

Employee Job Satisfaction: An Analysis of Key Determinants

Chandrika Acharya¹

Ashok Pokharel²

Rojina Ranjitkar³

¹HR Manager, United Academy Group (UAG), Lalitpur chandrika@united.edu.np

²Senior Faculty of Management, pokhrel_ash@yahoo.com

³Senior Faculty of Management, United College, rojinaranjitkar@united.edu.np

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Abstract

Employee job satisfaction is crucial for organizational success and employees' well-being, as it influences engagement, retention, and overall productivity. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that contribute to job satisfaction, including physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. This study aims to examine the determinants of employee job satisfaction within this framework, focusing on teaching staff in the United Academy Group (UAG), comprising of United Pre-School, United School, United Universal School, United Academy, and United College. Utilizing a quantitative research approach and correlational design, data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 161 teachers from various institutions within the UAG. This study found that basic needs and social needs significantly impact job satisfaction, while safety and esteem needs do not show significant associations. Interestingly, self-actualization needs also emerged as a significant determinant of job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of personal growth and fulfillment in the workplace. Therefore, utilizing Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework, organizations should prioritize fostering environments that address basic and social needs while also nurturing opportunities for personal growth and self-actualization to enhance employee job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Keywords

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Correspondence

Lal Rapacha, Post-PhD
principal@united.edu.np

Introduction

Ensuring teachers' job satisfaction in colleges is crucial for not only boosting their morale but also enhancing the overall performance of the college. Research indicates that when teachers are satisfied with their jobs, they are more productive and tend to stay longer (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2017). Satisfied teachers are also more likely to perform well, which directly benefits student learning outcomes Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel (2014). When teachers are satisfied, students tend to have better grades and enjoy their classes more (Hattie, 2009). Therefore, colleges must prioritize the satisfaction of their teachers to maintain smooth operations and promote student success. Dissatisfied teachers may consider leaving their jobs, resulting in financial losses for the college and potential disruptions for students (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). Hence, it is crucial for colleges to identify and address factors contributing to teacher satisfaction Bauer, Erdogan, and Truxillo (2019).

Understanding the determinants of teacher satisfaction is akin to solving a puzzle. Various factors, such as feeling safe, respected, and valued, contribute to teacher satisfaction (Kyriacou, 2001). Thus, this study aims to explore these factors comprehensively. By doing so, colleges can ensure teacher satisfaction, leading to improved overall performance for everyone involved—teachers, students, and the college itself. This study primarily focuses on investigating the factors determining the job satisfaction among the teaching staff at UAG (comprising United Pre-School, United School, United Universal School, United Academy, and United College). Within this institution, there exists a notable lack of clarity regarding the numerous factors that influence the satisfaction levels of its teaching staff. Despite serving as a critical determinant of both organizational success and employee well-being, the degree to which teaching personnel at United Academy Group (UAG) find satisfaction or dissatisfaction in their roles remains unidentified to the Human Resources (HR) manager.

This lack of information poses a significant challenge, hindering the creation of specific strategies designed to improve job satisfaction and retention rates among the teaching staff. Hence, this study attempted to answer the following question: What are the factors that influence employee job satisfaction, particularly in relation to physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs? The main objective of this study is to analyze the factors influencing employee job satisfaction within UAG, including examining physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. By figuring out these important factors, the study aims to provide useful information to the HR manager and other leaders. This information can help them create good plans and actions to make sure teachers are happy at work, create a nice and positive atmosphere, and make teaching and learning better at UAG.

Literature review

Various studies have been conducted to explore the multifaceted determinants of employee job satisfaction. Gupta and Sharma (2021) conducted a study to explore how Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs relates to job satisfaction among employees in Indian manufacturing. They employed a quantitative approach, likely distributing surveys or questionnaires among employees across various roles in the manufacturing industry. The study revealed notable associations between the fulfillment of different needs identified in Maslow's hierarchy (such as physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization) and the levels of job satisfaction among Indian manufacturing employees.

Garcia and Rodriguez (2021) conducted that study to examine the relationship between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and job satisfaction among manufacturing workers. To achieve this objective, quantitative research approach was employed. The study administered surveys to manufacturing workers to collect data. The findings of the study revealed significant correlations between the fulfillment of different levels of needs according to Maslow's Hierarchy and job satisfaction among manufacturing workers. Specifically, workers who reported higher levels of fulfillment of their physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization need also reported higher levels of job satisfaction.

Chen and Yang (2020) sought to investigate how Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs influences employee job satisfaction, focusing on how person-organization fit moderates this relationship. Employing a quantitative approach, researchers collected survey data from employees spanning various industries. Utilizing established measurement scales, they evaluated job satisfaction and conducted statistical analyses, including regression and moderation analyses. The study revealed a significant impact of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs on job satisfaction, particularly esteem and self-actualization. Moreover, the researchers noted that person-organization fit moderated the association between needs fulfillment and job satisfaction. They found that when employees perceived a strong alignment between their values and the organization's, the positive influence of needs fulfillment on job satisfaction was magnified, while a weaker fit attenuated this effect.

Smith and Smith (2020) conducted a study to examine how meeting basic needs relates to job satisfaction in the hospitality field. Employing most likely a quantitative research method, they likely used surveys or questionnaires to collect data from employees across different positions in hospitality. These surveys probably covered topics concerning basic needs fulfillment and job satisfaction. The study's outcomes would have shed light on how fulfilling physiological, safety, social, and esteem needs influences job satisfaction among hospitality employees. This comprehension could

offer valuable insights for hospitality employers and managers striving to enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

Brown and Brown (2019) aimed to investigate how meeting basic needs correlates with job satisfaction among healthcare professionals. To achieve this, the researchers likely utilized a quantitative research approach. This study administered surveys or questionnaires to collect data from healthcare professionals across various roles in the healthcare sector. These surveys included items concerning the fulfillment of basic needs, such as physiological, safety, social, and esteem needs, along with measures of job satisfaction. Data collection likely involved gathering responses from a sample of healthcare professionals to examine the relationship between basic needs fulfillment and job satisfaction. The findings of study concluded that meeting basic needs positively impacts the job satisfaction of healthcare professionals.

Rajan and Chitra (2019) undertook a study to explore the connection between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and job satisfaction within the software professional context. The study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing surveys or questionnaires to collect data from software professionals on both Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and their levels of job satisfaction. The findings of the study provided insights into how the fulfillment of various needs outlined in Maslow's hierarchy (such as physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization) related to the job satisfaction experienced by software professionals.

Jones and Brown (2019) conducted the research to examine the relationship between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and job satisfaction among public sector employees. The study employed a quantitative research approach and administered surveys to public sector employees to gather data. The findings of the study revealed significant correlations between the fulfillment of different levels of needs according to Maslow's Hierarchy and job satisfaction among public sector employees. Specifically, employees who reported higher levels of fulfillment across all needs also reported higher levels of job satisfaction.

Zappalà and Lyons (2019) conducted that study that aimed to investigate how workplace friendships impact organizational support, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, the research utilized both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Data were gathered from employees across diverse industries and organizational settings. Their study uncovered significant positive correlations between workplace friendships and organizational support as well as job satisfaction. Employees who reported closer friendships at work also indicated higher levels of perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the research revealed that stronger workplace friendships were linked to reduced turnover intentions among employees.

Yi and Li (2018) conducted research to explore how Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs influences employee job satisfaction in the Chinese public sector. Their aim was to determine if meeting different needs from Maslow's theory, ranging from basic physiological requirements to higher-level self-actualization aspirations, impacts job satisfaction among Chinese public sector employees. Employing a case study approach blending quantitative and qualitative methods, they gathered data from these employees. They utilized statistical analyses, like correlation analysis, to scrutinize the links between fulfilling various needs and job satisfaction levels. Additionally, thematic analysis was used to extract patterns and themes from qualitative interview data. The study yielded substantial evidence supporting Maslow's theory's influence on employee job satisfaction within the Chinese public sector. It revealed significant connections between meeting different needs, such as physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs, and employee job satisfaction levels. Furthermore, qualitative analysis of interview data provided further insights into how meeting these needs specifically affected employee job satisfaction.

Lee and Kim (2018) conducted a study aimed to explore how Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs influences job satisfaction within the hospitality sector, considering cultural diversity. Employing a quantitative approach, the researchers conducted a cross-cultural study and gathered data through surveys administered to hospitality industry employees from varying cultural backgrounds. The findings revealed significant associations between meeting different needs levels according to Maslow's Hierarchy and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Notably, workers reporting higher fulfillment across all needs also reported higher job satisfaction levels. Furthermore, the study identified consistent relationships across different cultural contexts, indicating the universal applicability of Maslow's theory to job satisfaction within the hospitality industry, irrespective of cultural disparities.

Parker, Wall and Jackson (1997) aimed to examine the importance of autonomy for job satisfaction and work performance. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, administered surveys or questionnaires and as interviews or focus groups to gather quantitative data on employees' perceptions of autonomy, job satisfaction, and performance evaluations.

The findings showed the interplay among autonomy, job satisfaction, and work performance. They probably identified a positive correlation between the extent of autonomy granted to employees and their levels of job satisfaction and work performance.

Smith and Johnson (2015) study utilized quantitative research methods to examine this relationship. Surveys were administered to healthcare workers to collect data. The findings of the study revealed significant correlations between the fulfillment of different levels of needs according to Maslow's

Hierarchy and job satisfaction among healthcare workers. Specifically, healthcare workers who reported higher levels of fulfillment across all needs also reported higher levels of job satisfaction. The research gap in the current literature lies in the specific investigation of determinants of employee job satisfaction among teaching staff within the United Academy Group (UAG), utilizing Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework. While existing studies explore job satisfaction across various sectors and professions, there is a notable lack of research focusing specifically on the teaching profession within the UAG context.

This study is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The hierarchy of needs was introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1943, originated within the framework of humanistic psychology, which prioritized the examination of human potential, development, and fulfillment (Hoffman, L. 2019). Maslow's theory was shaped by his observations of individuals whom he believed psychologically healthy and fulfilled, serving as the basis for his conceptualization of human motivation and behavior (Wilson, T. 2020).

According to Maslow's hierarchy commencing with physiological requirements, followed by safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, A. H. 1943). The conceptual framework employed in this study was firmly grounded in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a renowned psychological theory that included five hierarchical needs levels: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Fig. 1). By adopting this framework, the study benefitted from a well-defined structure for understanding the range of factors that contribute to an individual's satisfaction within the workplace environment.

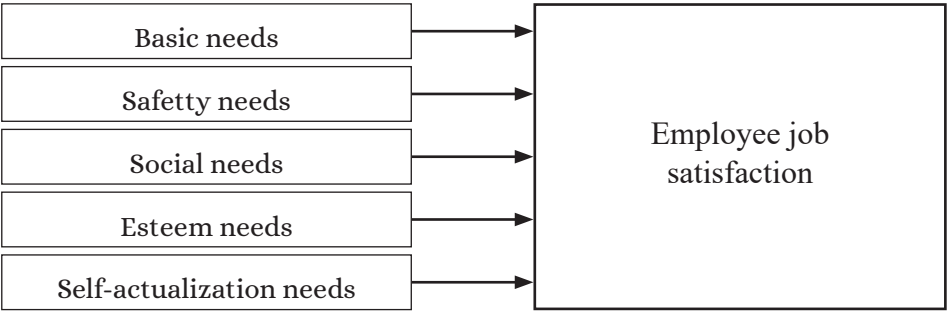


Figure 1: *Conceptual framework of the study*

In this study, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, encompassing basic, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs, are posited as determinants influencing employee job satisfaction. Based on these needs, five hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Physiological needs have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

H2: Safety needs have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

H3: Social needs have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

H4: Esteem needs have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

H5: Self-actualization needs have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction.

Methods

This study has adopted quantitative research approach, driven by considerations such as the capacity to precisely measure and analyze the factors influencing employee job satisfaction. Additionally, the organized format of quantitative research made it easier to compare the study's findings with those already documented in existing literature. Similarly, the research design employed in this study was a correlational research design. Specifically, the study utilized Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a theoretical framework to understand the influence of different needs—such as physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization—on job satisfaction. In addition, the study was conducted with the entire teaching staff (full time and part-time teaching staff) of the United Academy Group (United Pre-School, United School, United Universal School, United Academy, and United College), utilizing a census approach.

Using census, out of 265 teaching staff (both part time and full time), 161 teaching staff from the United Academy Group responded the structured questionnaires, accounting 60.75 % response rate. In this study, data analysis was conducted using a variety of statistical techniques to explore the relationships between different determinants and employee job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency distribution were used. Correlation analysis was employed to examine the strength and direction of associations between variables, providing insights into potential patterns of relationship. Regression analysis was used to identify the predictive power of various determinants, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, on job satisfaction among teachers. Model summaries were generated to assess the overall fit and explanatory power of the regression models. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test was conducted to examine the significance of differences between groups or variables. Coefficients derived from regression model was interpreted to understand the magnitude and direction of the relationships between predictor variables and job satisfaction. Hypothesis testing was carried out to evaluate the significance of specific relationships proposed in the study, providing empirical support for the theoretical framework and research hypotheses.

Result

The demographic profile of the respondents included the information on gender, education level, work duration, and the specific role or position held

by each teacher within the United Academy Group. In terms of gender, both male and female teachers participated in the study, showcasing a balanced representation. Educationally, the respondents varied in their academic qualifications, with individuals holding intermediate, bachelor's, master's, and advanced degrees, indicating a range of educational backgrounds. Work duration among respondents ranged from less than a year to over five years, suggesting a mix of experienced and relatively new staff members. Moreover, the distribution of teachers across different levels, from pre-primary to higher secondary and beyond, highlights the multifaceted roles and responsibilities within the educational institutions of the United Academy Group. This diversity in demographic characteristics emphasizes the varied perspectives and experiences that contribute to understanding the determinants of employee job satisfaction among teaching staff.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Items	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	85	52.8
	Male	76	47.2
	Total	161	100
Education	Intermediate	14	8.7
	Bachelors	48	29.8
	Masters	88	54.7
	M Phil and above	11	6.8
	Total	161	100
Work duration	Below 1 year	43	26.7
	1 year- 3 ye	35	21.7
	3 years- 5 y	20	12.4
	5 years and more	63	32.1
	Total	161	100
Teacher of	Bachelors and Master	18	11.2
	Higher Secondary	39	24.2
	Secondary (9 and 10)	23	14.3
	Lower Secondary	22	13.7
	Primary level (C	31	19.3
	Pre-Primary level	28	17.4
	Total	161	100

Source: Primary data

In Table 2, the correlation analysis reveals significant relationships among the variables in the study. Basic needs (BSND) show a strong positive correlation with safety needs (STND) ($r = .618, p < .01$), social needs (SLND) ($r = .562, p < .01$), esteem needs (EMND) ($r = .541, p < .01$), self-actualization needs (SAND) ($r = .436, p < .01$), and employee job satisfaction (EESN) ($r = .618, p < .01$). Similarly, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs exhibit significant positive correlations with employee job satisfaction ($r = .683, r = .765, r = .748$, and $r = .750$, respectively; all $p < .01$). These findings emphasize the importance of fulfilling basic, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs in enhancing employee job satisfaction.

Table 2: Correlational matrix

	BSND	STND	SLND	EMND	SAND	EESN
BSND	1					
STND	0.618**	1				
SLND	0.562**	0.748**	1			
EMND	0.541**	0.721**	0.796**	1		
SAND	0.436**	0.613**	0.731**	0.782**	1	
EESN	0.618**	0.683**	0.765**	0.748**	0.750**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Primary data*

The study conducted a regression analysis to examine what factors influenced job satisfaction among employees at United Academy Group. The model summary showed that the predictor variables chosen explained a large part of the variation in teacher satisfaction. The ANOVA results also backed up the importance of these predictor variables in affecting job satisfaction scores. Additionally, the coefficients from the regression analysis gave us valuable insights into how much each predictor variable contributed to job satisfaction. The model summary produced valuable understandings on the determinants of employee job satisfaction at United College. With an R-square value of 0.667, it was determined that the predictor variables, including basic needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs, collectively account for approximately 67% of the variation in job satisfaction among employees. This suggested that these factors play a significant role in determining the level of satisfaction experienced by employees in their roles.

Moreover, the adjusted R-square value of 0.678 suggested that the model is robust and provided a dependable estimation of job satisfaction. The standard error of the estimate, at 0.51567, indicated the accuracy of predictions. The ANOVA table predicted employee satisfaction using various factors. The regression table showed the degree of variance in satisfaction. An important portion of this variance is explained by the model ($F = 76.456$,

$p < .001$), indicating that the studied factors—basic needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs—jointly influenced employee satisfaction significantly. In the coefficient table, the individual contributions of each factor to employee satisfaction are observed. The “Standardized Coefficients” column indicated their relative importance. Basic needs, social needs, and self-actualization needs exhibited statistically significant impacts on satisfaction, with standardized coefficients of .209, .286, and .295, respectively (all $p < .001$). This implied that addressing these needs tends to have a stronger effect on satisfaction compared to safety and esteem needs, which are not statistically significant predictors. Overall, these results suggest that addressing basic, social, and self-actualization needs can significantly enhance employee satisfaction.

In this study, five hypotheses were formulated to investigate the determinants of employee job satisfaction within the United Academy Group. Specifically, it was hypothesized that basic needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs would significantly predict levels of job satisfaction among teachers. The analysis of the t -values and associated p -values provided insights into the significance of these needs. Basic needs were found to have a statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction ($t = 3.667, p = .000$), indicating their importance as determinants of employee job satisfaction. However, safety needs did not show statistical significance ($t = 1.275, p = .204$), suggesting these are not influential factors. Social needs exhibited a significant relationship with job satisfaction ($t = 3.520, p = .001$), highlighting as crucial determinants. On the other hand, esteem needs did not show statistical significance ($t = 1.379, p = .170$), suggesting these may not have significantly impacted job satisfaction. However, self-actualization needs demonstrated a significant relationship ($t = 3.984, p = .000$), indicating these are important determinants of job satisfaction among teachers at United College.

Table 3: Regression analysis

Model summary						
Model	R	R Square		Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	0.811 ^a	0.667		0.678	0.51567	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Basic needs, Safety needs, Social needs, Esteem needs, Self-actualization needs						
b. Dependent Variable: Employee job satisfaction						
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of square	df	Mean of square	F	Sig.

1	Regression	59.812	5	11.962	76.456	0.000 ^b
	Residual	22.217	156	0.156		
	Total	82.029	161			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Basic needs, Safety needs, Social needs, Esteem needs, Self-actualization needs						
Coefficient						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-0.287	0.243		-1.184	0.238
	Basic needs	0.251	0.068	0.209	3.667	0.000
	Safety needs	0.098	0.077	0.092	1.275	0.204
	Social needs	0.305	0.087	0.286	3.520	0.001
	Esteem needs	0.153	0.111	0.120	1.379	0.170
	Self-actualization needs	0.309	0.078	0.295	3.984	0.000

Source: *Primary data*

Discussion

In comparing the findings of the study with existing literature, several similarities and differences emerge regarding the relationship between different needs and job satisfaction. The literature review highlighted numerous studies examining the influence of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs on job satisfaction across various industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, public sectors, and hospitality (Gupta and Sharma 2021; Garcia and Rodriguez, 2021; Chen and Yang, 2020; Smith and Smith, 2020; Jones and Brown, 2019). Overall, the literature consistently suggests that the fulfillment of basic needs, such as physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs, correlates positively with job satisfaction (Gupta and Sharma, 2021; Garcia and Rodriguez, 2021; Chen and Yang, 2020; Smith and Smith, 2020; Jones and Brown, 2019).

This study aligns with previous research findings in several aspects. The study found strong support for the significance of basic needs in determining employee job satisfaction, which is consistent with the findings of Gupta and Sharma (2021), Garcia and Rodriguez, E. (2021), and Smith and Smith (2020). Moreover, this research revealed a noteworthy correlation between social needs and job satisfaction, reflecting the results documented by Chen and Yang (2020), Jones and Brown (2019), and Yi and Li (2018). Moreover, the importance of self-actualization needs in influencing job satisfaction, as observed in this study, resonates with the conclusions drawn by Chen and Yang (2020) and Yi and Li (2018). However, our study's findings diverge from the literature in terms of safety and esteem needs.

Unlike previous studies that reported significant associations between safety needs and job satisfaction (Garcia and Rodriguez 2021; Chen and Yang. (2020), our results did not find statistical significance for safety needs. Similarly, while some studies highlighted the significance of esteem needs in influencing job satisfaction (Gupta and Sharma, 2021; Yi and Li, 2018), our study did not find empirical support for this relationship. These disparities in findings between this study and existing literature may stem from contextual differences in the samples, industries, or methodologies employed. For instance, this study focused on teachers at United College, whereas previous research examined employees across various sectors and countries. Additionally, methodological variations, such as differences in survey instruments or data analysis techniques, could contribute to divergent results.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the factors influencing employee job satisfaction, specifically focusing on physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs within the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Employing a quantitative research approach and a correlational research design, data were collected via a questionnaire distributed from 161 teachers (both part-time and full-time) from the United Academy Group (UAG), comprising United Pre-School, United School, United Academy, and United College. The findings of study revealed that basic needs and social needs are important factors influencing employee job satisfaction. It found strong evidence supporting this conclusion through statistical analysis. However, safety needs and esteem needs did not show significant effects on job satisfaction. In contrast, self-actualization needs were identified as significant determinants of job satisfaction. These findings highlighted the importance of addressing basic and social needs in fostering job satisfaction among employees. Additionally, providing opportunities for personal growth and development can significantly contribute to enhancing overall job satisfaction levels.

This study's findings carry substantial implications for organizational management and human resource practices, particularly within educational institutions like the United Academy Group (UAG). By examining the determinants of employee job satisfaction through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the research highlights the significance of addressing fundamental and social needs to enhance teachers' well-being and productivity. The identification of self-actualization as a significant determinant emphasizes the importance of providing avenues for personal growth and fulfillment within the workplace. To translate these findings into actionable strategies, organizations should prioritize creating supportive work environments that cater to employees' basic and social needs while also fostering opportunities for professional development and self-realization. By doing so, UAG and

similar institutions can cultivate a positive workplace culture, boosting teacher job satisfaction, engagement, and retention, ultimately contributing to organizational success and the overall well-being of employees.

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