

Job Satisfaction and Perceived Challenge of SDSSU/NEMSU Employees During the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Organizational Behavior Perspective

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Abstract

In the advent of growing workplace setting, examining organizational behavior helps organizations create positive work environments that enhance employee commitment, productivity, and overall workplace well-being. This descriptive-comparative study analyzed the job satisfaction and perceived challenge of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic within the context of organizational behavior. Simple random sampling was applied to select the 268 participants in the study. Questionnaires were distributed through Google Forms. The findings showed that the job satisfaction of SDSSU/NEMSU employees in terms of compensation, supervisor, colleague, working environment, promotion, organization, and job content. There were minimal challenges that the employees encounter in terms of training, incentives, and fringe benefits. From a behavioral perspective, the data emphasized that employees' attitudes, satisfaction, and workplace behaviors are shaped by their interaction with the organizational environment. Job satisfaction was not only based on individual perceptions but also shaped by organizational factors such as leadership support, fairness, communication, workplace relationships, and institutional practices. Employees who experience supportive supervision, positive colleague relationships, and responsive organizational systems are more likely to develop positive perception about workplace systems. Organizations function as social systems where employee behavior is influenced by how they are treated, valued, and supported. Fair management practices, recognition, ethical leadership, and opportunities for growth contribute to stronger employee motivation and organizational attachment. In the context of SDSSU/NEMSU during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizational support became essential in helping employees adapt to changing work demands and challenges.

Keywords: job satisfaction, organizational behavior, perceived challenge, social systems

Introduction

A look at job satisfaction based on organizational behavior is necessary because employees' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences are shaped not only by individual factors but also by the organizational environment in which they operate. Organizational behavior provides a broader perspective in understanding how leadership practices, workplace relationships, organizational culture, communication patterns, and support systems influence employees' motivation, commitment, and performance.

Examining job satisfaction through the organizational behavior lens allows organizations to identify how internal processes and social interactions affect employees' overall workplace experiences (Sukmayadi & Sukmara, 2024). This study addressed the need to understand how job satisfaction can be linked towards developing positive employee attitudes and behaviors within the organization. It recognizes that employees' perceptions toward their work, workplace relationships, and organizational support influence their overall perception about workplace challenges.

Employment is a fundamental aspect of individuals' lives, as it significantly influences their personal well-being, social interactions, and overall quality of life. Hence, maintaining a satisfied workforce is essential for organizations to achieve effectiveness and sustainability.

In the context of higher education, universities serve as important institutions that contribute to national development by providing essential services and creating employment opportunities for a diverse workforce. However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly transformed the nature of work and organizational practices, creating unprecedented challenges for university faculty, staff, and students. These changes affected not only work arrangements but also the psychological well-being of members of the academic community, as increased levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional difficulties were reported during periods of lockdown and uncertainty (Chavez, 2020; Chavez & Lamorinas, 2023).

One of the major impacts of the pandemic was the transition from traditional workplace and learning environments to remote and technology-mediated arrangements. Universities and colleges worldwide implemented work-from-home policies, suspended campus-based activities, and adopted digital platforms to support online teaching, learning, and administrative operations. Faculty members and students were required to adjust to new modes of communication, instructional delivery, and academic engagement. These rapid changes presented significant challenges to the global education sector, requiring institutions to strengthen organizational support, adaptability, and employee-centered practices to sustain effective academic operations during times of crisis (Chavez & Lamorinas, 2023).

Job satisfaction refers to the combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental conditions that enable individuals to develop a positive perception and sense of fulfillment toward their work (Hoppock, 1935). It also represents the extent to which employees experience favorable or unfavorable feelings and attitudes toward their employment (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagińska, 2021). These feelings are influenced by various organizational factors, including compensation, supervision, colleague relationships, working environment, promotion opportunities, organizational support, and job content. Conversely, dissatisfaction may arise from concerns related to inadequate compensation, job insecurity, limited career advancement, poor supervisor relationships, ineffective communication between employees and management, lack of recognition, weak organizational trust, and work-related stress or burnout.

Employee satisfaction is a critical component in achieving organizational effectiveness and sustainability across different sectors. Understanding the factors that shape employees' satisfaction is essential because addressing their needs and expectations can contribute to employee retention, improved workplace relationships, stronger coordination between management and employees, and increased productivity.

When organizations provide supportive conditions and recognize employee contributions, workers are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes, motivation, and commitment toward their responsibilities. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the level of job satisfaction among employees of Surigao del Sur State University/North Eastern Mindanao State University (SDSSU/NEMSU) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the study may provide valuable insights into the organizational factors that influence employee satisfaction and contribute to the development of strategies that promote employee well-being, engagement, and effective workplace practices.

Literature Review

Job satisfaction is considered an essential factor in organizational effectiveness because satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate commitment, motivation, and improved performance. When organizations prioritize employee needs and create supportive workplace conditions, employees become more engaged and contribute more effectively toward achieving organizational goals.

Farsi et al. (2017) emphasized that job satisfaction is closely associated with productivity and employee well-being, making it an important element in sustaining organizational success. Furthermore, job satisfaction influences employee motivation, which contributes to higher levels of performance and efficiency. Bulińska-Stangrecka and Bagieńska (2021) highlighted that job satisfaction serves as a foundation of positive workplace well-being, strengthening employee motivation and promoting a more productive organizational environment.

Compensation. Compensation influences employees' job satisfaction, motivation, and workplace performance. An effective compensation system supports organizational effectiveness by encouraging positive employee behavior, improving productivity, and strengthening employee commitment. Compensation contributes to employee satisfaction and organizational success (Bustamam et al., 2014), while also helps in attracting and retaining employees (Terera et al., 2014). Adeoye and Fields (2014) further highlighted that organizations need competitive and innovative compensation strategies to maintain employee engagement and support long-term organizational goals.

Supervisor. Supervisor relationships significantly influence employees' job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. A positive relationship between supervisors and employees creates a supportive work environment that encourages greater satisfaction and better job performance, while negative relationships may reduce motivation and affect workplace outcomes (Hampton, 2019). Similarly, Conway (2011) emphasized that employees' perceptions of their relationship with their supervisors can influence their level of motivation, which directly affects their willingness to perform their responsibilities effectively. Therefore, effective supervision, communication, and positive leader–employee interactions are important factors in promoting employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

Colleagues. Positive relationships among colleagues play an important role in shaping employees' job satisfaction and performance. Occhipinti et al. (2018) found that employee interactions and personality differences influence workplace satisfaction and task performance, while conflicts among coworkers may weaken social relationships and negatively affect work outcomes. Similarly, Rhee et al. (2017) reported that coworker incivility is associated with lower job satisfaction and reduced performance. In contrast, supportive colleague relationships encourage communication, feedback, and cooperation, which helps employees become more productive and improve their overall workplace experience (Charles-Leija et al., 2023).

Working Environment. The working environment is an important factor that influences employees' job satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational performance. Organizations need to establish a supportive and well-equipped workplace that promotes employee efficiency, effectiveness, and motivation. A positive work environment enables employees to perform their responsibilities effectively while reducing conditions that may hinder productivity. Taheri et al. (2020) emphasized that providing suitable workplace conditions and necessary facilities contributes to employee satisfaction and helps organizations maintain a productive and committed workforce.

Promotions. Career advancement opportunities, particularly promotions, are significant factors that influence employees' work experiences and professional development. Promotions serve as an important form of career progression and are often associated with increased compensation, greater responsibilities, and stronger organizational commitment (Wang et al, 2024). They also function as a motivational mechanism by recognizing employees' contributions and rewarding high performance. Through promotion opportunities, organizations can encourage employees to improve their productivity, strengthen their commitment, and pursue higher levels of performance (Kumar & Vasudevan, 2024).

Organization. Organizational factors play a significant role in shaping employee experiences, commitment, and overall performance, especially during periods of uncertainty such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations must adapt their structures, policies, and workplace practices to address changing demands while maintaining employee support and productivity (Galvão et al., 2026). A strong organizational culture, reflected through shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices, contributes to employee commitment, learning, and capability development. Furthermore, effective management practices that align organizational culture with employee expectations and performance goals help improve workplace outcomes (Lund, 2003). Research also emphasizes that a positive organizational culture enhances employee performance and contributes to sustained organizational success (Galvão et al., 2026).

Job Content. Job content influences employees' attitudes, satisfaction, and performance by shaping how they perceive their roles and responsibilities. Robbins and Judge (2013) explained that employees' feelings toward their jobs are formed through their evaluation of job duties, expectations, and the benefits provided by their work. When employees clearly understand their tasks and responsibilities, they are more likely to perform effectively and experience greater satisfaction. Conversely, unclear job roles and inadequate understanding of work expectations may lead to dissatisfaction and reduced performance (Belias et al., 2014).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of job satisfaction and perceived challenge of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are the specific questions asked in this study.

1. What is the demographic profile of the participants?
2. What is the level of job satisfaction of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic based on compensation, supervisor, colleague, working environment, promotion, organization, and job content?
3. What is the level of perceived challenge of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic based on training, incentives, and fringe benefits?
4. Is there a significant difference in job satisfaction and perceived challenge between faculty and staff?
5. Is there a significant relationship in job satisfaction and perceived challenge?

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive-comparative research design was employed to analyze the job satisfaction of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. This design enabled the study to describe the employees' levels of job satisfaction and examine whether significant differences existed based on selected demographic and work-related characteristics.

Research Setting

SDSSU/NEMSU is a state-run higher education institution located in the southern part of the Philippines, serving learners from various communities, including those in rural and geographically distant areas. As a countryside university, NEMSU caters to students who may experience limitations in accessing digital resources, reliable internet connectivity, and technology-based learning facilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the university adapted flexible learning modalities to sustain educational delivery despite the challenges brought by movement restrictions and health protocols (Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022). Within this context, NEMSU employees experienced significant changes in their work environment, responsibilities, and institutional practices, making it a relevant setting for examining job satisfaction and workplace experiences during the pandemic.

Participants and Sampling

Based on the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) records, NEMSU had approximately 867 faculty members and staff across its seven campuses, the Tandag, Cantilan, Lianga, Bislig, San Miguel, Tagbina, and Cagwait, as of 2022. From this population, 268 respondents were selected through a simple random sampling technique (see **Table 1**), wherein each member of the population had an equal opportunity to be included in the study (Ahmed, 2024).

Table 1. Population and number of samples based on simple random sampling

CAMPUS	FACULTY	SAMPLE	STAFF	SAMPLE	CONTRACTUAL FACULTY	SAMPLE	JO Staff	SAMPLE	TOTAL SAMPLE
TANDAG	123	38	46	14	23	7	102	31	90
CANTILAN	68	21	23	7	54	16	49	15	59
BISLIG	19	6	5	2	-	-	19	5	13
LIANGA	41	13	24	7	17	5	21	7	32
CAGWAIT	19	6	6	2	6	2	14	4	14
TAGBINA	36	11	20	7	21	6	26	8	32
SAN MIGUEL	24	8	14	4	16	5	36	11	28
TOTAL	330	103	138	43	137	41	267	81	268

Instrumentation

The participants were asked about the problems they encountered during the implementation of the COVID-19 measures in the institution. The instrument of this study had three components: (1) the demographic profile, (2) satisfaction based on compensation, supervisor, colleague, working environment, promotion, organization, and job content, (3) perceived challenges based on training, incentives, and fringe benefits. The instrument was validated by experts to ensure its relevance, clarity, and appropriateness in measuring the intended variables of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Sampling was conducted by randomly selecting participants from the 2022 HRMO employee database to ensure that all eligible employees had an equal opportunity to be included in the study. The selected participants were contacted through email and were provided with an overview of the study's purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations. Upon their agreement to participate, the research instrument was distributed electronically to facilitate data collection while considering the limitations brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire, and follow-up reminders were sent to encourage participation and ensure an adequate response rate. The collected data were then organized, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

The primary data of this study was the responses from the online research questionnaire. The responses were coded based on a five-point Likert scale (see **Table 2**) to describe the level of satisfaction.

Table 2. Data interpretation based on a five-point Likert Scale

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	
5	4.20-5.00	Totally Satisfied	Extremely Challenging
4	3.40-4.19	Somewhat Satisfied	Highly Challenging
3	2.60-3.39	Satisfied	Sometimes Challenging
2	1.80-2.59	Moderately Satisfied	Slightly Challenging
1	1.00-1.79	Not Satisfied	Not Challenging

Frequency. This was used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and present the distribution of participants according to categories such as age, sex, position, and other profile variables.

Weighted Mean. This was used to determine the level of job satisfaction and perceived challenges of employees. It summarized the respondents' ratings for each indicator and provided an overall measure of their perceptions regarding compensation, supervision, colleagues, working environment, promotion, organizational factors, job content, training, incentives, and fringe benefits.

Mann–Whitney U Test. This non-parametric test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between two independent groups of respondents, particularly faculty and staff.

Spearman Rank Correlation. This statistical test was used to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived challenges. It determined whether increases or decreases in one variable were associated with changes in another variable, without requiring normally distributed data.

Results

Objective 1. What is the demographic profile of the participants?

Table 3 summarizes the demographic profile of the participants. The study involved 268 NEMSU/SDSSU employees with varied demographic characteristics. Most respondents belonged to the 21–30 age group (45.9%), followed by those aged 31–40 (31.3%). The majority of the respondents were male (61.2%), while female respondents comprised 38.8%. In terms of educational attainment, most employees had a college degree or college-level qualification (59.0%), followed by those with a master's degree or units (27.6%) and PhD units or degrees (13.4%). Regarding length of service, more than half of the respondents had worked in the institution for 1–5 years (54.1%). In terms of employment status, faculty/regular employees represented the largest group (31.7%), followed closely by job order employees (30.2%), contractual faculty (22.8%), and regular staff (15.3%). These results indicate that the respondents came from different age groups, educational backgrounds, employment categories, and levels of institutional experience.

Table 3. Demographic profile of participants based on age, sex, educational attainment, years in service, and employment status

Demographics	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21 – 30 years old	123	45.89552%
	31 – 40 years old	84	31.34328%
	41 – 50 years old	39	14.55224%
	51 – 60 years old	21	7.835821%
	61 and above	1	0.373134%
Sex	Male	164	61.19403%

	Female	104	38.80597%
Educational attainment	College Level/College Degree	158	58.95522%
	Master Unit/ Master's Degree	74	27.61194%
	PhD Unit/PhD Degree	36	13.43284%
	Years in Service		
	1 – 5 years	145	54.10448%
	6 – 10 years	71	26.49254%
	11 – 15 years	17	6.343284%
	16 – 20 years	12	4.477612%
	21 – 30 years	15	5.597015%
	31 years and above	8	2.985075%
Employment Status	Contractual Faculty	61	22.76119%
	Faculty/Regular	85	31.71642%
	Job Order	81	30.22388%
	Staff/Regular	41	15.29851%

Objective 2. What is the level of job satisfaction of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic based on compensation, supervisor, colleague, working environment, promotion, organization, and job content?

Table 4 shows that employees were generally somewhat satisfied with the compensation provided by the organization. The highest-rated indicator was salary meeting the expectation (3.76), followed by remuneration relative to employees' work (3.62) and commensurate salary based on educational attainment (3.56), indicating that employees perceived their pay and rewards as relatively appropriate. However, allowance meeting expectations (3.30) and housing benefits/healthcare and insurance (3.03) were rated as satisfied, suggesting areas where compensation-related benefits may still be improved. Generally, the compensation practices were viewed positively by employees, although additional improvements in benefits and financial support may further increase satisfaction.

Table 4. Level of satisfaction based on compensation

Compensation Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Salary meets the expectation	3.76	Somewhat Satisfied
Salary meets the needs	3.53	Somewhat Satisfied
Commensurate with degree of education	3.56	Somewhat Satisfied
Remuneration to employee's work	3.62	Somewhat Satisfied
Allowance meets the expectation	3.30	Satisfied
Housing benefits/healthcare & insurance	3.03	Satisfied
Bonus meets the expectation	3.40	Somewhat Satisfied
Bonus to support employees' efforts	3.48	Somewhat Satisfied
Promotion policy meets the expectation	3.41	Somewhat Satisfied
Retirement package/benefits	3.46	Somewhat Satisfied

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Totally Satisfied; 3.40–4.19 = Somewhat Satisfied; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfied; 1.80–2.59 = Moderately Satisfied; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Satisfied.

Table 5 shows that employees were generally somewhat satisfied with their supervisors. The highest-rated indicator was communication between supervisors and employees (3.88), followed by being backed up completely (3.86), fairness perception (3.86), and competence in decision-making (3.85), suggesting that supervisors were perceived as supportive, fair, and capable in managing employees. Other indicators, such as encouraging participation (3.84), providing helpful information (3.84), responsibility toward employees (3.84), and sharing organizational information (3.83), also reflected positive supervisory practices. The lowest-rated indicator was paying fair attention (3.45). Employees had positive perceptions of their supervisors, particularly in terms of communication, support, and leadership practices.

Table 5. Level of satisfaction based on supervisor

Supervisor Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Backed me up completely	3.86	Somewhat Satisfied
Encourages participation	3.84	Somewhat Satisfied
Fairness perception	3.86	Somewhat Satisfied
Competence in making decision	3.85	Somewhat Satisfied
Pays fair too little attention	3.45	Somewhat Satisfied
Provide helpful information	3.84	Somewhat Satisfied
Responsibility toward employees	3.84	Somewhat Satisfied
Communication between supervisor & employees	3.88	Somewhat Satisfied
Conflict resolution skills	3.73	Somewhat Satisfied
Shares news about functions, operation & financial status	3.83	Somewhat Satisfied

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Totally Satisfied; 3.40–4.19 = Somewhat Satisfied; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfied; 1.80–2.59 = Moderately Satisfied; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Satisfied.

Table 6 shows that employees were generally somewhat satisfied with their relationships and interactions with colleagues. The highest-rated indicator was establishing good relationships (4.24), which was interpreted as totally satisfied, indicating that employees valued positive interpersonal connections in the workplace. Other indicators, such as working with teammates (4.14), supportive team (4.12), ability to get along with others (4.07), and possibilities to receive assistance (4.07), were rated as somewhat satisfied, showing the presence of teamwork and collaboration among employees. The lowest-rated indicator was sharing stories of mental models (3.93). Employees had favorable relationships with their colleagues, characterized by support, cooperation, and positive workplace interactions.

Table 6. Level of satisfaction based on colleague

Colleague Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Establish good relationship	4.24	Totally Satisfied
Supportive team	4.12	Somewhat Satisfied
Ability to instruct others	4.05	Somewhat Satisfied
Relationship among colleagues of different parts	3.95	Somewhat Satisfied
Chance to do things to others	3.98	Somewhat Satisfied
Way get along with others	4.07	Somewhat Satisfied
Relationship of the same department	4.00	Somewhat Satisfied
Working with teammates	4.14	Somewhat Satisfied
Possibilities to receive assistance	4.07	Somewhat Satisfied

Share stories of mental models	3.93	Somewhat Satisfied
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Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Totally Satisfied; 3.40–4.19 = Somewhat Satisfied; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfied; 1.80–2.59 = Moderately Satisfied; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Satisfied.

Table 7 shows that employees were generally somewhat satisfied with their working environment. The highest-rated indicator was the importance of key-role (3.85), followed by connecting work to a higher purpose (3.84) and providing a comfortable working environment (3.83), indicating that employees perceived their workplace as supportive and meaningful. Other indicators, including satisfaction with current working hours (3.83), maintaining safety and security activities (3.79), and the organization meeting expectations (3.78), also reflected positive perceptions of the work setting. The lowest-rated indicators were teaching employees why to perform tasks (3.72) and considering employees' needs and desires in improving the working environment (3.72). Employees were satisfied with the workplace conditions, support systems, and organizational practices that contributed to a positive working environment.

Table 7. Level of satisfaction based on working environment

Working Environment Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Provides comfortable working environment	3.83	Somewhat Satisfied
Excellent and supportive environment	3.77	Somewhat Satisfied
Satisfaction with current working hours	3.83	Somewhat Satisfied
Maintain the safety & security activities	3.79	Somewhat Satisfied
Organization meet expectation	3.78	Somewhat Satisfied
Teaches employees why to perform tasks	3.72	Somewhat Satisfied
Considers the needs and desires in improving the working environment	3.72	Somewhat Satisfied
The importance of key-role	3.85	Somewhat Satisfied
Connects the work to a higher purpose	3.84	Somewhat Satisfied
Competences to provide high-quality services	3.76	Somewhat Satisfied

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Totally Satisfied; 3.40–4.19 = Somewhat Satisfied; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfied; 1.80–2.59 = Moderately Satisfied; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Satisfied.

Table 8 shows that employees were generally somewhat satisfied with the promotion practices of the organization. The highest-rated indicator was the feeling of accomplishment gained from the job (3.83), indicating that employees experienced a sense of achievement in their work roles. Other indicators, such as providing steady employment (3.66), reviewing individual employee performance (3.64), and fairness of promotion evaluation (3.62), also reflected positive perceptions of career growth and recognition opportunities. The lowest-rated indicator was the promotion policy meeting expectations (3.55). Employees viewed promotion-related practices positively, particularly in terms of recognition, performance evaluation, and opportunities for professional development.

Table 8. Level of satisfaction based on promotion

Promotion Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
The feeling of accomplishment that you get from job	3.83	Somewhat Satisfied
Promotion policy meets the expectation	3.55	Somewhat Satisfied

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Chance to get promoted	3.56	Somewhat Satisfied
Intense attention received from supervisor	3.61	Somewhat Satisfied
Recognition and praised received from supervisor	3.61	Somewhat Satisfied
Fairness of evaluation of promotion	3.62	Somewhat Satisfied
Receive information about overall performance	3.61	Somewhat Satisfied
Ensure employment trends, workforce, and employment data	3.6	Somewhat Satisfied
Conduct a review of individual employee performance	3.64	Somewhat Satisfied
Provide for steady employment	3.66	Somewhat Satisfied

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Totally Satisfied; 3.40–4.19 = Somewhat Satisfied; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfied; 1.80–2.59 = Moderately Satisfied; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Satisfied.

Table 9 shows that employees were generally somewhat satisfied with the organization. The highest-rated indicator was the alignment of organizational goals and objectives with the strategic plan (3.90), suggesting that employees recognized the organization’s clear direction and purpose. Other indicators, such as supportive organizational culture (3.83), feeling connected with other people in the organization (3.82), and the organization’s ability to accomplish its commitments (3.80), reflected positive perceptions of organizational practices and relationships. The lowest-rated indicator was the professional development program meeting employees’ needs (3.69). Employees viewed the organization positively, particularly in terms of culture, strategic alignment, fairness, and employee engagement.

Table 9. Level of satisfaction based on organization

Organization Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Goals and objectives linked to strategic plan	3.90	Somewhat Satisfied
Supportive organizational culture	3.83	Somewhat Satisfied
Take care of complaints	3.77	Somewhat Satisfied
Develops various engagement practices	3.75	Somewhat Satisfied
Ability to accomplish what it says it will do	3.80	Somewhat Satisfied
Takes the opinions of people like me into account	3.71	Somewhat Satisfied
Treats people fairly and justly	3.74	Somewhat Satisfied
Feel connected with other people in my organization	3.82	Somewhat Satisfied
Talks about vision, values, or culture of the organization	3.77	Somewhat Satisfied
Professional development program meets employees' needs	3.69	Somewhat Satisfied

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Totally Satisfied; 3.40–4.19 = Somewhat Satisfied; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfied; 1.80–2.59 = Moderately Satisfied; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Satisfied.

Table 10 shows that employees were generally somewhat satisfied with the content and nature of their jobs. The highest-rated indicator was self-development (3.89), followed by good working conditions (3.86), indicating that employees valued opportunities for personal growth and a favorable workplace setting. Other indicators, such as enthusiasm toward work when working from home (3.83) and maintaining a healthy work-life balance (3.83), also reflected positive perceptions of job-related experiences. The lowest-rated indicator was the freedom to use personal judgment (3.66). Employees had positive views toward their job content, particularly in terms of development opportunities, working conditions, and balance between work and personal life.

Table 10. Level of satisfaction based on job content

Job Content Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My pay and the amount of work I do	3.73	Somewhat Satisfied
Opportunity to work on interesting projects	3.70	Somewhat Satisfied
Opportunity to be mentored and to be a mentor	3.79	Somewhat Satisfied
Being acknowledged when I perform my work/tasks well	3.77	Somewhat Satisfied
Good working conditions	3.86	Somewhat Satisfied
The freedom to use my own judgement	3.66	Somewhat Satisfied
The chances for advancement on this job	3.71	Somewhat Satisfied
Feel enthusiastic about work when I work from home	3.83	Somewhat Satisfied
Basic to maintain healthy work-life balance	3.83	Somewhat Satisfied
Self-development	3.89	Somewhat Satisfied

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Totally Satisfied; 3.40–4.19 = Somewhat Satisfied; 2.60–3.39 = Satisfied; 1.80–2.59 = Moderately Satisfied; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Satisfied.

Objective 3. What is the level of perceived challenge of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic based on training, incentives, and fringe benefits?

In **Table 11**, employees perceived training as sometimes challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest-rated challenge was the transition to alternative modes of training and certification (3.02), followed by disruptions in apprenticeship and other practical skills training (2.97) and access to equipment and internet for trainers and learners (2.90). These findings suggest that employees experienced difficulties in adapting to changes in training delivery, particularly in shifting toward online and alternative learning approaches. The lowest-rated indicator was new online or offline distance learning training (2.77). Training-related adjustments during the pandemic presented occasional challenges for employees, especially in terms of technological adaptation, skills development, and changes in training systems.

Table 11. Level of perceived challenge based on training

Training Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Transition to virtual forms of recruitment, selection, and training	2.88	Sometimes
Both trainers and learners have access to equipment and internet	2.90	Sometimes
Disruption of apprenticeship and other practical skills training	2.97	Sometimes
Transition to alternative modes of training and certification	3.02	Sometimes
Support for learning enterprises or laid-off workers	2.87	Sometimes
Special guidelines on health and safety in face-to-face training	2.88	Sometimes
New online or offline distance learning training	2.77	Sometimes
Implement strategies to respond to a public health crisis	2.84	Sometimes
Policy measures to encourage training and learning promotion	2.82	Sometimes

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Extremely Challenging; 3.40–4.19 = Highly Challenging; 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes Challenging; 1.80–2.59 = Slightly Challenging; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Challenging.

In **Table 12**, employees perceived incentives as sometimes challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest-rated challenge was that employees might wish to make election changes (3.18),

followed by the loss of favorable tax treatment for incentive stock options (3.15) and the implementation of salary deductions and deferral arrangements (3.14). These findings suggest that employees experienced occasional difficulties related to changes in compensation arrangements, financial adjustments, and incentive policies during the pandemic. The lowest-rated indicator was employees' awareness of having no extra incentive for working extra hours (2.87). Generally, incentive-related concerns create occasional challenges for employees, particularly in terms of compensation adjustments, financial security, and changes in organizational reward systems.

Table 12. Level of perceived challenge based on incentive

Incentives Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Cash conservation, salary reductions, and deferral arrangements	3.00	Sometimes
Employees awareness in no extra incentive for working extra hours	2.87	Sometimes
Impact on performance-based compensation arrangements	2.97	Sometimes
Employees look to retirement plans and incentives	3.02	Sometimes
Sudden furloughs, layoffs, source of emergency funds	3.13	Sometimes
Suspension/elimination of company matching or profit-sharing contributions	3.13	Sometimes
Loss of favorable tax treatment for incentive stock options	3.15	Sometimes
Not hitting company's performance goal	3.11	Sometimes
Employee may wish to make election changes	3.18	Sometimes
Implementation of salary deductions and deferral arrangements	3.14	Sometimes

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Extremely Challenging; 3.40–4.19 = Highly Challenging; 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes Challenging; 1.80–2.59 = Slightly Challenging; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Challenging.

In **Table 13**, employees perceived fringe benefits as sometimes challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest-rated challenge was the working time spent on-call and traveling (3.18), followed by systemic changes that could happen through benefits (3.10) and insurance and retirement benefits (3.10). These findings suggest that employees experienced occasional difficulties in adjusting to changes in work arrangements, benefit structures, and support mechanisms during the pandemic. The lowest-rated indicator was employee loyalty (2.96). Fringe benefit-related concerns created occasional challenges for employees, particularly in relation to work flexibility, financial protection, and organizational support during the pandemic.

Table 13. Level of perceived challenge based on fringe benefits

Fringe Benefits Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Insurance & retirement benefits (hazard pay)	3.10	Sometimes
Working time that is spent on-call and traveling	3.18	Sometimes
Education and development opportunities	3.06	Sometimes
Flexible working hours (work from home)	3.09	Sometimes
Employee welfare benefits (hazard pay)	3.05	Sometimes
Employee loyalty	2.96	Sometimes
Legally required payments, pension, insurance, etc.	3.07	Sometimes
Systemic change can happen through benefits	3.10	Sometimes

Offers greater work flexibility, family-friendly benefits	3.01	Sometimes
A care crisis, a women's employment crisis, & mental health crisis	3.03	Sometimes

Note: The mean scores were interpreted using the following scale: 4.20–5.00 = Extremely Challenging; 3.40–4.19 = Highly Challenging; 2.60–3.39 = Sometimes Challenging; 1.80–2.59 = Slightly Challenging; and 1.00–1.79 = Not Challenging.

Objective 4. Is there a significant difference in job satisfaction and perceived challenge between faculty and staff?

In **Table 13**, it shows that there was a significant difference in the overall job satisfaction between faculty and staff ($p = 0.020$). Specifically, significant differences were observed in colleague relationships ($p = 0.013$), promotion opportunities ($p = 0.000$), organizational factors ($p = 0.048$), and job content ($p = 0.010$), indicating that faculty and staff had different perceptions in these areas. However, no significant differences were found in compensation ($p = 0.136$), supervisor support ($p = 0.544$), and working environment ($p = 0.383$), suggesting that both groups had similar views regarding these aspects of job satisfaction. The findings indicate that while faculty and staff shared similar perceptions in some areas, differences existed in several dimensions of job satisfaction.

Table 13. Difference in job satisfaction between faculty and staff

Job Satisfaction Variables	p-value	Result
Compensation	0.136	No significant difference
Supervisor	0.544	No significant difference
Colleague	0.013	Significant difference
Working Environment	0.383	No significant difference
Promotion	0.000	Significant difference
Organization	0.048	Significant difference
Job Content	0.010	Significant difference
Overall Job Satisfaction	0.020	Significant difference

In **Table 14**, the results showed that there was no significant difference in the perceived challenges between faculty and staff in terms of training, incentives, and fringe benefits. Specifically, training ($p = 0.649$), incentives ($p = 0.401$), and fringe benefits ($p = 0.206$) all showed no significant differences. The overall perceived challenge also indicated no significant difference between the two groups ($p = 0.332$). This suggests that faculty and staff had similar experiences and perceptions regarding the challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 14. Difference in perceived challenge between faculty and staff

Perceived Challenge Variables	p-value	Result
Training	0.649	No significant difference
Incentives	0.401	No significant difference
Fringe Benefits	0.206	No significant difference
Overall Perceived Challenge	0.332	No significant difference

Objective 5.5. Is there a significant relationship in job satisfaction and perceived challenge?

In **Table 15**, the results showed that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and perceived challenges in some areas. Specifically, supervisor satisfaction had a significant relationship with training and overall perceived challenges. Colleague satisfaction was significantly related to incentives and overall perceived challenges. Working environment satisfaction was significantly associated with

training challenges, while organization satisfaction showed a significant relationship with incentives and overall perceived challenges. Job content satisfaction was also significantly related to incentives.

Meanwhile, the overall job satisfaction had a significant relationship with training, incentives, and overall perceived challenges. However, no significant relationships were found between compensation, promotion, and fringe benefits with the perceived challenges.

Generally, the findings suggested that certain workplace challenges, particularly those related to training and incentives, were associated with employees' level of job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 15. Summary of relationship between job satisfaction and perceived challenge

Job Satisfaction Variables	Training	Incentives	Fringe Benefits	Overall Perceived Challenge
Compensation	0.116	0.087	0.079	0.102
Supervisor	0.157*	0.097	0.083	0.123*
Colleague	0.106	0.174*	0.11	0.144*
Working Environment	0.122*	0.118	0.082	0.109
Promotion	0.11	0.11	0.096	0.107
Organization	0.119	0.152*	0.101	0.121*
Job Content	0.078	0.132*	0.108	0.105
Overall Job Satisfaction	0.133*	0.131*	0.1	0.126*

Note: Significant relationship at $p < 0.05$.

Discussion

Strong organizational behavior contributes to organizational effectiveness and improves work efficiency. Although organizational behavior involves actions beyond employees' formal job responsibilities, these behaviors support organizational performance and create a more productive work environment. In this study, employees' attitudes toward their work are influenced by organizational conditions, workplace relationships, and the support systems provided by the institution.

Al-Jumaili et al. (2023) identified several workplace conditions that negatively influenced job satisfaction among pharmacists in the Arab region. These included the undervaluation of pharmacists' contributions, inadequate compensation, limited motivation, heavy workload demands, administrative and leadership concerns, experiences of unfair treatment, and challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among employees from SDSSU/NEMSU, job satisfaction can be measured and viewed through social contexts like compensation, supervision, colleague relationships, working conditions, promotion opportunities, organizational support, and job content.

A study also noted that employees who experience higher levels of job satisfaction tend to demonstrate high performance and exhibit constructive workplace behaviors, including stronger commitment and engagement (Fahri et al., 2025). Lin and Huang (2020) emphasized that greater job satisfaction contributes to employee retention by decreasing the likelihood of turnover and promoting organizational attachment. This study among SDSSU/NEMSU employees confirms that satisfaction with various organizational factors, such as compensation, supervision, colleague relationships, working conditions, promotion opportunities, organizational support, and job content, is necessary in shaping their overall workplace experiences. The findings further suggest that when employees perceive positive organizational practices and support systems, they are more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward their work and maintain stronger connections with the organization.

For example, it was observed in this study that satisfaction derived from relationships with colleagues may be associated with employees' perceptions of organizational challenges. When coworkers acknowledge and appreciate the importance of an individual's work, employees are more likely to develop a stronger sense of purpose and value toward their roles. A job becomes more meaningful when employees perceive that their contributions positively influence others and that their efforts create an impact beyond their personal responsibilities (Charles-Leija et al., 2023).

In addition, organizations and supervisors are essential in shaping employees' workplace experiences by promoting fairness, justice, and ethical practices within the organization. Sukmayadi and Sukmara (2024) explained that work ethics and workplace discipline significantly influence employee performance, as organizational conditions, leadership practices, and management approaches affect employees' satisfaction, motivation, and overall organizational behavior. When employees perceive that they are treated fairly, valued, and supported by their supervisors, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward their work and demonstrate stronger commitment to organizational goals.

From an organizational behavior perspective, the findings highlight that employee satisfaction is not only determined by individual perceptions but also by the interaction between employees and the organizational environment. Organizations operate as social systems where leadership practices, communication patterns, workplace culture, and resource allocation influence employees' attitudes and behaviors. In this context, employee experiences are shaped by how effectively the organization establishes supportive structures, provides opportunities for growth, and responds to employees' needs, especially during periods of uncertainty such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a broader scope, the organizational setting develops employees' sense of belonging and commitment. A workplace that promotes open communication, collaboration, and psychological support encourages employees to actively participate and contribute to organizational goals. The findings suggest that when employees perceive their organization as responsive and supportive, they are more likely to demonstrate positive workplace behaviors, including cooperation, engagement, and willingness to adapt to organizational changes.

Conclusion

Organizations help in shaping employees' job satisfaction and positive workplace experiences. Employee attitudes are influenced not only by individual perceptions but also by organizational conditions, workplace relationships, leadership practices, and institutional support systems. Factors such as compensation, supervision, colleague relationships, working environment, promotion opportunities, organizational support, and job content contribute to how employees perceive their roles and their connection with the institution.

A supportive organizational environment characterized by fairness, effective communication, ethical practices, and recognition strengthens employee commitment and engagement. Positive interactions with supervisors and colleagues help employees develop a greater sense of value and purpose, while organizational support enables employees to adapt to workplace challenges. The experiences of SDSSU/NEMSU employees during the COVID-19 pandemic emphasize that organizations must consider both structural and social aspects of work in maintaining employee satisfaction.

The study indicates that effective organizational behavior practices contribute to improved workplace relationships, employee motivation, and organizational effectiveness. Institutions that promote supportive leadership, equitable policies, and a positive organizational culture are more likely to maintain employee satisfaction and encourage productive behaviors, even in times of uncertainties.

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