

## Predictors of Instructors' Job Satisfaction: Implication for Supervisors and Communication Managers of First-Generation Universities in Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** Job satisfaction (JS) is a crucial variable in public relations (PR) research, essential for enhancing teaching, research, community service, and retaining university instructors. However, JS has become a significant issue among academic staff in Ethiopian universities. First Generation Universities (FGUs) must address instructors' JS to succeed in these areas. This study aimed to identify unique predictors of overall JS within FGUs. It randomly selected Jimma University, Hawassa University, and the University of Gondar from eight FGUs, involving 600 instructors chosen through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with descriptive statistics (mean and SD) and parametric tests (One-way ANOVA and multiple regressions). Results showed that female instructors, individuals from the Oromiyaa region, those working at Jimma University, those of Oromo ethnicity, and those with over 20 years of experience positively influenced JS. Pearson correlation analysis found a linear positive correlation between JS and four predictor variables. Stepwise regression identified perceived internal university image (UI), communication source satisfaction (CSS), intention to stay (IS), and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as unique predictors of JS, explaining 62.8% of its variance. CSS partially mediated OCB and JS. The study recommends that management and PR communication managers focus on these factors to effectively address faculty JS issues.

**Keywords:** Communication satisfaction; First generation universities; Intent to stay; Internal university image; Job satisfaction; Organizational citizenship behavior

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## 1. Introduction

Human beings must fulfill basic and higher-order needs to achieve life satisfaction (Maslow, as cited in Taormina and Gao, 2013). These are classified into deficiency needs (D-needs) at lower levels and Being (growth) needs (B-needs) at higher levels (McLeod, 2018).

Physiological needs (e.g. air, food, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, sleep); safety and security needs (e.g. health, employment, property, order, law, stability, freedom from fear); Love and belonging needs (e.g. friendship, family, intimacy, sense of connection); Esteem needs (i) esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g., status, prestige).

Being (growth need) includes ego needs, such as “promotion... increments,” and self-actualization (McLeod, 2018, as cited in Qamar, Manzoor, and Iram, 2020: 269), with McLeod noting “realizing personal potential” and “self-fulfillment.” Maslow (1970) estimated that only two percent achieve self-actualization.

Empirical studies underscore the importance of these needs for satisfaction. Taormina and Gao (2013: 173) found a direct link between life satisfaction and Maslow’s five needs, concluding that “...human beings would be more satisfied with their lives if the five important needs... are satisfied.” In the 1960s and 70s, McLeod (2018), referencing Maslow’s (1943) model, expanded it to eight stages, incorporating “cognitive needs (e.g., knowledge, curiosity), aesthetic needs (e.g., appreciation of beauty), and transcendence needs (e.g., religious faith).” Consequently, the growth needs construct now includes “cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence needs” (McLeod, 2018, slide 8).

According to Ngayai (1991: 21), primary needs specific to JS include physiological (on-time salary), security, and economic (fringe benefits). Higher-order (Being) needs encompass social (encouraging interaction), ego/esteem (timely feedback), and self-actualization (training and challenges that enhance creativity).

These factors do not equally impact faculty's job satisfaction (JS); what pleases one may not please another. While all humans need them, debates exist about the order and universality of needs in Maslow’s Theory of human motivation (Tay and Diener, 2011). The theory is criticized for better explaining JS than life satisfaction.

One aspect of life satisfaction is job satisfaction (JS). Đorđević, Ivanović-Đukić, and Lepojević (2021: 62) define it as a “pleasant emotional state resulting from job evaluation.” JS is categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction, with intrinsic satisfaction motivating employees more than extrinsic factors like job security and fringe benefits (Smerek and Peterson, as cited in Kassahun, Gessesse, and Peteti Premanandam, 2023).

At the university level, instructors’ roles encompass teaching, research, and community service, with teaching taking the most credit hours. Their job satisfaction (JS) stems from these domains but is not limited to them. Academic work serves as a significant intrinsic reward. To achieve JS, it is crucial to distribute workloads proportionally and align assignments with instructors' interests and specializations. Research shows that teaching in one’s area of specialization, even with less pay, provides greater satisfaction than teaching unrelated courses for higher pay. Additionally, engaging in research, advising students, publishing, and participating in community-enhancing projects can enhance faculty JS. As noted, “workers work for reasons other than pay” (Mehta, Popli, and Madan, 2016: 235).

Extrinsic factors such as “pay, job security, policies” (Ngayai, 1991) and communication sources can influence satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In this study, communication refers to interactions between management and academic staff, where effective communication fosters job satisfaction (JS), while ineffective communication detracts from it. For instance, working with competent faculty and supportive staff enhances JS, whereas inadequate pay, insecurity, and discouraging promotional policies lead to dissatisfaction. This can result in underperformance, turnover, and brain drain, particularly among Ph.D. instructors. Other motivating factors affecting JS include autonomy,

recognition, and achievement. According to Workineh and Shimels (2010: 13), issues like “inefficient administration” and “unsatisfactory financial rewards” are significant reward-related problems.

Evidence shows that employees' job satisfaction (JS), both intrinsic and extrinsic, is crucial for organizational success and public relations (PR) effectiveness. This study focuses on FGUs in Ethiopia, which has over 50 public universities (FDRE MoE, 2015, as cited in Alemayehu, 2021). Eight of these are research universities (Salilew, Kasahun, Yemanebirhan, Mezemer, and Melkamu, 2016). FGUs are chosen for their established management and communication offices compared to other universities. Specifically, Jimma University, Hawassa University, and the University of Gondar are selected to investigate the variables that collectively and uniquely influence FGU instructors' JS, as these institutions emphasize postgraduate programs and research over undergraduate teaching.

Over the years, PR researchers have explored variables that enhance PR effectiveness, identifying employees' job satisfaction (JS) as a fundamental dependent variable (Kim, 2019; Meng and Berger, 2019). Similarly, instructors' JS is vital for university success. Amani and Komba (2016: 4) state: “The lecturers' job satisfaction automatically affects their performance while, on the other hand, job dissatisfaction contributes to job turnover, absenteeism, and the involvement of lecturers in part-time jobs.” Richmond *et al.* (1982, as cited in Mehta *et al.*, 2016: 237) noted that moderately satisfied employees may be more productive than their dissatisfied counterparts.

Studies indicate significant dissatisfaction among higher education instructors (Bekele, 2019; Dejene, 2015; Guyo, 2023; Kassahun *et al.*, 2023; Otache and Iyaji, 2021) due to unmet basic needs. Instructors also seek satisfaction of higher-level needs. Serin, Raid, and Majid (2022: 403) note, “...the employees today have higher expectations than ever from their employers that surpass their basic needs,” emphasizing the need for job satisfaction. Without addressing these expectations, it is challenging to implement quality changes in teaching, research, and community service. Maslow (1943) stated that individuals with unmet primary needs do not aspire to higher levels. Currently, many university instructors struggle to meet basic needs like food and housing due to inflation, leading to a significant number leaving the profession (Berihun *et al.*, 2016) as their salaries are insufficient to support their families.

Political instability in Ethiopia has created insecurity among university teachers. A preliminary study found that many instructors relocated to their home regions; for example, ethnic Tigrians in Amhara and Oromiyaa moved to Tigray universities, while ethnic Amhara instructors followed similar path. This trend has led to high faculty turnover, indicating unmet safety and love/belonging needs, as described by Maslow.

The career path and office positions for faculty are discouraging. There is little salary differentiation between experienced and less experienced instructors, as the system only considers academic rank, not years of service (Berihun *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, complaints arise that office positions are influenced by demographic factors, leading to job dissatisfaction, turnover, and brain drain, particularly among Ph.D. holders. This situation indicates that instructors' primary needs remain unfulfilled, reflecting a broader issue in Ethiopian higher education.

Regarding brain drain among faculty in Ethiopia, Tesfaye, cited in Guyo (2023: 79), notes that “vulnerability to mind drain...suggested that employees faced various conditions, dissatisfaction with administration, and difficulty in job promotion.” Woltmann *et al.* (2008) state that such issues increase turnover, undermining institutional stability by removing experienced experts. This evidence indicates that some instructors lack affiliation with their universities, a common issue in countries practicing ethnic federalism.

Concerning esteem needs, University instructors struggle to earn respect from their communities and families due to their inability to meet lower and higher-order needs. A teacher in low-quality attire and housing cannot command respect from students with better resources and appearances.

From the perspective of Being (Growth) needs, university instructors are expected to enhance teaching, research, community service, and the political system. However, most show little interest in advocating for academic freedom or criticizing the education system, likely due to fear of

repercussions from political domination. Regarding Transcendence needs, many view the pursuit of science as a luxury, with a noticeable decline in participation in seminars and Ph.D. defenses. Instructors also struggle to satisfy their ego needs, as those with strong performance often lack recognition, negatively impacting educational quality. McLeod (2018) notes that Maslow believes the “physical, emotional, social, and intellectual qualities of an individual... impact on learning.” Acknowledging this, McLeod (2018, Educational applications) writes:

For example, a tired and hungry student will find it difficult to focus on learning. Students need to feel emotionally and physically safe and accepted within the classroom to progress and reach their full potential. Maslow suggests students must be shown that they are valued and respected in the classroom, and the teacher should create a supportive environment. Students with low self-esteem will not progress academically at an optimum rate until their self-esteem is strengthened.

Correspondingly, a tired, hungry instructor lacking acceptance, value, and respect is unlikely to achieve self-actualization. Without fulfilling these needs, it's unrealistic to expect university instructors to produce qualified, innovative students capable of generating problem-solving ideas. This dissatisfaction is reflected in the outputs of numerous graduates from Ethiopian universities.

Failing to meet faculty needs can lead to organizational crises and public relations issues, resulting in faculty turnover, negative perceptions of the university, low performance, and ineffective communication. Berihun *et al.* (2016) found a 66% intent to leave the academic profession at the University of Gondar. Similarly, Kassahun *et al.* (2023: 2) noted that academic employees in Addis Ababa were dissatisfied, except with their work. Dejene (2015) reached similar conclusions at Hawassa University. Quiroz (2021: 196) attributes job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions to factors like “pay, reward and recognition, work itself, promotion, and supervision,” aligning with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The discussions highlight the need to alter the current situation. Gardon, cited in Mehta *et al.* (2016), points out that it is essential to identify the key factors affecting faculty job satisfaction, especially for those with time constraints. Many studies show a positive relationship between job satisfaction and various predictors, though some results indicate reversed or minimal connections.

Mehta *et al.* (2016) reviewed both older studies (Bhatt, 1987; Gohil, 1999; Morge, 1953; Prasad, 1964; Smith *et al.*, 1977) and more recent research (Gurusamy and Mahendran, 2013; Rashid Saeed *et al.*, 2014; Resheske, 2001; Schneider, 2003) on job satisfaction (JS), revealing conflicting results. For demographic characteristics (DCs), Morge's review indicated male teachers were more satisfied, while Bhatt found them less satisfied than female teachers. However, Saxena, Tomar, and Tomar (2019) reported an insignificant relationship between gender and JS. Other studies reviewed by Mehta *et al.* showed that variables like marital status, age, and gender had insignificant associations with JS. According to Mohammed and Eleswed (2013: 48), “the impact of the demographics key variables...was found not to be statistically significant except for age.”

Mehta *et al.* (2016) found that job experience (length of service) is linearly related to JS based on two studies (Prasad; Gohil). However, findings on age's association with JS are inconsistent; while Smith *et al.* showed a linear relationship, Prasad did not. JS is significantly correlated with factors like security and pay (Schneider), salary (Gurusamy and Mahendran), promotion, fairness, and working conditions (Rashid Saeed *et al.*). Additionally, a significant relationship exists between JS and “job autonomy, working with students and colleagues, and supervisors” (Abdu and Waghule, 2021).

In addition to demographic characteristics (DCs), communication satisfaction (CS), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), intention to stay (IS), and perceived university image (UI) influence job satisfaction (JS). CS is defined as “the overall satisfaction of an employee has in his [her] communication environment” (Redding, 1972, as cited in Linn, Htwe, and Khin, 2021: 535). OCB refers to behaviors beyond formal duties (Đorđević *et al.*, 2021). UI represents an organization's image among internal publics (Demir and Saylik, 2021). Intention to stay indicates the desire to

remain with an institution (Tesfaye and Salilew, 2024). These variables are key focus areas in public relations, a distinct management function.

Many studies have examined the relationship between communication satisfaction (CS) and job satisfaction (JS) in various contexts (Ahmad, 2006; Ehlers, 2003; Goldhaber *et al.*, 1978; Goris *et al.*, 2000; Muchinsky, 1977; Pettit *et al.*, 1997; Pincus, 1986; Sheil, 2003 all cited in Gülnar, 2007). Other research has explored the link between turnover intention and JS (Ballard and Seibold, 2006; Kim and Lee in Alshuaibi, Akhtar, Bajaj, and Chatterjee, 2020; Siti, 2008). The connection between university image (external image) and JS has also been investigated (Adeniji, 2011; Azoury, Daou, and Khoury *et al.*, 2014; Bigné *et al.*, 2001). Additionally, numerous studies assessed the association between organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and JS (Đorđević *et al.*, 2021; Foote and Li-Ping, 2008; Kamel, Mohammed, and Abdeljalil, 2015; Saxena *et al.*, 2019; Weikamp and Göritz, 2016; Wyatt, as cited in Sadia *et al.*, 2017). These researchers reported linear associations between JS and these predictors.

Recent studies in higher education institutions in Iraq, Nigeria, and Ethiopia found an inverse relationship between instructors' job satisfaction (JS) and intention to leave (Guyo, 2023; Otache and Iyaji, 2021; Serin *et al.*, 2022). Conversely, research in Thailand revealed a significant positive interaction between communication satisfaction (CS) and JS (Pongton and Suntrayuth, 2019). Choon *et al.* (2020: 285) noted that "top management leadership was discovered to have the most significant relationship with job satisfaction." Additionally, Meng and Berger (2019) found that leadership strongly impacts JS among public relations professionals. The current study examines the relationship between leadership communication and JS.

There are several research gaps compared to previous studies. First, many findings are outdated and contradictory. Second, no research, particularly from a public relations perspective, has identified the strongest predictor of job satisfaction (JS) based on the researcher's review of relevant literature. Additionally, no study has assessed how the four variables—university image (UI), communication source satisfaction (CSS), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and intention to stay (IS)—uniquely and collectively predict the JS of instructors at FGUs in Ethiopia. Previous studies, such as Azoury *et al.* (2014), focused on students' perceptions of university images and overlooked the relationship between instructors' views of internal university image and job satisfaction. Moreover, the mediating role of CSS in the relationship between OCB and JS has received little attention from researchers.

This research aims to address the existing research gap. Specifically, it not only explores the significant relationships between job satisfaction (JS) and its individual predictors but also examines the collective and unique interactions between the four predictor variables and JS. The findings will have a meaningful impact, allowing management and communication leaders at FGUs to identify what truly satisfies instructors. Additionally, the study encourages them to reassess their working environment, organizational culture, reward systems, image promotion, and communication strategies. This research will address the following questions:

1. Which demographic characteristics significantly influence overall JS?
2. Which of these variables (CSS, UI, IS, and OCB) are the most important predictors of JS?
3. Is there a significant relationship between OCB and JS, and can this relationship be mediated by CSS?

Hypothesis:

- Ha1: There is significant relationship between academic ranks and JS
- Ha2: UI uniquely influences JS.
- Ha3: CSS uniquely influences JS
- Ha4: OCB uniquely relates to JS
- Ha4: IS uniquely relates to JS
- Ha5: CSS mediates the relationship between OCB and JS

## 2. Research Methods

### 2.1. Setting of the Study and Research Design

Survey data was collected from three FGUs—Jimma University, Hawassa University, and the University of Gondar—between November 2021 and June 2022. Jimma University is located approximately 352 km southwest of Addis Ababa, while the University of Gondar is about 653 km north, and Hawassa University is 288 km south of the capital. The study employed a cross-sectional correlational research design to identify predictors of job satisfaction (JS).

### 2.2. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques

The study selected four universities from a population of eight FGUs using a lottery technique: Jimma University, Hawassa University, the University of Gondar, and Mekele University. However, data collection from Mekele University was not possible due to regional political instability. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, 600 instructors were randomly selected from three universities—200 from each—resulting in a nearly equal instructor population across universities. The selected colleges were the College of Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH), the College of Natural Sciences (CNS), and the Institute of Technology (IT). The instructor list served as the sampling frame, with 92 from IT, 55 from CSSH, and 53 from CNS. For sample size determination, studies typically suggest a minimum of 400 for a 95% confidence interval. Considering low return rates, a contingency of 40% to 50% is also recommended (Fetene, 2009; Gregory *et al.*, as cited in Adam *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the sample size of 600 was calculated as 400 plus 50% of 400 (200). As noted, “the bigger the sample size, the better!” (Field, 2009: 222).

### 2.3. Instrument of Data Collection

The study utilized a structured questionnaire adapted from various standardized instruments on job satisfaction, communication source satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational image, and intention to stay (Downs and Hazen, 1977; Organ and Konovsky, 1989; Wang *et al.*, 2012). The questionnaire is used to collect data on participants' perceived internal university image (UI), intention to stay (IS), JS, CSS, and OCB, along with their demographic characteristics. Out of 600 returned questionnaires, 587 were deemed suitable for analysis.

While experts in the area verified the content and face validity of the instrument, internal reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha. Accordingly, the dependent variable – JS (19 items, Cronbach's alpha .927, e.g. “I find my job interesting”), and the predictor variables — UI (14 items, Cronbach's alpha .916, e.g. “The university where I am working now is a recommendable public university”), OCB (14 items, Cronbach's alpha .858, e.g., “I give constructive suggestions for improvement”), CSS (5 items, Cronbach's alpha .892, e.g. “I feel that I am communicated with dignity and respect by the management”), and IS (2 items, Cronbach's alpha .700 e.g. “I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this university”) were affirmed on five-point (agree, disagree) measurement scales.

### 2.4. Procedure

The questionnaire was initially piloted with 25 instructors from three departments in the CNS, which were later excluded from the main study. The finalized survey was distributed to participants from Jimma University, Hawassa University, and the University of Gondar by trained data collectors. The first round yielded an unsatisfactory response rate, particularly from the Institute of Technology. A second distribution round was conducted, which improved participation. Subsequently, data cleansing and editing were completed.

### 2.5. Analysis

The study employed a T-test and One-Way ANOVA to identify demographic variables significantly associated with JS. Pearson Correlation assessed JS's relationship with university image (UI), communication source satisfaction (CSS), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), intention to

stay (IS), and age. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis identified unique predictors of JS (at  $P < 0.05$ ). Assumptions for parametric tests were met, and SPSS version 27 was used for analysis. The five-point Likert scale was converted to continuous data before analysis.

## 2.6. Ethical Clearance

A formal collaboration letter was secured from CSSH. Participants agreed to participate by signing the questionnaire anonymously, ensuring confidentiality during the research.

## 3. Results and Discussions

### 3.1. Results

#### 3.1.1. Relationships between background characteristics and JS

This section presents the relationships between the demographic characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, region, religion, university, college, academic rank, and work experience) of the study participants and JS.

Table 1. The influence of gender on JS

Gender	N	M	SD	t(562)	P
Male	480	3.28	0.66	-2.404	.018
Female	84	3.46	0.64		

Source: Field Survey 2021-22

An independent-sample T-test was carried out to detect if males and females differ in their level of overall JS (Table 1), considering the unequal variance assumption because of the sample size difference. The result indicates males and females ( $\bar{x}=3.28$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ;  $\bar{x}=3.46$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ) respectively differed significantly on JS,  $t(562) = -2.404$ ,  $P = .018$ ,  $CI = [-.33382, -.03226]$ . Consequently, we can conclude that the female gender influenced JS more than the male gender did.

Table 2. Multiple comparison summary of ANOVA for demographic characteristics and JS

University	Group	Mean Difference	SE	F(2,584)	p
Jimma (JU)	Hawassa (HU)	.16185*	.06466	4.889	.034
	Gondar (UG)	.19495*	.06946		
Region				<i>F(4,543)</i>	<i>P</i>
Oromiyaa	Amhara	.19184*	.06713	2.786	.036
	Tigray	-.05996	.10787		
	SNNP	.15914	.09245		
	Others	.21371	.09797		
Ethnicity				<i>F(3,530)</i>	<i>P</i>
Oromo	Amhara	.20264*	.06651	4.349	.013
	Tigre	-.08414	.11222		
	Others	.22604*	.08229		
Work experience				<i>F(4,571)</i>	<i>P</i>
Above 20 yrs.	1 to 5 years	.15644	.10021	3.295	.965
	6 to 10 years	.29196*	.10104		
	11 to 15 years	.33661*	.10495		
	16 to 20 years	.07978	.12146		

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Source: Field Survey 2021-22

A One-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether job satisfaction (JS) varied based on university, region, and other demographic characteristics (Table 2). The analysis revealed significant JS differences among universities ( $F(2, 584) = 4.889, P = 0.008$ ). The Games-Howell HSD Test showed significant differences between instructors at Jimma University and Hawassa University ( $\bar{x}$  difference = .16185;  $P = 0.034$ , 95% C.I. = [.0097, .3140]) and the University of Gondar ( $\bar{x}$  difference = .19495;  $P = 0.015$ , 95% C.I. = [.0315, .3584]).

Similarly, the ANOVA test uncovered significant JS variation among the regions ( $F(4, 543) = 2.786, P = 0.026$ ). The Games-Howell HSD Test for multiple comparisons test detected statistically significant differences only between instructors from Oromiyaa and Amhara ( $\bar{x}$  difference = .19184;  $P = 0.036$ , 95% C.I. = [.0078, .3759]).

Likewise, the ANOVA test detected statistically significant differences between ethnic groups ( $F(3, 530) = 4.349, P = 0.005$ ). Specifically, a statistically significant difference was observed between Oromo and Amhara ( $\bar{x}$  difference = .20264;  $P = 0.013$ , 95% C.I. = [.0309, .3744]), and Oromo and Other ( $\bar{x}$  difference = .22604;  $P = 0.033$ , 95% C.I. = [.0131, .4390]), as revealed by the multiple comparisons Games-Howell HSD Test.

Further, the ANOVA test uncovered meaningful variation between service year experience groups ( $F(4, 571) = 3.295, P = 0.011$ ). Statistically significant differences were observed between service years above 20 years and 6 to 10 years ( $\bar{x}$  difference = .29196;  $P = 0.044$ , 95% C.I. = [.0056, .5783]) and 11 to 15 years ( $\bar{x}$  difference = .33661;  $P = 0.018$ , 95% C.I. = [.0406, .6327]) as detected by the multiple comparisons of the Games-Howell HSD. However, a separate Pearson correlational analysis revealed an insignificant relationship between the age of the participants and overall JS ( $r(587) = .006, P = .891$ ).

Hence, we can conclude that some demographic characteristics (Oromiyaa region, Oromo ethnicity, Jimma University, and 20 years and above working experience) positively influenced JS.

Next, we will assess respondents' satisfaction levels regarding their jobs, communication, their perceptions of the university's image, organizational citizenship behavior, and their intention to remain. After that, we will explore the correlation between job satisfaction (JS) and its related predictor variables before conducting the stepwise regression analysis.

Table 3. JS's relationship with CS, UI, IS, and OCB

Pearson correlation	N(587)	Mean	Median	SD	JS	CS	IUI	ISU	OCB
	JS	3.31	3.29	.66	1				
	CSS	2.89	3.00	.93	.707***	1			
	UI	3.45	3.38	.62	.696***	.630***	1		
	IS	3.42	3.5	.91	.542***	.482***	.573***	1	
	OCB	3.99	3.96	.45	.421***	.292***	.465***	.395***	1

\*\*\*Correlation is significant at the .001 level.

Source: Field Survey 2021–22

0.10,  $\pm 0.30$ , and  $\pm 0.50$  Pearson correlation coefficients represent a small, medium, and a large effect, respectively (Cohen, 1992).

The study conducted descriptive<sup>1</sup> and correlational statistical analyses to assess instructors' job satisfaction (JS), communication source satisfaction (CSS), perception of university image (UI), intention to stay (IS), and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Table 3). The results (not indicated in the table) revealed that approximately 51% of respondents were dissatisfied with their jobs, and about 53% reported dissatisfaction with supervisory communication. Additionally, around

<sup>1</sup> NB: The median serves as a stable cut point for all variables. Values below the median indicate dissatisfaction with job and communication sources, a negative view of university image and organizational citizenship behavior, and lower intention to stay in FGUs. Percentages of respondents are provided only in the text for simplicity.

51% had an unfavorable perception of the university image, while 62% indicated a lower intention to stay in FGUs. Furthermore, 53% reported a limited perception of OCB.

To examine the relationships between overall JS and CSS, UI, IS, and OCB, Pearson correlation analysis was employed. The results showed a strong positive and significant relationship between JS and CSS ( $r = .707, P < .001$ ), UI ( $r = .696, P < .001$ ), and IS ( $r = .542, P < .001$ ), as well as a moderate correlation with OCB ( $r = .421, P < .001$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that JS is strongly correlated with CSS, UI, and IS, and moderately with OCB.

From these variables, to identify the unique predictors of JS, the study has applied stepwise regression analysis as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of regression results by regressing JS on UI, IS, SCS, and OCB

Variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		95% CV for B		Collinearity statistics	
	Beta	SE	B	T	LB	UB	Tolerance	VIF
Step 4								
Constant	.394			2.597	.096	.692		
CSS	.299	.024	.423***	12.686	.253	.346	.581	1.722
UI	.334	.040	.313***	8.414	.256	.412	.465	2.153
IS	.085	.023	.117***	3.658	.039	.130	.626	1.598
OCB	.154	.043	.105***	3.618	.070	.238	.758	1.319

\*\*\*Correlation is significant at the .001 level.

Ns: Source: Field Survey 2021-22;  $R^2 = .625$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .622$ ;  $F(4,582) = 242.490$ ; Durbin-Watson = 2.002

The study employed stepwise multiple regression analysis (four steps) to identify unique predictors of overall job satisfaction (JS). In the final model (Model 4), as shown in Table 4, the four variables accounted for 62.5% (adjusted 62.2%) of the variance in overall JS. Beta values indicated that the most significant predictors were university image (UI) (Beta = .334,  $P < .001$ ), communication source satisfaction (CSS) (Beta = .299,  $P < .001$ ), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Beta = .154,  $P < .001$ ), and intention to stay (IS) (Beta = .085,  $P < .001$ ). Controlling for the other variables, UI, CSS, OCB, and IS explained 33.4%, 29.9%, 15.4%, and 8.5% of the variance in overall JS, respectively. Thus, these four factors are identified as the most important predictors of overall JS, with UI being the strongest (Fig. 1).

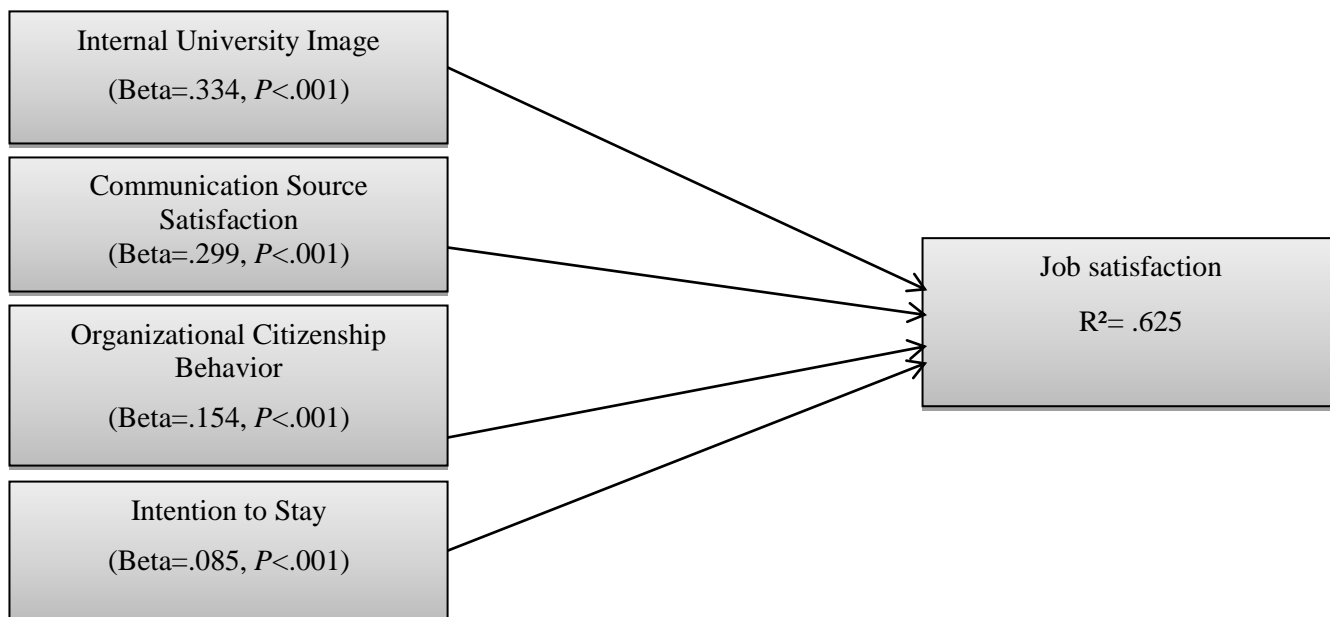


Fig. 1: Predictors of job satisfaction  
Source: Field Survey 2021-22

3.1.2. Mediation role of CCS

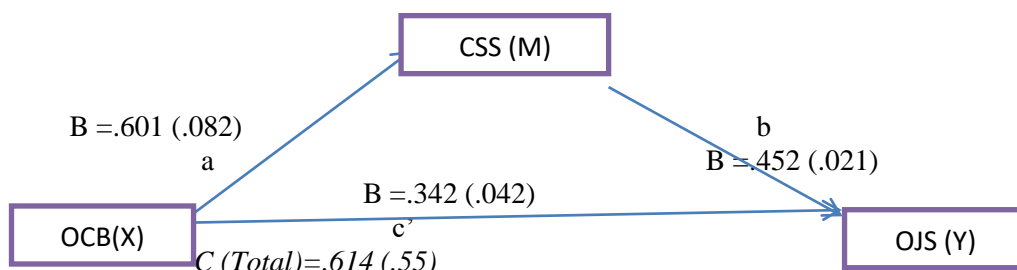


Fig.2: CSS’s partial mediation role between OCB and OJS  
Source: Field Survey 2021-22  
NB: The decimals in the brackets indicate the standard errors.

The study stipulated that communication source satisfaction mediates the relationship between OCB and OJS. Fig. 2 shows the direct significant influence OCB has on OJS and CSS, and CSS on OJS implying CSS plays a mediation role between OCB and OJS. In Figure 2, a, b, and c show the paths from X to M, M to Y, and X to Y, respectively. The C indicates the total direct effect without a mediator. Table 5 illustrates more.

Table 5. The direct effect of OCB on CCS and the unique effect of CCS on OJS

Variable	Direct effect	With mediator	Effect/implication
X → Y	.614 (.55) ***	.342 (.042) ***	
X → M	.601 (.082) ***		Possibility of partial mediation
M → Y	.452 (.021) ***		

\*\*\* Correlation is significant at the .001  
Source: Field survey 2021-22  
NB: The decimals in the bracket refer to standard error (SE)

To assess the effects of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) on overall job satisfaction (OJS) and communication source satisfaction (CSS), two simple and one multiple regression analyses were

conducted. Initially, OCB alone influenced OJS with a beta value of .614 ( $P < .001$ ). When CSS was introduced as a mediator, OCB's effect on OJS was reduced to .342 ( $P < .001$ ) (Table 5).

The study then examined the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and communication source satisfaction (CSS), finding that OCB has a .601 ( $P < .001$ ) effect on CSS. To assess their unique effects on overall job satisfaction (OJS), both variables were included in the regression model. The results indicated that OCB has a .342 ( $P < .001$ ) effect on OJS, while CSS has a .452 ( $P < .001$ ) effect. The overall model effect was significant at  $b = .614$  ( $P < .001$ ).

The study concluded that there is partial mediation based on the evidence in Table 5. As stated, "After controlling for M, if the correlation between X and Y is reduced..." and "If the effect of X on Y remains statistically significant but reduced, a partial mediation model is supported." Generally, a smaller coefficient 'c' indicates a stronger effect of the mediator (Abu-Bader and Jones, 2021, p. 45).

Thus, it can be concluded that communication source satisfaction (CSS) partially mediates the effect of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) on overall job satisfaction (OJS). Specifically, a one-unit change in OCB positively affects OJS by .342 units, while CSS increases by .601 units with a one-unit change in OCB. Additionally, a one-unit change in CSS results in a .452-unit change in job satisfaction (JS).

The findings suggest that communication source satisfaction (CSS) enhances the impact of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) on overall job satisfaction (OJS), indicating a causal relationship between them. It is recommended to use structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the significance of OCB's indirect effect on job satisfaction through CSS.

### 3.2. Discussions

The study aimed to identify the determinants of overall job satisfaction (JS) among teaching faculty at FGUs. Approximately 51% of respondents reported dissatisfaction with their work, with scores below the median of 3.29. This finding aligns with Kassahun *et al.* (2023), who noted dissatisfaction among academic staff in Addis Ababa. Additional support comes from studies by Bekele (2019), Guyo (2023), and Otache and Iyaji (2021). However, this contrasts with Tadege (2015) and Yasin (2015), who found that 69.6% of academic staff were satisfied. The discrepancy may be attributed to the timing of the research.

Conversely, only about 30% and 20% of participants reported moderate and high job satisfaction, respectively. These instructors may engage in additional income-generating activities, such as consultancy and external research projects, which could enhance their JS. Support from spouses may also play a role, as some instructors have financially contributing partners. The findings suggest that the roughly half of participants reporting dissatisfaction may be less productive in teaching, research, and community engagement compared to those who are moderately or highly satisfied. As noted by Richmond *et al.* (cited in Mehta *et al.*, 2016: 237), "moderately satisfied employees may be more productive than dissatisfied employees." However, satisfaction in academic work does not necessarily equate to overall life satisfaction. Previous studies indicate that intrinsic rewards from academic work are significant sources of satisfaction, highlighting that "workers work for reasons other than pay" (Mehta *et al.*, 2016: 235).

The first research question addressed demographic variables influencing JS. This study found that being female positively affects JS, aligning with Bhatt and Morge (cited by Mehta *et al.*, 2016), who reported a linear link between female gender and JS. However, Brown and Sargeant (2007) found that male gender impacts JS. Conversely, Moges (2018) did not confirm a correlation between gender and overall JS in a study at Gondar College of Teacher Education.

In this study, the higher JS among female instructors may be linked to gender policies at FGUs that prioritize women for office positions, providing extrinsic rewards. This suggests that male instructors may rely more on intrinsic rewards. Brown and Sargeant (2007) noted, "Male workers... had a higher level of intrinsic job satisfaction than female..." (p. 230). The findings indicate that FGUs management should reconsider their gender policies regarding office positions to prevent losing

committed male faculty, as studies show their intent to stay is often lower than that of female counterparts (Tesfaye and Salilew, 2024).

The review of studies by Prasad and Gohil, cited in Mehta *et al.* (2016), indicates a correlation between job experience and job satisfaction (JS). The current study found that instructors with over 20 years of experience reported higher satisfaction than those with 6 to 15 years. This may be because more experienced instructors enjoy benefits such as access to housing, office positions, and related benefits. Additionally, they may choose stability for their families; for instance, Jimma University prioritizes staff children for admission, and faculty can send their children to the university's community school at reduced fees. Brown and Sargeant (2007) partially support these findings, noting that longer tenure at Akra University correlates with higher levels of extrinsic job satisfaction. For FGUs management, the findings emphasize the need to enhance extrinsic motivation for instructors with less than 20 years of experience. Strategies could include covering full housing expenses and constructing more faculty housing to improve job satisfaction among less experienced instructors.

The study anticipated that instructors with higher academic ranks (Ph.D., associate professors, professors) would report greater job satisfaction than those with lower ranks (technical assistants, graduate assistants, lecturers). Contrary to this expectation, the analysis showed no significant differences between these groups. One reason may be that many Ph.D. holders do not engage in income-generating activities like consultancy or part-time work, and research grant writing. This finding contrasts with Brown and Sargeant (2007: 11), who stated: "Workers holding doctoral degrees had higher levels of [overall] job satisfaction... than individuals with a high school diploma only." The discrepancy could be due to the qualification gap; the difference between a Ph.D. and a diploma is larger than that between a Ph.D. and an M.A./MSc. Moreover, the disproportionate (limited) participation of associate professors in this study may have affected the results.

The findings regarding academic rank and JS suggest interconnected implications. When academic rank does not influence JS, higher-degree holders may feel discouraged from committing to their work, while those with lower degrees may lack motivation to pursue further education. This could negatively impact university productivity, leading to a crisis in quality education, research, community service engagement, and institutional reputation.

Many university instructors may avoid conducting significant research due to limited funding and challenges in securing external projects, opting instead for low-paying part-time teaching jobs. This lack of research funding leads to fewer publications, which affects promotion opportunities and contributions to scientific knowledge. Additionally, instructors may be less engaged in community projects that enhance quality of life.

These findings support Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which posits that individuals must fulfill lower-order needs before aspiring to higher ones. In this case, instructors are unable to pursue growth needs like promotion without first meeting their physiological needs. Therefore, FGUs must strive to fulfill these foundational needs to truly embody their identity as research universities.

In this study, marital status, college type, and religion did not significantly relate to overall job satisfaction (JS). Similarly, a review by Mehta *et al.* (2016) and Moges (2018) found no significant relationship between marital status and JS. The current study also revealed an insignificant relationship between age and JS, aligning with Prasad (cited in Mehta *et al.*, 2016), who reported similar findings.

This study found that university image (UI) is the strongest predictor of overall JS, supporting the hypothesis that UI influences JS. This finding aligns with Bigné *et al.* (2001), who noted that tourism image perceptions affect JS, and Azoury *et al.* (2014), who stated: "The image is the construct that most influences student satisfaction" (p. 4). Similarly, Uslu and Karakoyunlu (2022: 117) observed that "the university's corporate image affects student satisfaction." The current study uniquely demonstrates that internal university image impacts academic staff's JS, highlighting the need for FGUs to enhance their image in a competitive environment.

This study revealed a linear interaction between communication source satisfaction (CSS) and overall JS. The finding aligns with Gülnar (2007: 201), who concluded that overall JS positively interacts with various dimensions of CSS, including “communication climate, supervisory communication, media quality, feedback, organizational integration, organizational perspective, and horizontal communication.” Additionally, multiple studies (Ahmad, 2006; Ehlers, 2003; Goldhaber *et al.*, 1978; Goris *et al.*, 2000; Muchinsky, 1977; Pettit *et al.*, 1997; Pincus, 1986; Sheil, 2003) cited in Gülnar (2007) also reported significant correlations between CSS dimensions and JS. Similar findings were noted by Downs and Adrian (2004), leading to the retention of the alternative hypothesis (Ha).

About 51% of participants reported communication source satisfaction below the mean (2.8) and median (3), indicating areas needing improvement, such as the communication gap between supervisors and instructors. Conversely, somewhere else, “top management leadership was discovered to have the most significant relationship with job satisfaction” (Choon *et al.*, 2020: 285).

The study confirmed that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and overall JS interact, supporting the hypothesis. Numerous studies (Đorđević *et al.*, 2021; Foote and Li-Ping, 2008; Kamel *et al.*, 2015; Saxena *et al.*, 2019; Weikamp and Göritz, 2016) reported a strong linear relationship, indicating that increases in OCB correspond to higher levels of JS.

The findings have multiple implications. Instructors at FGUs voluntarily assist each other in developing skills for teaching, research, and community service (Altruism). They demonstrate loyalty to the university, encourage family patronage (Loyalty), and put in extra effort while opposing favoritism and seeking feedback from colleagues (Sportsmanship). Additionally, they avoid creating conflicts, reduce intergroup tensions (Courtesy), and promote the university's services and image (Civic virtue). These behaviors reflect the various sub-dimensions of OCB that contribute to a positive work environment and enhance overall job satisfaction.

Intent to stay (IS) significantly interacted with overall JS, indicating that instructors who intend to remain at FGUs are more satisfied. This finding aligns with studies from Iraq, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, which reported an inverse relationship between JS and turnover intentions (Guyo, 2023; Otache and Iyaji, 2021; Serin *et al.*, 2022). In this study, IS is the predictor variable, suggesting that increased JS leads to decreased turnover intention. Overall, participants wish to continue their careers at FGUs, provided that factors enhancing their stay are improved. Additionally, the study found that OCB influences JS through communication source satisfaction (CSS), highlighting the need for better information flow between committed academic staff and leadership to enhance JS.

#### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study aimed to identify unique predictors of overall JS among academic staff in FGUs. It found that being a female, having over 20 years of experience, being Oromo, coming from the Oromiyaa region, and working at Jimma University (JU) were significantly related to overall JS. Additionally, perceptions of university image (UI), communication source satisfaction (CSS), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and intention to stay (IS) uniquely influenced JS, with UI being the strongest predictor. Together, these variables explained 62.2% of the variance in JS. Notably, this study is unique as it investigates CSS's mediating role between OCB and JS, addresses the collective contributions of predictor variables, and highlights demographic factors significantly affecting job satisfaction among university instructors, thereby filling a crucial research gap.

##### **4.1. Implications of the Study**

The finding has theoretical and practical implications.

###### **4.1.1. Theoretical implications**

Previous studies did not explore the mediating role of communication source satisfaction (CSS) between organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and job satisfaction (JS), nor the relationship between instructors' perceptions of the university's internal image and JS. This research addressed

these gaps by examining the combined influence of university image (UI), CSS, OCB, and intention to stay (IS) on JS. It also emphasized the importance of contextual factors like gender, ethnicity, and region in understanding job satisfaction, rather than merely describing demographic characteristics. Consequently, this study offers a unique perspective on JS and supports Maslow's human motivational theory.

#### **4.1.2. Practical implications**

Over 50% of academic staff at FGUs are dissatisfied with their overall JS. To improve this, the study suggests that FGU management and the public relations (PR) office should strategically implement the four identified predictors of JS. A holistic intervention approach, prioritizing resource allocation to enhance the university's internal image, should be adopted. Enhancing the university's image involves providing high-quality education, conducting impactful research, publishing in prestigious journals, and promoting innovation.

Additionally, as some instructors, especially new employees, may lack familiarity with their universities' history, achievements, and resources, the PR office should actively promote these aspects through various communication channels. It should also amplify the voices of academic staff alongside the accomplishments of top management via the university's website, social media, community radio, and print publications. By doing so, the internal image of FGUs can positively influence faculty JS related to teaching, research, and community engagement, ultimately improving satisfaction levels among instructors.

Following university image (UI), communication source satisfaction (CSS) is fundamental. The findings suggest that FGU management, including PR communication managers, should address misunderstandings and consider faculty feedback. They must facilitate open exchanges of information and communicate effectively about potential issues. This approach enhances instructors' sense of responsibility and pride. As noted, “Clear communication and meaningful rules and regulations, along with participation in decision-making, can improve morale and instill a sense of responsibility and pride in faculty” (Ngayai, 1991: 43). Additionally, the findings highlight the need for effective communication training for management by the PR office, as it fosters faculty satisfaction in teaching, research, and community service.

The findings regarding organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) have several implications for FGUs' management and PR communication. First, management should identify and address the challenges faced by dedicated instructors and researchers. Listening to their requests is crucial, as is energizing and rewarding them to prevent burnout. Additionally, discouraging these committed workers can lead to dissatisfaction and high turnover rates among skilled staff. The PR office should promote the contributions of outstanding employees through various communication channels to highlight their value and encourage a positive work environment.

The study indicates that many Ph.D. holders feel discouraged from engaging in research, which is concerning. It highlights the need for FGUs to strategically evolve into research-focused universities. The findings suggest that top, mid-level, and lower-level officials, along with the PR office, should collaborate with the federal government to improve the research climate and instructors' living standards. Addressing faculty needs can enhance their intention to remain at FGUs. By considering these findings, management can better understand what satisfies instructors and improve job satisfaction, organizational culture, reward systems, and communication approaches. The PR office should also account for the academic staff's demographic characteristics when creating communication materials and organizing training, ensuring all voices are heard to foster a peaceful communication climate.

#### 4.2. Limitation of the Study and Recommendation for Research

The study has limitations. It primarily used a cross-sectional correlational design to examine predictors of faculty JS in FGUs. Each construct has sub-dimensions, and the relationships between these sub-dimensions and overall JS, as well as the “extrinsic” and “intrinsic” components of JS, were not explored. Additionally, findings cannot be generalized beyond FGUs, as data were collected from only three institutions. The impact of income on JS was not investigated, and the four unique determinants explained only 62.2% of the variance, leaving 37.8% unexplained. Future research could examine these additional variables and consider intervening factors, ideally using structural equation modeling. The researcher suggests qualitative methods or mixed approaches with larger samples, as well as similar studies on non-first-generation universities, administrative staff, and university students.

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