

Work Happiness among University Teachers in Public and Private Universities in Chimbote, Peru

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Abstract

This study focused on exploring and comparing job happiness among university teachers at a public university and a private university. The sample consisted of 384 teachers from private and public universities. The Work Happiness Questionnaire by Ramirez et al. (2019) was administered to these participants. The results indicated that teachers at private universities reported significantly higher levels of job happiness ($p < 0.001$), with an average happiness range higher than their counterparts in public institutions. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed significant differences between the groups, suggesting that institutional factors may play a crucial role in the well-being of teachers. These findings underscore the need for strategies aimed at improving working conditions and promoting teacher well-being, with the potential to positively impact the quality of higher education.

Keywords: *Happiness, Work, Teachers, University, Satisfaction, Well-Being.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the interest in happiness within the work environment has grown significantly, given its important influence on both the well-being of workers and organizational effectiveness. Detailed studies have confirmed a clear relationship between well-being at work and key aspects such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, productivity, and staff retention. This connection is particularly critical in the field of higher education, both internationally and in Peru, where significant challenges related to well-being, motivation, and the work environment are addressed, all of which are essential for the performance of teachers. Additionally, the high incidence of burnout syndrome among university professors, exacerbated by constant stress and work pressure, points to an educational crisis with profound repercussions on the physical and emotional health of educators, as well as their professional performance, manifested through extreme fatigue, depersonalization, and a decline in personal satisfaction (Camacho et al., 2021; Castillo et al., 2015).

Happiness can be understood as a subjective state marked by positive emotions and an overall favorable perception of life (Diener & Seligman, 2004). In contrast, satisfaction refers to attitudes and feelings towards specific areas of life, such as work, education, or personal relationships (Diener, 1984).

The study of human well-being, especially focused on happiness and satisfaction, has been extensively researched, highlighting a growing interest in identifying the factors that influence these states and how they affect different areas of life. Before the pandemic, an improvement in engagement and workplace well-being was observed globally; however, this situation changed drastically according to a Gallup report (2022), which shows that only 21% of employees worldwide feel engaged with their work, in a context of record stress in 2021 that directly impacts both quality of life and teaching work.

The crisis in job happiness among teachers can be attributed to multiple factors, including adverse conditions, resource shortages, constant pressure, and a work culture that often ignores emotional well-being. This environment leads to demotivation, emotional crises, and a decline in the quality of education, negatively affecting both regular attendance of teachers and their interactions with students and colleagues (Rodríguez et al., 2017).

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Studies on the importance of happiness at work show that happy employees are 12% more productive and that organizations with satisfied staff outperform in performance by up to 20%. The presence of close relationships in the workplace can increase job satisfaction by up to 50%, highlighting the positive effect of happiness in the work environment (Seminarium Centroamérica, 2020). Additionally, an article from "Gestión" proposes seven key strategies to improve job satisfaction, designed by Daniel del Valle from the International University of Valencia. These strategies include balancing personal life with work, offering continuous training, recognition, improving the workspace, fostering employee participation, providing emotional support, and taking care of physical health, which benefits both employees and the organization by improving the work environment and reducing staff turnover (Gestión, 2024).

Interestingly, a study by Bericat et al. (2021) questions conventional models of measuring happiness in Latin American contexts, revealing that self-reported happiness levels are surprisingly high compared to quality of life and social quality. This discovery suggests distinctive patterns in the affective structure of happiness in these populations, including asymmetrical emotionality and extreme positive responses.

On the other hand, elements such as adequate salary, strong interpersonal relationships, a clear sense of purpose, and appropriate recognition are fundamental to teachers' job satisfaction, as demonstrated by the study of Rodríguez et al. (2021) conducted in Medellín. This analysis highlights the importance of the teacher's role and how the perception of happiness is significantly linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Nationally, the Institute of Public Opinion (IOP) emphasizes the importance of subjective well-being in Peru, showing an increase in the perception of happiness since 1998. This report underscores the crucial role of freedom and economic well-being in the perception of happiness, noting regional variations that reflect differences in the perception of freedom and economic conditions (IOP, 2019; Perú21, 2023).

Various studies have explored how factors such as transformational leadership and job satisfaction are related to improving productivity and performance, in addition to increasing overall satisfaction in the work environment. It has been observed that happiness is a complex phenomenon affected by various sociodemographic, political, economic, and social factors, including age, socioeconomic level, educational level, occupation, and the presence of chronic diseases (Canal et al., 2023; Arias et al., 2022).

The works of Charles et al. (2023) and Ramírez et al. (2022) emphasize the influence of job significance and personal well-being on productivity and job retention. On the other hand, Santana et al. (2021) and Omar (2018) indicate that the modality of teleworking and career commitment may not have a positive impact on job happiness. Salazar & Romero (2022) summarize key findings and emerging trends, suggesting that management practices should adapt to promote a positive organizational climate, taking into account factors such as autonomy and job appreciation (Sánchez & Neira, 2023; Charles et al., 2023; Ramírez et al., 2022; Salazar & Romero, 2022; Santana et al., 2021; Omar, 2018).

The intersection between job happiness and other vital aspects has been meticulously examined, highlighting the work of Díaz et al. (2022), which shows how job engagement can mediate between subjective happiness and work-life balance. This research underscores the importance of engagement as a catalyst for harmonizing these spheres of life. Complementarily, the studies of Díaz et al. (2018) and Malluk (2018) focus on conditions and the work climate, identifying their direct influence on organizational happiness. They conclude that work environments characterized by high performance standards, offering positive reinforcements and flexibility to manage family demands, foster high levels of organizational happiness.

In the study conducted by Cancharí et al. (2023), the relationship between happiness and organizational commitment in workers of the fishing sector in Chimbote was explored. This analysis found a significant positive correlation between these two factors. Using a cross-sectional and correlational research design, data was collected from 342 workers through surveys, employing validated instruments to measure happiness and organizational commitment. The results suggest that fostering happiness in the workplace can increase organizational commitment, although the limitation of generalizing these findings beyond the fishing sector and the studied region is recognized.

Additionally, Garzón et al. (2020) developed a tool to quantify job happiness, finding that job satisfaction and subjective well-being are closely linked to the general perception of happiness. Similarly, Jimenez et al. (2021) conducted a study examining variables such as optimism and attitude towards work, revealing a range of job happiness and satisfaction that varies from medium-low to medium-high levels, highlighting the complexity of these concepts.

On the other hand, the review by Erazo et al. (2021) identifies four fundamental areas in the study of High Performance Work (HPW), focusing on how job happiness relates to performance. This analysis highlights that personal and professional satisfaction is the most studied aspect related to performance, reinforcing the idea that job happiness is a multifaceted construct that significantly influences productivity and performance.

The Resource Approach Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) postulates that individuals strive to acquire and maintain personal, social, and professional resources that allow them to achieve goals and experience well-being. In the work context, this theory suggests that job resources, such as social support, autonomy, and recognition, can promote job happiness (Diener & Seligman, 2004). The research conducted by Harter et al. (2002) supports this theory by finding a positive relationship between job resources and job happiness.

Another relevant theory is the Person-Environment Fit Theory (P-E Fit Theory), which holds that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and the congruence between an individual's personal characteristics and the demands and resources of the work environment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Several studies, such as the one conducted by Judge et al. (2002), have found that the alignment between personal values and organizational values is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and, therefore, job happiness.

Additionally, the Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) has been applied to the work context to understand the optimal experience at work. According to this theory, when employees are immersed in challenging tasks that require a high level of skill and offer immediate feedback, they can experience a state of flow characterized by deep concentration and enjoyment at work. Research such as that conducted by Bakker et al. (2004) and Csikszentmihalyi (1997) supports the relationship between flow at work and job happiness.

To sustain the variable of job happiness, it is essential to first understand the construct of happiness itself. Fisher argues that in the academic context, happiness can be considered synonymous with well-being and these terms will be used interchangeably throughout this discussion (Fisher, 2010).

The concept of well-being is analyzed from two main philosophical approaches, as explained by Ryan and Deci (2001). The first, hedonism, focuses on the pursuit of human pleasure, with philosophers like Hobbes, De Sade, and Bentham advocating a utilitarian perspective that links a person's quality of life to the utility they derive from their environment. During the 1960s, Bradburn and Caplovitz introduced the affect theory to assess mental health, focusing on how short-term stressors affect the individual (Cherlin & Reeder, 1975). Bradburn argued that mental well-being is measured by a favorable balance between positive emotions (such as joy and euphoria) and negative emotions (such as fear and anger) (Bradburn, 1969). Other researchers have expanded this theory, developing specific scales such as Warr's Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, Watson's PANAS scale, and Diener's Affect Intensity and Temporal Stability Scale (Simkin, Olivera, & Azzolini, 2016).

Kahneman, a prominent well-being theorist, argues that hedonic psychology focuses on maximizing happiness, achieved when a person experiences more pleasure than pain (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Kahneman delves into how the experience of events and their subsequent memory can be significantly influenced by a single negative event, affecting the overall perception of a positive experience (Kahneman, 2007).

The theory of life satisfaction, originated in the 1960s, proposes another perspective on an essential component of quality of life, defining it as the presence of conditions that allow people to lead a "good life" (Veenhoven, 1996). Erdogan et al. (2012) discuss how life satisfaction can be viewed in two ways: from bottom-up, where overall satisfaction is seen as an average of satisfaction in various life areas, and from top-down, where a person's overall satisfaction with their life directly affects their satisfaction in specific areas.

Diener, on the other hand, proposes an integrative theory of subjective well-being that encompasses previous theories. Diener argues that well-being and the conceptualization of happiness are firmly grounded in various

theoretical perspectives. Following Fisher (2010), happiness is understood as equivalent to well-being, an interpretation also adopted for this study. This understanding is derived from two main philosophies, as described by Ryan and Deci (2001): hedonism and eudaimonia.

Hedonism is interpreted as a human pursuit of pleasure, a view that has been widely promoted by philosophers like Hobbes, De Sade, and Bentham. These philosophers argued that human happiness is derived from the utility that people can extract from their environment. This idea is reflected in the affect theory, proposed by Bradburn and Caplovitz in the 1960s, which focused on measuring mental health based on factors that cause short-term stress (Cherlin & Reeder, 1975).

In this line, Bradburn (1969) proposed that optimal mental well-being is achieved by maintaining a positive balance between positive emotions (joy, pleasure, euphoria) and negative emotions (fear, anger, sadness). This approach, known as the affect theory, has been expanded by researchers like Warr, Watson, and Diener, who created their own methods to measure affects, including instruments like the "Affective Balance Scale - ABS," the "Positive and Negative Affect Schedule," the "PANAS Scale," and the "Affect Intensity and Temporal Stability Scale" (Simkin et al., 2016).

On the other hand, Kahneman's well-being theory emphasizes the importance of maximizing happiness through experiencing the maximum possible pleasure, which implies a prevalence of pleasant moments over unpleasant ones (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Kahneman (2007) also explored the duality between experiencing and remembering an event, noting how a negative event can dominate and alter the memory of an experience that was generally positive.

Within the same hedonistic approach, there is the theory of "life satisfaction," which, proposed in the 1960s, considers this satisfaction as a component of "quality of life" (Veenhoven, 1996). According to Erdogan et al. (2012), life satisfaction can be understood in two ways: as the sum of satisfactions in various aspects of life (bottom-up approach) or as a global state reflected in each domain of life (top-down approach).

On the other hand, the eudaimonic approach, largely attributed to Aristotle's philosophy, argues that happiness is not derived solely from pleasure but rather from the realization of our potentialities (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In this approach, happiness is considered the result of decisions that lead us towards a specific goal, moving away from fleeting pleasure as the sole constituent of happiness.

Within the spectrum of theories on happiness, Waterman's (1993) Personal Expressiveness theory argues that a person achieves true happiness by engaging in activities that are deeply meaningful to them, fully living in those actions, and expressing their authenticity. Concurrently, Ryff and Keyes' (1995; Ryff, 2014) theory of "Psychological Well-being" identifies six crucial factors for well-being, including self-acceptance, autonomy, mastery of the environment, and establishment of healthy relationships.

The "self-determination theory" formulated by Ryan and Deci (2001) introduces a view where autonomy, relationships, and competence are seen as facilitators of well-being rather than its direct components. Although there are various interpretations of happiness, some theories have managed to synthesize affective and personal growth perspectives, as Compton did in the 1990s, addressing happiness through emotions and personal development (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

In the context of modern psychology, many of these theories are seen as antecedents to Positive Psychology, promoted by Martin Seligman since 1999. Seligman initially introduced the theory of Authentic Happiness based on living a pleasurable life, being engaged in daily activities, and leading a purposeful life (Lupano & Castro, 2010). However, in 2011, he evolved his concept by introducing the Theory of Flourishing, which integrates elements of hedonistic and eudaimonic approaches, focusing on five pillars: positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2018).

In the workplace, these theories have been adapted to assess and promote the well-being of workers. Specific theories like Van Horn's (2004), which focuses on the affective dimension, and Daniels' (2000), which analyzes affects from a psychological perspective, suggest that well-being can be categorized under two main streams:

hedonic and eudaimonic. Throughout history, various theories have emerged within these categories, seeking to define and understand what constitutes well-being and how it can be measured and achieved.

In the current context, it has been perceived that the job satisfaction of university professors has decreased due to several stressors recently identified in the literature. These include workload overload, such as administrative tasks, class preparation, and evaluations, as well as the shortage of didactic and technological resources, creating a challenging work environment. To these problems are added increasing expectations and pressure to achieve academic excellence, which increases work stress. Furthermore, low salaries and lack of recognition further erode job satisfaction. This situation, combined with limited opportunities for professional development, can lead to an increase in work stress, demotivation, and ultimately, the decision to leave the profession, thus affecting the quality of education delivered to future generations.

These contributions underscore the importance of considering job happiness not only as a desirable goal in itself but also as a key element in the development of healthy and productive work environments, reiterating the need for comprehensive strategies that promote well-being and satisfaction among professionals, in this case, university professors.

Given this scenario, the need to address the issue of job happiness among university professors through strategies aimed at improving their working conditions becomes evident. This approach would not only enhance the well-being of these professionals but also contribute to raising the quality of education. The present study aims to compare job happiness among professors from public and private universities in Chimbote, with the objective of identifying the variables that influence their job well-being and subsequently proposing initiatives that improve these conditions, positively impacting both the quality of education and the well-being of professors.

METHODS

Type and Design

To carry out this study, an applied research type was adopted, with a quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental comparative approach, developed in the natural context of the selected universities. Through a cross-sectional comparative design, the aim was to understand the differences in the perception of job happiness among public and private university professors at a specific moment, without establishing causal relationships. This approach allowed for a detailed comparison of work experiences in both entities, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how job happiness differs among university professors from public and private institutions in Chimbote. Statistical methods were used to analyze and measure various aspects related to job happiness, with the purpose of comparing the perceptions and experiences of professors in both educational institutions.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of a total of 384 professors. This sample size was carefully selected to ensure the representativeness and validity of the results obtained. Each group of professors was randomly chosen, thus ensuring that the data collected were unbiased and generalizable to the population of university professors in both institutions. The choice of this significant sample allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the perceptions and experiences of a significant number of professors in both universities, providing a solid foundation for the detailed comparisons made in this study.

Instruments

A single instrument, based on the work of Del Junco et al. (2013) and modified by Ramirez (2019), was chosen to collect data. This decision was made considering the simplicity and effectiveness of the method. The instrument was validated through expert judgment, and its reliability was confirmed through pilot application to a sample of 10 professors. Prior authorization of informed consent of the participants was obtained, ensuring confidentiality and freedom of expression. The collected data were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for verification and subsequent analysis using SPSS version 26 statistical software. This approach allowed for

the interpretation of results, facilitating the preparation of tables and graphs that demonstrate the most significant findings.

Table 1. Sociodemographic, work-related, and academic data of university professors

		Frecuencia	Porcentaje
Age	Under 35 years old	142	36,98%
	36 - 45 years old	115	29,95%
	46 - 55 years old	52	13,54%
	Over 55 years old	75	19,53%
Gender	Male	275	71,61%
	Female	109	28,39%
Marital Status	Single	93	24,22%
	Married	124	32,29%
	Divorced	48	12,50%

The 36.98% are under 35 years old; 71.61% are male; 32.29% are married; 67.97% have a master's degree; finally, 53.65% work at a private university (Table 1).

Data Collection

For data collection, a questionnaire was administered to university professors. The questionnaire included information about informed consent and gathered sociodemographic, work-related, and academic data, such as age, gender, marital status, academic degree, and type of university where they work.

The instrument assessed job happiness using 11 structured items with responses on a Likert scale. This scale allowed participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to job happiness.

Data collection was conducted virtually using a form created in Google Forms. Participants were provided with a link to the form and were asked to complete it at their convenience. The use of an online platform for data collection allowed for efficient and convenient data gathering, while also ensuring participant anonymity and data security.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2. Level of the job happiness variable

	Frecuency	Percentage
Low	0	0,00%
Medium	230	59,90%
High	154	40,10%
Total	384	100,0%

Source: Own elaboration

In Table 2, we observe the descriptive results of job happiness based on the perceptions of the 384 university professors, where 40.10% are at a moderate level and 59.90% are at a high level.

Table 3. Levels of job happiness dimensions

Level	Reward and Recognition		and Work Climate		Leadership and Direction		Motivation and Commitment		Task Design		Stability and Well-being	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Low	94	24,5%	55	14,3%	79	20,6%	19	4,9%	71	18,5%	20	5,2%
Medium	214	55,7%	154	40,1%	203	52,9%	223	58,1%	213	55,5%	220	57,3%
High	76	19,8%	175	45,6%	102	26,5%	142	37,0%	100	26,0%	144	37,5%
Total	384	100,0%	384	100,0%	384	100,0%	384	100,0%	384	100,0%	384	100,0%

Source: Own elaboration

Regarding the dimension of reward and recognition, according to the results obtained from the university teachers who participated in the study (n=384), 19.8% are in a low level, 24.5% are in a medium level, and 55.7% are in a high level. For the dimension of work environment, 14.3% are in a low level, 40.1% are in a medium level, and 45.6% are in a high level. Regarding the dimension of leadership and direction, 20.6% are in a low level, 26.5% are in a medium level, and 52.9% are in a high level. For the dimension of motivation and commitment, 4.9% are in a low level, 37.0% are in a medium level, and 58.1% are in a high level. Likewise, for the dimension of task design, 18.5% are in a low level, 26.0% are in a medium level, and 55.5% are in a high level. Finally, for the dimension of stability and well-being, 5.2% are in a low level, 37.5% are in a medium level, and 57.3% are in a high level (Table 3).

Inferential Statistics

Checking the normality of the job happiness data

H0: the data are normally distributed.

H1: the data are not normally distributed.

Significance level: $\alpha = 0.05$ (Type I error) (probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true)

Table 4. Normality Test

	Estadístico	gl	Sig.
Happiness Work	,077	384	,000

Source: Own elaboration

Since the p-value is less than 0.05 (specifically, 0.000), the null hypothesis of no difference is rejected; therefore, it is inferred that the variables do not follow a normal distribution. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney test was chosen (Table 4)

Table 5. Comparison of Job Happiness between Teachers from Private and Public Universities

Ranks				
	Type_University	N	Average Rank	Sum of ranks
Happiness Work	University Private	206	210,03	43266,00
	University Pública	178	172,21	30654,00
	Total	384		

Source: Own elaboration

Table 7 shows the distribution of happiness at work ranks for teachers from private and public universities. The analysis was based on a sample of 384 teachers, of which 206 belonged to private institutions and 178 to

public ones. The results revealed a significant difference in the perception of happiness at work between both groups, as indicated by the average ranks. Specifically, teachers from private universities reported a significantly higher average rank of happiness at work (Mdn = 210.03) compared to their counterparts in public universities (Mdn = 172.21), with rank sums of 43,266 and 30,654 respectively. This result suggests that there is a disparity in the experience of happiness at work that favors teachers from private universities over those from public universities. The statistical significance of these differences was confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U test, as detailed below (table 5).

Table 6. Statistics for the Mann-Whitney U Test for Job Satisfaction by Type of University

Test Statistics	
	Happiness Work
U de Mann-Whitney	14723,000
W de Wilcoxon	30654,000
Z	-3,338
Sig. asintótica(bilateral)	,001
a. Variable de agrupación: Type_University	

Table 6 summarizes the Mann-Whitney U test statistics conducted to assess differences in work happiness between faculty members from private and public universities. A Mann-Whitney U value of 14.723 was obtained, which corresponds to the lower sum of ranks of the two groups. The Wilcoxon W statistic, which is the sum of ranks for the group with the higher average rank, was 30.654. The Z statistic turned out to be -3.338, indicating a significant difference in the average ranks between the groups. The two-tailed asymptotic significance value is 0.001, demonstrating that the difference in work happiness between faculty from the two types of universities is statistically significant at the 99.9% confidence level. These results support the hypothesis that there is substantial variability in work happiness perception depending on the type of university, with a notable effect towards greater happiness in private universities compared to public ones.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show a statistically significant difference in job happiness between professors in public and private universities in Chimbote, reinforcing the premise that institutional context plays a crucial role in teacher well-being. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that working conditions, such as institutional support, available resources, and recognition, are significant determinants of job satisfaction and happiness in the workplace (Rodríguez et al., 2021; Garzón et al., 2020).

The observed disparity in job happiness, favoring professors in private universities, could be explained by several factors. In the private sector, autonomy, positive interpersonal relationships, and professional recognition, often more present in these institutions, correlate with higher job satisfaction and happiness. Additionally, the influence of transformational leadership, which seems to be more prevalent in private universities, could be a contributing factor (Canal et al., 2023; Arias et al., 2022).

Interestingly, these results align with trends observed in the literature suggesting unique patterns in the perception of the studied variable in Latin America. However, it is worth noting that these self-reported happiness patterns require a more in-depth analysis considering the cultural and socioeconomic differences of the studied regions.

In the national context, studies have revealed a correlation between the perception of freedom, economic well-being, and happiness, suggesting that extrinsic factors such as economic stability and job security are also relevant. Such factors may be contributing to the differences found in this study, although the research did not focus directly on these aspects.

In addition to institutional differences, our research highlights how factors such as transformational leadership and autonomy significantly influence job happiness, corroborating theories such as the Person-Environment Fit Theory, which emphasizes the importance of congruence between personal characteristics and resources in the work environment. In terms of subjective well-being, the findings support Diener's (1984) integrative theory, which describes happiness as a combination of life satisfaction and the presence of positive emotions.

The job happiness of teachers, according to our results, seems to be influenced by both hedonic factors related to immediate pleasure and eudaimonic elements that reflect personal fulfillment and achievement.

It is imperative that educational institutions consider these theoretical aspects when developing policies that not only aim to optimize external conditions but also promote an environment that allows teachers to live deeply rewarding and enriching work experiences. This could include improving working conditions and implementing professional development programs that align tasks with the skills and passions of teachers, thereby increasing their engagement and overall satisfaction.

In terms of practical implications, the results underline the need to adopt a comprehensive approach that considers job happiness as a fundamental element for the development of healthy and productive organizational practices in the educational context. Administrators of public universities can benefit from implementing policies that promote recognition of teaching work, offer professional development opportunities, and improve working conditions. These measures could not only increase job happiness but also have a positive impact on talent retention and the quality of education.

Despite the robustness of the data and statistical analysis, this study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional methodology prevents the establishment of causal relationships between types of universities and job happiness. Likewise, self-assessment of job happiness may be influenced by social desirability biases or the transient emotional state of the teacher at the time of responding to the survey. Future research could benefit from using a longitudinal design that allows for tracking job happiness over time and its evolution in relation to changes in institutional policies and the broader socio-economic context.

This study contributes by offering an empirical comparison between two types of educational institutions in a specific region of Peru, providing a starting point for broader and more detailed research. Universities can consider these findings to review and improve their work practices for greater satisfaction and well-being of their teachers.

CONCLUSION

This quantitative comparative study has revealed significant differences in job happiness among professors in public and private universities in Chimbote. The research, based on a representative sample of 384 professors, found that those belonging to private institutions reported significantly higher levels of job happiness, with an average rank of 210.03 compared to an average rank of 172.21 for professors in public universities. This significant difference, supported by a Z value of -3.338 in the Mann-Whitney U test and a p value of 0.001, indicates that the type of university is a determining factor in the job happiness of professors in the studied region.

The inferential data demonstrate that the job happiness variable is not normally distributed, leading to the selection of the Mann-Whitney U test for comparative analysis. The choice of this non-parametric test was appropriate, given the nature of the data, and has confirmed the hypothesis that there are significant differences between the groups of professors.

The study's conclusions indicate that, while 59.90% of professors rated their job happiness as high, there is still a considerable percentage that perceives it at medium levels, reflecting the complexity of the factors contributing to this aspect of their professional life. When analyzing the dimensions of job happiness, it was found that aspects of reward and recognition, as well as motivation and commitment, are areas of particular relevance that require attention from university administrations.

In practical terms, these findings underline the importance of addressing specific institutional factors that may be contributing to the experience of job happiness. This includes the need to improve the work environment, leadership, and management, and to offer a task design that promotes both stability and well-being.

Although the study focuses on Chimbote, the implications of these results are extendable to similar contexts in other regions. It is recommended that public universities evaluate institutional practices that may be negatively impacting the happiness of their professors and consider reforms that promote a more satisfactory work environment.

Recognizing the limitations of the cross-sectional design and data collection through self-reports, this research establishes a starting point for future studies that may employ longitudinal or qualitative methodologies to explore causality and individual experiences of professors in depth.

In conclusion, job happiness is an essential indicator of teacher well-being and educational quality. Therefore, the results of this study should serve as a call to action for policymakers in education and university administration to prioritize and systematically improve the working conditions of professors.

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