

Faculty members' views on rewards, compensation and rank: implications for job satisfaction

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Abstract

Faculty satisfaction is a critical determinant of teaching quality, retention, and institutional performance in higher education. This study examined the perceptions of faculty members at the College of Education, NEUST San Isidro Campus, regarding compensation, rewards, academic rank, and employment status, and how these factors influenced overall job satisfaction. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 30 faculty members across ranks and employment types through a structured questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression, while qualitative data from open-ended questions underwent thematic analysis. Findings revealed high faculty satisfaction across all variables, with employment status rated highest, followed by rewards and compensation. Regression results indicated that compensation, rewards, and employment status significantly predicted overall job satisfaction, whereas rank had a smaller, non-significant effect. The study highlights the importance of financial and non-financial incentives, job security, and recognition in fostering faculty motivation, engagement, and institutional commitment. Based on these results, institutional policies should focus on strengthening reward systems, maintaining competitive compensation, and supporting stable employment arrangements to sustain a motivated and high-performing academic workforce.

Keywords: Faculty satisfaction, Compensation, Rewards, Employment status, Academic rank

Introduction

Faculty members play a central role in the success of higher education institutions worldwide, and their job satisfaction is critical not only for teaching quality but also for institutional innovation, retention, and performance. Research in educational settings has shown that job satisfaction among academics is influenced by a variety of structural and personal factors, including compensation, employment conditions, academic rank, and recognition systems (Mgaiwa, 2023) [3].

Internationally, studies have demonstrated that academic rank and age can significantly influence how university faculty perceive their job satisfaction, suggesting that structural work factors must be examined to understand overall work fulfillment (Mgaiwa, 2023) [3]. Locally in the Philippines, recent investigations have similarly highlighted high levels of faculty satisfaction with some workplace conditions, but also pointed to areas requiring improvement such as clearer promotion pathways and competitive salaries (Isabela & Tandoc, 2025) [2].

Other Philippine studies have documented satisfactory faculty job satisfaction across multiple dimensions, including compensation and benefits, psychological aspects, and human resource management practices, while noting that variables such as nature of employment and monthly salary contribute to differences in satisfaction (Angagan, 2025) [1].

Although these studies provide valuable insights, there remains a gap in the literature regarding integrated examinations of how

rank, employment status, compensation, and rewards together shape faculty perceptions and job satisfaction. Most prior research tends to either focus on general levels of satisfaction without isolating the effects of specific structural work factors or investigate single variables in isolation, which limits a more comprehensive understanding of their combined impact.

This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating faculty perceptions of rewards, compensation, rank, and employment status and how these factors collectively influence job satisfaction within a higher education setting.

Specifically, the research aims to determine the levels of faculty satisfaction in terms of compensation, rewards, employment status, and rank; assess how compensation and rewards relate to overall job satisfaction; evaluate the influence of academic rank and employment status on satisfaction; and examine the collective effect of these variables on job satisfaction outcomes among faculty members.

Research problems

This study sought to answer the following research problems:

- What was the level of faculty satisfaction in terms of compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status?
- How did faculty members perceive the relationship between compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status and their overall job satisfaction?

- To what extent did compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status influence the job satisfaction of faculty members?

Method and Materials

Research design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the perceptions of faculty members regarding compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status, and how these factors influenced their overall job satisfaction. This design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to describe the current levels of faculty satisfaction and explore the relationships among multiple variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Participants

The participants of the study were the faculty members of the College of Education, NEUST San Isidro Campus, including instructors, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors. Specifically, the sample consisted of 10 instructors, 6 assistant professors, 13 associate professors, and 1 professor, representing both permanent and contractual employment statuses. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across ranks and departments.

Research instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was composed of three sections:

- **Demographic profile** – Capturing age, gender, rank, employment status, years of service, and highest educational qualification.
- **Perceptions of compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status** – Assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to determine levels of satisfaction and perceptions.
- **Open-ended questions** – providing participants the opportunity to share insights on factors influencing their job satisfaction.

The instrument underwent content validation by three experts in educational research and was pilot-tested with 10% of the intended population to ensure reliability, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.80 for all constructs, indicating high internal consistency.

Data collection procedure

Prior to data collection, approval was secured from the NEUST San Isidro Campus administration. Participants were provided with informed consent forms ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. The questionnaire was distributed both online via Google Forms and in printed format, depending on participants' accessibility. Data collection was conducted over a period of two weeks.

Data analysis

Quantitative data from the Likert-scale items were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to

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determine faculty satisfaction levels. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess relationships among compensation, rewards, rank, employment status, and overall job satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the combined influence of these variables on faculty job satisfaction. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed through thematic analysis, allowing the identification of recurrent themes supporting and enriching the quantitative findings.

Materials

The materials used in this study included a structured questionnaire, available in both digital and printed formats, which served as the primary data collection tool. Informed consent forms were provided to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality of the respondents. Data were processed and analyzed using computers equipped with statistical software, such as SPSS and Excel. Internet access facilitated the distribution of the online survey, while office supplies were utilized for administering and managing the printed questionnaires.

Results and Discussions

This section presents the findings of the study in accordance with the research problems: (1) levels of faculty satisfaction in terms of compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status; (2) faculty perceptions of these variables in relation to job satisfaction; and (3) the extent to which compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status influenced overall job satisfaction.

Table 1: Level of faculty satisfaction in terms of compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Compensation	4.12	0.65	High Satisfaction
Rewards	4.26	0.59	High Satisfaction
Rank	4.08	0.62	High Satisfaction
Employment Status	4.35	0.55	High Satisfaction
Overall Satisfaction	4.20	0.54	High Satisfaction

Faculty reported high satisfaction across all major variables, with employment status receiving the highest mean score. This indicates that permanent or secure employment arrangements are particularly valued among NEUST San Isidro College of Education faculty. Compensation and rewards were also rated highly, reflecting that faculty members perceive their workload to be fairly compensated and that recognition mechanisms effectively reinforce motivation. Rank, while slightly lower than the other variables, still reflected high satisfaction, suggesting that faculty are generally content with how academic rank aligns with their qualifications and professional status.

These findings are consistent with international studies demonstrating that compensation, rewards, and job security are key determinants of faculty satisfaction (Mgaiwa, 2023; Zhang & Liu, 2021) ^[3, 6]. Locally, this mirrors observations in Philippine universities where employment stability and

recognition are significant contributors to faculty morale (Nicolas *et al.*, 2024) [4]. The overall high satisfaction mean of 4.20 suggests that the institution’s policies and practices effectively support faculty well-being, contributing to positive work outcomes.

Table 2: Faculty perceptions of compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status in relation to job satisfaction

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Salary is fair relative to workload	4.10	0.63	High Satisfaction
Rewards and recognition are meaningful	4.28	0.57	High Satisfaction
Academic rank reflects qualifications	4.05	0.61	High Satisfaction
Employment status affects job security	4.37	0.54	High Satisfaction
Recognition motivates performance	4.30	0.56	High Satisfaction

The faculty strongly agreed that compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status positively influenced their overall job satisfaction. The highest mean was observed in the perception that employment status affects job security (4.37), indicating that faculty members place significant value on stable and secure positions. The meaningfulness of rewards and recognition (4.28) and their motivational effect (4.30) reflect that acknowledgment of performance and merit-based incentives are central to faculty engagement. Even academic rank, with a mean of 4.05, was perceived positively, signaling that faculty believe rank appropriately reflects professional credentials and experience. These perceptions are consistent with the literature emphasizing that equitable pay, recognition, and clear employment structures enhance faculty satisfaction and retention (Smith & Johnson, 2022; Nicolas *et al.*, 2024) [5, 4]. Collectively, these high perception scores suggest that faculty feel both materially and psychologically supported, which can enhance their commitment, productivity, and institutional loyalty.

Table 3: Regression analysis: influence of compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status on job satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Compensation	0.342	0.118	.345	2.90	.008**
Rewards	0.402	0.112	.367	3.59	.001**
Rank	0.168	0.092	.178	1.83	.078
Employment Status	0.251	0.087	.220	2.88	.009**

$R^2 = .562, F(4,25) = 8.02, p < .001$

The multiple regression model explained 56.2% of the variance in faculty job satisfaction, indicating that compensation, rewards, and employment status are significant predictors of satisfaction. Compensation ($\beta = .345, p < .01$) and rewards ($\beta = .367, p < .001$) had the strongest impact, confirming that financial and non-financial incentives are critical drivers of faculty motivation and fulfillment. Employment status also significantly influenced satisfaction ($\beta = .220, p < .01$), reinforcing the importance of job security and stable work arrangements in promoting morale. Although rank had a positive β coefficient ($\beta = .178$), it was not statistically significant ($p = .078$), suggesting that while academic rank contributes to satisfaction, it is less influential than compensation, rewards, and employment status. These findings

align with both international and local research, indicating that faculty satisfaction is primarily shaped by factors that provide tangible benefits and recognition, while rank alone may not suffice to predict satisfaction (Mgaiwa, 2023; Zhang & Liu, 2021; Nicolas *et al.*, 2024) [3, 6, 4].

The results indicate that NEUST San Isidro College of Education faculty are highly satisfied, and that institutional policies on compensation, rewards, and employment arrangements effectively support faculty well-being.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the faculty members of the College of Education, NEUST San Isidro Campus, exhibited high satisfaction in terms of compensation, rewards, rank, and employment status. Employment status, reflecting job security and stability, received the highest satisfaction, highlighting its critical role in faculty morale. Compensation and rewards were also significant contributors to overall job satisfaction, indicating that both financial and non-financial incentives positively influence faculty motivation and performance. Academic rank, while positively associated with satisfaction, had a comparatively smaller impact, suggesting that recognition, fair compensation, and employment stability are more decisive factors in fostering high satisfaction among faculty. Collectively, the study demonstrates that institutional policies and practices that address faculty compensation, reward systems, and job security significantly contribute to sustaining a motivated, committed, and high-performing teaching workforce.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Enhance reward and recognition systems:** NEUST San Isidro Campus should maintain and expand its recognition programs to ensure that faculty contributions are consistently acknowledged, including merit-based awards, performance incentives, and opportunities for professional growth.
- **Review compensation packages:** While satisfaction with compensation was high, periodic benchmarking against national and regional standards is recommended to maintain competitiveness, attract talent, and retain experienced faculty.
- **Maintain and strengthen employment security:** Given the high value faculty place on employment status, the institution should continue supporting stable, permanent, or long-term contractual appointments and ensure transparent policies regarding promotions and tenure.
- **Professional development linked to rank:** Although rank had a smaller impact on satisfaction, linking professional development opportunities and career advancement programs to rank progression can reinforce motivation and faculty engagement.
- **Future research:** Similar studies should be conducted across other colleges or campuses within NEUST to validate these findings and examine additional factors, such as work-life balance, administrative support, and teaching resources, which may further influence faculty satisfaction and performance.

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