



INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS OF LECTURER JOB SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA (CUEA)

by

MWENDWA, Maureen¹

Graduate Student, The Catholic University of Eastern Africa – Nairobi, Kenya, Main Campus

Corresponding author email: mwendwaamaureen@gmail.com |

Betty Njagi, PhD²

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

Abstract

The purpose of this article was to investigate the factors of lecturer job satisfaction and its implications on learning, using the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya as the point of focus and reference. The contention of this article is that job satisfaction is pivotal for lecturers' performance, yet studies reveal mixed findings regarding key predictors. This research examines factors influencing satisfaction among faculty at Catholic University of Eastern Africa, aiming to address concerns over limited training opportunities, discontinued benefits, and high turnover. Using a quantitative approach, the study surveyed 33 lecturers, considering gender and experience as moderators. An anonymous online questionnaire assessed salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, training and development opportunities, and work autonomy.

The findings reveal salary, benefits, and autonomy significantly influence satisfaction, while promotion and training, though valued, were not significant predictors. A key finding was the moderating effect of gender on the autonomy-satisfaction link, with female faculty being more satisfied with greater autonomy. The study recognizes contextual factors shaping these relationships. It recommends enhancing financial incentives and participative decision-making, notes sample limitations, and suggests future qualitative research to explore neutral perceptions and changing relationships over time.

Key terms: Kenya, Job satisfaction, Higher education, Faculty, Predictors, Moderators, Gender differences.

Introduction

Job satisfaction is an important issue among university lecturers as it can impact their performance and the quality of education they provide to students. Prior studies have identified various factors that influence lecturer job satisfaction, including leadership style, rewards and recognition, opportunities for training and professional development, attractive salary packages, promotion prospects, flexible working hours, colleague support, conducive working conditions, work autonomy, and job security .

This research is prompted by concerns within the academic community at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) regarding limited training opportunities, discontinued benefits, and dissatisfaction among students due to frequent changes in lecturers, indicating high turnover. The identified problems raise

questions about the institution's commitment to lecturer well-being, indicating the need for a thorough examination of specific factors influencing job satisfaction among academic faculty.

The primary objective is to comprehensively investigate four key factors - salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, training and development opportunities, and work autonomy - that motivate academic faculty at CUEA towards job satisfaction. By delving into these factors, the study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations to enhance the professional well-being of lecturers. Additionally, the research explores how gender and years of experience moderate the relationships between these factors and job satisfaction.

Moreover, underscore the potential bias in existing research, which may be skewed towards developed countries. Emphasize a scarcity of studies specifically addressing the job satisfaction of university faculty in developing countries, revealing a significant gap in the current scholarly landscape. The unique challenges at CUEA, coupled with the relevance of understanding job satisfaction factors within a developing country context, drive this investigation.

Statement of the Problem

Limited training opportunities, discontinued benefits, and high turnover rates among lecturers at CUEA suggest issues with job satisfaction that may negatively impact teaching performance. These issues have prompted research into how salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, training and development, and work autonomy affect job satisfaction for CUEA faculty, considering the moderating roles of gender and years of experience. The goal is to provide insights to help CUEA enhance policies and practices for attracting, motivating, and retaining quality lecturers.

Literature Review

Job satisfaction among academic faculty in higher education institutions has garnered significant research attention. Various factors influencing lecturers' job satisfaction have been examined, such as salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, training and development, and work autonomy. Over the years, numerous theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain the complex factors that influence employee motivation and job satisfaction in the workplace. This literature review synthesizes influential theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, offering a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of job satisfaction among lecturers at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), with a particular emphasis on the potential moderating effects of gender and years of experience.

At the core lies Herzberg's Dual-Factor Theory (1966), elucidated by , which distinguishes between hygiene factors, such as salary and benefits, which can prevent dissatisfaction when present, and motivators, such as recognition, achievement, and growth opportunities, which can lead to job satisfaction when present. Corroborating this theory, numerous studies have found a positive relationship between salary and benefits and job satisfaction among academics. However, the degree of impact varies based on contextual factors like prevailing unemployment levels, university funding constraints, and the overall cost of living in a particular region. Research in developing countries like Bangladesh, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Pakistan highlights how inadequate or inequitable compensation often engenders dissatisfaction among university faculty.

Complementing this view is the Job Characteristics Model proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1980), as discussed by , which links certain core job characteristics like skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback to critical psychological states that drive work motivation and job satisfaction. Aligning with this model, numerous research studies have highlighted the positive association between autonomy among faculty members in areas like course development, classroom management, and research activities, and higher levels of job satisfaction. Increased autonomy fosters a sense of control, responsibility, and fulfillment, leading to higher job satisfaction. However, the degree of autonomy may vary across institutions and academic ranks, with branch campuses and larger public universities often imposing more restrictions. Moreover, the Job Characteristics Model suggests that opportunities for training and professional development, which can foster skill variety and task identity, can potentially increase job satisfaction among employees. This proposition is supported by several empirical studies conducted in academic settings linking access to training and professional development opportunities to increased job satisfaction, with the motivational effect being stronger when training aligns with individual needs and institutional objectives, and when adequate funding and support for continuous skills enhancement is provided.

Offering a complementary perspective, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943), as described by , proposes that individuals are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, progressing from basic physiological and safety needs (e.g., salary and benefits) to higher psychological needs, such as belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (e.g., growth and development opportunities). This view is supported by the findings of , who found that younger faculty with less

experience derived higher job satisfaction from fulfilling lower-level needs, such as earning money, as financial incentives played a more influential role for them. However, once these lower-level needs were satisfied, money was no longer a significant motivator, and intrinsic rewards, such as advancement, recognition, security, became more important sources of satisfaction. This aligns with Maslow's theory, which suggests that lower-order needs must be met before higher-order needs become motivating factors. However, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory has been criticized for being too simplistic and for not taking into account individual differences. For example, not all people prioritize their needs in the same order. Some people may be more motivated by self-actualization needs, while others may be more motivated by safety needs. This criticism is supported by the research of [1], which found that in a context where economic conditions are uncertain, lower-order or hygiene factors, such as financial factors, had a stronger impact on motivating lecturers compared to higher-order or motivational factors. This suggests that the prioritization of needs can vary based on contextual factors, such as economic conditions.

Adam's Equity Theory (1965), according to [2], suggests that individuals evaluate the fairness of their job inputs (e.g., effort, qualifications, and experience) relative to the outcomes (such as salary, promotions, and training opportunities) received compared to their peers and colleagues. If employees perceive an inequity or unfairness in this input-outcome ratio, it can breed dissatisfaction, potentially impacting their motivation, performance, and retention. This notion is echoed by research findings in Oman, Kuwait, and Pakistan which indicate that frustration from prolonged waiting times for promotion or perceptions of bias can decrease satisfaction, while clearly defined, fair and transparent promotion policies and practices and involvement in decision-making are associated with higher satisfaction levels [3].

Additionally, according to [4], Vroom's (1964) Valence Expectancy Theory argues that an individual's motivation and satisfaction levels are heavily influenced by their expectations of valued outcomes resulting from their efforts. In the academic context, if faculty members believe that their exceptional performance and contributions will lead to desirable outcomes such as promotions, enhanced training opportunities, or increased autonomy, they are likely to be more motivated and satisfied in their roles. Conversely, if these expectations are not met or perceived to be unattainable, it can breed dissatisfaction and potentially lead to higher turnover rates.

Moreover, as noted by [5], theories like the Social Identity Theory as proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), Role

Theory according to [6], among others, offer valuable insights into how individual characteristics like gender and years of experience can shape perceptions, priorities, and expectations regarding job satisfaction determinants. These theories suggest that an individual's social identity and the roles they assume, both within the workplace and in society, can influence the factors they deem most important for their job satisfaction. Empirical studies have indeed found moderating effects of gender and experience, lending support to these theoretical perspectives. The relationship between gender and salary satisfaction has yielded mixed results, with some studies reporting no differences [7], while others have found lower satisfaction among female academics [8]. Moreover, gender disparities in promotion opportunities have been reported, where female academics face structural barriers like heavy workloads, unclear promotion processes, and fears of additional burdens [9]. They also encounter organizational barriers such as feeling undervalued, perceiving gender inequity, and concerns about favoritism in promotion decisions [10]. Additionally, individual barriers like struggles with work-life balance, especially for those balancing work and family, can hinder female academics from seeking promotions [11]. In the Nigerian context, [12] found that gender discrimination, including factors like recruitment policies, salary gaps, and cultural beliefs about women's inferiority, significantly impacts promotion opportunities and job satisfaction for female academic faculty. These barriers can create a perception of inequity when females' inputs do not seem to be rewarded fairly through promotion opportunities compared to their male counterparts. Gender has also been found to moderate the relationship between work autonomy and job satisfaction [13].

Furthermore, years of experience may moderate these relationships. [14] observed that lecturers with longer periods of service at Hang Tuah University in Indonesia have more autonomy, while reinforce this by highlighting that lecturers with less than six years of experience exhibit lower levels of autonomy compared to their more experienced counterparts. With respect to opportunities for training and development, [15] reported that less experienced faculty members in both government and private higher educational institutions in India expressed lower satisfaction with training compared to highly experienced faculty. Concerning salary and benefits, [16] found that indeed teaching experience moderated the relationship between income and job satisfaction among Iranian EFL faculty. Regarding promotional opportunities, [17] reported that the influence of promotion opportunities on job satisfaction varied based on years of experience in Kuwait. Respondents with more than 10 years and between 1-5 years of experience reported the highest levels of job satisfaction, whereas, those with less than

1 year and 6-10 years of experience expressed the lowest levels, likely due to waiting periods for promotion.

While the existing literature provides valuable insights, there are several gaps that warrant further investigation. Firstly, there is limited research on the moderating effects of gender and years of experience within the context of higher education institutions, particularly in African countries. Secondly, many studies have relied on t-tests and ANOVA analyses, which may fail to capture the potential moderating effects, underscoring the need for more robust moderation analysis techniques. Thirdly, there is a dearth of context-specific studies that examine the unique cultural, religious, and organizational factors that may influence job satisfaction among academic faculty in African countries like Kenya.

Informed by the theoretical frameworks discussed, this study hypothesized positive relationships between salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, training and development opportunities, work autonomy, and job satisfaction among lecturers at CUEA. Furthermore, it aimed to address the identified research gaps by examining the potential moderating effects of gender and years of experience on these relationships, employing robust moderation analysis techniques within the unique cultural and organizational context of CUEA.

By integrating multiple theoretical perspectives, synthesizing empirical findings, and addressing contextual factors and moderating effects, this review provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the determinants of job satisfaction among academic faculty at CUEA. The proposed study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of this topic while considering the unique cultural, religious, and organizational context of CUEA, thereby advancing the frontiers of knowledge in this domain.

Methodology

The study utilized a quantitative approach with non-probability convenience sampling, surveying 33 lecturers from various faculties at CUEA. This subset was a pragmatic choice, driven by constraints in data collection and time. While the initial intended sample size of 169 lecturers was determined using Slovin's formula based on a total population of 295 lecturers, surveying the smaller sample was deemed necessary due to constraints in accessing contact information for the full roster of faculty at CUEA. Out of 80 lecturers successfully contacted based on available records, only 33 responded to the survey. It is pertinent to acknowledge potential limitations in fully generalizing the findings. However, the insights derived still hold important indicative value for future research.

To obtain the necessary data, the research instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire with 42 items divided into three sections: demographic profile, factors influencing job satisfaction, and the level of job satisfaction. The factors explored were salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, opportunities for training and development, and work autonomy. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each questionnaire also contained a cover letter addressed to the participants, explaining the significance of the study, the value of their participation, ethical considerations involved, and an appreciation for completing the survey.

To ensure the quality of the research instrument, content validity was ensured through a review by the project supervisor, ensuring the questions accurately represented the intended constructs. The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using the Cronbach alpha test with a minimum acceptable value of 0.6 for each construct.

The researcher sought approval from the Director, Directorate of Research & Innovation to conduct the survey among academic faculty. After receiving approval, coordination with the Heads of Departments was established to obtain email addresses of lecturers for the data collection process. An online Google form questionnaire survey was then sent via email to the lecturers. Once the data was gathered, the filled questionnaires were encoded into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software version 20.0, chosen for its capability to perform moderation analysis. The gathered data was carefully screened to identify and correct any errors, such as out-of-range variable scores, and missing data was handled using appropriate techniques like imputation or deletion as necessary.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hierarchical multiple regression modeling. The Likert Scale data was reported using the "Collapsing Response" method, adding the 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' percentages, and similarly, the 'strongly agree' with the 'agree' responses.

Normality assumptions were evaluated using skewness (within ± 1) and kurtosis (within ± 3) values. Multicollinearity was examined by inspecting the Tolerance and VIF values, with a small tolerance value less than 0.1 indicating redundancy, and a VIF score close to 1 but under 5 considered acceptable.

To further examine the potential moderating effects, a three-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to assess the moderating effects of gender and years of experience on the relationship between the independent variables and job satisfaction. In the first

step, the dependent variable was regressed on the independent variables. In the second step, the moderator variables were added. Finally, in the third step, the interaction terms (independent variable * moderating variable) were included. The linear moderation model took the following form:

$$\text{Step 1: } Y = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Step 2: } Y = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Step 3: } Y = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_1 X_5 + \beta_8 X_2 X_5 + \beta_9 X_3 X_5 + \beta_{10} X_4 X_5 + \beta_{11} X_1 X_6 + \beta_{12} X_2 X_6 + \beta_{13} X_3 X_6 + \beta_{14} X_4 X_6 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Job Satisfaction,

α_0 = is the constant,

X_1 = Salary and benefits

X_2 = Promotion opportunities,

X_3 = Opportunities for training and development,

X_4 = Work Autonomy,

X_5 = Gender,

X_6 = Years of Experience

$X_1 X_5$ = is interaction variable constructed as the product of $X_{i(1,2,3,4)}$ and X_5

$X_1 X_6$ = is interaction variable constructed as the product of $X_{i(1,2,3,4)}$ and X_6

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7, \beta_8, \beta_9, \beta_{10}, \beta_{11}, \beta_{12}, \beta_{13}, \beta_{14}$ = Coefficients, ε = is the residual error term

Decision Rule: A significant interaction term indicated the presence of a moderation effect. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Throughout the research process, the study adhered to ethical principles of respect for persons and confidentiality, ensuring participant anonymity and secure data handling through coding responses, omitting names, and presenting findings in a generalized manner. To maintain data security, responses stored in Google Drive were deleted post-survey.

Findings

Response rate

The survey distribution faced challenges due to partial availability of contact information provided by some Heads of Departments and incomplete email addresses. Initially planned for 295 lecturers, invitations were successfully sent to 80 lecturers based on the accessible information. Out of these, 33 lecturers responded, yielding a response rate of approximately 41.25%.

Demographic analysis

The most dominant group of lecturers consists of 18 males, surpassing the count of 15 female lecturers. Within the working periods, 5-10 years is the most prevalent, with 13 individuals, whereas the least common group, comprising less than 5 years, consists of 4 people.

Descriptive Analysis

The lecturers at CUEA express a moderate level of job satisfaction (mean = 3.4280, SD = 0.57199). This is influenced by positive perceptions, including a healthy work-life balance, availability of necessary tools and resources, and satisfaction with overall student discipline. However, opportunities for improvement are identified. These include fostering an environment where raising concerns is comfortable, ensuring consistent support for faculty, and cultivating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within the school.

In terms of opportunities for training and development, respondents perceive this as a significant contributor to job satisfaction (mean = 3.3144, SD = 0.68830). Positive perceptions include the university's frequent organization of training programs, fair implementation of training policies, and the provision of adequate support and resources to attend training programs. Areas for improvement involve aligning training opportunities with professional needs, offering job shadowing and cross-training opportunities, and reconsidering the provision of tuition waivers and study leaves to encourage further education among faculty.

Although work autonomy was highly valued and emerged as the second most influential factor on job satisfaction, (mean = 3.0606, SD = 0.74878), faculty perceptions of how autonomy is implemented at CUEA were mixed. On the positive side, most lecturers agreed they possess a variety of skills for their work. However, there are several areas needing improvement. Lecturers expressed disagreement with the level of independence in carrying out their responsibilities, indicating dissatisfaction in this area. Additionally, there is a perception that CUEA does not adequately respect and value their professional judgment and expertise. Neutral perceptions prevailed on aspects like decision-making involvement and authority to innovate.

Promotion opportunities at CUEA, with a mean score of 2.7803 and a standard deviation of 0.80830, generate mixed perceptions. On the positive side, many lecturers agree that there are good promotion opportunities and feel that their qualifications match their current positions. However, areas for improvement are identified. Disagreement exists concerning the transparency of promotion policies and satisfaction with performance-based promotions and

promotions based on years worked. Neutrality persists regarding satisfaction with research-driven promotions. Most critically, lecturers express disagreement that the availability of promotions motivates them to excel in their work.

The dimension of salary and benefits reveals a lower mean score (mean = 2.3636, SD = 0.66977), suggesting that lecturers perceive the university's salary and benefits as relatively low or unsatisfactory. This perception is reinforced by disagreements regarding satisfaction in salary in relation to the job they are doing, rules for salary increases, and regular bonus supplements. Additionally, there's uncertainty about the competitiveness of remuneration within the industry, the fairness of payment basis, and the comprehensiveness and attractiveness of the benefits package.

Inferential Analysis

Test of Reliability

The alpha values for all variables exceeded 0.80, indicating a high level of reliability and internal consistency in the study's measures. This suggests that the employed measures are highly dependable.

Correlation Analysis

There is a statistically significant and moderately positive correlation between work autonomy and job satisfaction ($r = 0.438$, $p = 0.011$). This finding implies that as work autonomy increases, job satisfaction tends to increase as well.

In contrast, salary and benefits ($r = 0.337$, $p = 0.055$), promotion opportunities ($r = 0.128$, $p = 0.476$), and opportunities for training and development ($r = -0.033$, $p = 0.857$) did not exhibit significant correlations at the 0.05 level. This lack of significance suggests that the observed relationships may be due to random chance rather than reliable associations. It's important to note that correlation does not imply causation; therefore, a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships can be gained through regression analysis.

Regression Analysis

Table 4.1 Regression Model 1 Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.583	.340	.245	.49691

Source: Field Data 2023

In table 4.1 above, the coefficient of determination ($r = 0.583$) signifies the strength of the linear relationship between job satisfaction and the independent variables (work autonomy, opportunities for training and development, salary and benefits, and promotion opportunities). This indicates a fair positive

correlation. The proportion of variance explained in the dependent variable is represented by $R^2=0.340$. This value denotes that 34% of the variation in job satisfaction can be accounted for by work autonomy, opportunities for training and development, salary and benefits, and promotion opportunities, holding all other factors constant. The remaining 66% of the variation is attributed to factors outside the model.

Table 4.2 Regression Model 1 Coefficients

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-Value
Constant	1.786	.672	.013
Salary and Benefits	.377	.157	.023
Promotion Opportunities	-.317	.215	.152
Opportunities for Training and Development	.087	.209	.681
Work Autonomy	.439	.156	.009

Source: Field Data 2023

In table 4.2 above, the regression analysis results provide insights into the relationships between key variables and job satisfaction among academic faculty at CUEA. Constant ($\beta = 1.786$, $p = 0.013$), represents the baseline value when all predictors are zero. Salary and Benefits ($\beta = 0.377$, $p = 0.023$), indicates a significant positive relationship. Each one-unit increase predicts a 0.377-unit rise in job satisfaction. Promotion Opportunities ($\beta = -0.317$, $p = 0.152$), suggests no reliable impact. A one-unit increase does not significantly affect job satisfaction. Work Autonomy ($\beta = 0.439$, $p = 0.009$), demonstrates a significant positive effect. Each one-unit rise predicts a 0.439-unit increase in job satisfaction. Opportunities for Training and Development ($\beta = 0.087$, $p = 0.681$), not a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction. The coefficient of 0.087 suggests minimal impact, and the p-value exceeds the conventional significance level of 0.05.

In summary, based on the regression analysis results, it can be inferred that salary and benefits and work autonomy are factors that motivate academic faculty at CUEA towards job satisfaction. Opportunities for promotion, training and development do not seem to have a statistically significant impact on job satisfaction.

Moderation Analysis

Table 4.3 Regression Model 3 Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
3	.781	.610	.307	.47607

Source: Field Data 2023

In table 4.3 above, the enhanced linear relationship between the dependent variable, independent variables, moderators, and interaction terms is evident with an increased coefficient of determination ($r = 0.781$). The adjusted R^2 of 0.610 signifies improved model fit compared to Model 2 ($R^2 = 0.391$), explaining 61.0% of the variance in job satisfaction. Model 2 includes the dependent variable, independent variables and moderators, while Model 3 goes a step further by incorporating interaction effects. The addition of interaction terms contributes significantly (Model 3 R^2 – Model 2 $R^2 = 0.219$), explaining an additional 21.9% of the variance, emphasizing the impactful role of moderation effects. The moderation component, elucidating 21.9% of the variance, underscores the size of the moderation effect, emphasizing the nuanced dynamics of job satisfaction within the study's context.

Table 4.4 Hierarchical Regression Model 3 Coefficients

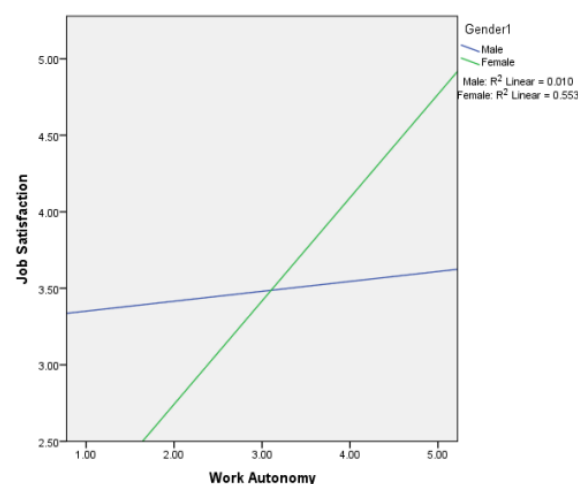
Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-Value
Constant	-1.386	2.312	.556
Salary and Benefits	.683	.778	.392
Promotion Opportunities	-.808	.807	.330
Opportunities for Training and Development	1.392	.848	.118
Work Autonomy	.402	.534	.461
Gender	-2.678	1.732	.139
Experience	2.059	1.035	.062
Salary*Gender	-.051	.505	.920
Promotion*Gender	-.540	.562	.349
TD*Gender	.502	.524	.351
WA*Gender	.966	.413	.031
Salary*Experience	-.255	.376	.505
Promotion*Experience	.385	.282	.190
TD*Experience	-.589	.302	.067
WA*Experience	-.237	.195	.239

Source: Field Data 2023

In scrutinizing moderation effects in table 4.4 above, it's essential to note that dimensions such as salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, and opportunities for training and development exhibit no significant interaction effects concerning both gender and years of experience. This suggests that the impact of these factors on job satisfaction remains consistent across diverse gender and experience groups. On the contrary, a significant interaction effect surfaces in the relationship between work autonomy and gender ($\beta = 0.966$, $p = 0.031$, at a 0.05 significance level, the primary threshold for this study). This signifies that the

influence of work autonomy on job satisfaction varies based on gender among academic faculty. These findings emphasize the intricate interplay between work-related factors and individual characteristics, providing insights into the nuanced dynamics of job satisfaction within this academic context. Moreover, it is pertinent to underscore that work autonomy maintains an insignificant interaction effect with experience. This implies that the relationship between work autonomy and job satisfaction remains consistent irrespective of varying levels of professional experience. Conversely, opportunities for training and development unveil a notable interaction effect at the 0.1 significance level ($\beta = -0.589$, $p = 0.067$). This signals that the impact of training and development opportunities on job satisfaction may be contingent on the individual's experience, introducing a nuanced layer to the understanding of this relationship within the academic setting.

Figure 4.1 Moderation Slope Analysis



Source: Field Data 2023

The steep slope in figure 4.1 above shows that the relationship between autonomy and satisfaction is stronger for female lecturers than the male lecturers. Gender moderates the relationship between work autonomy and job satisfaction, with female lecturers being more satisfied than male lecturers when they have more work autonomy.

Discussion

The findings highlight a significant positive impact of salary, benefits, and work autonomy on job satisfaction among academic faculty at CUEA, aligning with existing literature that underscores the crucial roles of adequate compensation and autonomy in fostering job satisfaction. Notably, remuneration emerges as a statistically significant predictor of overall academic faculty satisfaction resonating strongly with Herzberg's Dual-Factor Theory which categorizes salary and benefits as hygiene factors vital for preventing dissatisfaction and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory which posits that adequate remuneration addresses fundamental physiological and safety requirements, forming the bedrock for job satisfaction. This finding corroborates substantial empirical evidence across contexts like Sri Lanka, Kenya and Pakistan that consistently demonstrates a positive and significant relationship between adequate compensation and academics' job satisfaction.

Moreover, the results underscore the crucial role of work autonomy in fostering job satisfaction. Autonomy, as discussed in the literature, not only nurtures trust and responsibility but also acts as a moderator, reinforcing the positive correlation between student behavior and faculty satisfaction. Consistent findings across studies emphasize that greater faculty autonomy correlates with reduced job-related stress and increased satisfaction with workload management and leisure time. In a collective caution, studies conducted across Indonesia, Sri Lanka, England and Nigeria emphasize the potential risks associated with limited involvement in decision-making processes, suggesting increased turnover risks among academic faculty. This assertion of the positive influence of work autonomy also finds theoretical support from the Job Characteristics Model which postulates that autonomy cultivates a sense of responsibility, heightening work motivation and job satisfaction.

Interestingly, while the literature review as evidenced by underscores the positive and significant impact of training, development, and promotion opportunities on job satisfaction, the findings reveal these factors did not significantly impact overall job satisfaction among CUEA faculty. This discrepancy underscores the complexity of job satisfaction, influenced by numerous variables and emphasizes the importance of interpreting findings while considering the unique organizational climate at CUEA. One possible explanation could be that, while descriptive statistics indicated CUEA faculty value training, development, and promotion opportunities, they may not be as pressing as more immediate concerns such as salary and work autonomy on overall job satisfaction. As Maslow's hierarchy indicates, basic physiological and safety requirements may prevail over higher-order

developmental needs. Conversely, the lack of significant impact of opportunities for training and development on overall job satisfaction poses an intriguing contrast with the Job Characteristics Model's assertion that opportunities for skill development and task identity contribute to experienced meaningfulness and job satisfaction. Additionally, Vroom's Expectancy Theory offers insights into how lecturers' expectations and perceptions of the outcomes associated with promotion and training opportunities might influence their job satisfaction. If these opportunities are not perceived as leading to valued outcomes or personal goal achievement, their impact on job satisfaction may be diminished.

The significant moderating effect of gender on the autonomy-satisfaction relationship can be understood through Role Theory which suggests that individuals' job satisfaction is influenced by the harmony or conflict between work roles and societal expectations, particularly in the context of gender-specific roles. Females are often associated with traditional family roles, and the interplay between these roles and their work roles can impact their job satisfaction. Studies highlight gender barriers like heavy workloads, unclear processes, and work-life struggles which autonomy could mitigate. As women balance professional and domestic duties, autonomy enables better role adjustment, enhancing satisfaction. This might explain why female faculty reported higher satisfaction from autonomy. This finding also resonates with a study by , which report higher levels of autonomy and job satisfaction among female academics, potentially due to the enhanced flexibility afforded by autonomy in navigating conflicting societal and professional expectations.

The finding that only gender exhibited a moderating effect on the autonomy-satisfaction relationship, while other anticipated effects involving gender, years of experience, and factors like training, promotions, and remuneration based on previous studies were not replicated, reinforces the importance of conducting context-specific research that accounts for the unique cultural, religious, and organizational environment within higher education institutions like CUEA. These findings emphasize the need for nuanced investigations tailored to the realities faced by academic faculty in their particular institutional contexts rather than relying solely on generalizations from other regions or university settings.

Conclusion

This study contributes significantly to the understanding of job satisfaction among academic faculty in higher education institutions, particularly within the context of developing countries. By comprehensively investigating key factors such as salary, benefits, promotion opportunities, training, and work autonomy, the research sheds light on the intricate dynamics that shape job satisfaction levels among lecturers at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA).

A key strength of this investigation lies in its recognition of the context-specific nature of job satisfaction determinants. While universal principles may guide employee satisfaction, the unique interplay of cultural, socioeconomic, and organizational factors necessitates a localized understanding. Notably, the discrepancies observed between this study's findings and existing literature regarding certain factors' impact on job satisfaction emphasize the complex and context-specific nature of this phenomenon. This disparity underscores the necessity for ongoing, localized research efforts to unravel the nuanced factors influencing job satisfaction within unique organizational climates and cultural contexts. By illuminating these critical aspects, the present study paves the way for a deeper understanding of job satisfaction determinants, ultimately informing evidence-based policies and practices aimed at attracting, motivating, and retaining talented and fulfilled faculty members, thereby enhancing the quality of higher education.

Limitations exist including sample size and generalizability.

Key Recommendations

The university management should:

- There is need to conduct a comprehensive review of the current salary structure to ensure competitiveness within the industry and consider adjusting salaries to align with market standards.
- There is need to consider adding or enhancing benefits to contribute to overall job satisfaction by exploring options such as rewarding faculty members based on their years of dedicated service, recognizing and awarding employees reaching retirement age, exploring the possibility of offering overtime teaching allowances, financing faculty members' studies at different levels, providing affordable housing allowances or sponsoring faculty members' children's education.
- There is need to ensure that faculty members understand the extent of autonomy they have in their roles. Minimize ambiguity by clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and the decision-making

authority of academic faculty.

- There is need to establish regular channels for feedback on the level of autonomy provided. Conduct surveys or focus groups to gather insights into faculty perceptions, concerns, and suggestions for enhancing autonomy in the workplace. This fosters a culture of continuous improvement and employee involvement in decision-making processes.

Areas for further research

- While this study utilized quantitative techniques, there is a potential for future research to incorporate qualitative methods to provide an in-depth perspective, especially from respondents who expressed neutral or mixed feelings.
- Organizational dynamics and contexts are subject to constant change, and it would be valuable to explore how these changes impact the relationships between the independent variables, interaction effects and job satisfaction over time.
- Existing literature reveals a limited amount of research on moderation analysis in Higher Education Institutions (HEI), with a majority of researchers relying on t-tests and ANOVA tests. This highlights the current gap and underscores the imperative for more advanced analytical tools to thoroughly investigate the relationships among independent variables, interaction effects, and job satisfaction over time.