

JOB SATISFACTION OF PUBLIC WORKERS IN NORTHERN PERU DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the study was to determine the job satisfaction of public workers in the provincial municipalities of the Tumbes region (Peru).

Method: The method used was a descriptive, non-experimental cross-sectional design. The sample consisted of 319 male and female workers from the 3 provincial municipalities. A sociodemographic questionnaire and the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire were used as data collection instruments.

Results: The results showed that only 10% of the participants had high job satisfaction. Within the dimensions, the majority showed low satisfaction (67%) with the remuneration received. No significant differences were found between men and women with respect to job satisfaction, and those with permanent employment status had lower levels than those who work on a temporary basis.

Conclusions: It is concluded that most of the personnel working in the provincial municipalities of the Tumbes region have low levels of job satisfaction, so it is important to develop programs aimed at strengthening the bond and favorable attitude of workers with the institution where they work.

Keywords: Job satisfaction. Public workers. Municipality. Tumbes.

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SATISFAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL DOS TRABALHADORES PÚBLICOS NO NORTE DO PERU DURANTE A PANDEMIA DE COVID-19

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo do estudo era determinar a satisfação profissional dos funcionários públicos nos municípios provinciais da região de Tumbes (Peru).

Método: O método utilizado foi um projeto descritivo, não-experimental de corte transversal. A amostra consistia de 319 trabalhadores e trabalhadoras dos 3 municípios provinciais. Um questionário sociodemográfico e o Questionário de Satisfação do Trabalho foram usados como instrumentos de coleta de dados.

Resultados: Os resultados mostraram que apenas 10% dos participantes tinham alta satisfação no trabalho. Dentro das dimensões, a maioria mostrou baixa satisfação (67%) com a remuneração recebida. Não foram encontradas diferenças significativas entre homens e mulheres com relação à satisfação no emprego, e aqueles com status de emprego permanente tinham níveis mais baixos do que aqueles que trabalham temporariamente.

Conclusões: Conclui-se que a maioria do pessoal que trabalha nos municípios provinciais da região de Tumbes tem baixos níveis de satisfação no emprego, portanto é importante desenvolver programas destinados a fortalecer o vínculo e a atitude favorável dos trabalhadores com a instituição onde trabalham.

Palavras-Chave: Satisfação no trabalho. Trabalhadores públicos. Município. Tumbes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on worker job satisfaction (Makowicz et al., 2022; Tay & Hon, 2022) and has affected job performance by adapting to new ways of performing work (Silva & Rosa, 2022). The health emergency situation caused additional workload and has increased stress and anxiety among public workers (Eguchi et al., 2021) affected emotional and psychological well-being. In addition, the pandemic has led to a change in work procedures and protocols, which has generated confusion and required rapid adaptation on the part of public workers. The increased risks of contagion and the need to follow biosecurity measures has added an additional layer of complexity to the work of municipal workers (Cabanillas-Rojas, 2020).. Other elements that may have impacted the job satisfaction of public workers during the pandemic were the lack of adequate resources, work overload, and lack of recognition and support from municipal management (Gestion, 2021). Uncertainty and



lack of clarity regarding the duration and magnitude of the pandemic may also have generated additional stress and concern among public workers.

Job satisfaction is an important construct for understanding employee well-being and job performance. Numerous studies have approached job satisfaction from different perspectives and have found that it is related to various factors, both personal and organizational. Thus, a classic definition of job satisfaction is provided by Locke (1969) who considers it to be "a positive or pleasurable emotional state resulting from the evaluation of a job or experiential work". Likewise, Hackman & Oldham (1976) suggested that job design can affect employee motivation and satisfaction. On the other hand, the theory of core self-evaluations, according to Judge et al. (2002) argues that personality traits, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and emotional stability, are related to job satisfaction and job performance. Spector (1997) has explored the causes and consequences of job satisfaction, and has found that job satisfaction is related to motivation, organizational commitment and employee retention.

Job satisfaction is also related to other important variables at work, such as commitment to the institution (Allen & Meyer, 1990) job performance (Judge et al., 2001) emotional exhaustion (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998) (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998) and workplace confidence (Colquitt et al., 2007) (Colquitt et al., 2007).. Thus, Farh et al. (2007) found that individual cultural values may moderate the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee work outcomes in China.

Specific studies have also been conducted on the job satisfaction of public sector workers in times of pandemic, (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022) found a significant relationship between compensation and staff retention as well as turnover intention, and confirmed the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between compensation and retention of workers and compensation and turnover intention. Diakos et al. (2022) observed that participating physicians reported a significantly lower level of satisfaction with the pay factor compared to other categories of employees. On the other hand, Park & Ahn (2022) examined how the pandemic affected government employees in terms of socioeconomic hardship, finding gender gaps and racial disparities in the experience and expectations of these hardships. The Johnson & Whillans (2022) study reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, worker dissatisfaction in low-wage jobs increased and the importance of pay in determining overall job satisfaction for these workers. Also highlighted was the perpetuation of inequality by managers who held stereotypes about low-wage workers.

Finally, in the Peruvian context, studies have been conducted on the satisfaction of municipal public workers. The research conducted by Bellido Medina et al. (2021) reports a



trend towards job dissatisfaction during the year 2020 due to working conditions and the fear of contagion among collaborators in work centers, where women presented a considerable reduction in salary and men reported a reduction in their expectations of personal development, which affected both collaborators with stability and those without it. Likewise, Quispe & Paucar (2020) investigated a sample of teachers at a public university, finding that teachers who were satisfied in the institution where they worked had 3.39 times the possibility of organizational commitment, compared to dissatisfied teachers.

Studies have shown that job satisfaction is a fundamental factor influencing employee well-being and job performance, so it is important to address the concerns and needs of public workers to improve their overall job satisfaction. Therefore, the study aimed to determine the job satisfaction of public workers in the provincial municipalities of Tumbes.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research was descriptive and field level because it aims to understand the phenomenological behavior of job satisfaction as a function of the different sociodemographic groups and dimensions of job satisfaction. (Mar Orozco et al., 2020).. Also, the design was non-experimental cross-sectional, because no experimental stimuli or conditions were used to submit the research variables (Arias & Covinos, 2021), the information was collected only once and the study population was not intervened in (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018), being its fundamental objective to identify the frequency of a condition (Rodríguez & Mendivelso, 2018).

2.1. Sample

The sample consisted of 319 workers from the 3 provincial municipalities of the department of Tumbes in the Republic of Peru, the sampling was non-probabilistic by convenience applied to workers who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. (Otzen & Manterola, 2017)of which 51.4% were women and 48.6% men. With respect to the degree of education 15% had the degree of education up to high school, 33.5% were technical professionals, 45.5% university professionals, and only 6% presented postgraduate studies. Likewise, 44.5%, 29.5% and 26% of these workers worked in the provincial municipalities of Tumbes, Zarumilla and Contralmirante Villar, respectively. In terms of age range, 39.2% were between 18 and 29 years of age, 53.9% were between 30 and 59 years of age and 6.9% were over 60 years of age. Regarding the time worked, 63.9% have less than 5 years and 36.1% have



more than 5 years, and in relation to the type of contract, 69.6% have temporary contracts, and 30.4% have permanent contracts (see Table 1)

Table 1. Sociodemographic data

		f_x	%
Sex	Man	164	51.41
	Woman	155	48.59
Level of education	Primary	2	0.63
	Secondary	46	14.42
	Technician	107	33.54
	University professional	145	45.45
	Postgraduate study	19	5.96
Provincial Municipality	Provincial Municipality of Tumbes	142	44.51
	Provincial Municipality of Zarumilla	94	29.47
	Provincial Municipality of Contralmirante Villar	83	26.02
Age	Age between 18 and 29 years old	125	39.18
	Age between 30 and 59 years old	172	53.92
	60 years of age and older	22	6.90
Time working in the institution	from 0 to 4 years old	204	63.95
	from 5 to more years old	115	36.05
Type of contract	Temporary	222	69.59
	permanent (appointed)	97	30.41

2.2 Instrument

The job satisfaction questionnaire was used, which was adapted and validated by Chiang Vega et al. (2008, 2011). which consists of 37 items, presented on a likert scale with responses ranging from strongly agree, rather agree, rather agree, rather disagree, rather disagree, rather disagree and finally strongly disagree. It consists of 6 dimensions which are: Satisfaction with the job in general, satisfaction with the physical work environment, satisfaction with the way they perform their work, satisfaction with development opportunities, satisfaction with the subordinate-supervisor relationship and finally satisfaction with remuneration. For the present study, the reliability of the instrument was obtained by means of Cronbach's Alpha, whose value was 0.969.

2.3 Procedure

Permission was requested to access the provincial municipalities and then the questionnaires were applied to the public workers, requesting their participation so that they

could proceed to fill out the questionnaire, explaining to them the purpose and form of filling it out. The data from the questionnaires were tabulated in the Excel program and then the database was exported to the SPSS software where the descriptive statistical analysis was carried out. To interpret the results, they were grouped into three categories: low, medium and high, where the low level are the scores of the elements that are in the first two quartiles, the medium level the third quartile and the high level the fourth quartile.

3. RESULTS

The results of job satisfaction presented in Figure 1 show that of the 319 municipal workers in the department of Tumbes, 50.47% have low satisfaction, while 39.50% have medium satisfaction and only 10.03% have high job satisfaction.

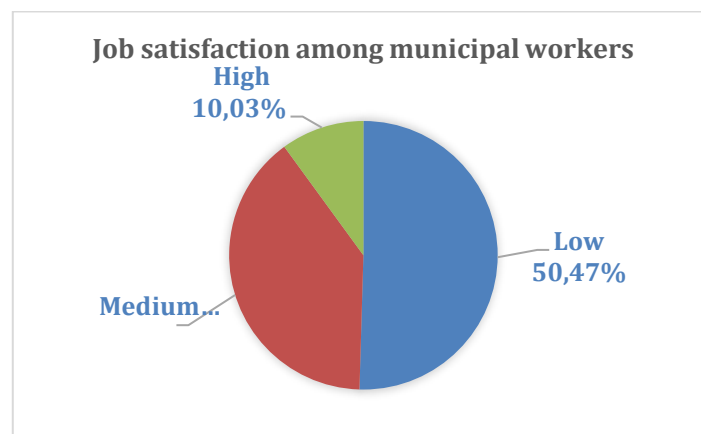


Figure 1. Levels of job satisfaction among municipal workers in the department of Tumbes

With respect to the dimensions of job satisfaction shown in Figure 2, it shows that in general 55% are not very satisfied, 32% are moderately satisfied and 13% are highly satisfied. Regarding satisfaction with the physical work environment, 55% had low satisfaction, 34% medium satisfaction and 11% high satisfaction. Regarding satisfaction with the way in which they perform their work, 59% had low satisfaction, 28% medium satisfaction and 12% high satisfaction. Regarding satisfaction with development opportunities, 57% had low satisfaction, 32% medium satisfaction and 11% high satisfaction. In terms of satisfaction with the subordinate-supervisor relationship, 58% had low satisfaction, 31% medium and 11% high, and in terms of satisfaction with compensation, 67% had low satisfaction, 25% medium and only 8% high.

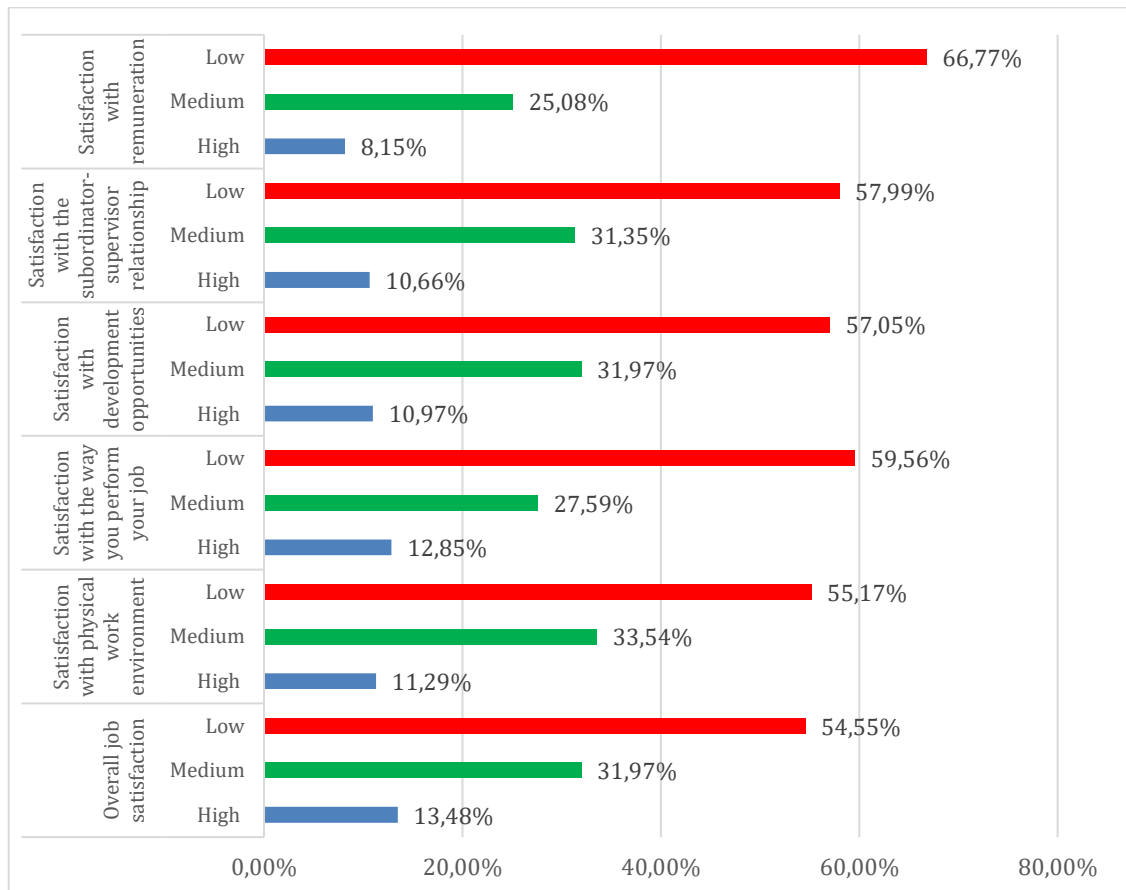


Figure 2. Levels of job satisfaction dimensions

Table 3 shows that with respect to job satisfaction by sex, women and men have similar levels of job satisfaction with slight differences, with low job satisfaction at around 50%, medium satisfaction at around 40% and high satisfaction at around 10% for both sexes respectively. The job satisfaction according to age shown in Table 3, we see that the age ranges from 30 to 59 and 60 years and older have a higher proportion of low job satisfaction reaching 54.7% and 59.10% respectively, while the age group that shows the best level of job satisfaction is the young group showing medium and high satisfaction levels of 54.7% and 7.6% respectively.



Table 3. Job satisfaction by gender and age range

Level	Sex			Age range			
	Man	Woman	Total	age between 18 and 29 years old	age between 30 and 59 years	from 60 years old and over	Total
Under	79	82	161	54	94	13	161
	48.17%	52.90%	50.47%	43.20%	54.65%	59.09%	50.47%
medium	68	58	126	54	65	7	126
	41.46%	37.42%	39.50%	43.20%	37.79%	31.82%	39.50%
High	17	15	32	17	13	2	32
	10.37%	9.68%	10.03%	13.60%	7.56%	9.09%	10.03%
Total	164	155	319	125	172	22	319
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Job satisfaction by province, as shown in Table 4, workers in the provinces of Contralmirante Villar and Zarumilla have almost similar levels of job satisfaction, ranging from 43% to 44%, and low, less than 50%, but in the province of Tumbes, workers have a high proportion of low satisfaction (55.6%), medium (33.8%) and high (10.6%). Regarding workers according to their type of contract, as shown in Table 4, workers with permanent contracts have a higher level of low job satisfaction reaching 63%, 25.8% medium and 10.3% high. But workers with temporary contracts only 44.6% have low job satisfaction, 45.5% medium and 9.9% high.

Table 4. Job satisfaction by municipality and contract type

Level	Provincial Municipality				Type of contract		
	Tumbes	Zarumilla	Contralmirante Villar	Total	Temporary	Permanent (appointed)	Total
Low	79	46	36	161	99	62	161
	55.63%	48.94%	43.37%	50.47%	44.59%	63.92%	50.47%
Medium	48	42	36	126	101	25	126
	33.80%	44.68%	43.37%	39.50%	45.50%	25.77%	39.50%
High	15	6	11	32	22	10	32
	10.56%	6.38%	13.25%	10.03%	9.91%	10.31%	10.03%
Total	142	94	83	319	222	97	319
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

With respect to job satisfaction by level of education, as shown in Table 5, we can see that workers with higher levels of education, such as postgraduate and university professionals, have medium and high job satisfaction, which together exceed 55%, while workers with lower levels of education, such as technical and high school, have a low level of job satisfaction of over 50%. Table 5 shows that workers who have been working for more than 5 years have a



higher proportion of low satisfaction reaching 58% and only 31.3% and 10.4% have medium and high job satisfaction respectively, on the contrary, workers who have been working for less than 5 years have a higher proportion of medium and high satisfaction reaching 54% together.

Table 5. Job satisfaction by time worked and level of education

Level	Tiempo laborando			Nivel de estudio				
	Up to 4 years	From 5 years and over	Total	Up to high school	Technician	University professional	Post graduate	Total
Low	94	67	161	26	58	70	7	161
	46.08%	58.26%	50.47%	54.17%	54.21%	48.28%	36.84%	50.47%
Medium	90	36	126	19	33	64	10	126
	44.12%	31.30%	39.50%	39.58%	30.84%	44.14%	52.63%	39.50%
High	20	12	32	3	16	11	2	32
	9.80%	10.43%	10.03%	6.25%	14.95%	7.59%	10.53%	10.03%
Total	204	115	319	48	107	145	19	319
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

4. DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic caused great changes worldwide, especially in the labor sector, and in particular for workers assigned to public institutions. These changes implied taking on new work challenges from home, through teleworking, and sometimes with insufficient technological resources (computers and internet access) and performing an occupation.

Human factors are fundamental for quality public services. Therefore, an adequate organizational climate could lead to workers being less stressed and exhausted and this influences the job satisfaction and well-being of employees (Pecino et al., 2019). Likewise, job satisfaction can influence workers' commitment to their organization (Adeniji et al., 2019).

The results show that most of the respondents had a low level of job satisfaction, with 50.47%, being these percentages much higher than those found in other public workers in Peru where most of them had average job satisfaction, (Abarca Arias et al., 2021; Aliaga-Zamora et al., 2022; Holguin Morales & Contreras Camarena, 2020). This is a negative factor because it can influence job performance (Chen & Sun, 2009; Obi, 2009). (Chen & Sun, 2009; Obiunu & Yalaju, 2020; Sudiardhita et al., 2018) affecting the quality of public services (Hernández Junco et al., 2009).. During the COVID-19 pandemic, drastic changes were made in the way job functions were performed, generating dissatisfaction, discomfort (Silva et al., 2021), stress and burnout (Kitsios & Kamariotou 2021). Therefore, it is important during these situations to make



improvements in job content and organizational characteristics in order to reduce burnout and job dissatisfaction among staff (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

Regarding the dimensions, it was found that the majority of workers are dissatisfied. The dimension in which the highest dissatisfaction is reported is remuneration, these results being similar to what was found by. (Castañeda-Santillán & Sánchez-Macías, 2022; Chiang Vega et al., 2018; Bhardwaj, Mishra & Jain, 2021).. The reality of public servants' remuneration in Peru is a complex and controversial issue. In general, public servants in Peru receive comparatively low salaries compared to other countries in the region (Gasparini et al., 2015)and therefore approximately one third of them are forced to look for other work to supplement their income (Castellares & Huaranca, 2022).. However, the situation varies according to the level of responsibility, education and experience of each public servant. Therefore, by improving the salary we can improve their job satisfaction, being necessary to seek equitable and sustainable solutions to improve the remuneration of public servants and, at the same time, ensure transparency and efficiency in the management of public resources.

In addition, similar levels of job satisfaction were found in terms of gender, with a slight advantage for women at the high level, these results being similar to those found by (Cortez-Silva et al., 2021).. It is evident that as workers get older they present low levels of satisfaction in higher proportions, being workers over 60 years of age those who present mostly low job satisfaction, which could be due to the fact that younger workers present more motivation to grow and learn within the institution, This could also be associated with the results where workers who have been working for more than 5 years present higher proportions of job dissatisfaction compared to workers who have less than five years. (Holguin Morales & Contreras Camarena, 2020)but contrary to what they found (Alonso Martín, 2008; Carrillo-García et al., 2013) where the higher the age and seniority, the higher the levels of job satisfaction. Although it is true that there are diverse results, it is necessary to improve working conditions, since they have an impact on the low level of job satisfaction of municipal workers.

Regarding job satisfaction by municipality, it was found that the municipality of Tumbes has a higher percentage of job dissatisfaction than the municipalities of Zarumilla and Contralmirante Villar. The study conducted by Kitsios & Kamariotou (2021) reported that workers' job satisfaction is influenced by job-related characteristics such as bureaucracy, job content and prosocial motivation. It was also found that permanent workers have a higher percentage of dissatisfaction than those who work on a temporary basis. A factor that influences job dissatisfaction is fatigue; studies show that job burnout is higher in those with permanent contracts compared to temporary workers (Castañeda-Aguilera & García de Alba-García,



2022). (Castañeda-Aguilera & García de Alba-García, 2022). It is essential to take into account that people who have the same job responsibilities for a long time experience loss of interest and monotony (Singh et al, 2019), so it is important that those responsible for the institutions make changes in the functions assigned to staff from time to time in order to generate greater commitment and motivation. Thus, Aziz et al. (2021) consider that job satisfaction has a positive relationship with the commitment of workers, i.e. satisfaction with the institution where they work has a positive impact on the commitment of workers.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that the majority of municipal public workers in the region of Tumbes who worked remotely due to the social distancing measures imposed by the pandemic present low levels of job satisfaction, being a worrying factor to be addressed effectively and timely to ensure a good job performance and guarantee an adequate quality of public services.

The next steps to be taken in the research are to analyze the temporal evolution of the variable in a post-pandemic context. Likewise, we will also increase the sample size to advance in the path of the confirmatory study of the exploration of job satisfaction.

One of the limitations of the present research lies in the descriptive design used. It is recommended that future research should analyze a causal relationship between the different variables associated with job satisfaction. It is also recommended that experimental studies be carried out, since there is evidence of the need to implement intervention programs in order to improve the levels of the variable studied.

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