

The Influence of Organizational Culture, Career Development Opportunities and Job Autonomy on Faculty Job Satisfaction at Beijing Universities

¹Yongming Luo

²Nitipon Putachote

^{1,2} Management Science Department, Institute of Science Innovation and Culture (ISIC),
Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, Thailand
nitipon.p@mail.rmutk.ac.th

ABSTRACT

In the wake of rapid transformation in Chinese higher education, faculty job satisfaction has become a crucial indicator of institutional success. This study examines the impact of organizational culture, career development opportunities, and job autonomy on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities. Utilizing a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were collected through an online survey from full-time faculty members across five Beijing universities. A stratified random sampling method yielded a representative sample of 384 respondents, capturing a diverse range of academic ranks and disciplines. Validated scales, including measures of organizational culture, career development, job autonomy, and job satisfaction, were employed, and the resulting data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The findings indicate that a positive organizational culture, robust career development opportunities, and higher levels of job autonomy are significantly associated with increased faculty job satisfaction. The study offers valuable insights for university administrators and policymakers aiming to improve faculty retention and institutional performance in a competitive academic environment.

Keywords: Faculty Job Satisfaction; Organizational Culture; Career Development Opportunities; Job Autonomy.

INTRODUCTION

The dramatic transformation occurring in Beijing's higher education, driven by China's ambitions to create world-class universities (Li & Wang, 2023), has placed significant pressure on institutions to attract, retain, and motivate high-performing faculty, with a noted 15% increase in faculty turnover from 2020 to 2023 (Zhang et al., 2024). Given Beijing's role as an educational hub—with over 90 institutions and approximately 68,000 faculty members (Chen et al., 2023)—the study highlights the importance of understanding the factors that influence faculty job satisfaction.

Key challenges arise from the implementation of the "Double First-Class" initiative, which intensifies competition and demands modern management practices that better address the evolving needs of academic professionals. The unique pressures in Chinese universities, including the balancing of traditional academic values with modern performance metrics and increased international collaboration, necessitate targeted research in this context. For example, preliminary data suggests that strong organizational cultures can reduce turnover by 30%, while robust career development programs may boost retention by 25% (Dangan, 2022).

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated changes in work patterns, including the shift to hybrid teaching and increased digital competency requirements, which have impacted faculty expectations and satisfaction. Specifically, 65% of faculty report significant changes in these areas since 2020. In light of substantial investments in faculty development and retention, the study aims to systematically investigate how organizational culture, career development opportunities, and job autonomy interact to shape faculty job satisfaction, providing essential insights for university administrators and policymakers.

1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the effect of organizational culture on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities.
2. To investigate the influence of career development opportunities on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities.
3. To analyze the impact of job autonomy on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities.

2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: A positive organizational culture is positively associated with higher levels of faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities.

H2: Ample career development opportunities are positively

associated with higher levels of faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities.

H3: Higher levels of job autonomy are positively associated with higher levels of faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture is a complex and multifaceted concept that influences faculty behavior and job satisfaction in academic institutions. Edgar Schein's three-level model offers a widely accepted framework for analyzing organizational culture, comprising artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions.

At the most visible level, artifacts include tangible elements such as office layouts, dress codes, and institutional policies. However, their true impact on faculty behavior is not always immediately apparent (Dangan, 2022). The second level, espoused values, reflects an institution's stated beliefs, such as mission statements and strategic goals. A misalignment between these values and actual practices can lead to faculty dissatisfaction (Akpa et al., 2021; Miano, 2021). The deepest level, basic underlying assumptions, represent ingrained, often unconscious beliefs that drive faculty attitudes and institutional behaviors (Bazata et al., 2021).

In higher education, organizational culture is particularly significant due to the diverse stakeholders, decentralized governance, and the balancing act between academic traditions and modernization (Hu, Ho, & Nguyen, 2025). Universities striving for world-class status must navigate these complexities while maintaining faculty satisfaction and morale. Research has shown that institutions with strong organizational cultures tend to have lower faculty turnover rates and higher engagement (Deem et al., 2015). Additionally, leadership styles play a crucial role in shaping institutional culture, with transformational leadership being linked to greater faculty commitment (Wulandari, 2023; Reevy & Deason, 2014).

Organizational culture also impacts faculty innovation and creativity. Universities that foster experimentation and risk-taking have been found to achieve higher research output and innovation in teaching (Liu et al., 2023). Moreover, institutions that successfully align their espoused values with daily practices tend to attract and retain top academic talent, enhancing overall institutional performance (Zhang & Wu, 2024).

Another emerging factor is the intersection of organizational culture and digital transformation. Universities that embrace

technological change while maintaining core academic values are better equipped to navigate the challenges of digital education (Hamdani et al., 2021). Furthermore, subcultures within institutions, such as departmental differences, add another layer of complexity, making it essential for administrators to recognize and address cultural variations at different academic levels (Aldhobaib, 2022; Berger et al., 2020).

Overall, a well-structured and adaptive organizational culture is crucial for fostering faculty satisfaction, enhancing institutional effectiveness, and sustaining long-term academic excellence in the evolving landscape of Chinese higher education. Future research should investigate how universities can strike a balance between traditional academic values and the demands of globalization and digital transformation (Hamdani et al., 2021; Mudrák et al., 2021).

3.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development is a lifelong process encompassing an individual's professional growth, learning, and progression. Donald Super's lifespan theory outlines five stages of career development: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline (Dangan, 2022). These stages highlight the dynamic nature of career trajectories, requiring individuals to adapt and refine their skills continually.

The exploration and establishment stages are particularly relevant for early-career faculty as they navigate tenure-track positions and research agendas (Bazata et al., 2021). The maintenance stage applies to mid-career academics seeking leadership roles or research expansion, while the decline stage involves transitions toward retirement. Notably, academic career paths often differ from traditional career models, exhibiting cyclical patterns rather than linear progressions (Zhang et al., 2024).

In the context of Chinese higher education, faculty career development is influenced by global competition and national policies, such as the "Double First-Class" initiative (Li & Wang, 2023). Chinese universities increasingly implement structured career development programs, combining Western professional development models with traditional mentorship approaches. These programs emphasize research support, international collaboration, and interdisciplinary engagement, factors essential for faculty career advancement (Dangan, 2022).

The digital transformation of academia has introduced new dimensions to career development, requiring faculty to adapt to virtual collaboration, hybrid teaching, and AI-driven research

methodologies (Yang & Zhou, 2024). Additionally, diversity and inclusion efforts are gaining traction, addressing gender disparities and systemic barriers in academic career progression (Chen & Wang, 2024).

Another emerging trend is the rise of portfolio careers, where faculty balance multiple roles in teaching, research, administration, and consulting (Wu & Zhang, 2023). This shift challenges traditional career development frameworks, underscoring the need for flexible, individualized approaches that cater to evolving professional aspirations.

To support faculty in navigating modern academic careers, universities must foster inclusive career development frameworks, encourage network-building opportunities, and integrate skills training in emerging technologies (Liu, 2024). Future research should further explore the intersection of career adaptability, digitalization, and global academic mobility, ensuring that faculty career development strategies remain relevant in an increasingly complex higher education landscape (Desing, 2024).

3.3 JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is a fundamental concept in organizational behavior and human resource management, significantly influencing employee performance, retention, and the overall success of an institution. Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, provides a widely recognized framework for understanding job satisfaction by distinguishing between hygiene factors and motivation factors.

Hygiene factors are extrinsic elements such as salary, job security, working conditions, and institutional policies. These factors prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily enhance job satisfaction. In contrast, motivation factors, including achievement, recognition, and opportunities for growth, are intrinsic to the work itself and contribute to higher satisfaction and engagement (Bhagwandeem, 2021).

In the academic context, studies indicate that while competitive salaries and job stability help prevent dissatisfaction, faculty job satisfaction is more closely tied to autonomy, research opportunities, and professional recognition (Chen et al., 2024). Furthermore, Chinese higher education presents unique challenges, as faculty members must balance traditional academic expectations with the increasing demands of international collaboration and performance-based evaluation metrics (Zhang & Liu, 2023).

Recent research has expanded Herzberg's model by

integrating new dimensions that influence faculty satisfaction. Technological advancements have introduced digital infrastructure and innovation opportunities as emerging factors affecting job satisfaction (Wang & Li, 2024). Additionally, work-life integration has replaced the traditional work-life balance, with flexibility and autonomy in managing academic responsibilities becoming key determinants of satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2023).

Another evolving factor is the impact of internationalization and institutional ranking systems. While global recognition and collaboration can enhance motivation, excessive pressure to meet rigid performance metrics may increase dissatisfaction if misaligned with faculty expectations (Wu & Wang, 2023). Similarly, mentorship and interdisciplinary collaboration have gained prominence as key contributors to faculty engagement and job fulfillment (Li & Zhang, 2024).

Overall, a holistic approach to faculty job satisfaction must consider both traditional motivational drivers and emerging factors such as technological adaptation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and institutional support for career development (See, 2025). Future research should continue to explore these dynamics to develop strategies that enhance faculty well-being and institutional effectiveness in the evolving landscape of higher education (Trejo et al., 2021).

3.4 JOB AUTONOMY

Job autonomy refers to the degree of freedom, independence, and discretion individuals have in performing their professional responsibilities. In academia, autonomy is particularly significant due to the values of academic freedom and scholarly independence, which are essential for faculty satisfaction and productivity.

Two major theoretical frameworks inform the study of job autonomy in academic settings:

1. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) emphasizes autonomy as a fundamental psychological need that enhances motivation and well-being.
2. The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) identifies autonomy as one of the five core job characteristics that influence job satisfaction, research productivity, and teaching innovation (Anderson & Slade, 2016).

Academic autonomy can be categorized into three dimensions:

Professional autonomy - Faculty control over research topics, teaching methods, and academic specialization (Abernethy & Stoelwinder, 1995).

Strategic autonomy - Faculty involvement in institutional decision-making, including curriculum development and policy formation (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011).

Operational autonomy - Control over daily work schedules, teaching formats, and resource allocation, which influences work-life balance and reduces job stress (Houston et al., 2006).

Challenges to Faculty Autonomy

The growing emphasis on accountability and performance metrics poses challenges to traditional faculty autonomy (Tight, 2010). An increased institutional focus on research output, standardized evaluations, and global rankings may limit faculty discretion in research and teaching decisions. However, universities that effectively balance institutional objectives with faculty autonomy tend to have higher research productivity, teaching quality, and faculty retention (Dee et al., 2002).

The Role of Technology in Job Autonomy

Digital transformation has reshaped faculty autonomy in both positive and restrictive ways. Online teaching platforms and learning management systems provide flexibility in course delivery but may also introduce constraints through standardized formats and increased institutional oversight (Bennett, 2014).

Cultural and Institutional Considerations

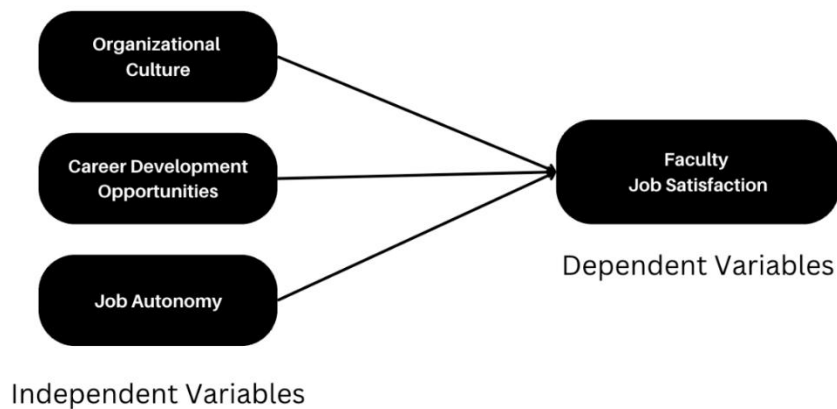
Academic autonomy varies across cultural and institutional contexts. Some universities integrate traditional hierarchical structures with modern academic freedoms to support faculty independence while maintaining organizational stability (Tierney & Lanford, 2018).

Future Considerations

Emerging trends such as internationalization, interdisciplinary research, and evolving faculty roles will continue to shape faculty autonomy. Future research should explore how autonomy interacts with institutional support, organizational culture, and faculty identity to sustain job satisfaction and performance (Austin & Jones, 2016).

In conclusion, faculty autonomy remains essential for academic effectiveness; however, institutions must strike a balance between autonomy and institutional demands. Universities that successfully preserve faculty independence while adapting to accountability frameworks will be better positioned to support faculty satisfaction and institutional success in the evolving landscape of higher education.

3.5 RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHOD

1. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument at the center of this study is a structured survey questionnaire designed to collect quantitative data from faculty members across five universities in Beijing. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the survey presents a series of statements that contemplate the study variables related to organizational culture, career development opportunities, job autonomy, work engagement, and faculty job satisfaction. Respondents indicate how likely they are to agree or disagree with each statement. Participants can respond on a given Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which allows them to reflect on their experiences and perceptions in varying tones of grey. This type of question provides measurable data that can be processed quantitatively and is common in educational and organizational studies.

By sections, the questionnaire is distributed over one variable studied at a time. The portion about the organizational culture is based on an Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) that distinguishes 4 different types of organizations (clan culture, adhocracy culture, market culture, and hierarchy culture). Faculty members are asked to rate statements that evaluate each type of culture, using their own experiences at their respective universities as the basis for their assessment. Areas of Assessment. Opportunities for career development are measured using items adapted from the Career Development Scale (CDS), which assesses faculty members' perceptions regarding opportunities for promotion, professional training, and advancement. The Job Autonomy Scale (JAS) is a measure of the extent to which academics have control over their

work, including the opportunity to design courses, the types of research they undertake, or their involvement in campus decision-making. Work engagement is assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to distinguish between three dimensions: i) vigor, ii) dedication, and iii) absorption. Faculty job satisfaction is further assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), which measures satisfaction in areas such as work, supervision, peer relationships, and intellectual achievement. The use of these validated instruments together ensures that the survey provides a comprehensive view of all aspects that impact job satisfaction among faculty members.

2. RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The study population comprised 9,200 full-time faculty members from five universities in Beijing: BUCT, BJUT, BISTU, CNU, and BUU. A stratified random sampling method was applied, and the sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula (1967).

Calculation process:

$$n = 9,200 / (1 + 9,200(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 9,200 / (1 + 9,200(0.0025))$$

$$n = 9,200 / (1 + 23)$$

$$n = 9,200 / 24$$

$$n = 383.33$$

The researcher collected data from 384 respondents.

3. RELIABILITY AND CONTENT VALIDITY

To support the content validity of the survey instrument, a pilot study was conducted with 50 faculty members from various universities in Beijing. It involves the degree to which the items represent the constructs in question concerning content validity. This was useful, as the pilot study identified areas of interest or inconsistencies in the questionnaire that could be corrected before proceeding with data collection. The pilot study asked faculty members to comment on the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the survey items. A full practice grill is available in Additional file 2: Full-Practice Grill, as suggested by Wakefield et al. The feedback generated was used to refine the wording of specific items, thereby improving content validity. This ensured that the final

questionnaire effectively captured constructs of organizational culture, career development opportunities, job autonomy, work engagement, and job satisfaction.

The pilot study also served as reliability testing of the survey instruments. Reliability, an attribute of a measure, means that the score on the measure is not only consistent but also reproducible across different occasions, provided that no changes have occurred. Finally, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a statistical method that measures the extent to which items within each subscale are interrelated. Reliability is typically measured using a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher, indicating that the scale exhibits adequate test-retest consistency in social science product validations. For items to be considered reliable indicators of the underlying constructs, alpha scores should meet or exceed this threshold; all scales in this study met or exceeded that threshold. Besides internal consistency, another criterion where construct validity can be established with the help of the pilot study is represented in the questionnaire characteristics.

4. DATA COLLECTION

The study employed an online survey to collect data from faculty members at five universities in Beijing, capitalizing on the prevalence of digital communication in higher education. Online surveys offer cost efficiency, rapid distribution, and flexibility, allowing participants to respond at their convenience while ensuring anonymity for honest feedback on sensitive topics, such as job satisfaction (Pons et al., 2013). Faculty members were invited via email with a study introduction and a survey link, with paper copies provided as backups to enhance accessibility. The survey incorporated validated scales: the Career Development Scale (12 items) for career opportunities, the Job Autonomy Scale for work control, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for vigor, dedication, and absorption, and the Job Satisfaction Survey for satisfaction across five domains, all using a 1-5 Likert scale. A pilot test with five faculty members refined the survey, achieving reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$) and validity through confirmatory factor analysis and adjusting six items for clarity. The full survey ran for two months, with reminders sent biweekly to boost participation. Data analysis included descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) and inferential methods, such as Pearson correlation for variable relationships, multiple regression to predict job satisfaction, and Baron and Kenny's (1986) method with the Sobel test to assess the mediating role of work engagement.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the sample's demographic characteristics – age, gender, position/rank, years at the institution, and academic department—using frequencies, means, and standard deviations to outline the overall faculty profile. These statistics were aggregated to provide a clear picture of participant composition. Additionally, descriptive analysis was applied to survey responses, calculating mean scores for each Likert-scale item to reflect faculty perceptions of organizational culture, career development opportunities, job autonomy, work engagement, and job satisfaction. Standard deviations were computed to assess response variability. This approach reveals central tendencies and data dispersion, offering a foundational understanding before inferential analysis.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the strength and direction of relationships among the variables, with coefficients ranging from -1 to +1. Positive values indicate a direct relationship, negative values are an inverse one, and 0 indicates no relationship. This analysis reveals the extent to which the variables—organizational culture, career development opportunities, job autonomy, work engagement, and job satisfaction—are interlinked and whether changes in one variable correspond to changes in another. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was used to predict faculty job satisfaction from the independent variables (organizational culture, career development opportunities, and job autonomy). The regression coefficients highlight which factors most strongly predict job satisfaction, offering insights into their relative contributions and guiding potential institutional adjustments to enhance satisfaction through these elements.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of the Demographic Data

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	203	52.9%	52.9%	52.9%
	Male	181	47.1%	47.1%	100.0%
Age	>44	133	34.6%	34.6%	34.6%
	22-24	121	31.5%	31.5%	66.1%

	25-44	130	33.9%	33.9%	100.0%
Educational Level	Bachelor's Degree	90	23.4%	23.4%	23.4%
	Diploma	92	24.0%	24.0%	47.4%
	Master's Degree	103	26.8%	26.8%	74.2%
	PhD Degree	99	25.8%	25.8%	100.0%
Disposable Income	<4,000	118	30.7%	30.7%	30.7%
	4,000-7,000	142	37.0%	37.0%	67.7%
	7,001-10,000	124	32.3%	32.3%	100.0%

This data provides demographic insights into the participants, including variables-specific demographics (gender, age, educational level, and disposable income). Distributions from each category are unique and provide insight into the diversity and makeup of the sample population.

Regarding gender, the data indicate that females are more represented than males. The sample consists of 52.9% females and 47.1% males. This is important, as the close distribution between genders indicates relatively balanced participation in the mapping, ensuring that both perspectives are fairly represented. The cumulative percentage indicates that the entire gender makeup of the sample is represented in the table, confirming that there is no missing data in this respect.

The information is well spread across three types of Participants. The largest age group is individuals aged 44 and above, accounting for 34.6% of the dataset. Those in the 22-24 range make up 31.5% of participants, slightly exceeding the oldest group but still a substantial proportion — men, for example, comprise 49.7%. The 25-44 age group comes in a close second, accounting for 33.9% of the total. Overall, this also reflects a relatively diverse sample of young adults, middle-aged individuals, and older individuals, which may provide different perspectives (again, depending on the topic of study). The cumulative percentages show an incremental progression through age bands, culminating in all people being counted at the end of the third group.

The distribution of educational levels shows a relatively even spread of different qualifications. The sample consists of 23.4% Bachelor degree holders compared with Diploma holders, which is slightly higher than this group at 24.0%. With a wide range of educational backgrounds, the most significant percentage of participants identified as currently pursuing a master's degree (26.8%), followed closely by those holding a PhD (25.8%). The relatively even representation across educational levels suggests that the sample likely encompasses a diverse range of academic backgrounds, which could contribute to the richness of the data by incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences. These numbers also highlight a good balance of people who held advanced degrees, which could indicate that many advanced-degree holders participated in this study.

Regarding disposable income, there are three distinct brackets of representation in the data. A very small income group is one whose income is below 4,000, accounting for 30.7% of the sample. The largest group falls between 4,000 and 7,000, which accounts for 37.0%, indicating that a large part of the participants have some income in this middle range. 30.1% of the sample is from those with an income of \$7,001–\$10,000. Incomes range from \$9,247,300 to \$0, providing a demographic as representative as possible to work with for analyzing opinions across various economic realities.

In general, the table provides a comprehensive demographic snapshot of the subjects, reflecting their gender, decade, instruction, and profit characteristics. Most categories exhibit a balanced distribution, indicating a well-rounded sample that can facilitate strong and inclusive analyses. This will allow the study to examine different outlooks and experiences, which could add richness and relevance to the results by including these varied demographics.

What is the effect of organizational culture on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities?

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.013	.707		4.263	.000
	Organizational Culture	.620	.019	.853	32.000	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Faculty Job Satisfaction

Organizational culture is the independent variable, and faculty job satisfaction is the dependent variable. The results above reflect the

strength and significance of the relationship between these two variables, as well as the predictive effect of organizational culture on faculty job satisfaction.

The constant term in the regression output ($B = 3.013$) indicates the baseline level of job satisfaction among faculty members when the effect of organizational culture is held at zero. This suggests that, even without the influence of organizational culture, there is a moderate level of inherent job satisfaction. The associated t -value of 4.263 and a significance level of 0.000 confirm that this constant is statistically significant and makes a meaningful contribution to the overall model.

The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.620$) for organizational culture indicates that for every one-unit increase in organizational culture, faculty job satisfaction is expected to increase by 0.620 units, assuming all other variables remain constant. This supports the conclusion that organizational culture is a significant predictor of faculty job satisfaction.

The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.853$) indicates a strong positive correlation between organizational culture and job satisfaction. This high beta value reflects the substantial influence organizational culture has on faculty attitudes, behaviors, and overall satisfaction. The t -value of 32.000 for organizational culture, along with its p -value of 0.000, demonstrates that this predictor is highly statistically significant—the likelihood that this relationship is due to chance is virtually zero. This result highlights that organizational culture is a critical factor influencing faculty job satisfaction in the context of Beijing universities.

These findings suggest that enhancing organizational culture—through strategies such as fostering shared purpose, collegiality, appreciation, and inclusion—can lead to increased job satisfaction among faculty members. Given the strength and significance of the relationship, organizational culture represents a strategic area for intervention that may yield high returns in morale, performance, and institutional effectiveness.

What is the influence of career development opportunities on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities?

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.770	.747		.719	.000

Career development Opportunities	692	.026	806	6.588	000
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a. Dependent Variable: Faculty Job Satisfaction

The data shown examine career development opportunities and their impact on faculty job satisfaction, with job satisfaction as the dependent variable. It provides insights into the significance, strength, and nature of the relationship between the dependent variable (career development opportunities) and the independent variable (employee performance).

Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Constant) = 5.770 excludes the effect of career development opportunities from the model. This suggests that this cohort of academics achieves a relatively high level of intrinsic satisfaction, regardless of career advancement opportunities. The t-value associated with this is 7.719, and the statistical significance level is .000 indicates that it is statistically significant and makes a meaningful contribution to the overall model.

Career development opportunities become a strong predictor of faculty job satisfaction. Additionally, the unstandardized coefficient of .692 indicates that for each 1-unit increase in the availability or quality of career development opportunities, there is a corresponding increase of .692 units of faculty job satisfaction. The fact that this relationship was positive suggests that enhancements in career development opportunities tangibly and directly lead to higher levels of satisfaction within the dry faculty.

The standardized coefficient (beta) of 0.806 demonstrates the strength of the relationship between career development opportunities and job satisfaction among faculty members. This high value suggests that the quality and availability of career development opportunities are among the levers having a significant (positive) impact on influencing faculty satisfaction with their overall job satisfaction. The variable explains a large portion of the variance in Job Satisfaction. Academics, wherein a positive attitude toward work and experience is substantially impacted by the support of a strong career development effort (beta value).

In addition, the t-value for career development opportunities is 26.588, which is not surprising given the reasonable and reliable cross-reference. The significance level of 0.000 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, with no chance that the results we find are due to random chance. These results highlight the role of

career development opportunities as an important contributor to faculty job satisfaction.

These findings indicate that institutions that invest in career development efforts (e.g., training, mentorship programs, skill-building opportunities, and transparent advancement routes) will see marked increases in faculty job satisfaction. Thus, given the strength of the relationship, it could be beneficial for faculty to focus on strategies for career advancement, thereby enhancing the overall work experience for faculty members.

What is the impact of job autonomy on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities?

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.273	.794		14.192	.000
	Job Autonomy	1.330	.074	.679	18.083	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Faculty Job Satisfaction

The unstandardized coefficient for the constant is 11.273, indicating the baseline level of faculty job satisfaction without considering job autonomy. The magnitude of this high value indicates that such satisfaction is inherent, with no influence from autonomy-related attributes. The constant t-value is 14.192, with a significance level. 000" proved significant from a statistical perspective, which confirms that the constant is not nothing in the model.

Findings reveal that job autonomy is a robust and meaningful predictor of faculty job satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient of 1.330 suggests that a one-unit increase in job autonomy contributes to a 1.330-unit increase in job satisfaction. This positive relationship illustrates the role of autonomy in determining satisfaction and implies that, by foregoing freedom and control, faculty satisfaction can increase significantly.

The standardized coefficient, or beta, emphasizes the strength of the link between job autonomy and job satisfaction. This suggests that job autonomy explains approximately half of the variance in faculty satisfaction, asserting its importance in defining their overall work experience. This means that giving autonomy really helps cultivate positive faculty attitudes and increases faculty job

satisfaction.

The t-value for both job autonomy is 18.083, an extremely high value, further proving the strength and reliability of the relationship. The corresponding alpha level of .000 indicates that the impact of job autonomy on job satisfaction is statistically significant, with nearly zero likelihood that the results are due to chance. These findings confirm the crucial importance of autonomy as a driver of satisfaction for academics.

The results imply that offering a certain level of autonomy to academic staff in carrying out professional activities contributes to their satisfaction with work, teaching, and research. The likely result of autonomy by itself is a heightened sense of empowerment, creativity, and engagement, leading to greater overall satisfaction. It suggests that colleges and universities that exercise restraint in micromanagement while allowing faculty and staff control over their jobs might create a more satisfied and energized workforce.

CONCLUSION

H1: Positive Organizational Culture and Faculty Job Satisfaction

The findings confirm a strong positive link between a supportive organizational culture and higher faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.620$) and standardized beta (0.853) indicate a substantial association, with cultural elements such as collaboration and recognition significantly driving satisfaction. A t-value of 32.000 and a p-value of 0.000 affirm the robustness and statistical significance of this relationship. This suggests that fostering an inclusive, value-driven culture can enhance faculty satisfaction and institutional performance, making cultural initiatives a key strategy for retaining talent.

H2: Career Development Opportunities and Faculty Job Satisfaction

The results support the hypothesis that ample career development opportunities positively correlate with faculty job satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.692$) and standardized beta (0.806) demonstrate a strong, positive effect, with a t-value of 26.588 and p-value of 0.000, confirming statistical significance. Structured programs, such as training, mentorship, and clear promotion paths, boost growth and satisfaction, fostering a motivated and loyal workforce that benefits both individuals and universities in Beijing.

H3: Job Autonomy and Faculty Job Satisfaction

The findings strongly support the hypothesis that higher job

autonomy is associated with greater faculty job satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 1.330$)—the highest among predictors—shows a significant direct impact, with a standardized beta (0.679), t -value (18.083), and p -value (0.000) indicating a reliable, influential relationship. Granting faculty control over teaching, research, and responsibilities enhances fulfillment and engagement, suggesting that reducing micromanagement can build trust and improve satisfaction and performance in Beijing universities.

DISCUSSION

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design to investigate the impact of organizational culture, career development opportunities, and job autonomy on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities. It validated the mediating role of work engagement in these relationships. Below is a detailed discussion of the study's findings.

1. Impact of Organizational Culture on Faculty Job Satisfaction

The results indicate a significant positive correlation between a positive organizational culture and faculty job satisfaction (standardized coefficient $\beta = 0.853$, $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with previous research on the influence of organizational culture on employee satisfaction (e.g., Deem et al., 2015; Zhang & Wu, 2024). A positive organizational culture fosters collaboration, recognition, and inclusivity, enhancing faculty members' sense of belonging and professional identity, thereby increasing their job satisfaction. Specifically, when faculty perceive support from the organizational culture, they are more likely to actively participate in university activities, evaluate their work environment positively, and ultimately enhance their job satisfaction.

2. Impact of Career Development Opportunities on Faculty Job Satisfaction

Career development opportunities emerged as another critical factor influencing faculty job satisfaction, with a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.806$ ($p < 0.001$). This result validates Super's career development theory and highlights the high value that faculty place on personal growth and career advancement in the current higher education environment (Dangan, 2022).

Training and Skill Enhancement: Faculty generally believe that participating in professional training and skill enhancement programs significantly enhances their teaching and research capabilities, thereby boosting job satisfaction. These programs not only provide new knowledge and skills but also foster academic exchange and collaboration among faculty, creating a positive academic atmosphere.

Mentorship and Career Planning: Mentorship is particularly crucial during the early stages of a faculty member's career. Experienced mentors can offer career planning advice, helping new faculty clarify their goals and formulate reasonable development paths. This personalized guidance strengthens faculty members' professional identity and job satisfaction.

Promotion Opportunities and Career Pathways: Clear promotion opportunities and career pathways serve as significant motivators for faculty to remain in universities for the long term. When faculty members perceive upward mobility within the university, they are more inclined to invest time and effort in teaching and research, thereby enhancing their job satisfaction.

3. Impact of Job Autonomy on Faculty Job Satisfaction

Job autonomy, as a core factor influencing faculty job satisfaction, was found to have a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.679$ ($p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with the Self-Determination Theory, which posits that autonomy is a key factor in satisfying individuals' basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Teaching Autonomy: Faculty generally desire greater autonomy in teaching, including curriculum design, selection of teaching methods, and student evaluation. When faculty can design courses based on their professional judgment and teaching philosophies, they are more likely to stimulate students' interest in learning, improve teaching quality, and enhance job satisfaction.

Research Autonomy: Research autonomy is significant for university faculty. Faculty members wish to have the freedom to choose research topics of interest, formulate research plans, and access sufficient resources to support their work. This autonomy facilitates the production of high-quality research outcomes and enhances faculty members' sense of professional accomplishment and job satisfaction.

Decision-Making Participation: Faculty also hope to participate in the management and decision-making processes of universities, particularly in areas closely related to their areas of expertise. When faculty feel that their opinions are valued and considered, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging to the university, thereby increasing job satisfaction.

Research Context: Beijing universities face intense competition under the "Double First-Class" initiative, resulting in higher academic pressures and career expectations for faculty. Consequently, faculty members have a greater need for career development opportunities and autonomy in their jobs.

Policy Support: As China's educational center, Beijing

universities enjoy unique advantages in resource investment and policy support, which may influence faculty members' perceptions and satisfaction with career development opportunities and job autonomy.

Cultural Differences: Cultural differences across regions and universities may also contribute to variations in research findings. For example, Beijing universities may place a greater emphasis on academic innovation and international collaboration, which can indirectly affect faculty job satisfaction.

In conclusion, this study offers valuable practical guidance for university administrators and policymakers by elucidating the impact of organizational culture, career development opportunities, and job autonomy on faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities. Future research should expand sample sizes, adopt more rigorous research designs, and explore other potential factors to understand the formation mechanism of faculty job satisfaction comprehensively.

RECOMMENDATION

This study's findings suggest actionable steps to enhance faculty job satisfaction in Beijing universities, focusing on organizational culture, career development opportunities, and job autonomy and offering practical guidance for administrators and policymakers globally. First, universities should cultivate a positive organizational culture by promoting collaboration, inclusivity, and recognition through team-building activities, transparent decision-making processes, and effective reward systems, alongside regular surveys to address faculty perceptions. Second, career development must be strengthened with tailored professional programs, clear advancement paths, funding for conferences, mentorship pairing experienced and junior faculty, and support for certifications or sabbaticals, with periodic policy evaluations based on feedback. Third, job autonomy should be prioritized by reducing bureaucratic constraints, allowing faculty freedom in teaching, research, and scheduling, and balancing guidelines with discretion to foster innovation. Additionally, supporting faculty well-being through counseling, stress management, and work-life balance initiatives, as well as open feedback channels such as town halls, can foster a responsive environment. Finally, universities should adopt a continuous improvement approach, tracking these efforts, benchmarking best practices, and maintaining faculty dialogue to align with evolving needs and sustain gains in job satisfaction.

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