Factors Impacting Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Chinese Foreign Language Universities: A Case Study of a Foreign Language University in Western China

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Abstract

Purpose: The study examines the influence of five independent variables—teacher collaboration, disciplinary climate, work goals, working conditions, and stakeholder participation—on a single dependent variable, teacher job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study seeks to determine whether significant differences exist among these variables. **Research design, data and methodology:** A validity assessment using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) and a reliability test with Cronbach's Alpha (n=30) were conducted. Multiple linear regression analyzed 170 teacher responses from Sichuan International Studies University of Science and Technology. A 14-week Strategic Plan (SP) was implemented with 30 teachers, followed by a paired-sample t-test to compare job satisfaction levels. **Results:** Multiple linear regression confirmed significant effects of all independent variables on teacher job satisfaction. Furthermore, the results of the paired-sample t-test revealed a significant difference in teacher job satisfaction between the current situation and the expected situation. **Conclusions:** By identifying critical determinants and testing the effectiveness of strategic interventions, this research contributes to the broader discourse on teacher well-being and professional fulfillment. The implications of these findings extend beyond Sichuan International Studies University of Science and Technology, offering practical recommendations for policymakers and educational administrators aiming to enhance teacher job satisfaction in similar institutional and regional settings.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Collaboration, Disciplinary Climate, Work Goals, Working Conditions

JEL Classification Code: D90, I23, L84, M10

1. Introduction

In recent years, foreign language universities in China have faced significant challenges in educational development, talent recruitment, and teaching quality enhancement. Many institutions struggle with limited research output, insufficient faculty development, and constraints in enrollment expansion. These challenges hinder their ability to compete in the evolving higher education landscape.

To address these issues, foreign language universities must implement innovative educational models, integrating advanced pedagogical methodologies and technological advancements. Additionally, fostering international collaborations can create new growth opportunities for both faculty and students. However, achieving these improvements requires a fundamental focus on one of the most crucial yet often overlooked aspects: teacher job satisfaction.

Teacher satisfaction reflects educators' perceptions of their profession, work environment, and institutional support. It is not only vital for individual well-being and professional growth but also has direct implications for institutional stability and educational quality. A decline in job satisfaction can lead to diminished enthusiasm for the

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profession, faculty attrition, and a subsequent shortage of qualified educators.

While numerous studies have examined teacher satisfaction in general education settings, limited research has specifically explored the unique challenges faced by educators in foreign language universities. Previous studies have often focused on broader teacher dissatisfaction factors such as salary, workload, and career progression but have not sufficiently addressed the distinct demands of foreign language education—such as bilingual teaching pressures, cross-cultural communication challenges, and the need for specialized training opportunities. Furthermore, existing literature has largely overlooked how external factors—such as globalization, policy changes, and institutional internationalization—impact teacher satisfaction in these institutions.

This study aims to bridge this gap by conducting a comprehensive investigation into the job satisfaction of teachers in Chinese foreign language universities. The research will analyze key factors such as working conditions, salary, professional development opportunities, and administrative support. By identifying both strengths and weaknesses in the current system, this study will inform targeted strategies for improvement, including policy recommendations for better compensation structures, enhanced professional development programs, and administrative reforms to foster a more supportive and collaborative work environment.

Understanding and improving teacher job satisfaction is critical for attracting and retaining high-quality educators. By addressing this issue, foreign language universities can enhance their overall educational quality, strengthen their global competitiveness, and ensure sustainable academic development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)

Job satisfaction is a key indicator of an individual's happiness and fulfillment in their profession, shaped by their evaluation of work experiences. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a state of happiness or positive emotions generated by work. Expanding on this, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) identified multiple factors influencing teacher job satisfaction, framing it as a subjective experience tied to personal and professional fulfillment. Their earlier study (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) conceptualized teacher job satisfaction as an emotional response to work experiences, emphasizing that negative workplace conditions can lead to burnout and attrition.

However, while much research has explored job satisfaction in broader educational settings, there is a limited examination of teacher job satisfaction within foreign language universities. These institutions present unique challenges, such as higher demands for bilingual proficiency, cultural adaptability, and exposure to international academic standards, which may create additional stressors or motivational factors. Addressing these overlooked variables is crucial in understanding how different factors impact teacher satisfaction in this specialized context.

2.2 Teacher Collaboration (TCO)

Teacher collaboration refers to the degree of cooperation between educators, which fosters mutual support, shared expertise, and professional growth (Vangrieken et al., 2015). A positive collaborative environment enhances not only teacher job satisfaction but also instructional quality, as teachers can exchange best practices and navigate challenges collectively. Strong teacher collaboration can reduce isolation, enhance professional identity, and create a more supportive work environment, which is particularly valuable in foreign language universities where cross-cultural pedagogical methods are essential.

However, while collaboration is widely seen as beneficial, some studies highlight potential tensions or inconsistencies in its effectiveness. For instance, competitive institutional cultures or imbalanced workloads can sometimes hinder meaningful collaboration (Kelchtermans, 2006). Additionally, hierarchical administrative structures in Chinese universities may limit open dialogue and shared decision-making among faculty members. Thus, while teacher collaboration is generally expected to enhance job satisfaction, its effectiveness may be contingent on institutional culture and administrative policies. From the literature review, the following hypothesis is presented:

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

2.3 Disciplinary Climate (DCL)

The disciplinary climate in schools refers to the level of order, respect, and emotional engagement between teachers and students (Ning et al., 2015). A positive disciplinary climate has been found to enhance student academic performance, emotional regulation, and classroom participation (Reyes et al., 2012; Wang & Degol, 2020). In turn, this contributes to teachers' sense of achievement, reduced stress, and overall job satisfaction.

Despite these recognized benefits, the relationship between disciplinary climate and teacher satisfaction is not always straightforward. In foreign language universities,

teachers may encounter cultural and linguistic barriers that impact student engagement and classroom behavior. Additionally, administrative discipline policies may either support or constrain teachers' ability to maintain an effective learning environment. Some scholars argue that strict disciplinary policies can sometimes create additional pressure for teachers, leading to dissatisfaction rather than improvement in work conditions (Tsai, 2015). These inconsistencies highlight the need for further investigation into how disciplinary climate interacts with institutional policies to shape teacher job satisfaction. From the literature review, the following hypothesis is presented:

H2: Disciplinary climate has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.4 Work Goals (WGO)

Teachers' work goals influence their motivation, commitment, and professional identity (Papaioannou & Christodoulidis, 2007). High-performance work environments often encourage teachers to set ambitious goals, leading to higher engagement and personal fulfillment. Work goals are shaped by self-perception, professional responsibilities, and institutional expectations. When teachers align their personal ambitions with institutional objectives, job satisfaction tends to increase.

However, not all work goals lead to positive outcomes. Research suggests that excessively high expectations or misalignment between personal and institutional goals can result in frustration and dissatisfaction (Butler, 2012). For foreign language universities, the added expectation of research output, international engagement, and bilingual proficiency may create workload imbalances and pressure, affecting job satisfaction. Therefore, examining how work goals contribute to teacher satisfaction in this specific educational setting is crucial. From the literature review, the following hypothesis is presented:

H3: Work goals have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.5 Working Conditions (WCO)

Working conditions encompass a broad range of factors, including workload, infrastructure, teaching resources, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and institutional support (Salinas-Falquez et al., 2022). Research consistently finds that favorable working conditions contribute to higher teacher retention and satisfaction, while poor conditions lead to burnout and attrition (OECD, 2019).

However, working conditions in foreign language universities may present unique challenges. For instance, faculty members often face high teaching loads, administrative responsibilities, and expectations for

international collaboration. Some institutions lack sufficient teaching materials and research funding, further affecting teacher morale. Additionally, the hierarchical structure of Chinese universities can impact decision-making autonomy, which may either enhance or hinder teacher satisfaction. From the literature review, the following hypothesis is presented:

H4: Working conditions have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

2.6 Participation Among Stakeholders (PAS)

Stakeholder participation involves engagement among administrators, teachers, students, parents, and policymakers in decision-making processes (Bartle, 2007). A participatory approach fosters shared responsibility, stronger institutional trust, and improved school management. Studies have shown that when teachers are included in institutional decision-making, they feel more valued and satisfied (Ingersoll, 2003).

However, the extent of stakeholder participation varies across institutions. In many Chinese universities, top-down administrative structures often limit teacher involvement in policy decisions, potentially leading to frustration and disengagement (Zhou & Li, 2021). Additionally, some studies suggest that excessive stakeholder involvement without clear guidelines can lead to conflicts, inefficiency, and role ambiguity (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). Thus, while stakeholder participation is generally linked to job satisfaction, the dynamics of its implementation need to be carefully examined. From the literature review, the following hypothesis is presented:

H5: Participation among stakeholders has significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

The researchers integrated four theoretical models from S. Liu et al. (2021), Jeffrey et al. (2023), Saira (2017), and Y. Liu et al. (2022) to systematically identify key independent variables influencing teacher job satisfaction. Each model provides a distinct yet interconnected perspective, reinforcing the conceptual framework as illustrated in Figure 1.

S. Liu et al. (2021) highlighted the impact of organizational culture and working conditions (WCO) on job satisfaction, emphasizing how resource availability and institutional support shape teacher motivation and retention. Jeffrey et al. (2023) explored teacher collaboration (TCO)

and stakeholder participation (PAS), showing that collaborative work environments and inclusive decision-making enhance teacher engagement and reduce stress. Saira (2017) examined psychological factors, particularly work goals (WGO), arguing that alignment between personal aspirations and institutional expectations increases job satisfaction, while misalignment leads to frustration. Y. Liu et al. (2022) focused on educational reforms and disciplinary climate (DCL), finding that structured yet flexible discipline policies foster a positive classroom environment, reducing stress and enhancing job fulfillment. By synthesizing these models, the study develops a comprehensive framework that connects workplace conditions, collaboration, psychological motivation, and institutional policies, providing a holistic understanding of teacher job satisfaction in foreign language universities.
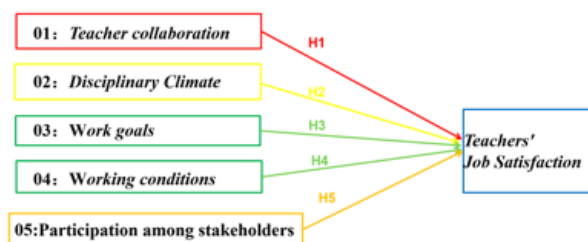

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Research Methodology

The research process comprised four distinct stages to examine the study's objectives and hypotheses systematically.

In Stage 1, 170 teachers from the research population were surveyed to collect data based on the proposed conceptual framework. The sample size (n=170) was selected to ensure sufficient representation across faculty members while maintaining feasibility for in-depth statistical analysis. All hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression, assessing significance at a p-value threshold of < 0.05. Hypotheses with statistical support were retained for further investigation.

In Stage 2, strategic plan surveys were administered to the same 170 participants, specifically focusing on variables from the supported hypotheses. This step helped establish baseline conditions and key areas for improvement before implementing the intervention.

In Stage 3, the 14-week Strategic Plan (SP) intervention was implemented with 30 participants, focusing on structured professional development activities. Week 1 involved team establishment, goal setting, and SWOT analysis to assess challenges and opportunities. Weeks 1–10 introduced group mentoring, while Weeks 1–14

incorporated practical applications with feedback. Additionally, Weeks 2–14 provided individual counseling for personalized support. The intervention concluded in Weeks 15–16 with interviews and summary discussions to evaluate progress and impact. This structured approach aimed to enhance teacher collaboration, professional growth, and job satisfaction.

In Stage 4, the 30 SP participants completed a post-intervention survey. Data from pre- and post-intervention assessments were analyzed using a paired sample t-test to compare differences between the Current Situation and Expected Situation, measuring the intervention's effectiveness.

This study adhered to strict ethical guidelines, ensuring voluntary participation with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses, and data security was upheld through restricted access to authorized researchers. Ethical approval was secured before conducting the study.

3.3 Research Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

3.3.1 Research Population

The researchers selected 170 SISU teachers as the research subjects for the pre-survey. For a population of 405 full-time foreign language teachers at SISU, selecting a sample size of 170 is considered sufficient to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. This aligns with established guidelines in educational research, which recommend such sample sizes to ensure precision in survey results (Israel, 1992). The teachers come from different colleges, including English College, Translation College, German College, Japanese College, Russian College, French College, Oriental Languages and Cultures College, and Western Languages and Cultures College. In total, 170 SISU teachers received paper questionnaires. Afterward, the researchers checked all the responses and confirmed that 170 responses were valid.

3.3.2 Sample Size

The researcher conducted a pilot survey on 30 teachers and verified the reliability through pilot testing. After that, the researcher identified 170 SISU teachers as the research population and obtained 170 valid responses. The researcher then surveyed multiple linear regression to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, the researcher selected 30 volunteer teachers who participated in the SP intervention stage.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

The researcher conducted several sampling and related sampling procedures as follows:

Sampling 1: Sampling for pilot survey and pilot test

The researchers randomly selected 30 teachers and asked them to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback from the pilot and pilot tests.

Sampling 2: Sampling for Pre-survey

The researchers randomly selected 30 teachers and asked them to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback from the pilot and pilot tests. The researchers conducted a pre-survey on paper questionnaires from 170 teachers from different colleges of SISU. Afterward, the researchers checked all the responses and confirmed that 170 responses were valid.

Sampling 3: Sampling for Strategic Plan

The researcher randomly selected and sampled 30 voluntary students to implement SP.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire Design

The researcher designed the survey questionnaire by following three steps.

Step1: Identifying questionnaire sources from three openly published articles (Jeffrey et al., 2023; S. Liu et al., 2021; Y. Liu et al., 2022; Saira, 2017)

Step 2: Adjusting and Presenting survey questionnaires on Chinese university teachers' Context.

Step 3: Implementing SP.

3.4.2 Questionnaire Components

Survey questionnaire items were composed of the following three parts:

Part 1: Screening Questions. There were screening questions to filter out the non-research population.

Part 2: Basic info Questions. Questions were asked to obtain basic information on the research population, including gender, age, academic title, and so on.

Part 3: Pre-survey Questions. There were questions for the pre-survey to find out the current level of IV and DV to a total of 170 SISU teachers.

3.4.3 IOC Results

The researcher invited three independent experts to implement IOC (Index of item-objective congruence); among these experts, two are specialized teachers in vocational education, and one is a university leader responsible for teaching work. In this IOC process, independent experts, scholars, or doctors are marked +1 for Congruent, 0 for Questionable, and -1 for Incongruent. In this research, all questionnaire items were greater than 0.67, so the researcher retained all questionnaire items.

3.4.4 Reliability and Validity

The researcher randomly recruited 30 teachers to complete a pilot survey and give feedback. Afterward, the researcher implemented Cronbach's Alpha's internal consistency reliability test, which requires values equal to or greater than 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, the table below demonstrates the approved results for the high reliability of each construct.

Table 1: Pilot Test Result

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Strength of Association
Teachers Collaboration (TCO)	5	0.877	Good
Disciplinary Climate (DCL)	4	0.836	Good
Work Goals (WGO)	5	0.797	Acceptable
Working Conditions (WCO)	5	0.755	Acceptable
Participation Among Stakeholders (PAS)	3	0.853	Good
Teachers Job Satisfaction (TJS)	4	0.772	Acceptable

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile

The researcher demonstrated the demographic profile of the entire research population (n=170), followed by the selected teachers' group (n=30), who participated in the Strategic Plan as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Entire Research Population (n=170)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	62	36.5
	Female	108	63.5
Grade level	30 years old and below	17	10.0
	30-40 years old	67	39.4
	40-50 years old	50	29.4
	50-60 years old	26	15.3
	60 years old and above	10	5.9
Academic Title	Lecturer and below	37	21.8
	Associate professor	74	43.5
	Professor	59	34.7
IDI Participants (n=30)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	7	76.7
	Female	23	23.3

4.2 Multiple Linear Regression

The researcher conducted Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) on a total of 170 survey questionnaire results and found out whether each hypothesis was supported. There were five research hypotheses, among which five were related to Teacher's Job Satisfaction (TJS). Based on the variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis, it can be concluded that multicollinearity is not a concern since the VIF value is

below 5 (Hair et al., 1995). The R-squared (R^2) in a multiple linear regression model with five independent variables can account for 22.6% of the variability in creativity.

Table 3: The Multiple Linear Regression of Five Independent Variables on Teacher's Job Satisfaction

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta Value	t-value	p-value	VIF	R²
TCO	0.150	2.56	0.046	2.41	0.226
DCL	0.142	2.02	0.046	1.07	
WGO	0.150	2.00	0.047	2.94	
WCO	0.166	2.21	0.028	2.45	
PAS	0.164	2.08	0.039	1.78	

Note: p-value <0.05*

The summary of analyses in Table 3 indicates that the first five hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5) were supported.

Among the five variables, working conditions ($\beta = 0.166$, p = 0.028, VIF = 2.45) showed the strongest influence, emphasizing the importance of infrastructure, resource availability, workload balance, and administrative support in shaping teacher job satisfaction. This aligns with prior research (S. Liu et al., 2021), which highlights that a well-resourced work environment fosters professional engagement and reduces stress.

Similarly, stakeholder participation ($\beta = 0.164$, p = 0.039, VIF = 1.78) was a strong predictor, indicating that teachers who feel included in decision-making and valued by administrators, parents, and policymakers experience higher job satisfaction (Bartle, 2007). Institutions that encourage participatory leadership can improve job commitment and reduce dissatisfaction stemming from hierarchical constraints (Zhou & Li, 2021).

Teacher collaboration ($\beta = 0.150$, p = 0.046, VIF = 2.41) also had a significant positive effect, reinforcing that collaborative work environments enhance professional identity, reduce isolation, and increase job fulfillment (Jeffrey et al., 2023). Creating structured peer mentoring programs can foster a more connected and supportive teaching community.

Additionally, disciplinary climate ($\beta = 0.142$, p = 0.046, VIF = 1.07) played a notable role, suggesting that structured yet flexible classroom management policies can reduce teacher stress while fostering a positive learning environment (Y. Liu et al., 2022).

Finally, work goals ($\beta = 0.150$, p = 0.047, VIF = 2.94) were found to significantly impact satisfaction, indicating that teachers who perceive alignment between their professional aspirations and institutional expectations report greater fulfillment (Saira, 2017). Conversely, unclear career progression and excessive workloads may lead to dissatisfaction.

Consequently, additional hypotheses were developed based on the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, and these were tested during the intervention stage of the strategic plan.

H6: There is a significant difference in Teacher Collaboration between the current and expected situation.

H7: There is a significant difference in Disciplinary Climate between the current and expected situation.

H8: There is a significant difference in Work Goals between the current and expected situation.

H9: There is a significant difference in Working Conditions between the current and expected situation.

H10: There is a significant difference in Participation Among Stakeholders between the current and expected situation.

H11: There is a significant difference in Teacher Job Satisfaction between the current and expected situation.

4.3 IDI Intervention Stage

The SP Intervention plan lasted for 16 weeks. It was based on quantitative and qualitative data collected at the pre-PS stage to achieve the purpose of this research, which was developing teachers' job satisfaction. The researcher illustrated strategic plan intervention in chronological order, as illustrated in Figure 2.

No.	Time and Duration	Implementation keywords
1.	Week 1.	Team establishment
		Goal setting
		SWOT diagnostic analytic tool
2.	Week 1-10.	Group mentoring
3.	Week 3-14.	Practical and feedback
4.	Week 2-14.	Individual counseling
5.	Week 15-16.	Interview and summary

Figure 2: Strategic Plan

4.4 Results Comparison between Current and Expected Situation

The researcher implemented a paired-sample t-test analysis on all five variables to identify whether there were any differences between teachers' job satisfaction between the Current Situation and the Expected Situation. The tables below illustrate a paired-sample t-test analysis on five variables as follows:

Table 4: Paired-sample T-test Results

Variable	Mean	SD	SE	p-value
Teacher Collaboration				
Pre-SP	3.09	0.660	0.1204	<0.001
Post-SP	4.60	0.292	0.0534	
Disciplinary Climate				
Pre-SP	3.24	0.882	0.1610	<0.001
Post-SP	4.42	0.726	0.1326	
Working Goals				
Pre-SP	3.01	0.662	0.1209	<0.001
Post-SP	4.37	0.445	0.0812	
Working Conditions				
Pre-SP	3.01	0.662	0.1089	<0.001
Post-SP	4.46	0.445	0.0837	
Participation Among Stakeholders				
Pre-SP	3.12	0.590	0.1078	<0.001
Post-SP	4.40	0.628	0.1146	
Teachers' Job Satisfaction				
Pre-SP	3.02	0.576	0.1051	<0.001
Post-SP	4.41	0.180	0.0328	

Table 4 illustrates the results of the paired-sample t-test analysis of pre-SP and post-SP comparison as follows:

There was a significant difference in teachers' collaboration between the Current Situation (M=3.09, SD=0.660) and the Expected Situation (M=4.60, SD=0.292) condition; t (29) =-1.51, p < .001, and the mean difference was 0.149. Therefore, H6 is supported with the data that there is a significant mean difference in in teachers' collaboration between pre-SP and post-SP.

There was a significant difference in disciplinary climate between the Current Situation (M=3.24, SD=0.882) and the Expected Situation (M=4.42, SD=0.726) condition; t (29) =-1.18, p < .001, and the mean difference was 0.210. Therefore, H7 is supported with the data that there is a significant mean difference in disciplinary climate between pre-SP and post-SP.

There was a significant difference in working goals between the Current Situation (M=3.01, SD=0.662) and the Expected Situation (M=4.37, SD=0.445) condition; t (29) =-1.36, p < .001, and the mean difference was 0.158. Therefore, H8 is supported with the data that there is a significant mean difference in working goals between pre-SP and post-SP.

There was a significant difference in working conditions between the Current Situation (M=3.01, SD=0.662) and the Expected Situation (M=4.46, SD=0.445) condition; t (29) =-1.45, p<0.01, and the mean difference was 0.133. Therefore, H9 is supported with the data that there is a significant mean difference in working conditions between pre-SP and post-SP.

There was a significant difference in participation among stakeholders between the Current Situation (M=3.12, SD=0.590) and the Expected Situation (M=4.40, SD=0.628) condition; t (29) =-1.28, p<0.01 and the mean difference was 0.155. Therefore, H10 is supported with the data that there is a significant mean difference in participation among

stakeholders between pre-SP and post-SP.

There was a significant difference in teachers' job satisfaction between the Current Situation (M=3.02, SD=0.576) and the Expected Situation (M=4.41, SD=0.180) condition; t (29) =-1.39, p<0.01 and the mean difference was 0.113. Therefore, H11 is supported with the data that there is a significant mean difference in teachers' job satisfaction between pre-SP and post-SP.

According to the paired-sample t-test results, all five variables demonstrated significant mean differences between the post- and pre-SP stages. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a significant increase in teachers' job satisfaction between the pre- and post-IDI phases.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions

Teacher job satisfaction, originally defined by Hoppock (1935) and later expanded upon by Locke (1976) and Hackman and Oldham (1976), refers to educators' emotional and psychological responses to their work environment. While early models emphasized factors such as skill variety, autonomy, and work rewards, more recent studies (e.g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Wang & Degol, 2020) have highlighted the role of collaboration, institutional policies, and stakeholder participation in shaping teacher satisfaction. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on how teacher collaboration, disciplinary climate, work goals, working conditions, and stakeholder participation impact job satisfaction in foreign language universities, a context that remains underexplored.

The findings confirm that working conditions have the strongest influence on job satisfaction, reinforcing that a well-resourced and supportive work environment enhances professional motivation and reduces burnout (S. Liu et al., 2021). Stakeholder participation was also a key factor, indicating that teachers who feel involved in institutional decision-making report higher satisfaction (Bartle, 2007). Teacher collaboration emerged as a crucial factor in mitigating professional isolation, fostering shared learning, and improving workplace morale (Jeffrey et al., 2023). Additionally, work goals and disciplinary climate were found to significantly shape teacher job satisfaction, supporting previous findings that alignment between institutional expectations and personal aspirations plays a major role in workplace fulfillment (Saira, 2017).

However, the study also identifies challenges to improving teacher job satisfaction. Key stressors include excessive workloads, limited professional development opportunities, and bureaucratic management structures.

Occupational burnout, driven by work pressure and poor interpersonal relationships, further exacerbates dissatisfaction (Salinas-Falquez et al., 2022). Additionally, the hierarchical nature of promotion and evaluation systems affects motivation, as teachers with higher titles report greater job satisfaction. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach involving institutional reforms, leadership support, and enhanced professional development opportunities.

Improving teacher job satisfaction in foreign language universities requires coordinated efforts from institutions, policymakers, and society. Strategies such as enhancing workplace conditions, strengthening collaboration, refining performance evaluation systems, and reducing administrative burdens can significantly improve teacher satisfaction. This study expands existing research by providing a context-specific analysis of teacher job satisfaction in Chinese foreign language universities and offers evidence-based recommendations for improving job retention, teaching quality, and institutional development.

5.2 Recommendations

The study findings indicate that teacher collaboration, disciplinary climate, work goals, working conditions, and stakeholder participation all positively influence teacher job satisfaction. Among these factors, job stress and burnout emerged as critical issues, requiring targeted interventions.

To alleviate job stress, institutions should establish policies that ensure fair teaching and research workloads, clear promotion pathways, and a supportive environment for career development. Reducing excessive administrative burdens and providing opportunities for work-life balance can further enhance satisfaction (OECD, 2019). Additionally, fostering a strong institutional culture based on ethical values and professional belonging can help mitigate stress and strengthen job commitment.

Improving performance evaluation and promotion systems is another key recommendation. The findings indicate that teachers with higher academic titles report greater job satisfaction, suggesting a need for transparent and equitable promotion criteria. Universities should reform title evaluation mechanisms, ensuring that they reward both teaching excellence and research contributions in a balanced manner. A more inclusive and structured career progression system can enhance motivation, creativity, and job retention (Zhou & Li, 2021).

Addressing occupational burnout is crucial for maintaining teacher well-being. Interpersonal relationships within institutions play a major role in shaping workplace satisfaction, and universities should invest in peer mentoring programs, faculty networking opportunities, and emotional support initiatives. Establishing a positive work culture with effective communication channels can reduce emotional strain and enhance collaboration among colleagues.

To strengthen teacher job identification, institutions must promote organizational commitment and emotional connection to the workplace. By aligning teachers' professional aspirations with institutional goals, universities can foster higher engagement and long-term commitment (Y. Liu et al., 2022). Leadership teams should actively recognize and support teachers' contributions, ensuring they feel valued, respected, and included in institutional decisions.

Ultimately, implementing these recommendations can lead to higher teacher retention rates, enhanced job satisfaction, and overall improvements in education quality. By addressing the root causes of dissatisfaction and burnout, foreign language universities can create a more sustainable and motivating teaching environment.

5.3 Limitation and Further Study

The reliability and validity of qualitative research remain challenging. First, reliance on survey data limits the depth of understanding of teachers' experiences. Future research should incorporate qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and longitudinal studies to capture long-term trends in job satisfaction. Second, the sample size (n=170), covering 42% of SISU's foreign language teachers, offers reasonable representation but limits generalizability. Expanding the sample to multiple institutions across different regions would enhance the validity of findings. Third, while reliability and validity were tested, challenges remain in ensuring complete independence in data coding and analysis. Future research should explore standardized validation techniques to strengthen methodological rigor. Lastly, this study identifies key factors influencing teacher job satisfaction but does not examine potential moderating or mediating variables. Future research should explore how aspects such as gender, experience, and institutional policies interact with job satisfaction, potentially developing a teacher job satisfaction index for systematic assessment and policy recommendations.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes new knowledge by offering empirical evidence on teacher job satisfaction in foreign language universities. It provides a foundation for policymakers and administrators to implement evidence-based strategies for enhancing teacher retention, well-being, and institutional effectiveness.

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