

## Faculty Motivation and Job Satisfaction in Higher Education

Dr. Frank Padlan

Gmail add: [fpadlan.alaminos@psu.edu.ph](mailto:fpadlan.alaminos@psu.edu.ph)

Pangasinan State University – Lingayen Campus  
Lingayen, Pangasinan



**Dr. Frank Padlan** was born on November 1, 1964, in Samonte, Quezon, Isabela. He is the third of nine children of the late Mr. Alfredo V. Padlan, Sr., and the late Mrs. Letecia A. Padlan. He is married to the late Zenaida Melchor Padlan. He is a proud father of two accomplished daughters, namely **Maria Frances Aimee Melchor Padlan**, a graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and **Ma. Pamela Alyssa Melchor Padlan**, a graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, cum laude, passed the Philippine Board of Nursing and the NCLEX-RN in the US.

### Introduction

Motivation and job satisfaction are two crucial aspects that influence the quality of work life for all higher education faculty members. Motivation involves both internal & external forces that inspire someone to take an action or accomplish something (the reasons that motivate someone) and has a major impact on an educator's level of engagement and commitment to their work. A highly motivated educator typically performs well, contributes positively to the academic environment, and improves student learning outcomes.

Job satisfaction, by contrast, is the degree of satisfaction an educator experiences with aspects of their position: role, duties/responsibilities, and the culture of their workplace. Higher job satisfaction leads to increased productivity, reduced turnover, and stronger collaboration among employees. Faculty members in higher education are expected to perform many functions, including teaching, conducting research, and providing community service, all of which require effective juggling of competing demands. The degree to which faculty members can successfully juggle these competing demands is often influenced by their level of job satisfaction and motivation (Bai & Ghazali, 2024).

By understanding the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction, colleges and universities can foster a learning and working environment by engaging educators. The interdependence of motivation & satisfaction is supported by motivation theory, which provides theoretical frameworks for understanding how a variety of motivational techniques may improve job satisfaction for faculty and ultimately yield improved academic outcomes for students and the institution. The motivation theories that people have studied for many years can help organizations improve employee morale and job satisfaction by providing an understanding of these theories.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs describes how individuals are motivated to satisfy a series of needs, starting with basic needs such as food, shelter, and water. Once those basic needs (physiological needs) are met, they move upwards in the hierarchy of needs to more complex needs (such as self-esteem and self-actualization). Therefore, when faculty members are employed, they would likely seek a job with a secure income and a good work environment initially. However, once they have security and a good working environment, they would expect to experience personal growth or to be recognized for their contributions.

Hygiene factors (such as salary and working conditions) prevent faculty from being dissatisfied, but do not motivate faculty to improve their work performance (according to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory). Motivational factors (such as professional development opportunities, recognition for their contributions, and a sense of purpose for teaching) can improve job satisfaction for faculty members.

Self-Determination Theory (as presented by Sebit) explains the importance of intrinsic motivation (motivation that arises from within an individual for reasons related to personal interest or satisfaction, as opposed to extrinsic motivation, which arises from external sources). Faculty members who have autonomy to do their job, have opportunities to master their subject area, and can contribute meaningfully to their institution are typically more satisfied with their job than those who do not meet these conditions. (As stated in both Bai & Ghazali and Al-Ansi

et al.). These theories suggest that addressing the diverse motivational needs of faculty members will ultimately improve their job satisfaction. This method naturally entails evaluating specific elements that influence job satisfaction in higher educational institutions, thereby providing insight into how to develop a workplace that fosters a positive working environment for faculty members and supports the institution's successful operation.

### **Factors that Impact Job Satisfaction**

There are many interrelated elements that influence job satisfaction among those who work in higher education and shape how faculty members experience their jobs. A very important element when determining an employee's job satisfaction in an institution of higher education is having a supportive work environment. A supportive work environment includes not just physical attributes but also the institution's emotional aspects. As faculty members perceive that their colleagues and the administration are supportive, they develop a greater sense of belonging and therefore increase their job satisfaction. Also, recognition and reward systems are extremely important to faculty members' job satisfaction. When institutions recognize faculty members' contributions, it creates an environment of appreciation and encourages faculty to put forth additional effort and maintain their level of commitment (Manasa & Kasman, 2024).

An additional element that is extremely important is professional development opportunities. When an institution invests in the professional growth of its faculty through workshops, conferences, and mentoring programs, not only is the faculty member's teaching improved, but their morale also increases. In addition, by demonstrating a commitment to faculty development, institutions communicate to faculty that their professional growth is valued. Therefore, faculty members' job satisfaction and level of engagement with their work will increase. (Padilla et al., 2023).

The various factors that contribute toward job satisfaction provide the foundation on which a faculty member's work motivation is built. As a

faculty member's job satisfaction grows, their motivation will increase, resulting in improved performance and greater commitment to the institution. It is necessary to understand how each of these elements relates to the others, as the next chapter will demonstrate the direct impacts of motivation on job satisfaction. That is, socially motivated faculty are intrinsically connected to the level of support and value they feel in their profession and, therefore, their drive to excel academically. (Shaikh et al., 2023).

### **Motivation and Job Satisfaction: A Powerful Correlation**

Motivation is strongly correlated with job satisfaction among faculty in higher education. Numerous studies show that motivated faculty are typically more satisfied with their jobs, leading to enhanced overall job performance. For example, the results of a recent case study conducted at a prestigious university showed that motivated faculty reported higher job satisfaction when they received recognition for their efforts. Increased job satisfaction may lead to improved teaching effectiveness and greater student engagement.

Motivation plays an important role in job satisfaction through several different avenues. Intrinsic motivators (e.g., having a sense of purpose, being passionate about teaching) are positively correlated with faculty perceptions of their jobs. Faculty members who feel like they make a difference in the lives of others (i.e., their students) are more likely to have positive emotional responses toward their job. On the other hand, extrinsic motivators (e.g., salary, benefits) also contribute to job satisfaction, but typically to a lesser degree, unless they are comparable to what faculty members anticipate (Margolang et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction significantly impacts faculty performance. Educators who are motivated and satisfied with their jobs tend to utilize innovative teaching strategies, participate in professional development, and collaborate with other faculty members (Prianto & Handayani, 2024). Institutions can foster faculty motivation and job satisfaction through their support systems,

which, in turn, will create an environment conducive to job performance for faculty, students, and the academic community. This will set the stage for the next section, which will also examine how institutional support can further strengthen these dynamics.

### **How Institutional Support Helps Faculty**

Institutional support has been established as an important factor in promoting faculty motivation and job satisfaction in higher education. By implementing effective administrative policies, institutions can create a structured environment that supports faculty engagement and growth. For instance, schools that establish transparent communication with their faculty and create clear pathways for professional development make their faculty feel valued and aligned with the institution's mission(s). Institutions committed to promoting a culture of support for their faculty are most likely to have faculty who are motivated to contribute to their departments and/or interact with students.

Providing mentorship programs for new faculty members is also an essential aspect of providing institutional support. Providing opportunities for new faculty to work with experienced faculty as a mentor for guidance in overcoming challenges related to their work, improving instructional practices, and developing their professional network provides a supportive learning environment that helps to foster strong relationships between new faculty and help to develop a sense of community within the academic institution as a whole, while also enhancing the overall satisfaction of the faculty member being Faculty members are motivated by resources, which include Research Funds, Technology, and Professional Development Workshop(s). When faculty members have access to resources that support their success, they tend to look for new and creative ways to teach and conduct research.

However, even though resources are available to support faculty members in their teaching and research roles, many faculty members report encountering barriers that affect their ability to perform their duties, including increased workload and reduced opportunities to advance within the institution. Barriers to performance are important to

establish an environment of motivation and job satisfaction for faculty members because they affect their job satisfaction.

### **Barriers to Performing**

The existence of barriers to performing directly affects faculty members' motivation to perform and job satisfaction. The inability of faculty members to achieve work-life balance is a barrier. Faculty members struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance between who they are at work (the teacher and researcher) and their personal lives with family and friends. When faculty members are unable to achieve a work-life balance, they may become burned out, leading to decreased motivation for teaching and job satisfaction.

Another area of concern for faculty members is their job security. Increased competition for funding among colleges and universities contributes to faculty members' fear of losing their jobs. Concerns about job security create significant anxiety, making it difficult for faculty members to be creative and take risks in their teaching because they fear that anything that goes wrong will cost them their jobs.

Faculty members are also subject to stress due to the large number of administrative duties they are required to perform. When faculty members spend most of their time on paperwork and other institutional responsibilities unrelated to teaching, they become overwhelmed, undermining their mission to teach and mentor students (Khan & Sreenivasan, 2024).

The barriers illustrated above underscore the need for strategies to enhance faculty members' motivation and job satisfaction. Institutions must implement processes to help faculty members achieve work/life balance, provide faculty members with a sense of job security, and/or protect and defend faculty members from institutional processes that prevent faculty members from fulfilling their responsibilities to students. By addressing the barriers to faculty motivation and job satisfaction, institutions will also foster greater engagement with the institutional community, thereby improving students' learning outcomes and

enhancing their overall educational experience (Khan & Sreenivasan, 2024).

According to research, there's a key relationship between motivation and satisfaction in work. The key takeaways from the research are that the combination of supportive environments (co-faculty), recognition of achievements, and institutional policy significantly affects the level of motivation and satisfaction of faculty working within those spaces.

Faculty members who feel valued and are involved in continued professional development have higher levels of motivational energy and greater commitment to their students' performance.

To improve the faculty experience at higher education institutions, several recommendations are offered. First, institutions of higher education need to develop a culture of open communication and collaboration through routine feedback, the development of mentoring networks, and the encouragement of interdisciplinary work.

Additionally, higher education institutions should recognize the accomplishments of their faculty (both individually and collectively) to establish a culture of appreciation.

For these changes to be made, all stakeholders (administrators, faculty, and students) must be involved. Administrators should listen to their faculty's needs and work with them to actively engage them in their institutions' decision-making processes. Faculty must be advocates for themselves and their colleagues when articulating their experiences to administrators and providing recommendations for positive change. Students can support the faculty's initiatives and provide constructive feedback on their faculty members' performance.

Through implementing the recommendations above, higher education institutions can develop a highly performing and satisfied faculty, which, in turn, provides their students with enriching educational experiences and creates vibrant academic communities.

## References

- Al-Ansi, A. M., Jaboob, M., & Awain, A. M. S. B. (2023). Examining the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction between Motivation, Organizational Culture, and Employee Performance in Higher Education: A Case Study in the Arab Region. In *Education, Science, and Management*.  
<https://doi.org/10.56578/esm010104>
- Bai, Y., & Ghazali, S. S. (2024). Exploring the Link Between Transformational Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction and The Mediation Effect of Employee Work Motivation among Higher Education Teachers. In *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*.  
<https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v14-i5/21660>
- Ihensekien, O. A., & Joel, A. C. (2023). Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation Theories: Implications for Organizational Performance. In *The Romanian Economic Journal*.  
<https://doi.org/10.24818/rej/2023/85/04>.
- Khan, S., & Sreenivasan, D. (2024). Impact of AI on Work Life Balance of Working Women in Hotel Industry. In *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT*.  
<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijsrem38120>
- Manasa, K., & Bs, M. (2024). Motivating Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction Among Faculty Members in Junior Colleges, with reference to Hyderabad City. In the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT*. <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijsrem27882>.
- Margolang, R. K., Absah, Y., & Harahap, R. H. (2024). The Influence of Work-Life Balance and Motivation on Employee Performance with Job Satisfaction as the Mediator: A Case Study of Medicine Faculty Employees. In *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*. <https://doi.org/10.32535/jicp.v7i1.3101>
- Padilla, M. A., Thompson, J. N., Ball, J., & Phillips, R. (2023). Why They Intend to Leave: The Role of Burnout Between the Faculty Work Environment and Intent to Leave Academia. In *Journal of Educational & Psychological Research*.  
<https://doi.org/10.33140/jep.05.03.04>
- Prianto, R., & Handayani, R. (2024). Organizational Commitment, Work Motivation, and Job Satisfaction: Understanding Its Impact of Employee Performance (Case Study at Bank Mandiri (Persero)). In *Journal of Economics, Finance And Management Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.47191/jefms/v7-i7-18>

Sebit, M. D. W. (2024). RELEVANCE OF TRADITIONAL MOTIVATION THEORIES IN CURRENT TIMES. In the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT*.

<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijsrem34254>

Shaikh, A., Khoso, I., & Raza, A. (2023). Analysis of Individual Performance through Job Satisfaction: A Study of Faculty Members in Public Sector Universities in Sindh, Pakistan. In *Voyage Journal of Educational Studies*.

<https://doi.org/10.58622/vjes.v3i2.49>