Linking Administrative Leadership Practices with Faculty Job Satisfaction in Online Educational Settings: A Quantitative Study

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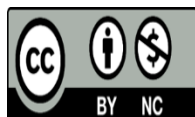University of the Punjab, Pakistan

Abstract

The advancement of online education has made it more challenging for researchers to adapt to digital teaching techniques while sustaining their high levels of effectiveness. Administrative leadership has a major influence on professional experiences in this respect. This quantitative study explores the relationship between administrative leadership techniques and faculty job satisfaction in online learning settings. Data was collected from faculty members of several online universities using standardized questionnaires. There was a moderate to high positive relationship ($r = .60$, $p < .001$) between leadership practices and faculty job satisfaction, representing that effective administrative leadership significantly surges faculty morale and professional fulfillment. Through conceptual understanding and applied tactics for institutional improvement, this study is a growing body of research on leadership in online higher education.

Keywords: Online Education, Administrative Leadership, Faculty Job Satisfaction, Leadership Practices, Higher Education, Digital Teaching, Professional Fulfillment

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Introduction

Around the world, Online education has become a dynamic element of higher education. As the educational institutions enlarge their digital learning opportunities, there is increasing pressure on faculty members to be adaptable, tech-savvy, and engaged with students. In online learning contexts, Teachers' job satisfaction has become comparatively less research attention than student outcomes. There is a significant influence on teachers' effectiveness and morale due to administrative leadership strategies, which range from communication and decision-making to resource distribution and recognition. Teacher job satisfaction, which is also crucial for retention, is directly linked with the quality of instruction and learning This study examines how administrative leadership strategies affect faculty job satisfaction in online learning contexts.

Literature Review

It is a fact that leadership is essential in defining the performance and culture of the institutions of higher education. According to Northouse (2021), a good leader has ability to motivate the stakeholders, to provide direction, and to bring change in the organization. leadership in online education is not limited to routine tasks, but it is the duty of administrators to provide services to students, faculty members, and online facilities (Allen and Seaman, 2017). Research shows that faculty members feel more engaged and trusted when administrative leaders exhibit transformational, supporting, and participatory approaches (Bush, 2020).

Faculty Job Satisfaction in Online Learning

Teaching quality, student results, and institutional retention are all impacted by the complex concept of faculty job satisfaction (Spector, 1985). According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), weak supervision, insufficient funding, and ambiguous policies lower satisfaction whereas motivators like success, recognition, and growth prospects raise it.

The term "teaching satisfaction" describes how students feel about their teachers and how learning objectives are fulfilled. Students' motivation to learn will increase if learning objectives are fulfilled. According to wang et al. (2021), online teaching satisfaction is the assessment and degree of student satisfaction with the environment, teachers, and substance of instruction in a variety of online learning environments.

Faculty in online education frequently deal with particular pressures, such as increased workloads, little peer interaction, and adjusting to new technology (Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009). According to research, the degree of assistance and acknowledgment administrators provide is closely related to job satisfaction in digital environments (Hassan, 2022).

Factors affecting inline teachers job satisfaction

Teacher-Related Factors

Online teachers' responsibilities and expectations have also changed dramatically. Teachers now design learning environments, facilitate learning processes, unearth learning materials, lead educational technology, reverberate teaching scenarios, reflect classroom effects, assist with task completion, and assess growth objectives (Xia, Li, & Liu, 2021). Chan, H. et al., 2013 assert that a teacher's attitude has a favorable impact on students' educational experiences. According to Zhang et al., 2023, the quality of instruction in online open courses and the satisfaction of students are impacted by teachers' ability to enhance their teaching abilities. Using a structural equation model, Shaban & Ramzan, (2013) discovered that in a blended learning environment, the teaching skills of instructors and teaching assistants are crucial in fostering students' self-efficacy and have a significant impact on learning satisfaction. Yang & Wang (2013) described that teaching style is the most influencing factor of teacher job satisfaction. He also asserted that teachers' teaching styles, professional proficiency, pedagogical approaches, and organizational skills positively impact on the effectiveness of online teaching, which in response marks students' satisfaction with online learning.

Curriculum-Related Factors

The curriculum provides the primary source of knowledge for students as well as the essential framework for online educational activities. According to structural equation analysis, curriculum design significantly affects online effective learning (Eom, Wen, & Ashill, 2006). Wu, Yu, and Huang (2020) discovered through comparison study that course material improves students' professional abilities, which in turn has a practical impact on their learning pleasure. In order to increase students' willingness and satisfaction with learning, Qin, Li, and Wu (2023) stressed that online education should implement a systematic curriculum design based on the theoretical connotations of various disciplines. Additionally, various disciplines should adopt targeted and improved teaching organization form, content structure, and teaching concept.

Platform-Related Factors

The medium for conducting online teaching activities is an online teaching platform. According to Xia et al. 2025, students' perceptions of the online teaching platform's usefulness have a major positive influence on their willingness to stick with it. Additionally, students' perceptions of the platform's usefulness can indirectly influence their willingness to stick with it through subjective norms and satisfaction, respectively. According to Yong (2023), students' teaching satisfaction can be positively predicted by their level of proficiency with information technology, the design of the e-learning space system, the curriculum, and the resources available for e-learning space expansion.

Interaction-Related Factors

According to information theory, interaction is the two-way exchange of information between different system components. According to Wang, Chen, and Anderson (2014), interactions in online learning should take place between students and their teachers as well as between students and the material. Students' learning satisfaction can be raised by teachers' role-shifting and non-intellectual assistance in class activities, such as interaction (Zhang et al. 2022). According to Bowie's empirical research, there is a considerable correlation between student happiness and student development, and teacher-student contact has a major impact on college students' development (Bao et al. 2018). Using a factor analysis of the interactions between teachers and students during the teaching process, Guo (2020) found that students' engagement, learning time, and teachers' preparation all had varying degrees of impact on online teaching satisfaction.

Leadership practices and job satisfaction

An increasing amount of research indicates that leadership behaviors directly affect teacher morale and job satisfaction. Academic staff happiness has been observed to increase under transformational leadership, which is typified by vision, communication, and tailored support (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Yukl, 2012). Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016), for instance, discovered that transformative leadership in higher education was a strong predictor of both lower turnover intentions and improved faculty satisfaction.

Effective communication, acknowledgment, and the availability of professional development opportunities are frequently mentioned as indicators of teacher satisfaction in online education in particular (Bawa, 2016). Professional development gives faculty members the skills they need to teach digitally, communication clears up any confusion in online teaching positions, and acknowledgment strengthens faculty efforts. Furthermore, research by Cutri & Mena (2020) emphasizes the value of administrative assistance during the shift to online education, especially in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, when institutional leadership was essential in maintaining faculty satisfaction and engagement.

Fewer empirical researches concentrate on the online learning environment, despite the fact that the relationship between leadership and work satisfaction has been thoroughly examined in traditional educational contexts. A large portion of the work currently in publication is qualitative, examining faculty perceptions through case studies or interviews (Bolliger &

Halupa, 2018). There is currently a dearth of quantitative research assessing the degree to which leadership practices and faculty job satisfaction are related in online higher education. In order to close this gap, this study uses a quantitative methodology to investigate the relationship between particular leadership approaches and online faculty members' work satisfaction.

Objectives of the study

- To determine the most common leadership styles among instructors in online learning environments
- To examine the connection between job satisfaction among faculty members and administrative leadership approaches.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which makes a distinction between hygiene elements (such policies, supervision, and working conditions) and motivators (like performance, growth, and recognition). Leadership behaviors can affect faculty happiness by acting as hygiene factors and motivators. Furthermore, Bass and Riggio (2006) developed the Transformational Leadership Theory, which offers a framework for comprehending how leaders encourage, inspire, and assist faculty in adjusting to the demands of online instruction.

Materials and Methods

This study was quantitative. Correlational research design was used to examine the connection between faculty job satisfaction and leadership practices.

Faculty members who are teaching in online higher education institutions made up the study population. To guarantee representation across disciplines, a convenient sampling technique was used to choose a sample of 200 faculty members. A 5-point Likert scale was employed in both instruments. To ensure accuracy in the local context, questionnaires were updated in accordance with expert advice. Using Cronbach's alpha, the instrument's reliability was examined.

Data collection and data analysis

Questionnaires were used to gather data online. Two questionnaires were adapted. Teachers received questionnaires via email that were made using a Google Form. Leadership practices and satisfaction levels were compiled using descriptive statistics. The association between job satisfaction and leadership behaviors was investigated using Pearson Correlation.

Descriptive statistics

This study examined the connection between faculty job satisfaction and administrative leadership strategies. Frequency distributions, mean, and standard deviation were examples of descriptive statistics.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the sample

Characteristics	Subgroup	Frequency	Percentage
Sample	Male	50	25%
	Female	150	75%
Experience	Less than 5 years	40	20%
	5-10years	74	37%
	10-15 years	50	25%
	15-20 years	36	18%

According to the demographic data, 50 (25%) of the sample consisted of male participants, while the majority of respondents (n = 150, 75%) were female. Female representation was substantially higher, according to this distribution, which might reflect women's increased participation in the education industry, especially in online and distant

learning environments. According to these findings, mostly participants had mid-level experience (5-10 years), while a large sample had 10-15 years of job experience. The most experienced professionals had the lowest percentage. There were 20% respondents who had less than 5 years of experience.

Table 2

Level of faculty job satisfaction

Scale	M	SD
Overall Job Satisfaction	4.22	2.09
Work Environment & Tools	4.24	2.42
Compensation and Benefits	3.70	2.21
Management and Communication	4.00	2.11
Growth and Development	3.82	3.90

The results defined that respondents were mostly satisfied with their jobs (M = 4.22, SD = 2.09). Work Environment and Tools were the highest -rated items (M = 4.24, SD = 2.42), which demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction with facilities and resources. On the other hand, the lowermost score (M = 3.70, SD = 2.21) was given to rewards and Benefits, suggesting problems with incentives and rewards. There is a positive evaluation for management and communication (M = 4.00, SD = 2.11) which indicated trust in the leadership. Growth and Development (M = 3.82, SD = 3.90) indicated the modest pleasure but significant variation, highlighting inconsistent experiences. Improvements in compensation and professional development could boost teacher morale. However, overall satisfaction levels were positive.

Table 3

Level of administrative leadership practices

Scales	M	SD
Digital Communication Skill	4.27	2.90
Technology Proficiency	4.32	3.23
Online Team Management	4.15	2.67
Strategic use of Technology	4.37	2.13
Adaptability and Flexibility	4.28	3.92

On the whole, respondents said that they were digitally literate. Strategic Use of Technology had the highest score (M = 4.37, SD = 2.13), which shows stable expertise in the use of digital technologies. Adaptability and Flexibility (M = 4.28, SD = 3.92) and Technology Proficiency (M = 4.32, SD = 3.23) were correspondingly highly regarded, however there was a significant variation in these ratings which indicated variation in faculty members' skill levels. Online team management (M = 4.15, SD = 2.67) and digital communication skill (M = 4.27, SD = 2.90) had high scores; however, variation suggests varying experiences.

In spite of the fact that most of the faculty members showed a high degree of digital literacy, their differences highlight the need for specific training to ensure consistency among staff.

Table 4

Relationship between administrative leadership and faculty job satisfaction

Variables		1	2
1.	administrative leadership practices	-	.60**
2.	Faculty job satisfaction	.60**	

**p<.001

Correlation analysis was employed to explore the relationship between job satisfaction and administrative leadership practices. The findings showed that these two variables are significantly correlated as r =.60, p <.001. This suggests that valuations of good administrative leadership tactics will increase the faculty job satisfaction.

Faculty job satisfaction and morale is influenced by leadership behaviors in online learning

environment as correlation was moderate to strong (r =.60). The findings of this study support that administrators' encouragement, recognition, and effective communication have a valued outcome on faculty well-being and job satisfaction.

Discussion

The present study explored the relationship between faculty job satisfaction and administrative leadership strategies in online settings. The findings of this study indicated that good leadership has a weighty influence on faculty satisfaction, and this thing was supported by the results, which showed a moderate to high positive correlation (r =.60, p <.001) between the two variables.

The results of this study are consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which emphasis the value of growth, acknowledgment, and encouraging supervision in raising job satisfaction. Those who have faith in good leadership practices like recognizing contributions, open communication, making decisions impartially and providing opportunities for professional development express greater level of job satisfaction.

The results are aligned with former researches. According to Bolliger and Wasilik (2009), "leadership and support have a weighty impact on teacher job satisfaction in online education". Similarly, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) stated, "transformational leadership practices have been shown to strongly impact on faculty satisfaction and lower attrition in higher education. Leadership support is even more significant in the context of online learning environment".

The results of this study highlighted the status of administrators in online learning environment. By stressing freedom of speech, systems of acknowledgement, and career progression, leaders may produce a more encouraging work environment. These strategies may not only improve teacher job satisfaction but also increase student engagement, teaching efficacy, and institutional retention rates.

Conclusion

This study realizes the importance of leadership administrative practices to determine the satisfaction of faculty members with their jobs in online setting. Career advancement, communication, and acknowledgment were shown to be the best measures of satisfaction. The leaders who practise these values may improve the well beings of their faculty, increase retention, and finally increase the standard of online learning.

Recommendations

- Future studies should observe both long-term and short-term impacts of leadership styles on job satisfaction eventually.
- Earlier researches conducted at various colleges, locations, or nations may also provide understanding on how institutional culture influences the rapport between leadership and satisfaction.
- Future studies should study digital literacy, organizational support and faculty workload as mediating and moderating factors.
- Qualitative research techniques as focus groups and interviews may provide in-depth understanding of faculty experiences and expectations from administrators.
- It may be more compelling to invest in effective leadership practices if faculty job satisfaction is linked with student achievement, retention, or online learning engagement.

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