. All research respondents are teachers of different ages engaged in language education in the university, from the Faculty of Advanced Translation, Faculty of English, Faculty of Oriental Languages, and Faculty of Western Languages. All basic information can be summarized in the table below (n=90), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Entire Research Population (n=90)		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	33	36.7%
	Female	57	63.3%
Age	21-30	14	15.5%
	31-35	23	25.6%
	36-40	26	28.9%
	41-50	20	22.3%
	51 or above	7	7.7%
Faculty Name	Faculty of Advanced Translation	24	26.7%
	Faculty of English	24	26.7%
	Faculty of Oriental Language	22	24.4%
	Faculty of Western Language	20	22.2%
Total		90	100%
Strategic plan participants(n=30)		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	11	36.67%
	Female	19	63.33%
Age	21-30	2	6.67%
	31-35	13	43.33%
	36-40	9	30%
	41-50	3	10%
	51 or above	3	10%
Faculty Name	Faculty of Advanced Translation	8	26.67%
	Faculty of English	11	36.66%
	Faculty of Oriental Language	8	26.67%
	Faculty of Western Language	3	10.00%
Total		30	100%

4.1.2 Results of multiple linear regression

Table 3 shows the relationship between independent variables and JS at the diagnosis stages. R square value is .274, which illustrates that independent variables account for 27.4% of dependent variables. In addition, the result of significant value (P <0.05) shows that the TC and CE significantly impact the JS, and TC has more influential ability with 43% on JS. However, the P-values of SP, SCE, SEE, and AS were 0.468, 0.829, 0.883, and 0.661, respectively, indicating that SP, SCE, SEE, and AS had no significant impact on JS.

Table 3: The multiple linear regression of five independent variables on teachers' job satisfaction

Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	P-value	R	R Square
Spirituality	0.072	0.730	0.468		
Teaching Competency	0.434	4.546	0.000**		
Core Evaluations	0.288	2.934	0.004**	.524a	.274
School Effectiveness	0.022	0.217	0.829		
Self-Efficacy	0.014	0.148	0.883		
Adaptive Space	.043	0.440	0.661		
Dependent variable: Job Satisfaction					

Note: p-value <0.05*, p-value <0.001**

When conducting multiple linear regression analysis, we simultaneously conducted multicollinearity tests on six independent variables: SP, TC, CE, SCE, SEE, and AS. The variance expansion coefficients of VIF values of each variable are 1.12, 1.04, 1.10, 1.16, 1.06, and 1.09, respectively. The results are all less than 5, indicating no multicollinearity between the five variables.

To sum up, after the testing by MLR, results supported two hypotheses and rejected four:

H7: There is a significant mean difference in Teaching Competency between pre- and post-strategic plans.

H8: There is a significant mean difference in Core Evaluations between pre- and post-strategic plans.

H9: There is a significant mean difference in Job Satisfaction between pre- and post-strategic plans.

4.2 Strategic Plan Process

The 20-week Strategic plan (SP) is based on quantitative and qualitative data collected in the pre-SP phase to achieve the purpose of this study, namely, to improve teachers' teaching competence (TC) and core assessment (CE), thereby increasing their job satisfaction. The researchers illustrate the SP in chronological order, as shown in Figure 2.
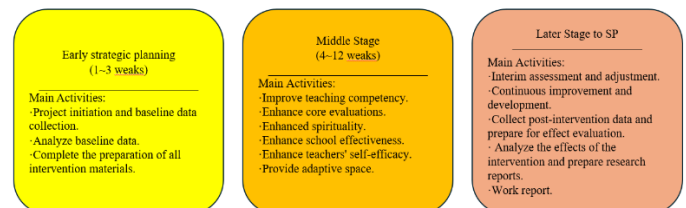

Figure 2: Strategic Plan Activities

4.3 Results Comparison between Pre-SP and Post-SP

The researchers performed a paired sample T-test analysis for all six variables to determine whether there were differences in teacher job satisfaction during the pre-SP and post-SP phases. To sum up, the following table analyzes six variables by paired sample T-test:

Table 4: Paired-Sample T-Test Results

Variables	Standardized Coefficients (β)	T-Value	P-Value
Teaching Competency			
Pre-SP	0.434	4.546	P<0.01
Post-SP	0.390	4.071	
Core Evaluations			
Pre-SP	0.288	2.934	P<0.01
Post-SP	0.340	3.547	
Job Satisfaction			
Pre-SP	0.213	2.761	P<0.01
Post-SP	0.325	3.802	

To enhance educators' job satisfaction, an in-depth analysis of the Core Evaluations and Teaching Competency as key variables post-strategic Plan (SP) implementation reveals a compelling story of transformation.

Under the pre-SP phase, Core Evaluations, with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.288, demonstrated a T-Value of 2.934, firmly establishing its significant positive impact on job satisfaction with a P-value well below the 0.01 threshold. Upon the advent of the post-SP phase, a remarkable upswing in the influence of Core Evaluations was observed, with the β-value climbing to 0.340, complemented by an augmented T-value of 3.547. This surge persistently maintained the P<0.01 mark, reinforcing the hypothesis that the SP significantly amplified the constructive thought within Core Evaluations.

Concurrently, Teaching Competency, as a linchpin of educational excellence, showcased a robust β-value of 0.434 in the pre-SP phase, supported by a T-Value of 4.546 and a P-value that resided comfortably below the 0.01 boundary, highlighting its substantial contribution to job satisfaction. Transitioning to the post-SP phase, despite a modest decline in the β-value to 0.390, the variable's significance was undiminished, as evidenced by a T-value of 4.071 and a P-value that remained steadfastly below the 0.01 threshold, corroborating the enduring importance of Teaching Competency in shaping job satisfaction.

Thus, the SP's effectiveness is underscored by the discernible and statistically significant increments in the impact of Core Evaluations and the sustained substantial influence of Teaching Competency on educators' job satisfaction. The mean difference in the predictive efficacy of these variables between the pre-and post-SP stages is pronounced, with the hypothesis supported that there is a significant mean variance in their contributions to job satisfaction.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

5.1 Conclusions & Discussions

The present study, conducted at a private foreign language university in Jilin Province, China, has delineated the multifaceted nature of teachers' job satisfaction (JS) within higher education. The research was predicated on a robust methodological framework that included a comprehensive questionnaire survey and a strategic plan for subsequent implementation (SP). The findings of this study offer empirical evidence supporting the significant influence of teaching competency (TC) and core evaluations (CE) on JS. At the same time, spirituality (SP), school effectiveness (SCE), self-efficacy (SEE), and adaptive space (AS) were found to have no statistically significant impact.

The study's quantitative analysis, underpinned by the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) and multiple linear regression (MLR), revealed that TC and CE are pivotal determinants of JS. The standardized coefficients and t-values from the MLR indicated that these two variables have substantial predictive power regarding teachers' satisfaction levels. Notably, the R-squared value of .274 suggests that 27.4% of the variance in JS can be attributed to the independent variables under investigation, with TC and CE being the most influential.

The paired-sample t-test comparison between pre-SP and post-SP stages further corroborates the transformative impact of targeted interventions on educators' job satisfaction. The significant differences in the mean scores of TC and CE post-SP implementation suggest that the strategic plan was efficacious in enhancing these variables, thereby improving overall JS.

The implications of these findings are manifold. First, they highlight the necessity for educational institutions to prioritize the professional development of their teaching staff, focusing on enhancing teaching competencies. Second, they underscore the importance of establishing fair and comprehensive evaluation mechanisms that are aligned with educators' professional aspirations and performance metrics. Lastly, the findings advocate for creating an institutional culture that values and supports the growth and well-being of its faculty members.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the extant literature by providing a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing JS among university teachers. The results offer a theoretical basis and practical guidance for higher education institutions seeking to develop effective strategies

to enhance teachers' job satisfaction and advance educational reform. The study's findings are particularly relevant in private higher education, where the quest for quality and innovation is paramount.

5.2 Recommendations

The study's empirical evidence warrants a series of academically grounded recommendations designed to enhance the job satisfaction of university educators. These recommendations are formulated to address the critical factors identified in the research:

Professional Development: Universities should prioritize advancing teaching competencies through structured professional development programs. These initiatives should encompass pedagogical innovation, curriculum development, and integrating instructional technologies, fostering a robust foundation for effective teaching practices.

Evaluative Framework Refinement: Given the pronounced impact of core evaluations on job satisfaction, institutions are encouraged to undertake periodic reviews of their evaluative mechanisms. The development of fair, transparent, and multidimensional assessment criteria is essential to accurately reflecting educators' multifaceted roles.

Organizational Culture Cultivation: While the study did not establish a significant impact of certain variables on job satisfaction, a nuanced exploration of these areas is needed. Institutions should implement well-being programs, mentorship networks, and recognition systems that cater to educators' comprehensive professional and personal needs.

Supportive Institutional Infrastructure: It is vital to promote an inclusive and collaborative organizational culture. Regular faculty meetings, social events, and collaborative research endeavors should foster a sense of community and mutual respect among educators.

Learning Environment Adaptability: Advocacy for creating flexible, technologically-equipped learning spaces is crucial. Such environments should accommodate diverse teaching approaches, enhancing the educational experience for both teachers and students.

Scholarly Engagement Facilitation: Institutions should provide resources and incentives that support educators in their research and publication endeavors. This contributes to a sense of professional accomplishment and enriches the institution's academic discourse.

Technological Integration in Education: Given the digital transformation of education, it is recommended that technological tools that streamline administrative processes and enhance teaching and learning be actively incorporated. Such integration has the potential to increase job satisfaction through improved teaching efficiency.

Systematic Job Satisfaction Monitoring: Institutions should establish mechanisms for regularly assessing job satisfaction levels and collecting feedback from educators. This will ensure that the institution remains responsive to its faculty's evolving needs and perceptions.

The study's findings underpin these recommendations, which are intended to guide higher education institutions in crafting strategic initiatives to enhance the job satisfaction of their teaching staff. By addressing the professional, psychological, and organizational dimensions of educators' work lives, these recommendations aim to create a conducive environment for academic excellence and faculty well-being.

5.3 Limitations for Future Research

While the current study provides valuable insights into the determinants of job satisfaction among university teachers, it is not without limitations that suggest avenues for future research:

Generalizability Constraints: The study's findings are based on a sample from a single private foreign language university in Jilin Province. Therefore, the results may not be fully generalizable to other educational contexts, including public institutions or those in different geographical regions. Future research should replicate the study in diverse settings to enhance the external validity of the findings.

Temporal Dynamics: The cross-sectional nature of the data collection limits the ability to infer causality and observe the long-term effects of the strategic plan on job satisfaction. Longitudinal studies that track changes in job satisfaction over time provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors at play.

Variable Scope: The study focused on a select set of independent variables. Future research could benefit from an expanded scope, incorporating additional variables such as workload, administrative support, and the influence of educational policies, which also impact job satisfaction.

Methodological Expansion: Although the quantitative approach provided robust statistical evidence, the inclusion of qualitative methods could enrich the understanding of educators' lived experiences. Future studies might employ interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insights into the nuances of job satisfaction.

Cultural Factors: The study was conducted within a specific cultural context that may influence educators' perceptions of job satisfaction. Comparative studies across different cultures could reveal the impact of cultural values and norms on job satisfaction.

Sample Diversity: The sample consisted of full-time lecturers from a limited number of faculties. A more diverse sample, including part-time or adjunct faculty and those from various academic disciplines, could provide a broader perspective on job satisfaction factors.

Technological Integration: The rapid evolution of educational technology suggests a need for future research to examine the impact of emerging technologies on teaching competencies and job satisfaction, especially in the context of online and hybrid learning environments.

Interdisciplinary Approach: Future research could benefit from an interdisciplinary approach, integrating insights from educational psychology, organizational behavior, and sociology to explore the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction.

Addressing these limitations in future research will contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the complex factors influencing job satisfaction among university educators, ultimately informing more effective policy and practice in higher education.

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