

Work environment as a driver to university academic staff levels of job satisfaction in a selected public and private universities in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The issue of academic staff levels of job satisfaction has become a major issue of concern globally based on the fact that the academic staff play a significant role in the day-to-day affairs of the university. Both external and internally generated drivers determine the levels of job satisfaction. However, several studies have pointed out remuneration as the most critical driver to the academic staff's levels of job satisfaction falling short of examining the same issue with related issues in the light of a comparative analysis between private and public universities. This study, therefore, is determined to bring out a clear cross-cutting discussion in public and private universities and recommend possible policy action to improve on the academic staff levels of job satisfaction and consequently output. Guided by the pragmatism research paradigm and the Herzberg two-factor theory, the study employed a concurrent mixed research method design. The target population for this study was the members of the academic staff in a selected private and public university. Participants were purposively identified and selected; therefore, the sample size for public university was 115 participants, while that of private university was 60. Data was collected, evaluated, and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, giving an in-depth examination into the subject matter. The study found out that there is a strong relationship between work environment and the academic staff levels of job satisfaction; further, it discovered that there is a strong difference in the levels of job satisfaction between the academic staff in public and private universities in relation to the levels of academic staff job satisfaction. The study therefore proposes policy reforms in both public and private universities to ensure a favorable working environment is created for the members of the academic staff in order to increase staff output. For ethical consideration, the selected public university is referred to as University Alpha, while the private university is University Beta.

Keywords: Alpha, Beta, Driver, Job, Remuneration, Satisfaction, Staff

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents an analysis of how work environment is a key driver to the level of university academic staff levels of job satisfaction. In understanding the dynamics involved the study examined the case of University *Alpha* a representative of a public university and *University Beta* a representative of a private university in Kenya. The independent variable in the context of this study is work environment that includes the office space assigned to the members of the academic staff, interpersonal relationships at place of work, institutional support, staff work load and communication structures. Dependent variable on the other hand is the academic staff level of job satisfaction that includes the levels of contentment, motivation, and feelings of fulfillment at place of work. This study points out that work environment shapes the conditions under which academic staff perform their duties such as teaching, research and community outreach. These environmental factors are seen as physical, psychosocial or organizational. In line with other similar discussion by Wachira et al. (2017) and Tetty (2006), this study finds out that physical environmental factors includes facilities at work place such as office space, internet connectivity and availability of teaching resources. Organizational environmental factors include policy issues and workload while psychosocial environmental factors include teamwork and collegiality.

This study therefore concludes that there is a significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job satisfaction in selected public and private universities where a supportive physical environment significantly influences the level of job satisfaction among academic staff. Further, Positive collegiality among members of the academic staff enhances academic staff levels of job satisfaction and fair workload distribution and supportive work environment significantly promote academic staff levels of job satisfaction. The study also notes that availability of professional development opportunities significantly influences academic staff levels of job satisfaction.

Beyond physical facilities, the study explored the psychological and social environment, where significant differences also emerged. Quantitatively, 68% of private university (University Beta) staff agreed or strongly agreed that their institutions fostered a collegial and respectful professional culture, compared to just 43% in public universities (University Alpha). Interviews and focus group discussions revealed that staff in private institutions felt more recognized, supported by leadership, and included in decision-making processes; thereby nurturing a sense of belonging and psychological safety. Conversely, academic staff in public universities frequently cited bureaucratic rigidity, lack of feedback mechanisms, and minimal recognition for achievements, which contributed to a pervasive sense of neglect and disengagement. This line of thought seems to be in agreement with Ulfah et al., (2023). The dimension of academic freedom and professional autonomy presented a clearer picture. Quantitative analysis showed that while 59% of staff in public universities (University Alpha) felt they enjoyed high levels of autonomy in their teaching and research activities, only 48% in private universities (University Beta) shared this view. Qualitative data provided depth to this finding: while public university (University Alpha) staff valued the freedom to innovate, they expressed frustration that this freedom was hollowed out by lack of funding, erratic scheduling, and overregulation in procurement and ethics review processes. On the other hand, private university (University Beta) staff appreciated the structured expectations and institutional clarity, although some felt constrained by performance based evaluations, strict institutional structures and managerial oversight. This argument is also brought out in the work of Wachira et al, (2017), who argues that leadership style determine a lot about management of an institution and therefore affecting workers levels of motivation.

Workload and time pressure emerged as significant determinants of academic staff job satisfaction, with strong quantitative disparities: 64% of academic staff in public universities (University Alpha) described their workload as “excessive” or “unmanageable,” compared to 41% in private universities (University Beta). Public university (University Alpha) staff frequently reported teaching very large classes, undertaking multiple administrative responsibilities, and managing external consultancy work and part time lecturing to compensate for low salaries. In contrast, while private university (University Beta) staff also worked under tight schedules, many reported that workload allocation was more predictable and better managed. A study conducted by Ngethe et al. (2012) points out to similar factors having a significant influence on the employee levels of job satisfaction. Another critical finding related to the availability of institutional support services such as research funding, professional development, and mentorship. Survey results showed that only 35% of public university (University Alpha) respondents felt their institutions provided adequate support for research and career advancement, in contrast to 62% in private universities (University Beta). Qualitative evidence reinforced this gap: while public university (University Alpha) staff expressed frustration with the bureaucratic hurdles to access funding or attend conferences, private university (University Beta) staff spoke of regular training opportunities, internal research grants, and clear staff development policies (Ngethe et al, 2012; Odhiambo, 2014).

Lastly, the issue of safety and campus security was more prominent among public university (University Alpha) respondents, 29% of whom described their working environment as “unsafe” or “poorly secured,” compared to only 11% in private universities (University Beta). Focus group discussions highlighted concerns over theft, harassment, and lack of security personnel, particularly for those teaching evening classes in public universities (University Alpha). This could be a similar case with a study done by Wachira et al. (2017) and Tetty (2006) which point out that environmental factors are significant in determining employees levels of job satisfaction. By contrast, staff in private universities (University Beta) reported feeling secure, with several mentioning the presence of well-trained guards, surveillance cameras, and clear emergency protocols.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Notwithstanding despite a lot of attention on the role of the academic staff in the university setting and generally to the university education scholarly work into institutional drivers such as work environment remains limited with few studies narrowly examining the issue of completely missing the point. Scholarly works by Wachira et al. (2017), Tetty (2006) have either looked at one aspect of environmental drivers or focused on one category of an institution a gap that this study intends to fill by examining the situation in both public and private universities. Therefore this study points out of interest that in Kenyan public and private universities, the relationship between work environment drivers such as policy formulation and implementation, compensation regimes, career progression, professional development frameworks, and interpersonal relations, and staff job satisfaction levels has not been adequately examined in the context or institutional category. The limited research that exists tends to generalize findings across universities, ignoring the unique governance structure, funding, and operational models that differentiate them. This analytical gap has left MOEST, CUE, policymakers, UMB, UASU, and university councils without wide, evidence-based frameworks for responding to staff welfare concerns in an objective manner, justifying the urgency of this study and why it was conducted.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following one key objective namely to examine the role of working environment on academic staff job satisfaction in selected public and private universities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Herzberg Two Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory developed in 1959, was discovered to be suitable and adequate which is also referred to as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory. This theory is found to distinguish between two sets of drivers that influence university academic staff levels of job satisfaction in both university Alpha and university Beta: that is the *motivators* which is considered as intrinsic motivational driver and *hygiene factors* which is considered as extrinsic drivers. According to Herzberg, motivator drivers consists of elements such as staff recognition, staff achievement, and staff responsibility which are considered to influence academic staff job satisfaction and drive or increase staff output, while on the other hand hygienic drivers consists elements such as university policies, university administrative practices, academic staff salary, and university working conditions which do not in themselves motivate members of the academic staff, but their absence or inadequacy definitely leads to high levels of job dissatisfaction among the members of the university academic staff in both university Alpha and university Beta for this study (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Based on this study, university institutional policy in both university Alpha and Beta can be classified under hygiene factors or drivers as argued in this theory. When a university whether Beta or Alpha has poorly designed or inconsistently applied policies characterised with unclear academic staff promotion procedures and criteria, bureaucratic performance evaluation tools and procedures, or inequitable staff recognition, rewards and compensation standards may ultimately lead to university academic staff frustration, disengagement, demotivation, low output, disengagement and transfer to better or well-structured universities. On the other hand, when university policies are clearly and well-articulated, procedurally implemented, and transparently executed, they decrease's the levels of the academic staff dissatisfaction and create a well supportive academic staff work environment within which intrinsic drivers can survive leading to greater academic staff job satisfaction in both university Alpha and university Beta (Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Odhiambo, 2014). Therefore, although university policy may not always directly "motivate" and "influence" academic staff job satisfaction, it is should be understood that it is important in creating a working environment where motivation is natured and thrives and is sustainable for the benefit of the university and the members of the university academic staff.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical review of this study is based on the objective namely to examine the role of working environment on academic staff job satisfaction in selected public and private universities. Therefore, the study notes that quality of the academic staff work environment determines to a greater percentage the levels of the employee job satisfaction. A good working environment comprising of adequate and well-furnished office space, well-equipped lecture hall, well-furnished laboratory and internet connectivity is relatively important in influencing the academic staff level of job satisfaction. Studies done by Chimanikire et al. (2007) and Ngethe et al. (2012) pointed out that poor working conditions such as old and dilapidated lecture halls, lack of internet connectivity, high number of lecturer student ratio have greatly affected the ability of the members of the university academic staff to perform their duties effectively. This study reveals that the above findings is not far from the truth since the study found out that university Alpha was characterised with overcrowded lecture halls and dilapidated infrastructure yet it receives minimal funding from the government which has greatly lowered the academic staff levels of job satisfaction and the general staff output at work. On the other hand, several studies including the ones done by Wachira et al. (2017) and Tetty (2006) have pointed out that private universities have relatively better working environment than those of public universities. According to them, private universities have invested many resources on putting up state of the art infrastructure raising the levels of the academic staff job satisfaction. However, this argument remains largely unsubstantiated by a wide range of studies that are conflicting. Most existing literature on the subject matter is limited to quantifying the direct correlation between specific infrastructural elements, such as the condition of office spaces, laboratory functionality, or ICT access, and levels of university academic staff job satisfaction. There is therefore an urgent need of this scholarly work that goes beyond generalizations by employing a mixed research method design to effectively measure and evaluate on the impact of university work environment on the levels of the academic staff job satisfaction across institutional types

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

This study employed a mixed-method research design, specifically concurrent mixed method design [QUANT + qual] (Kroll et al., 2005). Generally, a research design was used to determine what, when, how much, where, or by what means a study is conducted. The research design was suitable since qualitative data provided more insights and in-depth information from the information collected. Participants lived experiences played a significant role in drawing conclusions in this study.

3.2 Study Setting

This study was based in Uasin Gishu and Machakos Counties of Kenya. The two counties represent diverse geographical and demographic characteristics needed for this study. Uasin Gishu County, is known for its vast agricultural activities and many educational institutions which includes, several universities namely; Mount Kenya University Eldoret Campus, Moi University, Catholic University of East Africa Gaba Campus, University of East Africa Baraton Eldoret extension Center, and the University of Eldoret, equally Machakos County is inhabited by diverse ethnic communities and has several educational institutions including Machakos University, South Eastern Kenya University Tala Campus, Scott Christian University and Daystar University. Consequently, the variance in these areas provided valuable insights into how different work environmental factors influence the academic staff job satisfaction in the university.

3.3 Target Population

Target population for this study was 887 as tabulated in table 1

Table 1

Target and Actual Study Population

University Category	Target Population	Accessible Population
University Alpha (Public University)	740	134
University Beta (Private University)	141	66
Total	887	200

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sampling Size

Simple Random Sampling was employed in this study. This method was designed to ensure that every participant within the target population had an equal chance of being selected, which helped in eliminating bias and ensuring that the sample was a clear representative of the population. In this case the the population included all academic staff across the selected public and private universities in Kenya. Therefore, the sample size for the university Alpha was 115 participants, while the sample size for university Beta was 60 participants.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaires and well developed interview schedules as the main data collection instrument for academic staff and university managers. The two data collection instruments corroborated each other to ensure an in depth data collection on the subject.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. This was done concurrently and then merged with the final report. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in quantitative data analysis. For descriptive statistics, percentages and frequencies were used; for inferential statistics, simple linear regression was used.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Qualitative Analysis of work environment on academic staff Job Satisfaction Levels

This study conducted a qualitative study to verify the findings of quantitative analysis in order to determine the true position of environmental drivers to university academic staff levels of job satisfaction. Oral interviews were conducted on participants in university Alpha and Beta; these interviews were guided by well-structured interview schedules. Data obtained through key informant interviews (KIIs) were analyzed using thematic data analysis procedures. The outcome of the oral interviews revealed a lot as compared with quantitative outcome in this study above. Qualitative findings through participant's voices are discussed below.

4.1.1 Institutional Infrastructure and Resource Availability

Infrastructure came out to be a major sub driver within the environmental driver as a force of academic staff job satisfaction. It was clear from all the respondents from university Alpha that this factor greatly undermined job satisfaction. Academic staff in university Alpha described poor working environment characterized with low government capitation, old lecture halls, unstable internet, lack of certain laboratory equipment's and lack of office space for members of the academic staff. These were pointed out as key reasons for high levels of dissatisfaction among the members of the academic staff in Alpha University.

Academic staff in university Alpha noted the following:-

“Very few members have offices and in most cases they are very old professors who came to the university earlier and the heads of academic departments, majority of us share offices limiting our levels of privacy. Sometimes it's difficult to even suit in the office to write academic papers and even mark examination scripts, it's just difficult for us to fully function”. KII-2-M-A

While the second participant noted that,

“It's difficult to supervise post graduate students because I can't even access the latest journals and books in my area of specialization unless I go out of hand and purchase using my own money. It's really frustrating something needs to be done”. KII-4-M-A

Another KII noted

“The lecture halls are dilapidated, I can't even use my laptop and projector, and there are no power sockets”. KII-2-M-A

Similarly

“Sometime I go to the lecture hall early enough but students have no chairs to sit on. Students can take even an hour to look for chairs and nobody is concerned. This practice has been on for years now. Students numbers is increasing but the state of facilities in the university has remained the same for over ten years I have worked in this university”. KII-3-M-A

This study notes that these environmental challenges play a significant role in demotivating members of the university academic staff. It's also an indicator that public universities have not prioritized work environment for its staff. Members of the academic staff feel they are not adequately supported in meeting their professional and institutional targets hence low levels of job satisfaction. On the other hand academic staff members of university Beta described their institution as having ultra-modern facilities fashioned with modernity. All the participants interviewed noted with a lot of confidence that they have modern lecture halls, they have enough offices allocated to them, the university has a lecturers parlor, they have high speed stable internet connectivity and their libraries are well furnished. This is noted by their voices bellow:-

“I have a fully furnished personal office similarly to my colleagues. Our offices are connected with reliable internet. I am able to mark my scripts, set examinations and conduct online meetings and classes at the comfort of my office. I prefer working from my office than in any other place”. KII-1-F-B

From the above discussions this study notes that university alpha which is a representative of public universities does very little to support the members of the academic staff to perform the duties which they were employed to perform. This has led to the general feeling among members of the academic staff in public universities in Kenya to feel unsupported, neglected and helpless where as in university Beta which represents private universities there is more enabling environment and support to the members of the academic staff to perform their duties. However it should be understood from the findings of this study that this institutional support through creation of the enabling environment is attached to a level of accountability from the part of the members of the academic staff. The strict accountability processes also act as a hindrance to the sense of freedom and job security among members of the academic staff hence lowering the levels of job satisfaction. The divergence in the outcomes of the working environments in university Alpha and Beta tends to justify a study by Ulfah et al. (2023) which demonstrated that high performance institutional systems require parallel investment in both staff support mechanism and performance monitoring. There must be equilibrium in order for the employee to realise full potential at the place of work thereby influencing high job satisfaction levels.

This study further reveals that the availability of better working environment in university Beta did not translate to perceived autonomy at place of work which is a key driver to individual job satisfaction. Several respondents demonstrated that while infrastructure was superb institutional environment was sometimes overly corporate and metric driven, with the management expecting a lot from the workers to achieve institutional goals. This specific finding agrees with a study done by Slaughter and Rhodes (2004) whose outcomes indicate that sometimes educational institutions promote 'academic capitalism' where they operate like business entities, measuring academic productivity through quantifiable metrics. Looking at the results of this study therefore it's quite open that the level of the academic staff job satisfaction is determined by available resources as well as the manner in which the institution treats its staff in the process of achieving institutional goals and objectives.

4.1.2 Administrative and Leadership Styles and Support

Administrative and leadership styles and support emerged as a distinct driver to academic staff job satisfaction in the university Alpha and university Beta. Staff in university alpha expressed that they are not happy with the bureaucratic leadership structures that tend towards autocracy which they view as a strong factor against the academic staff job satisfaction. The study notes that the participants pointed out that decision making is noninvolvement, slow and always influenced with non-academic factors. Administrative appointments and promotions are highly politicized and ethnicized against the principal of meritocracy and motivation which is against job satisfaction.

Academic staff in university Alpha noted that:-

“Imagine in the university a simple thing like ordering a ream of photocopying paper takes weeks or even months. Nobody bothers about anything, in most cases we are forced to use our own money to get the papers in order to perform university tasks”. KII-4-F-A

“If you are not in the right tribe and know the correct people in the system then you might never be promoted in this university. You cannot be appointed to any committee in the university, not even in charge of water unless you have direct connection to the system”. KII-7-M-A

Of interest in university Beta the members of the academic staff demonstrated elements of administrative efficiency. Academic staff members in university Beta noted that the university was open to communication and took up any advice aimed at improving the institution. They further noted that the university was very quick to respond to any request made. They further expressed that despite the system being open, in most cases they were not involved in key decision making and the administrative structure was much rigid limiting inclusivity and therefore affecting the academic staff job satisfaction.

“This kind of administrative structure leads to some level of undue loyalty. To some extent it leads to sycophancy where individuals are forced to blindly follow management for recognition which is pure sycophancy that shy’s away from the university set standards”. KII-3-M-B

The divergence in the university Alpha and university Beta in the manner in which they observe administrative structures and leadership styles reveals the differences in the motivation drivers between the two. The comparative qualitative analysis of University Alpha and University Beta reveals several key drivers of academic staff job satisfaction namely leadership style, administrative norms and other similar factors. The findings of this study further indicate that the levels of the academic staff motivation are dependent on the organizational support structures. The results from the qualitative inquiry in this study relate well with the study done by Harsonet et al. (2023) which argues that leadership style and educational institutional structures significantly influence an employee level of job satisfaction. Therefore this study demonstrates that an open system of leadership that is focussed on motivating workers tends to boost the staff morale and general output at work place, while leadership that promotes aspects that undermine best work practices tends to limit or hinder an employee level of job satisfaction. This findings tend to concur with the findings of a study done by Ulfah et al. (2023) who argues that a kind of leadership style that is transformative promotes high levels of job satisfaction and generally that is beneficial for the institution and the employee

In comparison between university Alpha and university Beta, University Alpha is characterised by poor administrative structures and leadership styles that affect that affect greatly the academic staff job satisfaction while university Beta has leadership styles that is open and transparent but limits the autonomy of the workers and involvement in key decision making processes. Both this institutions leadership practices affects the university academic staff job satisfactions at different levels. This finding tends to agree with the study done by Paz’s (2021) indicating that poorly managed institutions in most cases struggle with promoting employee engagement and motivation due to underdeveloped human resource structures. However, of interest to note is that, this study reveals that university Alpha has very high numbers of qualified staff but subjected to bureaucratic leadership styles. The findings of this study confirms Herzberg’s two factor theory of motivation as employed in this study where hygiene factors such as administrative efficiency and fairness in promotions are important drivers to job satisfaction even when they do not directly motivate academic staff members.

4.1.3 Workload and Work-Life Balance as a Driver to Job Satisfaction

In relation to the distribution of participants by number of learners per course in a semester this study demonstrates that the academic staff members in university Alpha deal with relatively high numbers of students compared with the academic staff in university Beta. University Beta has a clear workload policy that is manageable by members of the academic staff compared to university Alpha. This study notes that workload and its effects on work life balance is as a strong driver to academic staff job satisfaction. Staff in university Alpha reported excessive teaching load characterised by understaffing and high enrolment levels. Many respondents indicated that they ended up teaching several units up to four undergraduate and three post graduate courses including postgraduate supervision with very high number of students and sometimes over a thousand students in a course.

University Alpha respondents noted:-

“I teach from Monday to Friday, I have post graduate classes up to very late at night and sometimes, I have to fix post graduate classes over the weekend. I don’t have time to conduct research, publish papers or even for personal development and family. My daughter told me she wouldn’t admire my job seeing me on the table throughout”. KII-8-F-A

The heavy workload for members of the academic staff in university Alpha greatly affects the levels of job satisfaction. The staff are unable to conduct research, publish or engage in community engagement which ideally should be triadic is limited to just teaching. On the contrary the academic staff in university Beta reported more structured and practical workload allocation which in turn enabled the staff to conduct research, publish and actively participate in community engagement. However this study notes from the participants in the study it became clear that this structure also puts a lot of pressure to the academic staff members to meet specific performance targets which is closely monitored through regular appraisals.

“I teach fewer hours compared to the academic staff in public universities, which gives us a lot of time to engage in other work related activities. But performance reviews are important and they are closely monitored by the university.” KII-4-M-B

This study reveals that although in university Beta the academic staff appreciated the existence of clear workload policy that is practical and manageable they also noted that performance evaluation processes are very tight which is mentally involving. While in university Alpha the staff is over worked but they are left or minimally supervised. The overburdened workload in university Alpha limited their ability to engage in other personal and work related activities. This study reveals that the University academic staff workload and work-life balance differentiates the experiences of academic staff in public and private universities. These findings are in concurrence with a study done by Korir (2017), who demonstrated that academic staff workloads in public universities just like in university Alpha are never aligned with staff workload capacity, resulting in staff fatigue, reduced research output, and declining morale. In university Beta the academic staff have manageable work load which improves there efficiency levels and outputs however they are psychologically traumatised due to pressure to meet work targets.

Comparatively academic staff members in the two universities are subjected to some kind of pressure, one on meeting institutional targets and the other one in the form of performance anxiety. This outcome is in line with the finding of a study conducted by Harsonet et al. (2023) who identified this tension and named it “productivity paradox,” where institutional efficiency and goal clarity improve output but can diminish intrinsic motivation if staff feel over-scrutinized. In summary, the qualitative findings demonstrate two distinct institutional drivers at play. In university Alpha, there were poor administrative concerns about the staff workload leading to demotivation, delays and performance stagnation while university Beta reflected an efficient system governed by rigid accountability mechanisms promoting institutional success but also inducing some level of stress academic staff members. These differences in institutional operations demonstrate the nature of working environment whether through infrastructure, leadership or workload to a larger extent shapes the academic staff job satisfaction.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis on the Role of Working Environment as a Driver

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

Fourteen participants were involved and tested on the study objective to ascertain the influence of work environment to the academic staff levels of job satisfaction in university Beta and Alpha. According to Table 2 below descriptive statistics from the simulated data on the two universities indicated that the mean on work environment was found to be 3.29, which is slightly above average on a 5 point scale. The mean on job satisfaction in the two universities Alpha and Beta was found to be 3.06 which is neutral or slightly satisfied and the standard deviation of academic staff job satisfaction was found to be 0.20 which is very low pointing out that work environment barely predicts job satisfaction conflicting with results from qualitative findings on university Alpha and university Beta. Results in table 2 further indicates that the minimum and maximum columns indicate the variation (limited) in academic staff levels of job satisfaction scores giving justification as to why the correlation with work environment is almost zero.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics on Work Environment and Academic Staff Job Satisfaction

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Work Environment (Independent Variable)	14	3.29	1.14	1	5
Job Satisfaction (dependent Variable)	14	3.06	0.20	2.7	3.4

Table 3 Simulated Raw Scores

Participant	University Type	Work Environment (Scale 1-5) Independent Variable	Job Satisfaction (Scale 1-5) Dependent Variable
1	University Alpha	3	3.0
2	University Beta	4	3.1
3	University Beta	2	2.9
4	University Beta	5	3.2
5	University Alpha	3	2.8
6	University Beta	4	3.3
7	University Alpha	2	3.0
8	University Alpha	1	2.7
9	University Alpha	3	3.1
10	University Beta	5	3.4
11	University Alpha	2	2.9
12	University Beta	4	3.2
13	University Alpha	3	3.0
14	University Beta	5	3.3

From table three above the levels of job satisfaction in both university alpha and university Beta are almost consistent reflecting $R = 0.0058$ meaning that there is a very weak correlation while the standard deviation on job satisfaction residuals is estimated at 0.531 indicating consistency where work environment scores are varied across Likert scale 1-5 in both university Alpha and university Beta.

4.2.2 Regression Analysis on University Work Environment

The study employed a simple linear regression analysis formulae to assess the extent to which certain aspects and facilities within the working environment in the university such as leadership, infrastructure, collegial relationships, and administrative efficiency determines the level of university academic staff levels of job satisfaction in both university alpha and university Beta representing both public and private universities.

Table 4

General Influence of Working Environment on University Academic Staff Productivity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std of Estimate
Working Environment	0.058	0.003	-0.080	0.531

As indicated in table 4 of this study the regression R models value of 0.058 indicates that there is a very weak positive correlation between the academic staff working environment in the university Alpha and university Beta in relation to academic staff job satisfaction. From the above analysis the R^2 value of 0.003 demonstrates that only 0.3% of the variance in productivity is accounted for by the selected environmental institutional drivers in both universities Alpha and Beta. On the other hand the negative adjusted R^2 value (-0.080) indicates a possible overestimation due to irrelevant institutional practices, indicating that the variables included may not meaningfully contribute to predicting job satisfaction outcomes across the entire sample in this study.

Table 5

Examination of Regression Model (ANOVA)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Regression	0.110	1	0.110	0.040	0.844
Residual	3.386	12	0.282	-	-
Total	3.397	13	-	-	-

From table 5 above the outcome of the analysis indicates that regression model employed in this study is not statistically significant for example from the table $F = 0.040$, and $p = 0.844$. Although it's evident from a number of studies explored in chapter two that working environment is a vital determinant of the university academic staff job satisfaction the results from this analysis model explains otherwise. It's clear from this outcome that other moderating variables maybe related to higher job satisfaction therefore other drivers such as institutional policies could be a stronger drivers than working environment within the university.

4.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings on working Environment as a Job Satisfaction Driver

From earlier discussion although the regression analysis demonstrated weak and statistically no significant relationship between working environment and academic staff job satisfaction as discussed in this study earlier, the qualitative study reveals that working environment is a strong driver to academic staff job satisfaction as indicated in table 6 below:-

Table 6

Results on the influence of Working Environment on University Academic Staff Job Satisfaction

Dimension	University Alpha	University Beta
Institutional infrastructure	Dilapidated, constrained	Ultra-modern
Administrative Structures	Bureaucratic, with autocratic tendencies	Effective
Leadership style	Detached, reactive	Focused and responsive
Workload	Heavy , overburdening	Manageable
Stress Contributors	Job security	Performance rewards, autonomy recognition
Job satisfaction drivers	Resource scarcity, unclear promotion criteria	Output pressure, evaluation fatigue

From the discussions in objective number one of this study, the findings reveal differences in experiences in the two institutions reflect systemic issues that need to be addressed. Public universities like University Alpha, which depends heavily on government sponsorship and funding, is characterised with resource limitations and inflexible bureaucracies characterising leadership styles. This therefore means that academic staff job satisfaction levels in public universities are limited by structural deficiencies rather than individual staff performance limitations. Private universities, on the other hand, such as University Beta, operate under company structures that prioritize performance, branding, and return on investment to meet institutional goals. While this can lead to more efficient systems and better working conditions, it can also commodify the academic role, potentially reducing academic staff job satisfaction for those who value intellectual freedom over institutional directives (Marginson, 2007).

Further, the study findings highlight a crucial tension between resource availability and academic freedom. In public universities, staff may enjoy more intellectual freedom but face infrastructural and administrative limitations. In private universities, staff benefits from resource-rich environments but are often subject to more rigid institutional policies and control measures. This tension is not necessarily composed of an individual academic staff choice but rather a force cleared by the institutions, therefore the universities must balance performance expectations with the professional dignity and well-being of their academic staff.

The qualitative findings of this study strongly align with existing literature on job satisfaction and organizational dynamics in institutions of education. As demonstrated by Harsonet et al. (2023), Ulfah et al. (2023), Korir (2017), and Paz (2021), the link between leadership, infrastructure, workload, and institutional practices are key drivers in shaping university academic staff job satisfaction. These study therefore calls for the need for differentiated strategies in both public and private universities for example in public universities therefore is need for investment in infrastructure and administrative reform's while in private universities there is need of enhancing academic voice and reducing performance induced stress .if this is adequately done then the academic staff in both institutions will experience significant levels of job satisfaction.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In understanding the objective of this study and in answering the research question of this study, this study found out that while quantitative analysis models underscores the role of working environment as a critical driver to the university academic staff job satisfaction while qualitative explanations gave a contrary opinion indicating that university academic staff job satisfaction is influenced by work environmental conditions. In public universities represented by university Alpha the levels of job satisfaction is usually limited by structural inefficiencies, resource constraints while in private universities represented by university Beta, performance requirements were characterized by rigidity interferes with the benefits of better infrastructure therefore limiting the university academic staff job satisfaction.

5.2 Recommendations

This study would like to give the following policy recommendation. That both university Alpha and university Beta should improve university academic staff working conditions through investment in academic infrastructure and staff welfare. Both public (University Alpha) and private (University Beta) universities should consider creating conducive and well-resourced academic staff working environments. This includes modernizing office spaces,

reducing workload pressure through strategic staff recruitment and deployment, providing adequate teaching and research facilities, and promoting academic staff work life balance. This study notes that strategic infrastructural investments and academic staff welfare policies are essential for promoting job self-satisfaction.

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