

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction of Employees in Private Sector Universities of Islamabad

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the factors that affect employee job satisfaction in private sector universities based in Islamabad. The study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design. A structured questionnaire was developed based on previous studies and validated by five experts to ensure its validity. The questionnaire was created via Google Forms, and the link was shared with 282 faculty members/staff, whose email addresses and contact information were collected from the university's websites. A convenient sample approach was used for the data collection. Out of 282 contacted, 274 respondents completed the questionnaire. The data were imported into SPSS version 27 software for demographic information, while SmartPLS 4.1.1.0 was used for hypothesis testing. The findings show that all hypotheses' relationships in the model were statistically significant, with p-values less than 0.05. The structural model results indicated that Leadership Behavior (LB) significantly predicted Job Satisfaction (JS) ($\beta = 0.225$, $p < 0.01$) and Job Autonomy (JA) ($\beta = 0.904$, $p < 0.001$), as well as Teamwork ($\beta = 0.956$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Job Autonomy (JA) ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.001$) and Teamwork ($\beta = 0.419$, $p < 0.001$) were found to be strong predictors of Job Satisfaction (JS). All hypothesized relationships were statistically significant and thus supported. These results support all proposed paths in the conceptual model. The study highlights the importance of university administrators implementing leadership techniques that grant faculty members greater autonomy and foster a team spirit. The research also fills the existing research gap on job satisfaction in Pakistan's private sector education, which has lacked comprehensive research recommendations on how these institutions can enhance faculty satisfaction and achieve organizational goals. The research provides insightful information and can be used as a guideline tool for curricula, policymaking, and research scholars in the field.

Keywords: Job satisfaction; Leadership Behaviour; Job autonomy; Teamwork; Private Sector Universities; Islamabad.

Introduction

Job satisfaction has been a prominent focus of research since the early 20th century and continues to draw significant scholarly attention in the contemporary world, particularly within advanced nations. It is considered a vital area of inquiry in educational institutions and remains a central theme in organizational research. However, job satisfaction is a broad and multidimensional concept that cannot be adequately captured by a single, universally accepted definition. Various scholars have defined the term job satisfaction in different ways, and each one has a different perspective on job satisfaction. Some scholars, such as (Hameed et al., 2018), hold the view that job satisfaction is a multifaceted notion, it is refer as the set of feelings and beliefs that people hold about their job at a given moment. The other concept of job satisfaction entails an amalgamation of positive and negative emotions about jobs among employees. (Ali et al., 2021) is of the view that the most acceptable definition of job satisfaction is described as a pleasant or positive emotional effect of job appraisal that is often felt. Satisfaction at work is correlated with several intrinsic and extrinsic factors that boost employee morale. It may range from being extremely unsatisfied to extremely satisfy. Higher job satisfaction rates are likely to result in an organization being able to improve efficiency, productivity, and employee relationships; decrease turnover intentions and burnout; and decrease absenteeism. The issue of job satisfaction is often closely tied to life satisfaction, which can have a direct impact on a person's social, physical, and mental well-being (Changlong, 2024). Satisfaction at work is correlated with several intrinsic and extrinsic factors that boost employee morale. It may range from being extremely unsatisfied to extremely satisfied (Changlong, 2024) . Higher job satisfaction rates are likely to result in an organization being able to improve efficiency, productivity, and employee relationships; decrease turnover intentions and burnout; and decrease absenteeism. The issue of job satisfaction is often closely tied to life satisfaction, which can have a direct impact on a person's social, physical, and mental well-being (Jabbar et al., 2020).

In advanced countries like the U.S. and Western Europe, the role of job satisfaction in higher education consistently highlights the crucial role of working conditions, supportive institutional culture, and job autonomy of faculty members. The Study of Torlak and Kuzey (2019) highlights that educational organizations in Western Europe emphasize academic freedom, research support, and clear promotion pathways as a source of satisfaction. Unlike advanced nations, academic institutions in Asia and Latin America face numerous challenges, including limited career progression, resource constraints, and autocratic administrative behavior, which further erode the morale of faculty members and hinder job satisfaction among employees. The study in the past also highlights that academic organization in Malaysia and Indonesia suggest that sustainable practices, such as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) aligned human resource policies, which not only boost employee well-being but also enhance the performance of faculty members in private sector universities. These studies underscore how governance and organizational

ethics increase the influence of job satisfaction beyond basic motivation or ergonomic factors.

In Pakistan, faculty job satisfaction has become a serious issue. For instance, the study of Torlak & Kuzey (2019) highlights that the job satisfaction in Karachi's private sector colleges relies more on career growth opportunities, compensation, and working conditions of the employee. Similarly, the study of Akhtar et al. (2022) highlights that job satisfaction in public sector universities of Sindh reflects that female faculty members report slightly higher satisfaction than their male counterparts. A study conducted by Abbas et al.(2024) in Punjab province reveals that employees in public sector universities are more satisfied with their pay, promotion opportunities, and faculty supervision. In contrast, employees in private sector universities receive lower pay and often feel less secure due to their financial conditions.

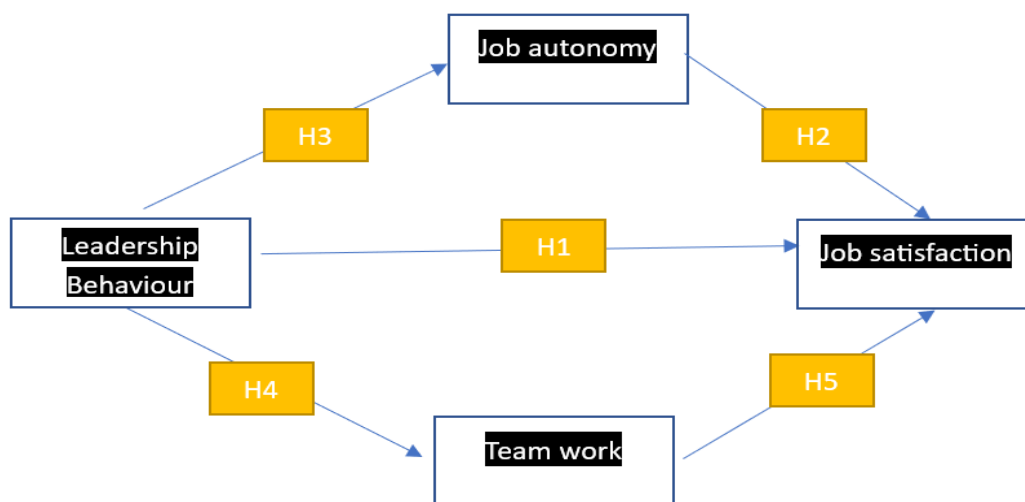
Previous research on job satisfaction reveals that numerous factors significantly contribute to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among employees in both public and private sector universities. For instance, the study of S. Hussain et al.(2022) shows that a work environment that offers employee freedom, autonomy, and Independence to perform a specific job with satisfaction, such as compensation, salary, sense of achievement, and accomplishment. In developing countries like Pakistan, only a few studies have been conducted with a limited scope. The purpose of this research is to examine and compare the different factors that influence job satisfaction of employees in private sector institutions of Islamabad. The study will try to determine the underlying causes if such differences are discovered. Additionally, the study highlights varying degrees of overall job satisfaction and identifies the causes of low levels of job satisfaction. Moreover, the job satisfaction of academic employees is certainly not well-researched and needs to be discussed and documented in colleges and other higher educational institutions in the country.

Literature

The term job satisfaction varies among researchers; however, all researchers define it as an effective or emotional response to various dimensions of an employee's job. Job satisfaction is defined as the sense individuals feel and the associated factors relevant to their jobs. Hameed et al. (2018) defined job satisfaction as the individual's feelings about their job. Inayat and Jahanzeb Khan (2021) concur with this opinion, stating that job satisfaction is employees' liking their job. According to Kumari et al.(2022), job satisfaction refers to a worker's attitude towards their job and their general outlook on work, which is influenced by their perception of their job. (Kibria, 2021) explains that job satisfaction is based on the summation of Abraham Maslow's (1954) concept of human needs, based on a five-layer pyramid of physiological needs, safety and belongingness, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Some researchers have addressed the issue of job satisfaction based on Maslow's theory, i.e., through the lens of need fulfilment. Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction depend not only on the job's nature but also on the expectations that the job supplies to an employee (Abid Hussain et al., 2018). Lower convenience costs and higher organizational, social, and intrinsic rewards will increase job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon with

multiple facets and is influenced by factors such as salary, working environment, autonomy, communication, and organizational commitment (Torlak & Kuzey, 2019). Different people interpret compensation differently. Compensation, reward, recognition, and wages are used in various situations (Anwar et al., 2023). The American Association defines compensation as "cash and non-cash remuneration provided by the employer for services rendered". According to a survey conducted by (A. Hussain, 2021), salary was the primary factor influencing the motivation and job satisfaction of salaried employees in the automotive industry—the survey aimed to assess various job characteristics and how employees ranked them as motivators and satisfiers. The results showed that compensation was ranked as the number one job element for job satisfaction, and an increase in salary for performance was ranked as the number one job element for motivation. Compensation is a very valuable tool for retention and turnover. It also motivates employees in their commitment to the organization, enhancing attraction and retention. It also serves as a communication tool when given to an employee in recognition of their services, demonstrating the organization's valuation of the employee (A. Hussain, 2022). Based on the previous study, the present study addressed the following hypotheses mentioned in the conceptual model, below, please see Figure 1:

Figure 1: Proposed Model of the study



Research Hypotheses

This study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: Leadership behaviour has a significantly positive impact on job satisfaction
- H2: Job autonomy has a significant impact on Job satisfaction.
- H3: Leadership behaviour has a significant positive impact on job autonomy
- H4: Leadership behaviour has a significant positive impact on Teamwork
- H5: Teamwork has a significant impact on job satisfaction

Leadership Behavior

In today's competitive world, organizations are going multinational and face numerous challenges to achieve their desired goals. Thus, the role of leaders/leadership in achieving these objectives and stimulating employee performance by satisfying them with the jobs they do is crucial. Similarly the challenge faced by the educational institute in Pakistan are infrastructure and resource, recruitment of teachers/lecturers, involvement of parents and political pressure initiated by the rapid advancements of technologies, the growing demand, the increasing requirement for quality, the diffusion of knowledge, competitiveness, the transformation in nature of funding mechanisms and globalization (Asif et al., 2021). In literal terms, Pakistan's poor education quality is mainly due to weak governance and management. The organization needs to choose a suitable leadership style that will allow the institute to adjust to the needs of the community through the teaching and learning procedures. Effective leadership will also play a significant role in overcoming challenges and achieving success in educational institutions in Pakistan.

Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is one factor influencing job satisfaction among employees. According to Torlak & Kuzey (2019), job autonomy was the most motivating factor for job satisfaction among university faculty members, and the most satisfying characteristic of their jobs includes the working conditions. (Jabbar et al., 2020) notes in their studies that job autonomy is continuously associated with employee satisfaction. Moreover, from a professional standpoint, research has also shown that work autonomy can be necessary. In his research, Inayat and Jahanzeb Khan (2021), ascertains that work autonomy is the most significant predictor of employee job satisfaction. However, Independence and flexibility are also instrumental in gaining entry and maintaining a position as an academican. Kumari et al. (2022) also affirmed that faculty job satisfaction was most closely correlated with the nature of the work and progress. The sense of responsibility and the enjoyment of work are examples of intrinsic motives, which allow humans to develop and improve as individuals (A. Hussain & Richardson, 2024). In their study, Kibria (2021) emphasizes that job autonomy helps individuals grow, expand, and learn, as well as providing an avenue to take responsibility for the outcomes of their work, which in turn leads to higher job satisfaction. Moreover, according to A. Hussain (2021), university personnel employees were pleased with their ability to select how they work, their degree of responsibility, and the variety in their work. To be more specific regarding the differences in public higher education, Torlak & Kuzey (2019) concluded that the flexibility and autonomy granted in the job positively influenced academicians' job satisfaction.

Team Work

Teamwork is a group of people with complementary abilities who subscribe to a common aim, performance objectives, and style, which are accountable to each other. According to (Alrayes et al., 2022), teamwork or team collaboration is the process through which ordinary people can produce extraordinary results. In contrast, Changlong (2024) states that the team had a common objective or goal, enabling team members to forge effectiveness and reciprocity in pursuit of team goals. Team collaboration refers to people working as a unit within a course of thought in an organizational setup, to achieve team objectives by exchanging information and skills. Attention to collective and clear goals is one attribute of a team (A. Hussain, 2022). Teams are considered a critical attribute of contemporary management theory and practice. Teamwork can also foster social interactions among team members. Three features of this definition are worthy: people interactions, group work, and interdependence. Teamwork involves cooperating to achieve team objectives in a favorable working environment by sharing knowledge and skills. Continuing with this conceptualization, Rafiq (2024), express the opinion that effective teamwork depends on synergy between members in building or developing a team environment where all members interact and contribute to achieving a positive and effective team outcome. According to these authors, team members must also be flexible enough to adapt to work environments where teamwork and social interdependency are present, allowing objectives to be accomplished through collaborative effort.

Job Satisfaction

There is a plethora of literature on job satisfaction in advanced nations, particularly in higher education institutions. For instance, in their study, Torlak & Kuzey (2019) highlights that job satisfaction is strongly linked to enriched job design, employee well-being and organizational justice. Moreover, the study of Jigjiddorj et al. (2019) explains that flexible work policies and participative leadership are a few associated elements of job satisfaction. In contrast, European studies highlight that the adoption of family-friendly HRM policies is a supportive factor of job satisfaction. Moreover, some scholars have their views; for instance, Hameed et al. (2018) holds the view that applying the job characteristics model developed by Hackman and Oldham reveals that features like task variety, autonomy, and feedback significantly drive motivation and satisfaction. In developing countries, scholars view job satisfaction from a different angle. Some scholars, for instance, Hussain (2022), in their study mentioned that resource constraints and institutional dynamics are key factors of job satisfaction.

Nevertheless, leadership styles play a notable role in countries like Pakistan. Particularly in private sector universities, it is viewed that transformational leadership is positively correlated with both faculty job satisfaction and performance. These findings reflect a universal truth, regardless of context; intrinsic job factors and leadership significantly shape job satisfaction. In Pakistani higher education institutions, multiple studies reveal consistent trends. The study of Ismail et al. (2022) highlights that both motivational factors, such as recognition, achievement, and growth, and hygienic factors, such as salary and working conditions, positively and

significantly influence faculty job satisfaction; life satisfaction showed no moderating effect. Similarly, the study of Shah G. Syed et al.(2012) reveals that in Karachi's higher education institutions, promotion opportunities and interpersonal relationships were statistically linked with higher job satisfaction among permanent academic staff. In the capital of Pakistan, only a few studies highlight the role of job satisfaction in organizations like higher education, which deliver nuanced insights. A comparative study of faculty across public and private sector universities, conducted by Changlong (2024), revealed that several key factors, including advancement, supervision, rewards, work quality, and peer relations, contribute to greater contentment with pay and benefits. Further analysis reveals that culture across Islamabad's universities is positively related to job satisfaction in both public and private sector universities. Although several authors in developing countries have conducted numerous studies, a significant theoretical and practical gap remains regarding job satisfaction in private sector universities. The present study provides insightful information and highlights the various factors that could enhance the job satisfaction level of employees. The study is a first attempt that encompasses all private sector universities by measuring the faculty perception regarding job satisfaction.

Problem statement

In the changing environment of tertiary education, especially among the private university sector in Pakistan, faculty satisfaction is a key attribute in the achievements of institutions, employee retention, and the quality of academic services. Although its significance is increasingly being understood, many Pakistani private universities still struggle to achieve high staff satisfaction levels in their jobs. Other studies have determined that leadership behavior, autonomy at work, and the impact of teamwork are essential predictors of work satisfaction. There has, however, been little empirical evidence in the context of Pakistani private universities that examines the interaction of such variables within a structural framework. Although its significance is increasingly being recognized, even in Pakistan, ensuring high job satisfaction among academic personnel in most private universities in Pakistan remains a challenge. The findings of earlier studies have determined that leadership behavior, job autonomy, and work effectiveness in teams are proper predictors of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, there is little empirical evidence in the case of Pakistani private universities to examine the interaction between these variables as a structural model. This gap should be filled with current research, as it investigates the effects of leadership behavior on job satisfaction in both direct and indirect ways, using job autonomy and the effectiveness of teamwork. The current research paper fills this knowledge gap by studying how leadership behavior directly and indirectly influences job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research design based on a structured questionnaire. Initially, some relevant literature on the topic was reviewed and a questionnaire was

designed as the primary data collection tool. In Pakistan, the majority of research scholars used a questionnaire for data collection. This design is particularly effective for generalizing findings across a large population. As noted by Hussain and Rafiq (2023), questionnaires are a widely used method for collecting data from large and geographically dispersed populations, including faculty and staff members working in private sector universities of Islamabad. This approach is both cost-effective and easily accessible (A. Hussain & Ismail, 2024) . The scholar employed a non-probability purposive sampling technique for data collection. The target population includes teaching faculty and staff members of private sector universities in Islamabad. A sample size of approximately 300 teaching and staff was considered appropriate to ensure adequate representation and statistical validity.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: demographic information, including gender, qualification, and year of experience; while the second part was based on statements measuring factors that influence job satisfaction in private sector universities. For all sections, a five-point Likert scale, i.e., 1=Strongly Disagree to Agree 5=strongly, was used to state their agreements with statements related to individual choices. After preparing the questionnaire, it was shared with a few experts for their remarks to check its validity and reliability for data collection. After their feedback, some spelling errors and mistakes were highlighted and addressed. Later on, the questionnaire was mounted on Google Forms and shared with a few members to assess its reliability. Those were excluded from the final data collection. For questionnaire validity, initially, 20 librarians were selected, but they were later excluded from the original survey. For the validity of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was applied. The questionnaire was then shared with 300 teaching faculty and staff members across all private sector universities via email. The survey remains active from May 5, 2025, to June 28, 2025. All ethical values of research were followed. Initially, only 140 respondents completed the questionnaire, but after follow-up, 280 respondents duly filled out the questionnaires. Out of these, six were excluded due to missing information, leaving 274 respondents deemed suitable for data analysis. For data analysis, SPSS version 27 was used for demographic characteristics of faculty and staff, while SmartPLS 4.1.1.0 was used for questionnaire reliability and structure equation modelling (SEM) techniques. The result was then presented in tables and a hypothesis model.

Findings

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The respondents of this study include the faculty and staff members of nine private sector universities in Islamabad. The data shows that 274 faculty and staff members participated in this survey. The gender profile indicates that there are 58% more male respondents than female respondents. This reflects that the academic staff is relatively gender diverse. The academic ranks of faculty show that most of the participants were Associate professors (32.5%), Assistant professors (23%), Lecturers and Professors (both 22.3%). It indicates that the sample distribution on the academic levels is even, with a minor focus on the mid-career stage. In age, most respondents had been aged above 41 years (34.3%), 36-40 (26.3%), 31-35 (22.3%), and 25-30 (17.2%). This allocation

shows that this group comprises mainly mid to late career academics. Regarding the education qualification, the majority of the respondents (51.1%) had an MPhil/MS degree, and a second factor is holding a PhD (34.3%). Fewer held only a degree at the Master's level (9.5%), and some had Postdoctoral degrees (5.1%). This indicates a relatively high academic level of the sample. In the teaching experience aspect, most of them had over 6 years of experience (60.6%), demonstrating a very experienced academic workforce. A smaller number of them (19.3%, 12% and 8%, respectively) had 1-3 years of experience, 4-6 years, and fewer than 1 year. Lastly, the sample was selected from a diverse group of universities in Islamabad, with the most excellent representation in CUST University (17.9%), Foundation University (14.2%), and FAST University (11.3%). The sample was also reasonably well institutionally represented by other universities like SZABIST, Riphah International, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat, Abasyn, Ibadat, and My University.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Demographic Characteristic	f	%
Gender	Male	159	58.0
	Female	115	42.0
Academic rank	Lecturer	61	22.3
	Assistant Professor	63	23.0
	Associate Professor	89	32.5
	Professor	61	22.3
Gender's Age	25–30	47	17.2
	31-35	61	22.3
	36-40	72	26.3
	Above 41	94	34.3
Highest Qualification	Master's	26	9.5
	MPhil/MS	140	51.1
	PhD	94	34.3
	Post Doc	14	5.1
	Less than 1 year	22	8.0
Experience in Years	1–3 years	53	19.3
	4–6 years	33	12.0
	More than 6 years	166	60.6
	Foundation university	39	14.2
University Name	CUST University	49	17.9
	Ripha International University	26	9.5
	Shifa Tameer Seerat University	25	9.1
	FAST University	31	11.3
	My university	28	10.2
	Ibadat University	22	8.0
	SZABIST University	29	10.6
	Abasyn University	25	9.1
	Total	274	100

The measurement model of all constructs represents robust internal consistency and convergent validity. The Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.727 to 0.959, greater than the acceptable value of 0.70, indicating good internal reliability. Composite reliability (rho_c) values are also high, with all constructs scoring above 0.84, far beyond the minimum recommended value of 0.70, thus indicating consistent measurement. In the same way, values of rho_a secure this credibility, and all constructs have them higher than 0.74. Concerning Average Variance Extracted (AVE), the values of all constructs logically exceed the critical level of 0.50, starting with 0.647 (JA) and continuing with 0.671 (FB), which indicates sufficient convergent validity. In short, both Job Autonomy (JA) and Job Satisfaction (JS) constructs are well measured regarding reliability and valid indicators. Leadership Behaviour (LB) and Teamwork (TW) constructs are also well measured regarding reliability and validity. For detail, see table 2, below:

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
JA	0.727	0.745	0.846	0.647
JS	0.926	0.935	0.943	0.735
LB	0.948	0.949	0.960	0.828
TW	0.959	0.961	0.966	0.803

Table 3 presents the Fornell–Larcker criterion results for assessing discriminant validity among the constructs: Job Autonomy (JA), Job Satisfaction (JS), Leadership Behavior (LB), and Team Work Environment (TW). According to the criterion, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (shown diagonally in bold) should be greater than its correlations with other constructs. The results indicate that JA (0.805), JS (0.857), LB (0.910), and TW (0.896). Although the Fornell–Larcker criterion showed high correlations, HTMT ratios (all < 0.90) confirmed acceptable discriminant validity. However, the high inter-construct correlations (e.g., LB–JS = 0.949; LB–TW = 0.955; JS–TW = 0.949) suggest strong associations among the constructs, implying that while they are empirically distinct, they are conceptually closely related. This supports the model's theoretical assumption that leadership behavior, job autonomy, and teamwork environment are strongly interlinked with job satisfaction.

Table 3: Table 3: Discriminatory Validity-Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	JA	JS	LB	TW
JA	0.805			
JS	0.929	0.857		
LB	0.902	0.949	0.910	
TW	0.879	0.949	0.955	0.896

Table 4 presents the results of factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) for the study constructs. All factor loadings are above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, confirming that the items load significantly on their respective constructs. The reliability of each construct is also established, as Cronbach's alpha values exceed the recommended minimum of 0.70 (JA = 0.727, JS = 0.926, LB = 0.948, TW = 0.959). Similarly, composite reliability values are above the threshold of 0.70 (JA = 0.846, JS = 0.943, LB = 0.960, TW = 0.966), indicating strong internal consistency. Furthermore, the AVE values for all constructs are greater than the benchmark of 0.50 (JA = 0.647, JS = 0.735, LB = 0.828, TW = 0.803), establishing convergent validity. Collectively, these results demonstrate that the measurement model is reliable and valid for further analysis. For details, see Table 4 below:

Table 4: Convergent Validity Test

Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alphas	Composite reliability	AVE
JA1	0.719	0.727	0.846	0.647
JA2	0.833			
JA3	0.855			
JS1	0.682	0.926	0.943	0.735
JS2	0.919			
JS3	0.874			
JS4	0.924	0.948	0.960	0.828
JS5	0.827			
JS6	0.893			
LB1	0.946	0.959	0.966	0.803
LB2	0.915			
LB3	0.922			
LB4	0.909	0.959	0.966	0.803
LB5	0.854			
TW1	0.921			
TW2	0.875	0.959	0.966	0.803
TW3	0.902			
TW4	0.877			
TW5	0.902	0.959	0.966	0.803
TW6	0.880			
TW7	0.915			

Table 5 presents the outer loadings of all measurement items on their respective constructs. The results indicate that each item loads strongly on its assigned construct, with all values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, thereby confirming indicator reliability. For Job Autonomy (JA), loadings range from 0.719 to 0.855; for

Job Satisfaction (JS), from 0.682 to 0.924 (with JS1 slightly below the threshold but still acceptable in exploratory research); for Leadership Behavior (LB), from 0.854 to 0.946; and for Teacher Work Engagement (TW), from 0.875 to 0.921. These results demonstrate that the items are well aligned with their respective constructs and provide evidence of adequate convergent validity for the measurement model.

Table 5: Outer Loading Matrix

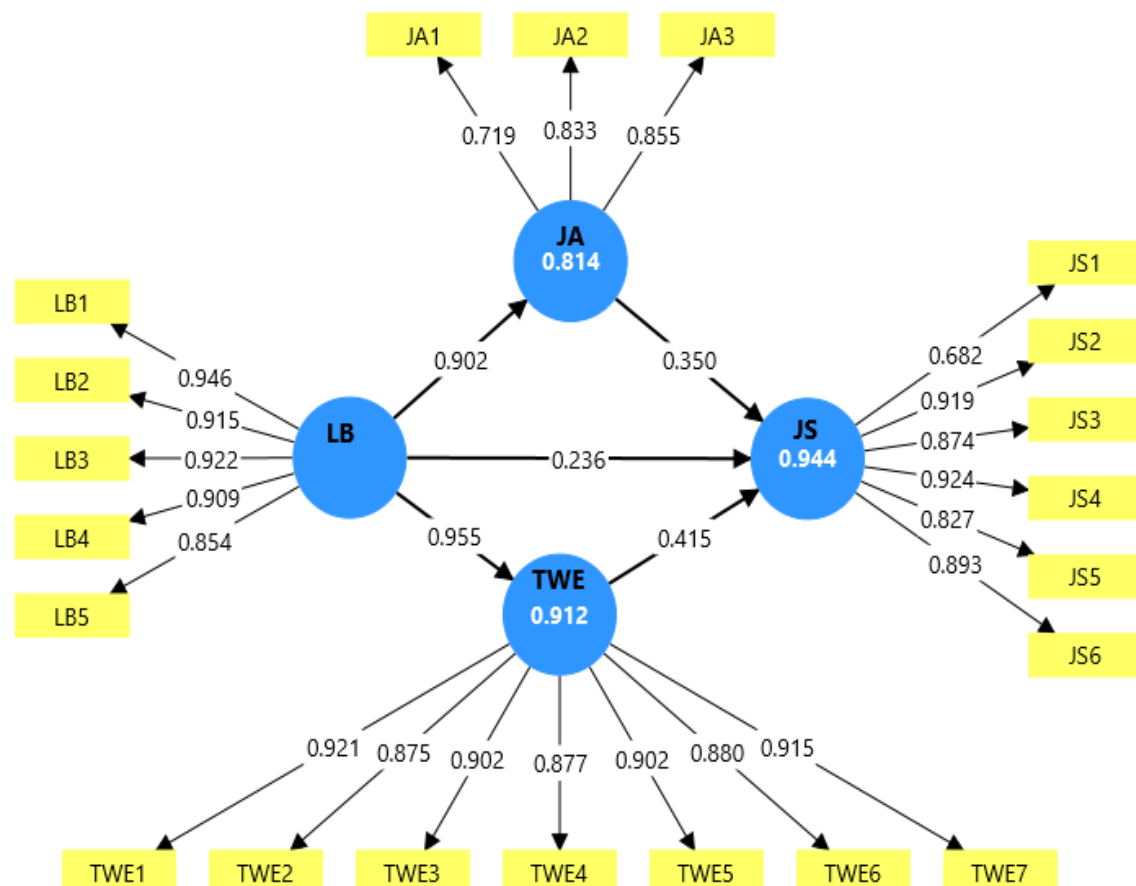
Items Code	JA	JS	LB	TW
JA1	0.719			
JA2	0.833			
JA3	0.855			
JS1		0.682		
JS2		0.919		
JS3		0.874		
JS4		0.924		
JS5		0.827		
JS6		0.893		
LB1			0.946	
LB2			0.915	
LB3			0.922	
LB4			0.909	
LB5			0.854	
TW1				0.921
TW2				0.875
TW3				0.902
TW4				0.877
TW5				0.902
TW6				0.880
TW7				0.915

Table 6 and Figure 2 below present the structural model results with path coefficients (β), standard errors, t-values, and p-values for the proposed hypotheses. The path from Job Autonomy to Job Satisfaction is significant ($\beta = 0.357$, $t = 4.897$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher job autonomy positively influences job satisfaction, thus supporting H1. Leadership Behavior shows a very strong positive effect on Job Autonomy ($\beta = 0.904$, $t = 53.249$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H2. Leadership Behavior also positively affects Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.225$, $t = 2.768$, $p = 0.006$), supporting H3. Similarly, Leadership Behavior has a substantial positive impact on Teacher Work Engagement ($\beta = 0.956$, $t = 148.799$, $p < 0.001$), validating H4. Finally, Teacher Work Engagement significantly contributes to Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.419$, $t = 5.045$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H5. Since all p-values are below the 0.05 acceptance threshold, every proposed hypothesis is accepted, confirming the robustness of the structural model.

Table 6: Structural Equation Modelling Results – Hypotheses Testing

	Parameter estimates	Standard Error	T values	P values	Decisions
LB -> JS	0.225	0.085	2.768	0.006	Accepted
JA -> JS	0.357	0.072	4.897	0.000	Accepted
LB -> JA	0.904	0.017	53.249	0.000	Accepted
LB -> TW	0.956	0.006	148.799	0.000	Accepted
TW -> JS	0.419	0.082	5.045	0.000	Accepted

Figure 2: Result of proposed hypotheses



Discussion

The findings of this study provide insightful information on leadership behavior and its impact on job satisfaction, where teamwork effectiveness and job autonomy can also play a crucial role in private sector universities of Islamabad. The demographic information of respondents reveals that the majority of them were male professionals compared to female faculty. The study also reveals that most of the faculty and staff members were from mid-career and highly qualified professionals. In private sector universities, the male trend and the mid-career employee trend show a consistent pattern, as these institutions tend to attract experienced faculty members with higher qualifications. The findings of the demographic characteristics closely align with the study of (Aghaei et al., 2021), which also reveals that mid-career to late-career academic employees suggest that job satisfaction and engagement are often influenced by accumulated experience and professional maturity. The study also employed the measurement model which confirms that strong reliability and convergent validity of the constructs are closely associated with organizational behavior in Pakistan, however, the discriminatory validity reveals that high correlations among constructs like job autonomy, job satisfaction and effective teamwork which denotes that in academic setting autonomy, collaboration and satisfaction are closely interlinked as stated by the (Changlong, 2024). The structural model of this study offers several important implications, such as the job autonomy was found to significantly enhance job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.001$).

This is consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Anwar et al., 2023). The study also reveals that job autonomy is a critical determinant of motivation and satisfaction in Pakistani higher education. According to Asif et al.(2021) study, autonomy enables faculty to innovate in teaching and research, thereby increasing employee satisfaction. The findings also reveals that leadership behavior demonstrated as strongly positive effect on job autonomy ($\beta = 0.904$, $p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.225$, $p = 0.006$), this reflect that job autonomy and job satisfaction are closely interlinked with each other's and the findings are in line with the study of (Changlong, 2024) which argues that leader influence autonomy, collaboration and satisfaction through supportive and empowering practices.

The finding corroborates the study of (Hameed et al., 2018), which emphasizes that effective leadership is essential for fostering a collaborative academic culture in private sector universities. The study also highlights that teamwork significantly contributes to job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.419$, $p < 0.001$). The findings of this hypothesis are closely aligned with the study of (Huang et al., 2024), demonstrating that effective collaboration enhances performance and satisfaction of employees in educational sectors. In the Pakistani higher education sector, the HEC emphasizes that academic institutions foster a culture of collaboration, which has become an essential element towards productivity and satisfaction. The findings of this study reinforce that leadership practices, autonomy and teamwork are deeply interconnected in shaping

job satisfaction among faculty and staff members. Hence, the study contributes to both global and Pakistani literature by confirming that supportive leadership and collaborative structure enhance autonomy and satisfaction among employees in higher education institutions, ultimately fostering a more engaged and motivational academic workforce, which is essential for sustainable development in the 21st century.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study highlights the relationship between leadership behavior, teamwork effectiveness and job autonomy and its impact on job satisfaction in private sector universities of Islamabad, Pakistan. The study reveals that the academic workforce in these universities is gender-diverse, highly qualified and predominantly mid to late career professionals with strong teaching experience. The study is based on a structural model and confirms that job autonomy significantly enhances job satisfaction among faculty and staff members. The study further confirms that leadership behavior is a critical driver and has a strong influence on autonomy, satisfaction and teamwork effectiveness. The findings also reveal that teamwork has a positive impact on job satisfaction, which further confirms the importance of collaboration in academic institutions. The findings also suggest that supportive leadership, job autonomy and effective teamwork are essential drivers for job satisfaction and engagement in private sector organizations of Pakistan.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for faculty and staff members in higher education sectors:

Academic freedom in teaching and research is an essential driver for job satisfaction. Universities in Pakistan should provide greater academic freedom and autonomy in order to reduce administrative constraints. The study also recommends that transformational and participatory leadership styles are essential approaches in the academic context of Pakistani universities, which are true guarantors for job satisfaction and teamwork.

The study also recommends that a teamwork structure can improve institutional performance; hence, universities in Pakistan should create a formal platform that engages both staff and faculty members. It is also recommended that a continuous professional development program should be introduced in private sector universities to enhance their teaching, research and collaborative skills. The study also recommends that the Higher Education Commission (HEC) should encourage a policy that promotes faculty autonomy, collaboration, and leadership development across both public and private sector universities. The study also recommends conducting research in this area across different regions, exploring these constructs with more diverse samples to understand the causal relationship better.

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