

---

# DYNAMICS OF ACADEMIC CIRCLES: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS WITH ACADEMIC STAFF IN UNIVERSITIES IN KAZAKHSTAN

---

Dinara BELKHOZHAYEVA<sup>2</sup>,  
Yermek BURIBAYEV<sup>3</sup>,  
Zhanna KHAMZINA<sup>4</sup>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35782/JCPP.2024.4.02>

**Abstract** *In the years following its independence, Kazakhstan's higher education landscape has experienced profound changes. This period has been marked by a concerted effort to broaden the scope and capacity of the education system. There has been a pronounced emphasis on elevating the sector's role in fostering a 'knowledge society', a concept pivotal to contemporary developmental strategies. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in the influence of both external and international entities in steering academic affairs. A key area of focus has been the enhancement of university teaching quality, coupled with the establishment of robust systems for acknowledging and rewarding excellence in this domain. The central task of the article is to analyze the updated model of employment and management of the teaching staff in the universities of Kazakhstan. The authors propose a comprehensive three-stage analysis: firstly, the peculiarities of the emergence, change, and termination of employment relations between teachers and universities are studied; secondly, approaches to managing teaching staff are examined; thirdly, an analysis of sociological data on employment trends among university teachers is conducted. The study covers legal, administrative, and practical aspects of teaching work, emphasizing*

---

<sup>2</sup> Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4348-0556>

<sup>3</sup> Zhetysu University Taldy-Kurgan, Almaty Region, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0433-596X>

<sup>4</sup> Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0913-2002>, E-mail: 292803@mail.ru

*the interconnection of these issues in a dynamic educational environment. The results indicate the need for far-sighted leadership in managing the teaching staff, implying the integration of traditional academic values with innovative approaches in organizational culture, incentive systems, and employment practices, and the demand for legislative changes. The insights garnered from this study offer a valuable foundation for formulating policy recommendations tailored to Kazakhstan's higher education framework and similar systems. Such recommendations are poised to significantly elevate the importance and effectiveness of the teaching aspect within the academic sphere.*

**Keywords:** *employment model; teaching staff; University; academic profession; employment conditions; higher education institutions; higher education research.*

---

## **1. Introduction**

As of 2023, Kazakhstan's higher education system marked its 95th anniversary. While this duration may not signify a long-standing tradition or centuries-old evolutionary process by global standards, the Kazakhstani higher education trajectory has been intricate and multifaceted. Its roots and development are deeply intertwined with the Soviet era (1917–1991), during which it was initially established and evolved. The training methods for scientific and pedagogical staff that were developed in this period played a crucial role in forming a cadre of highly skilled higher education professionals.

In the post-Soviet era, characterized by significant economic reforms, Kazakhstan's higher education system confronted substantial challenges, primarily due to the reduced funding for public educational institutions. Despite these obstacles, the system not only managed to maintain its state universities but also expanded with the addition of private higher education institutions, enriching the educational landscape of the country.

Today, 609,000 people are enrolled, including 228,000 under the state educational order, in 118 organizations of higher and (or) postgraduate education (hereinafter referred to as OHPEs) in Kazakhstan. The system of higher and postgraduate education in Kazakhstan will experience strong demographic pressures over the next seven years. If the population of the country was 18.8 million in 2021 and 19.5 million in 2022, it is projected

to reach 21.5 million by 2030 and 27.7 million by 2050. By 2029, the number of school graduates is expected to double, leading to overcrowding in OHPEs, a shortage of qualified academic staff, a deficit of places in universities and dormitories, and an increasing relevance of forming modern infrastructure and updating the laboratory base of OHPEs.

The crucial and complex task of organizing and training highly qualified specialists, along with their direct mentorship, falls to the management and academic personnel of higher professional education institutions. Within this framework, the legal aspects governing employment relationships in higher education take on a heightened importance. These regulations are instrumental not only in facilitating the educational and developmental needs of students but also in advancing scientific research. Consequently, there arises a clear necessity to delve into the challenges and nuances of legal frameworks surrounding educators' labor, drawing upon the substantial historical expertise in legal oversight of university-level pedagogical activities.

The legal governance of educators' labor integrates both general and specific legal norms. Achieving an optimal balance between these norms is critical for maintaining a stable and highly qualified teaching workforce, which in turn is pivotal for the ongoing progress of higher education in Kazakhstan. The legal framework governing the labor of teaching personnel should be strategically designed to address and neutralize systemic threats and risks that could potentially impact job security in this sector:

1. Growing demographic pressure on the higher education system.
2. Increasing the 'brain drain' and the outflow of young teachers and scientific personnel to other industries.
3. The need for a clear institutional policy in OHPEs for human resources and talent management.
4. The lack of a talent pool and a system for training top management in OHPEs.
5. The absence of broad career prospects for young talented professionals and managers in the OHPE management sector.

6. The incompleteness of OHPEs' transition to a new system of positions according to international standards, a new staff scheduling model, and academic staff's professional development.
7. The issue of inadequate compensation for educators in higher education institutions.

The academic staff in higher education currently operate amidst several challenging socio-economic issues. Key among these is constrained financial resources, diminished prestige of the teaching profession, an aging educator demographic, and evolving demands from stakeholders such as students, employers, and the public. These factors significantly influence both the objectives and the operational dynamics of universities.

In today's competitive landscape, Kazakhstani higher education institutions are vying for funding, attracting qualified applicants, and retaining educators who can meet the evolving educational standards. The ability of universities to adapt and thrive in the educational service market hinges on the effectiveness of their educational activities, often quantified through specific metrics.

In this setting, the importance of robust legal regulation of educators' labor becomes clear. It serves as a cornerstone for developing strategies that systematically advance university development. The study of employment conditions for teachers in Kazakhstan's higher education system is critical, driven by the need to rejuvenate the teaching workforce. This involves attracting and retaining the most talented, personally driven, and professionally competent individuals in scientific and pedagogical roles. The future of the entire higher education system in Kazakhstan is largely dependent on the quality and dedication of these educators.

## **2. Literature Review**

Consideration of various aspects of employment, and management of the labor of academic staff in universities has been the subject of several works by both foreign and Kazakhstani scholars. Firstly, these are highly cited results of studies on sustainable practices of human resource management, productivity of university staff (Manzoor et al., 2019; May et al., 2013; Teichler & Höhle, 2013; Ramsden & Martin, 1996; Bennion & Locke, 2010; Dunkin, 1990; Slišković & Maslač Seršić, 2011; García-Arroyo &

Segovia, 2019; Wiegel et al., 2016; Acker & Feuerverger, 1996; Han et al., 2020a; Han et al., 2020b; Buribayev et al., 2023; Khamzina et al., 2022).

These studies have centered on evaluating the quality of teachers' work life, focusing particularly on solutions that are mutually beneficial for both the employee and the organization. This approach emphasizes cooperative management and suggests that incremental changes in organizational interaction structures can enhance this dynamic. Effective personnel management is also identified as a key competitive advantage, influencing various work-related attitudes like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work attachment. Beyond the professional sphere, the quality of work life also significantly impacts personal, family, and social aspects. Research aimed at developing a model to improve teachers' work life quality includes contributions from Ghashghaeizadeh, 2020; Solimani, 2013; Powell et al., 1983; Subbarayalu, 2017; Cabero & Epifanio, 2021 and Demediuk & Van Gramberg, 2011).

Experts in this field contend that the quality of work life for academic staff is a critical and impactful element in higher education institutions, possessing an interactive nature within the organization. Consequently, organizational policies can have either a positive or negative influence on work life quality. Organizational justice is identified as a foremost factor affecting the work life quality of professors. A perception of unfairness within an organization can lead to psychological and emotional strain for employees. Therefore, it is recommended that university administrators adopt fair behavior promotion as a management strategy and nurture such conduct within the university environment.

To enhance the quality of work life, several strategies are proposed. These include considering the complexity and qualification levels of teachers' work, assigning duties based on employees' capabilities, alleviating stress through equitable workload distribution, and providing growth opportunities by evaluating staff performance in terms of knowledge, experience, and education.

In the studies conducted by Ma et al., 2010; Kurbatova et al., 2015; Rayner et al., 2010; Gould, 2006, the necessity of continuous research on the labor behavior of university teachers and its management is emphasized. Significant attention is given to the development of collectivism, issues of delegation of authority, organization of control, as well as other variables that affect civic behavior in the organization, evaluation, and stimulation

of teachers' work in universities. Research on the management of university teachers' motivation is conducted by Gutsu & Chilipenok, 2019; Rasheed et al., 2010; Rowley, 1996; Ramsden, 1998; Blaskova et al., 2015; Stankovska et al., 2017, in which basic concepts and managerial aspects of stimulation are thoroughly analyzed, and specific systems for diagnosing work motivation are considered.

The research conducted by Amaral et al., 2002; Enders, 2001; Goddard & Puukka, 2008; Abdulkadyrov et al., 2021 provided insightful analysis into the nuances of higher education operations, particularly in the context of regulating teachers' labor. These studies offer a comprehensive view of the internal and external environments of universities, highlighting their role in state development. The aspects of organizational behavior within universities are explored in the works of Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017; Atta & Khan, 2016; Driver, 1983 and Bo, 2013. These authors propose methodologies for analyzing and evaluating the organizational behavior of university faculty, focusing on managing such behavior through the socio-cultural elements of their environment.

M. Tulegenova et al.'s 2019 study concludes that in post-Soviet developing countries, the work of university faculty is often undervalued. The investment in the intellectual resources of the higher education system is sometimes seen as a bothersome expense, which is frequently minimized to boost the profitability of educational services. This approach, however, risks undermining the intellectual capacity of these nations in the long run. The study supports the hypothesis that the current working conditions do not align with the rapid and expansive technological changes of modern times.

Despite the extensive body of research addressing various aspects of personnel management in universities, there remains no consensus within the academic community on the optimal approach to regulate and structure the management of faculty organizational behavior in higher education. It appears that within labor relations, the issue of effectively motivating educators, particularly in orienting them towards the quality of the educational process, is not sufficiently addressed. The need to develop effective legal mechanisms that influence the employment of professorial and teaching staff, while considering the unique characteristics of this workforce and the current state of Kazakhstan's higher education system, is an urgent and unresolved matter.

### **3. Methodology**

The methodology of the research was systematically executed in a structured sequence. Initially, an in-depth analysis was carried out on various legal documents, including legislation, subordinate legal acts, and local regulatory norms that govern the labor relations between teachers and universities. This was followed by a comprehensive summary of Kazakhstan's current practices regarding the competitive appointment to positions within university professorial and teaching staff. Additionally, the study examined the nuances of establishing, evolving, and concluding labor relations with faculty members. Based on these analyses, the research culminated in the formulation of targeted recommendations aimed at enhancing the legislative framework. These recommendations are specifically focused on refining the processes for initiating, modifying, and terminating employment contracts with university faculty.

In the course of the study, general scientific methods were used, in particular, a systemic approach, and a sociological approach — in summarizing the practice of labor relations with the faculty in universities. The traditional formal-logical (technical-legal, special-legal) method for legal sciences became the basis for analysis. Logical, statistical, historical, comparative-legal, and other specific scientific methods were also applied.

This study employs a range of general theoretical methods for analyzing and synthesizing information, including summarizing findings from both domestic and international empirical research in the field of labor relations. Emphasis was placed on both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of intellectual labor in scientific research and higher education, along with methods for managing these metrics.

To meet its objectives and address its research tasks, the study utilized various empirical data sources. These included materials from the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which provided insights into the current state and key development indicators of the Kazakhstani higher education system. Additionally, monitoring data on the activities of Kazakhstani universities, available on the website of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period 2012-2023, were analyzed. The study also considered information from the websites and public reports of 12 Kazakhstani universities for the same period, as well as local regulatory documents

from these universities, including internal labor regulations, faculty position selection criteria, and collective labor agreements.

The empirical component of the analysis also incorporated findings from sociological research on labor relations issues with professorial and teaching staff at universities in Almaty. This research was conducted by the authors or with their involvement. Almaty is a significant educational hub in Kazakhstan, hosting one-third of the country's universities (over forty institutions) and educating more than a third of the students funded by the state budget.

The survey of university faculty and experts was conducted using a combination of methods: Google Docs, email campaigns, face-to-face interviews, telephone surveys, and social media (Facebook, Instagram). The research was carried out in two stages: 1) during September-October 2022 (388 teachers surveyed); 2) during April-May 2023 (417 teachers surveyed).

The nature and volume of the empirical data obtained allowed for a representative analysis of the features of labor relations with the professorial and teaching staff of Kazakhstani universities. Given that the scope of this study does not allow for an in-depth examination of all existing problems of labor regulation for university faculty, the article addresses three main issues:

1. The specifics of concluding, modifying, and terminating labor relations between faculty and universities. This topic includes legal and contractual aspects of university teachers' employment. It encompasses the development of proposals and recommendations for improving labor legislation, contractual, and local norms.
2. Management of educational staff in higher professional education. This area delves into the administrative and organizational aspects of managing a university's teaching staff. It includes strategies and methods used by universities for the recruitment, retention, development, and assessment of teachers. Management practices can significantly affect job satisfaction and the productivity of the teaching staff.
3. Results of sociological research on employment trends among university teachers. This includes analysis and interpretation of data on employment patterns, career trajectories, job satisfaction, and challenges faced by university teachers. Such research results can



provide insights into broader trends in academic employment, such as changes in job security and the impact of external factors such as economic conditions or changes in academic career policy.

The outlined topics are interconnected and collectively cover the legal, administrative, and practical aspects of university teachers' employment, each influencing and being influenced by others in a dynamic academic environment.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Legal Provision of Academic Employment in Higher Education**

The research team conducted a thorough examination of the conditions surrounding the establishment, modification, and termination of labor relationships of faculty in higher education institutions. They identified challenges in the legal framework governing labor and other related aspects of higher education employment, proposing actionable solutions. A detailed analysis of the latest labor legislation and local normative legal acts relevant to the subject matter revealed several deficiencies. The authors put forward recommendations for addressing these gaps through amendments and additions to existing legal acts, and they also suggested ways to enhance the current legislative framework.

Upon reviewing the normative acts that regulate labor relations for pedagogical staff in higher education, it became evident that despite the enactment of the Labor Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan (November 23, 2015, No. 414-V Law of RK) and various specific normative acts, there remains a need for further development and refinement of the legal system governing university faculty labor. The Labor Code of the RK lacks a dedicated chapter or specific articles that address the unique legal considerations of pedagogical labor, and it does not fully capture the distinctiveness of this category of workers due to inherent limitations. Additionally, it was argued that including all norms pertaining to the industry-specific labor features of different worker categories in a codified law source is unnecessary.

During the research, a clear distinction between labor law and educational law was made in terms of regulating the labor of pedagogical workers. The

authors posited that the regulation of labor and directly associated relations with faculty should primarily fall under the purview of labor law.

The current working conditions for university faculty are insufficient to meet the evolving demands of higher and postgraduate professional education systems. Based on the findings of the study, several proposals are made to enhance the legal regulation of labor for university pedagogical staff:

- Restrict competitive selection for filling positions of scientific and pedagogical staff in higher education institutions to initial employment and after five years, an evaluation should be conducted. This evaluation will determine whether a new employment contract is offered or if the employee faces dismissal.
- Reintroduce the authority of university rectors to hire teachers, including part-time staff, as well as faculty deans (or institute directors) and department heads, without competitive selection or election for a term up to one year. This period could serve as a probationary phase.
- Clearly define a teacher's specific duties correlating to their salary.
- Address the issue of increasing salaries for university pedagogical workers at a national level, ensuring it aligns with the expenses incurred by these professionals in fulfilling their job responsibilities.
- Limit the use of civil contracts for teaching activities to prevent violations of labor rights of teacher-employees.
- Develop specific qualification criteria for professorial and teaching staff positions.
- Enhance the importance of localized labor regulations for university pedagogical staff, allowing for a more nuanced approach in salary distribution based on qualifications, quality of work, and teaching experience.
- Include the principle of electing the rector of a higher education institution in the Labor Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan and establish safeguards for the labor rights of vice-rectors in cases where the rector's tenure ends prematurely, ensuring that a change in university leadership does not automatically lead to a complete overhaul of the university's executive team.

- In the Labor Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, incorporate separate articles regulating the specifics of labor of the faculty, in particular:
  - general qualification requirements for individuals seeking to engage in pedagogical activity; grounds for disallowing citizens from pedagogical activity (having a criminal record for certain crimes, incapacity or limited capacity, having certain diseases, etc.);
  - specifics of suspending pedagogical workers from work;
  - the particularities of initiating and dissolving employment contracts with faculty members, including those in professorial and teaching roles. This aspect covers the unique considerations and processes involved in formalizing and ending working relationships with academic staff;
  - the distinct processes involved in the formation and termination of employment contracts with executive personnel, such as leaders and deputy leaders of state higher education institutions, as well as heads of their respective branches;
  - the duration of working hours for pedagogical workers, the procedure for determining the teaching load;
  - the duration of rest time, vacations, and other specifics of exercising labor rights and obligations of the faculty.

Furthermore, the analysis of the legal regulation system for the labor of university faculty has demonstrated the demand for the following steps in the area of normative influence. Regulation of the procedures and conditions for the professional development of faculty. The current legislation does not ensure transparency and systematization in this area of labor relations. The study suggests establishing legal bases that promote fairness and transparency in the recruitment of educational staff. This includes conducting competitions for positions within the higher education system, evaluating the performance of educational staff annually, and introducing new, effective public oversight mechanisms.

Additionally, the study recommends enhancing adherence to existing normative legal acts regarding the financing of higher educational institutions. This involves refining the procedures for creating budget expenditures, conducting internal financial audits, and proactively identifying and addressing corruption in these processes.

There is also an emphasis on developing and implementing normative legal acts concerning the formation of personnel reserves and ensuring adherence to ethical standards within the higher education system.

The anticipated outcome of these measures is an increase in the efficacy of educational and scientific activities, leading to an improvement in the quality of the educational process. These improvements are expected to fulfill the objectives set for higher and postgraduate professional education systems as part of the broader initiative to modernize the education system.

#### **4.2 Management of Educational Staff in OHPEs**

In modern conditions, the traditional structure of university management as a "creative hierarchical organization", as a community of teachers building their organization, selecting the administration, and controlling its activities, is replaced by the model of the university as a customer-oriented organization that produces educational services and hires teachers in the labor market. Customer orientation implies feedback, the implementation of a process cycle, and "distributed" management. The current situation is such that university rectors, practically appointed (competitions are formal) by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, are exclusively subordinate to the ministry, as the direct employer, and do not need feedback from consumers of educational services, employers, business, are not interested in seeking investments, reporting exclusively by the criteria of an effective contract to the ministry.

It is important to remember that university education is a complex phenomenon and is not based exclusively on programs, textbooks, or teachers; it needs nourishment from science, social environment, business, business, and cultural spheres, etc. It is not just recorded knowledge that can be measured by tests. In this connection, a system of rigid centralized management is unsuitable for universities. If we think in market terms, imagining the university as a private company, a factory for the production of specialists (although this category is gradually receding into the background in developed countries), then it should be managed according to market laws. The role of the state is undoubtedly extremely important to counter two negative factors: the strengthening of academic capitalism and the leveling of cultural values of society. Moreover, there is a sector,

particularly the oil and gas industry, where the state acts as a customer, employer, manufacturer, and product seller; however, adjustments in the administration system and increasing the efficiency of management are necessary. It is important to consider not only quantitative but also qualitative indicators of university activity.

Currently, several key management issues in higher education require adjustments, including:

- This broad term refers to situations where personal interests may influence decision-making, potentially harming societal or organizational interests. It's important to intensify and broaden efforts to manage conflicts of interest across all administrative activities. This includes setting limitations on awarding titles, honorary certificates, using faculty status to gain additional vacation days, holding multiple managerial positions, etc.;
- While the position of a rector is formally filled through a competitive process, in practice, the professorial and teaching staff often has little influence on this selection. Moreover, there are limited options for the early dismissal of leadership, barring court proceedings or direct intervention by the Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Introducing an elective process with options for dismissal and early re-election could enhance accountability;
- There should be a direct prohibition on occupying senior positions for more than two terms. Additionally, these terms should be shortened to a reasonable duration, such as three years, to encourage fresh perspectives and leadership;
- The selection process for employment and appointment to senior positions in higher education institutions should be based on meritocracy. Candidates who contribute significantly to the development of the higher education system should be considered, with a fair and objective evaluation of their activities, professional qualities, and special contributions to the field. It's also crucial to adhere strictly to principles of gender equality in these appointments;
- Expanding university autonomy — a long-overdue necessity, as currently, from a legal standpoint, universities cannot manage resources

at their discretion, earn from their scientific activities, or expand cooperation with business;

- Reducing the bureaucratic burden — the university's reporting system to the state and society should be revised, as the existing system is focused on the volume of paper reports, not on target indicators;
- Stimulating mobility, training, and work in different universities to reduce inbreeding - under current conditions, such mobility cannot develop, as teachers are burdened with classroom work, bureaucracy, and lack of time or financial opportunities for self-development;
- Remuneration for teachers — even maintaining the current salary with a reduction in classroom hours per position would provide an opportunity to stimulate the teacher's work not only in the lecture area but also in scientific research. Artificially inflating salaries will only have a negative economic effect, but freeing up part of the classroom load would create opportunities for teachers to engage in science, business, public activities, and publishing;
- Introducing an effective system for organizing continuous professional development of teaching staff;
- Developing programs for academic mobility of faculty within the framework of cooperation with foreign higher education institutions;
- Establishing robust systems for motivating professors, researchers, and young scientists engaged in research. This involves creating a framework for evaluating their work based on specific performance indicators;
- Implementing a system of material rewards, funded through non-budgetary sources, for scientists, professors, and young researchers who have achieved a high Hirsch index (h-index). The h-index is a measure of international recognition in scientific activity, particularly through publications in prestigious journals included in global scientific and technical information databases;
- Systematically raising the number of professors and teaching staff in higher education institutions who possess national and international evaluation certificates and proficiency in foreign languages;

- Actively involving experienced industry professionals in the educational process and systematically arranging internships for professors and teaching staff in relevant enterprises and organizations;
- Refining the distribution of the yearly teaching responsibilities for competitively selected professors and teaching staff, especially those holding copyrights to educational materials. This could involve allocating more time for creating educational content within their annual workload, offsetting the time spent on direct teaching activities;
- Creating favorable conditions for talented Kazakhstani scientists working abroad to return and contribute to the national higher education system. While hiring foreign experts has its prestige, prioritizing the repatriation of Kazakhstani scientists can be more effective for national scientific advancement;
- Achieving an optimal balance in the age and academic qualifications among the professorial and teaching staff in higher education institutions, ensuring a diverse and dynamic academic environment.

#### **4.3 Results of Sociological Analysis of Employment Dynamics Among University Faculty**

The study highlights that the cornerstone of management within Kazakhstan's higher education system is its professorial and teaching staff. These professionals are pivotal in determining the level and quality of educational services. For university leaders, a key objective is to enhance the engagement of teaching staff in their work outcomes, ultimately leading to an improvement in the quality of education. The scale and intricacies of challenges faced by higher education institutions underscore the urgency of identifying an optimal model for managing the organizational behavior of teachers. This includes devising and embedding mechanisms that stimulate the labor activities of the professorial and teaching staff in contemporary higher education.

Kazakhstani higher education institutions find themselves in a highly competitive environment, vying not only for students but also for qualified teaching staff. This competition underscores the critical need for effective collaboration between higher professional education institutions and their faculty. However, there is a concern regarding the qualification level of

Kazakhstani teachers, which in some cases, may not meet current requirements.

The work of higher education teachers is marked by its multifaceted nature, creativity, high responsibility, and complexity. Assessing the outcomes of pedagogical work is challenging, as these cannot be simply categorized as positive or negative. The impact of education is influenced by a myriad of factors and often becomes apparent only after the completion of training. Consequently, the direct influence of a teacher on the final educational outcomes of students is difficult to quantify precisely.

This complexity in evaluating teachers' effectiveness and productivity also indirectly influences their remuneration. The recent focus has been on enhancing the labor efficiency of higher education personnel. This involves optimizing teaching loads and extensively integrating modern information and communication technologies into their professional activities.

To better understand the factors underlying the effective, quality work of the faculty, a sociological study was conducted. The survey results from 2022–2023 showed that the faculty feel overloaded with work and professional duties, believe they are underpaid and lack desired opportunities for professional development and remote work.

In the surveys of 2022–2023, questions were asked in the following areas:

- Satisfaction with the work environment;
- Opportunities for remote work;
- Activities performed beyond the normal working hours and duties (overtime work);
- Evaluation of benefits.

For this report, we analyzed data from 805 employees of higher education institutions. All respondents worked full-time, in a single job position, and belonged to the faculty of universities. The average age of the respondents was 47 years. 69% were women, and 31% were men. 44% of those surveyed held academic degrees and titles.

When it comes to job satisfaction, there are significant areas of dissatisfaction among the faculty, with only 58% of faculty members in higher education institutions overall satisfied with their jobs. A higher



degree of satisfaction is achieved when respondents are asked about specific aspects of their work environment. For example, the highest satisfaction with the work environment among the faculty was expressed regarding relationships with colleagues, leaders, and the atmosphere in the work team (82%).

Significant areas of dissatisfaction with the work environment exist. Faculty members expressed disagreement with the amount of their salary, feeling that their contribution is undervalued (64%). A notable aspect of dissatisfaction is related to the support for professional growth of faculty members provided by the educational institution (59%). 72% of faculty members stated that they lack career advancement prospects and opportunities for professional development funded by the university.

66% of respondents stated that they are not satisfied with the amount of health compensation paid by the university during the annual labor leave. 73% of those surveyed reported dissatisfaction with the conditions for providing remote work and believed that their duties could be performed remotely or in a hybrid format.

Understanding these data allows identifying specific areas that need special attention to increase overall employee satisfaction with their job and work environment.

The survey showed that more than two-thirds (68%) of the faculty agree that they prefer remote work modes. However, only 4% of respondents reported that their duties are performed in a hybrid format (remote and offline). The survey did not reveal any faculty currently working exclusively remotely. Opinions were divided regarding the impact of remote work on the quality of teaching: 35% believe it has a positive impact, while 30% believe the opposite.

56% of respondents felt more productive working remotely. 30% reported no significant changes in productivity. 17% experienced a decrease in productivity, mainly due to distractions at home and technical limitations. 30% indicated the need for improved technological support, including software and hardware updates.

67% of faculty work beyond the stipulated hours and perform duties not specified in their employment contract. For most respondents, overtime work is associated with preparing reporting documentation, filling out electronic work reports, performing public duties, as well as conducting

scientific research, and participating in competitions for funding scientific projects.

About two-thirds of the faculty expressed satisfaction with their paid annual leave but were dissatisfied with the level of health benefits provided during leave, believing that they were under-compensated for their vacation.

Most faculty members expressed satisfaction with the work environment, relationships with colleagues, and administration. However, 38% were dissatisfied with the level of autonomy and academic freedom in teaching and choosing teaching strategies.

More than two-thirds of the surveyed respondents were not satisfied with opportunities for professional development. 20% of respondents expressed concern about the lack of recognition of their professional merits and achievements. 37% would like to have more opportunities or funding for professional growth and more support from the university.

Thus, the key factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction are salary and benefits, employment guarantee, workload, administrative support, opportunities for professional development, and the level of autonomy and academic freedom.

The main problems and stress factors for faculty include high workload, lack of resources, bureaucratic obstacles, or pressures related to research and publications. Additionally, the research results of S. Mohammadi, N. Mohammadi (2022), Moorthy et al. (2013), Taris et al. (2001) show that job stress harms the quality of work-life, organizational health, and organizational citizenship behavior.

The survey identified the demand for a review of compensation packages to address issues related to salary and benefits; methods for managing workload, with a demand for implementing policies for more effective workload management; forms of support for professional development to expand staff development opportunities; and the expansion of recognition programs to boost morale and acknowledge achievements.

The issue of redistributing workloads in universities is critical. Institutions need to explore avenues for a more balanced allocation of teaching, research, and administrative duties. Additionally, it's important to ensure that educators are appropriately compensated for any extra hours worked.

Fair interaction between management and faculty is a significant factor that influences the quality of a teacher's work life. Employees are acutely aware of and expect just treatment when contributing their skills and efforts to the organization. Therefore, equitable treatment of teachers is essential not only for reinforcing their mental well-being but also for enhancing their perception of the quality of their work life (Ghashghaeizadeh, 2020).

The study suggests further support for effective remote work; providing comprehensive training for faculty focused on digital tools and online teaching methods; developing a clear policy for remote work to balance productivity, work-life balance, and teaching quality; and considering a hybrid work model to meet the diverse preferences and needs of the faculty. The survey shows that, despite significant prevalence and satisfaction with remote work among university teachers, there are areas for improvement, especially in technological support, training, and policy development. The hybrid model is becoming a popular choice, indicating a potential path for universities in managing work organization.

The study highlights the widespread issue of burnout among university teachers, affecting their personal well-being, work-life balance, and the quality of teaching and research. Addressing this issue requires institutional reforms, improved support systems, and a reassessment of expectations from workload and reward policies.

This research is valuable from the perspective of university administrations, policymakers, and the academic community in Kazakhstan, helping to identify areas for improvement and informing strategies to enhance working conditions and satisfaction of the university's professorial and teaching staff.

## **5. Conclusion**

The conducted research identified problems in the legal regulation of labor in the field of university faculty in the higher education system; the necessity of improving legislation and other regulatory acts in the field of labor regulation of these categories of workers has been substantiated; specific proposals aimed at eliminating gaps, resolving contradictions in normative acts, and improving the normative legal base regulating the legal

relations discussed in the work have been made. This study does not claim to be exhaustively comprehensive in addressing the problems analyzed, which provides a basis for continuing research on the chosen topic.

The findings highlight the need for visionary leadership in faculty management, which includes blending traditional academic values with modern approaches in organizational culture, incentive systems, and employment practices, alongside advocating for legislative reforms. Amidst ongoing higher education reform, there is a pressing need to develop and implement new, effective management policies. These policies should focus on attracting, retaining, and motivating highly qualified scientific and pedagogical personnel. However, this challenge remains unaddressed in Kazakhstan. Addressing the effective management of university faculty employment is an urgent requirement.

Three strategic directions are proposed for reform. The current level of normative regulation in this area is notably limited and inadequate. Establishing comprehensive legal frameworks to govern faculty labor is essential. This involves recognizing the role of teachers as a crucial component of academic work. In light of efforts to improve the quality of educational services, developing a strategy for managing the human capital of university faculty is crucial. This strategy should aim at effective internal management within universities.

An ongoing evaluation of university faculty's job satisfaction is vital in managing the personnel potential of higher education. Empirical research should be used for continuous monitoring of key parameters related to university teaching roles and the realization of opportunities provided by the university. Segmenting teachers based on job satisfaction levels can optimize decision-making processes by catering to the needs of different faculty groups. Implementing these directions to enhance the management of human potential in higher education is crucial for the relevant state bodies.

## **Acknowledgements**

N/A

## **Funding**

The authors declare no funds/ other support for the current study.

## **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The author declares no conflicting interests.

## **References**

- Abdulkadyrov, U. U., Pak, O. A., & Makushkin, S. A. (2021). Regulation of professional and labor relations of university teachers: international practice and national characteristics. *Revista Tempos E Espaços Em Educação*, 14(33).
- Acker, S., & Feuerwerker, G. (1996). Doing good and feeling bad: The work of women university teachers. *Cambridge journal of Education*, 26(3), 401-422.
- Ahluwalia, A. K., & Preet, K. (2017). The Influence of Organizational Commitment on Work Motivation: A Comparative Study of State and Private University Teachers. *IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 16(2).
- Amaral, A., Jones, G. A., & Karseth, B. (2002). Governing higher education: Comparing national perspectives. In *Governing higher education: National perspectives on institutional governance* (pp. 279-298). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Atta, M., & Khan, M. J. (2016). Perceived organizational politics, organizational citizenship behavior and job attitudes among university teachers. *Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, 26(2).
- Bennion, A., & Locke, W. (2010). The Early Career Paths and Employment Conditions of the Academic Profession in 17 Countries. *European Review*, 18(S1), 7-33.
- Blaskova, M., Blasko, R., Figurska, I., & Sokol, A. (2015). Motivation and development of the university teachers' motivational competence. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 182, 116-126.
- Bo, Y. (2013). The influence study of transformational leadership in university on teachers' organizational commitment: the construction and verification of a theoretical model. *Canadian Social Science*, 9(4), 126.
- Buribayev, Y., Khamzina, Z., Safronova, L., Kilybayev, T., & Apendiyev, T. (2023). Evaluation of the effectiveness of scientific research at the pedagogical university of Kazakhstan. *scientific journal "bulletin of NAS RK"*, 401(1), 104-121.

- Cabero, I., & Epifanio, I. (2021). A data science analysis of academic staff workload profiles in Spanish universities: gender gap laid bare. *Education Sciences*, 11(7), 317.
- Demediuk, T., & Van Gramberg, B. (2011). Quality teaching in a managerial setting: Higher education challenges in Australia. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 7(32), 98-113.
- Driver, M. (1983). Decision style and organizational behavior: Implications for academia. *The Review of Higher Education*, 6(4), 387-406.
- Dunkin, M. J. (1990). The induction of academic staff to a university: processes and products. *Higher Education*, 20(1), 47-66.
- Enders, J. (2001). *Academic staff in Europe: Changing contexts and conditions*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- García-Arroyo, J. A., & Segovia, A. O. (2019). Work overload and emotional exhaustion in university teachers: Moderating effects of coping styles. *Universitas Psychologica*, 18(2), 1-12.
- Ghashghaeizadeh, N. (2020). Designing and development models for improving the quality of work life of faculty members. *Iran Occupational Health*, 17, 1-12.
- Goddard, J., & Puukka, J. (2008). The engagement of higher education institutions in regional development: An overview of the opportunities and challenges. *Higher education management and policy*, 20(2), 11-41.
- Gould, E. (2006). Professor or knowledge worker? The politics of defining faculty work. *Higher education in Europe*, 31(3), 241-249.
- Gutsu, E. G., & Chilipenok, Y. Y. (2019). Intra-Department Model of University Teacher's Motivation Management. *Vysshee obrazovanie v Rossii= Higher Education in Russia*, 27(12), 69-78.
- Han, J., Yin, H., Wang, J., & Bai, Y. (2020a). Challenge job demands and job resources to university teacher well-being: the mediation of teacher efficacy. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(8), 1771-1785.
- Han, J., Yin, H., Wang, J., & Zhang, J. (2020b). Job demands and resources as antecedents of university teachers' exhaustion, engagement and job satisfaction. *Educational Psychology*, 40(3), 318-335.
- Khamzina, Zh., Kilybayev, T., & Safronova, L. (2022). Assessment of staff potential in the field of scientific research at the university: current state and development prospects. *Pedagogy and Psychology*, 50(1), 37-52. <https://doi.org/10.51889/2022-1.2077-6861.04>
- Kurbatova, M., Kagan, E. S., & Aparina, N. F. (2015). Behavior of university employees during higher education reformations: an issue of choice. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*, (2), 122.
- Ma, L., Wang, Y., & Yu, L. (2010, August). An Empirical Research on Organizational Citizenship Behavior of University Teachers in China.

- In 2010 International Conference on Management and Service Science (pp. 1-4). IEEE.
- Manzoor, F., Wei, L., Bányai, T., Nurunnabi, M., & Subhan, Q. A. (2019). An Examination of Sustainable HRM Practices on Job Performance: An Application of Training as a Moderator. *Sustainability*, 11(8), 1-19.
- May, R., Peetz, D., & Strachan, G. (2013). The casual academic workforce and labour market segmentation in Australia. *Labour & Industry: a journal of the social and economic relations of work*, 23(3), 258-275.
- Mohammadi, S., & Mohammadi, N. (2022). Structural analysis of the effect of job stress on quality of work life and organizational health according to the mediating role of citizenship behavior and the moderating role of employment status (Case study: employees of teaching hospitals affiliated to Ahvaz Jondishapur University of Medical Sciences). *Iran Occupational Health*, 19(1), 151-166.
- Moorthy, M. K., Lee, J. Y., Hon, P. L., Khong, Y. M., Teow, A. N., & Yeong, S. J. (2013). Determinants of job stress in affecting job performance: a study on the Malaysian banking sector. *International Journal of Business Excellence*, 6(4), 472-487.
- Powell, J. P., Barrett, E., & Shanker, V. (1983). How academics view their work. *Higher Education*, 12, 297-313.
- Ramsden, P. (1998). Managing the effective university. *Higher education research & development*, 17(3), 347-370.
- Ramsden, P., & Martin, E. (1996). Recognition of good university teaching: Policies from an Australian study. *Studies in higher education*, 21(3), 299-315.
- Rasheed, M. I., Aslam, H. D., & Sarwar, S. (2010). Motivational issues for teachers in higher education: A critical case of IUB. *Journal of management research*, 2(2), 1.
- Rayner, S., Fuller, M., McEwen, L., & Roberts, H. (2010). Managing leadership in the UK university: a case for researching the missing professoriate?. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(6), 617-631.
- Rowley, J. (1996). Motivation and academic staff in higher education. *Quality assurance in education*, 4(3), 11-16.
- Slišković, A., & Maslač Seršić, D. (2011). Work stress among university teachers: Gender and position differences. *Arhiv za higijenu rada i toksikologiju*, 62(4), 299-306.
- Solimani, N. (2013). The Quality of Work Life of Faculty Members in Research Mirror. *Quart J New Appr Educ Administ*, 4(15), 171-192.
- Stankovska, G., Angelkoska, S., Osmani, F., & Grncarovska, S. P. (2017). Job Motivation and Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in Higher Education. *Current Business and Economics Driven Discourse and Education: Perspectives from Around the World*, 159.

- Subbarayalu, A. V. (2017). Development of a six sigma rating scale for measuring the quality of work life of teaching staff working in Saudi Universities. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 11(2), 397-418.
- Taris, T. W., Schreurs, P. J., & Van Iersel-Van Silfhout, I. J. (2001). Job stress, job strain, and psychological withdrawal among Dutch university staff: Towards a dualprocess model for the effects of occupational stress. *Work & stress*, 15(4), 283-296.
- Teichler, U., & Höhle, E. A. (Eds.). (2013). *The work situation of the academic profession in Europe: Findings of a survey in twelve countries*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Tulegenova, M., Sadykhanova, G., & Zeinullina, Z. (2019). Study of the role of university teachers in the conditions of technological transformation: The case study of Kazakhstan. In *Proceedings of the 33rd International Business Information Management Association Conference, IBIMA 2019: Education Excellence and Innovation Management through Vision 2020* (pp. 4895-4903).
- Wiegel, C., Sattler, S., Göritz, A. S., & Diewald, M. (2016). Work-related stress and cognitive enhancement among university teachers. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 29(1), 100-117.