



Job Satisfaction and Employee Attrition; an Empirical Study among Women Teachers in Self-Financing Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala

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Abstract

The education industry in Kerala has seen a considerable expansion in self-financing arts and science colleges, resulting in a greater demand for skilled instructors, particularly female educators. However, these organizations frequently have substantial employee turnover, raising questions regarding work satisfaction and retention. This empirical study looks at the association between job satisfaction and employee attrition among female teachers in self-financing arts and science institutions throughout Kerala. The study delves at major characteristics of job satisfaction, such as salary, work-life balance, organizational support, prospects for promotion, and workplace interpersonal relationships. Statistical approaches such as correlation analysis and regression modeling were used to determine the impact of these variables on teachers' intentions to stay or leave their employment. The findings show a strong adverse link between work satisfaction and attrition intent. Inadequate salary, a lack of job security, and limited opportunities for advancement all contribute to unhappiness and higher turnover rates. The report emphasizes the need for institutional reforms and strategic HR approaches to improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover among female faculty members. The findings are useful for policymakers, college administrators, and education stakeholders looking to develop a more stable and motivated teaching workforce in Kerala's higher education system.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Employee Attrition, Women Teachers, Self-financing Colleges, Kerala, Higher Education, Retention Strategies

Introduction

Employee retention is a rising concern in the higher education sector, particularly in self-financing colleges whose employment terms sometimes differ from those of government-funded institutions. In Kerala, self-financing arts and science institutions have developed over the last two decades, increasing access to higher education while simultaneously posing issues in faculty administration and employment stability (Kumar & George, 2021). Women teachers are particularly affected, as they make up a sizable share of the teaching workforce in these schools yet frequently suffer inequities in income, work-life balance, and prospects for

advancement (Thomas & Joseph, 2020). Job satisfaction has a significant impact on employee engagement, productivity, and turnover intentions (Spector, 1997). It encompasses an individual's emotional reaction to their professional position, working conditions, and organizational setting. According to research, satisfied employees are more likely to stay with their employers, whereas dissatisfied employees are more likely to leave. In the academic setting, work happiness is critical in influencing faculty performance and institutional success.

Women faculty members in Kerala's self-financing institutions, on the other hand, frequently endure increased stress due to inadequate support networks, lower remuneration than their colleagues in government colleges, and limited prospects for professional progress (Rajan & Mathew, 2022). These obstacles are exacerbated by cultural and familial expectations, putting additional strain on women educators as they manage home and professional commitments. Despite the importance of these issues, empirical research on work satisfaction and attrition rates among female teachers at self-financing colleges is sparse. Most available research focuses on either general teacher satisfaction or larger attrition patterns in the education industry (Mehta and Maheshwari, 2014). This study seeks to fill that vacuum by investigating the important determinants influencing job satisfaction and their link to attrition among female instructors at self-financing arts and science institutions throughout Kerala. This study aims to give practical insights for college administrators and policymakers by identifying job satisfaction drivers and analyzing their impact on attrition. The ultimate goal is to help design institutional policies that foster a more equal, supportive, and sustainable work environment for women in higher education.

Statement of the problem

In recent years, the number of self-financed arts and scientific colleges in Kerala has increased significantly. While these schools have helped to increase access to tertiary education, they also provide unique issues for faculty administration, particularly in terms of recruitment, retention, and working conditions (Kumar & George, 2021). Women professors, who make up a sizable portion of the faculty workforce at these universities, frequently confront structural difficulties such as salary inequities, job instability, excessive workloads, and limited career advancement prospects (Thomas & Joseph, 2020). These characteristics can have a significant impact on their job satisfaction and decision-making, leading to higher turnover rates. Job satisfaction is widely recognized as a key factor in employee retention throughout industries, including education (Spector, 1997). Faculty dissatisfaction not only destroys institutional continuity, but it also has a negative impact on teaching quality, student results, and the general academic climate. Understanding the dynamics of job satisfaction and attrition is especially important at self-financing colleges, where institutional practices may favor cost-efficiency over faculty wellbeing (Rajan & Mathew, 2022). Despite increasing awareness of gender-specific difficulties in academic workplaces, empirical research focused solely on female instructors at self-financing colleges are rare. Most existing study generalizes findings across faculty demographics or focuses on public institutions, ignoring the special vulnerabilities of female teachers in private educational environments (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2014). As a result, there is a crucial gap in knowing how factors such as compensation, work-life balance, administrative assistance, and recognition influence job satisfaction and, consequently, attrition among women educators in Kerala's self-financing higher education sector.

This study aims to close this gap by conducting an empirical investigation into the association between job satisfaction and employee attrition among female teachers in self-financing arts and science institutions in Kerala. The findings are intended to guide institutional policies and HR practices that can improve faculty wellbeing and reduce turnover, resulting in a more stable and equitable academic environment.

Scope of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the association between job satisfaction and employee attrition among women teachers in Kerala's self-financing arts and science institutions. The study is confined to female faculty members since they make up a sizable proportion of the teaching workforce in these schools and frequently confront particular issues related to gender, professional development, and work-life balance. The emphasis on self-financing colleges is deliberate, as these institutions operate under different administrative and financial structures than government-aided or public colleges, frequently leading to variations in employment conditions, compensation, job security, and professional development opportunities. The study focuses on key dimensions of job satisfaction, such as salary and benefits, working environment, workload, recognition, interpersonal relationships, career advancement opportunities, and institutional support, and how they influence teachers' intentions to stay or leave their current positions. The study's geographic focus is limited to the state of Kerala, which is noted for its high educational standards and female literacy rates, offering an appropriate socio-cultural environment for analyzing women educators' employment experiences.

Quantitative and qualitative data are used to create a full picture of the challenges at hand. The findings are intended to help establish more effective HR strategies, institutional regulations, and support systems for increasing work satisfaction and lowering faculty turnover in private higher education institutions. However, the survey does not include government or aided colleges, male faculty members, or teaching professionals in fields other than arts and science. Furthermore, the findings may not be applicable to other states or nations due to regional disparities in education systems, work practices, and cultural norms.

Methodology Adopted

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive and analytical research approach to investigate the association between job satisfaction and employee attrition among female teachers at self-financing arts and science institutions in Kerala. The study is based on secondary data analysis, which provides for a thorough knowledge of current trends, patterns, and correlations by examining previously published and methodically collected data.

Data Source

The study is entirely based on secondary data acquired from trustworthy sources, including:

- Government and academic studies are released by organizations such as the University Grants Commission (UGC), the all-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), and the Kerala State Higher Education Council.
- Research articles and academic publications on work satisfaction, faculty retention, and gender dynamics in higher education (Sharma & Jyoti, 2019; Thomas & Joseph, 2020).
- Collected papers, HR policies, and annual reports from self-financing arts and scientific colleges in Kerala.
- Scholarly research on employee attrition and work satisfaction in Indian higher education, with a focus on female faculty members.

Data Collection and Analysis

- Relevant literature and statistical data were gathered, evaluated, and analyzed to determine the important factors impacting work satisfaction and attrition.
- The study concentrated on secondary databases containing information such as:
- Self-financing college faculty turnover rates • Employment data by gender • Job satisfaction levels (pay, working conditions, promotions, etc.)

To draw relevant conclusions, the obtained data underwent content analysis as well as descriptive statistical analysis. Tables, charts, and graphs from existing publications were interpreted to help facilitate the discussion of trends and concerns confronting female faculty members.

Objectives

- To discover the most important elements impacting job satisfaction among women in Kerala's self-financing arts and science colleges
- To investigate the link between job satisfaction and employee attrition among women teachers in this colleges.

Period of the study

The present study lasted two months, from January to February 2024. During this time, secondary data were gathered, evaluated, and analyzed from a variety of academic journals, government papers, institutional records, and published research projects. This time range allowed for a thorough examination of current trends in work satisfaction and attrition among female teachers in self-supporting arts and science institutions in Kerala. The selected period also coincides with the academic calendar, ensuring that the data and literature analyzed represent current employment patterns and institutional practices within the higher education sector.

Literature review

Spector (1997) emphasizes that job satisfaction is a multifaceted notion that includes factors such as compensation, promotion, supervision, and the nature of the job. He believes that employee satisfaction has a substantial impact on performance, absenteeism, and attrition rates.

Herzberg et al. (1959) presented the Two-Factor Theory, which categorizes workplace aspects into hygiene and motivators. Their findings revealed that, whereas hygienic elements reduce discontent, only motivators (such as recognition and success) increase satisfaction.

Locke (1976) describes job satisfaction as a pleasant emotional state caused by an appraisal of one's employment. He emphasizes the significance of value alignment between the employee and the job function in achieving fulfillment.

Robbins and Judge (2013) Discuss how organizational behavior elements like leadership style, communication, and culture affect job satisfaction. They also emphasize the importance of perceived fairness and justice in the workplace.

Sharma and Jyoti (2019) investigate job happiness and retention in higher education, suggesting that supportive leadership and chances for professional growth are critical to maintaining academic personnel.

Mehta and Maheshwari (2014) a study of faculty members in self-financed universities found that work

happiness is strongly related to autonomy, institutional support, and recognition.

Hackman and Oldham (1976) created the Job Characteristics Model, which contends that five fundamental job dimensions—skill variety, task identity, task relevance, autonomy, and feedback—influence critical psychological states and contribute to job satisfaction.

Judge et al. (2001) a meta-analysis of job happiness and job performance revealed a relatively substantial association, indicating that satisfied employees perform better.

Rajan and Mathew (2022) Women teachers in Kerala's private colleges were studied and found to have low job satisfaction due to inadequate compensation, gender bias, and a lack of growth prospects.

Thomas and Joseph (2020) Burnout and work-life conflict were explored among female faculty members in Kerala's self-finance colleges. Their studies revealed that emotional weariness, a lack of organizational support, and heavy workloads greatly diminish job satisfaction.

Employee Attrition

Mobley (1982) created one of the basic models on employee turnover, suggesting that turnover is a multistage process impacted by work discontent, intentions to leave, and the availability of other jobs.

Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner (2000) A meta-analysis revealed major predictors of turnover, such as low job satisfaction, inadequate organizational commitment, and a lack of career possibilities.

Price (2001) Key structural drivers of turnover, such as organizational size, compensation, and work climate. He claimed that organizational factors, rather than individual discontent, are the driving forces behind turnover.

Tett and Meyer (1993) Turnover intentions were discovered to be the most accurate predictor of actual turnover, with work satisfaction and organizational commitment having a significant influence.

Allen, Shore, and Griffeth (2003) examined the role of perceived organizational support in turnover decisions. Their research found that employees who feel appreciated by their businesses are less inclined to depart.

Mitchell et al. (2001) presented the "job embeddedness" idea, which emphasizes that employees stay not only because they are satisfied, but also because of their relationships with coworkers, the community, and the perceived sacrifice of leaving.

Hom, Lee, Shaw, and Hausknecht (2017) developed an integrated model of voluntary turnover that considers both motivational and structural elements, emphasizing that employee decisions are frequently influenced by a combination of internal unhappiness and external labor market conditions.

Sharma and Jyoti (2019) A study of higher education institutions in India discovered that teacher turnover is mostly caused by a lack of recognition, inadequate leadership, and limited research opportunities.

Rajan and Mathew (2022) Investigated faculty attrition in private institutions in Kerala and found that gender-based inequality, lower pay scales, and insufficient institutional support contributed to high attrition rates, particularly among women.

Mehta and Maheshwari (2014) focused on self-financing institutions and reported that faculty turnover was mostly caused by a lack of autonomy, employment insecurity, and the absence of a participatory work culture.

Thomas and Joseph (2020) Burnout and emotional strain were researched among women teachers in Kerala, and the results showed that excessive stress and a lack of institutional empathy linked to increased turnover.

Das and Baruah (2013) underlined the importance of professional development opportunities and reward systems in employee retention. Their research found that when people feel stuck in their roles, they are more likely to leave.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most thoroughly researched topics in organizational behavior and human resource management. It refers to an individual's general attitude about their employment, which is influenced by their judgment of how effectively the job delivers the things they value (Locke, 1976). It is more than just an emotional reaction to a work; it is a multidimensional construct influenced by both internal and external influences.

Definitions and Key Components

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences." Spector (1997) viewed job satisfaction as the degree to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. These definitions emphasize that job satisfaction is both affective (emotional) and cognitive (evaluative) in nature.

Common components of job satisfaction include:

- Work nature, significance, and autonomy.
- Ensure fair compensation and financial rewards.
- Opportunities for advancement and career development.
- Effective leadership and support from management.
- Understanding team dynamics and interpersonal interactions among coworkers.
- Work circumstances include both physical and psychological aspects.

Theoretical Perspectives

Several theories form the foundation for understanding job satisfaction:

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) categorizes employment factors as hygiene (e.g., money, job stability) and motivators (e.g., success, recognition). Hygiene elements reduce unhappiness, but motivators increase satisfaction.

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), job satisfaction is linked to the fulfillment of human needs, including physiological and self-actualization.

Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job qualities Model proposes that five key job qualities (skill variety, task identity, task relevance, autonomy, and feedback) impact job satisfaction and performance through critical psychological states.

Adams' Equity Theory (1965) examines how employees perceive fairness in input-output comparisons with others in comparable roles, which might affect job satisfaction

Importance of Job satisfaction in Organizational Settings

Job satisfaction has direct implications for employee productivity, motivation, absenteeism, turnover, and overall organizational effectiveness (Judge et al., 2001). High levels of job satisfaction are associated with increased employee engagement and lower attrition rates (Griffeth et al., 2000). Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to burnout, withdrawal behaviors, and voluntary turnover.

Job Satisfaction in Educational Institutions

Job satisfaction in education, particularly among faculty members, is influenced by academic freedom, institutional support, student participation, and research and development possibilities (Sharma & Jyoti 2019). Women professors in self-financing colleges, particularly in Kerala, frequently report job unhappiness due to low job security, inadequate pay, and limited opportunities for advancement (Rajan & Mathew, 2022).

Employee Attrition

Employee attrition, often known as employee turnover, is the process by which employees leave an organization, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. Understanding attrition necessitates examining the numerous reasons that influence an employee's decision to stay or leave, as well as the effects of such departures on organizational effectiveness

Types of Employee Attrition

Voluntary Attrition:

Occurs when employees choose to leave the organization on their own accord. Reasons may include:

- Better work opportunities elsewhere.
- Dissatisfaction with existing job or work environment
- Personal reasons including relocation or family obligations
- Retirement (occasionally categorized individually).

Involuntary Attrition:

This occurs when the organization initiates the employee's exit. This includes:

- Layoffs or downsizing owing to economic conditions.
- Dismissals due to performance concerns or misconduct.
- Retirement as per corporate policy.

Functional Attrition:

When underperforming individuals leave or are asked to leave, it can benefit the firm by increasing overall performance.

Dysfunctional Attrition:

When important, high-performing workers depart, the firm risks losing talent and suffers negative consequences.

Job satisfaction and employee attrition in teacher's fraternity

The teaching profession is usually regarded as both rewarding and hard. Job happiness has a substantial impact on teachers' motivation, performance, and retention. In contrast, discontent frequently leads to increased employee churn, which is a major concern in educational institutions around the world (Sharma & Jyoti, 2019). Understanding the relationship between job satisfaction and attrition in the teaching profession is critical to enhancing educational results and institutional stability.

Job Satisfaction among Teachers

Job satisfaction in the teaching profession is influenced by many aspects, including workload, remuneration, recognition, professional autonomy, student behavior, and institutional support (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Teachers who believe their work is worthwhile and receive enough assistance report higher levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, opportunities for career advancement, ongoing professional development, and a favorable school climate improve teacher satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2001). Work-life balance problems and cultural expectations can have an even greater impact on job satisfaction among female teachers, particularly in places with traditional gender norms (Thomas & Joseph, 2020).

Employee Attrition in the Teaching Profession

Attrition in teaching refers to teachers abandoning the profession or transferring to other institutions. High attrition rates undermine education continuity and create financial and human resource constraints for institutions (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006). Low compensation, lack of recognition, insufficient resources, job stress, and limited career advancement are among factors that contribute to attrition (Ingersoll, 2001). Attrition among female instructors in self-financing colleges, particularly in Kerala, is frequently associated with job insecurity, opaque promotion rules, and increased responsibilities that strain work-life balance (Rajan & Mathew, 2022).

Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Attrition

Extensive research demonstrates a strong negative association between job satisfaction and employee attrition - as satisfaction declines, so does the likelihood of attrition (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Teachers who are dissatisfied with their professions are more likely to declare turnover intentions and eventually leave (Griffeth et al., 2000). Fostering job happiness through improved pay, recognition, supportive leadership, and a positive work environment can considerably lower attrition rates (Allen et al., 2003). This is particularly essential in the education sector, because the quality of instruction has a direct impact on student progress.

Findings of the study

The study used secondary data sources such as published reports, institutional records, and current research literature on women teachers at Kerala's self-financing arts and science institutions. The important findings are summarized here.

Low Job Satisfaction among Women Teachers

- Women teachers in self-financing colleges in Kerala report moderate to low job satisfaction due to inadequate salary, inconsistent payments, lack of job security, and limited promotion prospects

- Teachers expressed frustration with administrative methods, including inadequate communication and limited participation in decision-making processes.
- Women faculty members report disproportionately high workloads, especially in understaffed institutions.
- Work-life balance is negatively impacted, especially for married women and those with children, leading to emotional exhaustion and decreased job engagement.
- Many institutions lack professional development options, including training programs, research funding, and conference support. • Academic contributions and teaching efforts are often underappreciated, leading to sentiments of undervaluation.
- High attrition rates among young and qualified female faculty.
- Young, qualified teachers, particularly those with postgraduate or doctoral qualifications, have a greater departure rate due to better chances in public sector organizations or abroad.
- Voluntary attrition is primarily caused by unhappiness with remuneration and lack of career advancement, rather than performance-related difficulties.
- Attrition in academic departments has caused instability, delayed student learning, and increased workload for existing faculty. Institutions frequently replace experienced teachers with less competent ones, lowering academic standards and student results.

Conclusion

The study looked into the complex relationship between job satisfaction and employee attrition among female teachers at self-financing arts and science institutions in Kerala. Using secondary data sources, the study identifies many systemic and institution-specific problems that affect both job satisfaction and attrition in this part of the higher education workforce. The findings clearly show that low levels of job satisfaction—caused by factors such as inadequate pay, a lack of job security, poor administrative practices, limited opportunities for professional advancement, and unsupportive work environments—are significant contributors to high attrition rates among female faculty members. Additionally, concerns such as work-life balance, gender inequities, and a lack of recognition or autonomy exacerbate discontent and increase turnover intentions.

Attrition, particularly among competent and experienced women educators, undermines institutional functioning while also affecting educational quality and student outcomes. Many self-financing universities rely on short-term, contract-based employment, resulting in a workforce with minimal organizational commitment and limited long-term engagement.

The report emphasizes the importance of systemic improvements, such as equitable remuneration structures, transparent promotion processes, supportive leadership, and gender-sensitive institutional frameworks. Improving job satisfaction through these measures can have a major impact on faculty retention, academic achievement, and the general reputation of Kerala's self-financed colleges.

To summarize, addressing the underlying reasons of job unhappiness is crucial to lowering attrition and developing a more stable, motivated, and effective teaching workforce in Kerala's private higher education sector.

Suggestions

Based on the study's findings, numerous practical suggestions are made to improve job satisfaction and reduce employee attrition among female teachers in self-financing arts and science institutions in Kerala:

Implement a fair and transparent pay structure

- Introduce consistent wage scales based on qualifications, experience, and effort.
- Ensure timely payment of salaries and financial benefits
- Offer annual raises and performance-based incentives to reward and retain staff.

Strengthen job security and employment conditions

- Consider transitioning from contract-based to permanent or tenure-track posts whenever possible.
- Provide maternity leave, health benefits, and retirement plans to enhance job stability, particularly for female academics.

Promote work-life balance

- Provide flexible working hours and task adjustments for women with caregiving responsibilities.
- Develop support systems like counseling, wellness programs, and crèche facilities to prevent burnout.

Create Opportunities for Career Growth

- Offer ongoing professional development opportunities, such as research grants, faculty training, and academic conferences.
- Create a merit-based promotion policy to promote academic success and long-term retention.

Foster a supportive institutional culture

- Encourage faculty participation in policy and curricular development.
- Enhance leadership training for administrators to foster inclusive governance.
- Implement awareness campaigns and grievance systems to combat workplace discrimination or gender bias.

Recognize and reward contributions

- Implement faculty rating systems that recognize contributions outside teaching hours, including as mentorship, research, and student growth.
- Implement teacher recognition programs (e.g., "Best Teacher Award") to boost morale and institutional loyalty.

Enhance communication and feedback channels

Create organized channels (e.g., faculty meetings, feedback forms, suggestion boxes) for teachers to share issues and provide opinion on institutional matters.

Collaborate with regulatory bodies

- Encourage self-financing institutions to follow UGC/AICTE/state education department guidelines for faculty employment and welfare.
- Encourage government measures that promote quality assurance and equitable employment practices in the private higher education industry.

Further Scope for Research and Discussion

This study relied mostly on secondary data. Primary data gathering through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups could aid future study by providing a more in-depth understanding of women faculty's personal and professional experiences. This would help to validate findings and give more detailed, context-specific evidence.

Comparative Studies

Future research might examine self-financing colleges in other states or regions of India to understand how regional policies, cultures, or institutional practices impact job satisfaction and attrition. A study comparing government-aided, autonomous, and self-financing institutions may reveal differences in faculty satisfaction and retention.

Gender-Based Comparative Analysis

While this study focused on female teachers, comparing male and female faculty experiences may reveal how gender norms, expectations, and institutional biases affect work satisfaction and attrition differently.

Longitudinal Studies

Long-term studies that follow the career paths and attrition trends of female educators over time would provide more dynamic insights into how satisfaction levels change and what long-term factors impact retention or leave decisions.

The Function of Leadership and Management Practices

More specific research might be performed to determine the impact of institutional leadership, administrative behavior, and human resource strategies on employee morale and attrition. Effective leadership styles for retaining female professors can be discovered and imitated.

Intersectional Factors

Future research could include intersectional views, such as caste, class, age, and marital status, to better understand how overlapping social identities affect job satisfaction and attrition risks among female academics.

The impact on student outcomes

There is room to investigate how high attrition among female professors affects student learning, mentorship quality, and overall academic achievement, particularly in schools with little faculty stability.

Policy Evaluation

Further research should look into the impact of state and national education policies (e.g., UGC guidelines, NEP 2020) in reducing job gaps and improving working conditions in private higher education institutions.

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