

**Thematic Analysis of Factors Contributing to the Job Satisfaction of Foreign University Instructors in Japan According to Employment Status**

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**【Abstract】**

Human resources issues play an outsized role in the success of academic institutions, therefore understanding the motivations and level of satisfaction of instructional staff is crucial. Insufficient onboarding of international faculty into the organizational culture of Japanese universities can result in workplace friction arising from cultural and systemic issues which can affect job satisfaction and performance. This study is based on responses to a nationwide survey of foreign instructors of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Japan. It uses thematic analysis to categorize and quantify the human resource issues related to international EFL faculty teaching at Japanese universities. Responses indicated that the key issues that positively impact job satisfaction include autonomy, interaction with students and colleagues, and work-life balance, and professional respect. Some of the issues that negatively impact job satisfaction are compensation, unstable contractual terms, and communication between administration and line faculty regarding expectations and decision making. The results can be interpreted in line with Herzberg's (1959) Two-factor Theory and Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory. The results will allow university administrators to better understand the needs and perceptions of international faculty and facilitate improvement in management practices.

**【Keywords】**

Two-factor theory, Expectancy theory, teacher satisfaction, teacher motivation

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## 1. Introduction

This study examines the human resources issues facing international faculty employed at Japanese universities. Human resources in the form of instructors represent the crucial element of the education industry. As business leader Lawrence Bossidy notes, "I am convinced that nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day, you bet on people, not on strategies" (Tichy & Charan, 1995). Although maintaining worker motivation and satisfaction is important in all industries, preventing dissatisfied academic staff in an academic context is paramount, as dissatisfied staff can affect the performance of both students and other academic colleagues (Azman, et al., 2013; McCaffery, 2019).

One perquisite of academic employment is the dual promise of a flexible work schedule, with ample time off between terms, and virtually guaranteed employment security in the form of tenure. However, the nature of academic employment is changing worldwide, due to economic and structural factors, such as an increasing shift to distance learning via the internet (Fountain, 2005). The possibilities and perils of this trend were accelerated by the recent COVID-19 global pandemic, which has led to almost all classes being held online, worldwide. One reaction to such economic and structural changes in universities has been a shift in human resources policies towards an adjunct-based model (Danaei, 2019; Fountain, 2005; Yakoboski, 2015). The trend is exacerbated in the Japanese university context due to demographic factors, namely the shrinking birthrate, decreasing student base, and aging society (Harada, 2015; Williams, 2019). In Japan, this results in a significant alteration of the ways tenured faculty are utilized, as they retire, they are more likely to be replaced by full-time contract positions (*tokunin*), visiting professorships, or adjunct faculty (*hijokin*) regardless of departments, disciplines, and institutions, resulting a steady decline in the proportion of tenured faculty (JANU, 2017; Milliner, 2017).

### *Expanding roles of foreign instructors*

Over the past 30 years, the rapidly growing economies in the Asia-Pacific region have tried to increase competitive advantage through improving the quality of higher education (Marginson, 2014; Yonezawa et al., 2014). One of the strategies used to

improve the reputation of regional universities is to internationalize their curricula. These universities implemented English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) courses to facilitate participation in a global marketplace (Brown, 2017). These goals were achieved partly by fostering academic exchanges, sending their students abroad and recruiting international academics to teach in the region. Asian universities increased the recruitment of international instructors in both foreign languages and specific types of subject matter. Faculty members were typically hired on short-term contracts, as tenure was reserved for local academics, resulting in international faculty members being seen as ancillary, temporary contributors to curriculum delivery, without long-term career prospects (Huang et al., 2019; McCrostie & Spiri, 2008; Noriguchi, 2006).

### ***Job satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is a key concept in the literature of human resources and organizational psychology. Job satisfaction is an assessment of the extent to which an individual likes their job and is content with their working conditions. It can also be based on a person's perceptions of the actual versus expected outcomes that result from their activities in a work context (Fields, 2002). Hoyt and Egget (2007) emphasize that because of the unique conditions of educational work, some of the bases for job satisfaction differ from those in other working contexts. Azman, et al. (2013) outlines some of the factors that affect job satisfaction in an academic, higher educational context, including "work overload, role conflict, lack of autonomy, insufficient support for teaching and research, discrimination in terms of race and gender, poor communication and management style" (p. 169). Work-life balance is also an important factor, the inability to find a suitable balance between professional time and personal or family time was one of the biggest sources of dissatisfaction (Trower, 2012).

### ***Terms of employment***

The first category in the thematic analysis is labelled "Terms of Employment," which is related to the different categories of employment contracts typically offered in Japan. Parrish and Miller (2019) enumerate the three most typical contract types, term limits, and conditions of three types of higher education instructors, including tenured faculty (*sennin*), limited-term contract faculty (*tokunin*), and part-time or adjunct faculty (*hijyoukin*). The latter two types of employment are fraught with insecurity about the continuation of employment, either at the same university or any other university (Huang et al., 2019).

Differences across these employment statuses create unique costs and benefits that can affect overall job satisfaction.

For example, although the core job of delivering an academic lecture is basically the same, the terms and conditions of work are quite different between tenured, limited-term contract, or adjunct staff. Tenured staff enjoy greater job security, higher salary, and more insurance and pension benefits. In return, they are required to take on more administrative duties, such as serving on faculty committees and designing and revising program curriculums. Contract teachers earn salaries about half of that earned by tenured staff but receive similar insurance and pension benefits. In return, they enjoy a much lower administrative workload. Adjunct faculty earn the lowest salary and lack any fringe benefits, but they have few administrative duties unrelated to classroom instruction. This non-instructional workload has increased over the years. This is the result of greater administrative oversight requirements across higher education, as well as fewer tenured instructors remaining on staff to share the workload. However, this can lead to misgivings about pay disparities between part-timers and tenured staff, as Kelly and Adachi (2018) note, "the demands on a full-time professor are often misunderstood by part-time teachers who mistakenly see course load as equivalent to workload" (p. 37). In particular, Huang et al. (2019) notes that American and British full-time faculty working in Japanese national universities in the Humanities disciplines felt that their jobs were unstable, and that prospects for career advancement were uncertain. Amundrud (2008) found that foreign instructors felt that their roles in the institution were limited by their status as foreign nationals. Whitsed and Volet (2013) found that adjunct foreign language teachers in the Kansai area of Japan feel they are commodified and lacking in power, status, and compensation. As contingent or adjunct faculty are forced to take on expanded roles due to the decrease in tenured faculty, it is important for administrators to understand the issues and needs of their foreign staff.

### **Statement of problem**

Little research exists on the working situation and job satisfaction of international university instructors in Japan, particularly instructors on adjunct or contingent contracts. "In order to shape a culture that is supportive of work-life satisfaction and effectiveness, it is first important to identify the needs of employees" (Bryan & Wilson, 2015, p. 29). The purpose of this study is to determine some of the specific factors regarding the nature of their work that determine job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of international instructors at Japanese universities.

### **Objectives and significance of study**

This study expands knowledge regarding human resources management (HRM) practice in various ways. First, it will provide insight into the issues that cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction for international instructors. Second, it will determine whether broad factors, such as terms of employment, workload, professional development opportunities, and inclusion in the decision-making process appear in the comments. It will further explore whether there are differences in types of comment made by part-time, contract, or tenured instructors.

In terms of broader HRM policy, this research will also make Japanese university administrators aware of the situation facing foreign faculty members and their attitudes toward their work. These empirical results will enable administrators to draft hiring policies, depending on the types of contracts offered, that increase job satisfaction and, ultimately, educational performance. This research will guide university best practices regarding the degree of inclusion of foreign university staff in curricular meetings and support standards for professional development. At the governmental level, results could inform MEXT (Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) guidelines, regarding the proportion of tenured faculty recommended at a university and the conditions, such as term limits, placed on contracts. It can also inform recommendations regarding promotion of research and professional development at the national level.

Finally, the results of this study will expand the current knowledge about job satisfaction in academic settings in several ways. The data collected will be broader in scope than is currently available regarding the working life of international university instructors in Japan, an understudied minority. This research expands the types of respondents beyond tenured faculty, previously researched, to include full-time contract and part-time instructors. Finally, it provides a Japanese context for comparison regarding the issues of "adjunctification" facing instructors worldwide.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***Herzberg's Dual-factor Theory***

Herzberg et al. (1993/1959) made one of the first serious empirical analyses of job satisfaction based loosely on the ideas of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. Herzberg believed that the characteristics of jobs either "facilitate or hinder 'growth needs' such as self-esteem and self-actualization" (Latham, 2012, p. 40).

Herzberg's team proposed a dual-factor theory describing two aspects of job satisfaction, called "hygiene factors" and "motivators."

The hygiene factors result in dissatisfaction if they are not met, but do not necessarily cause more satisfaction if they are increased beyond the minimum level. These factors include, supervision, salary, the work environment, company policies, and relationships with colleagues (Herzberg et al., 1993/1959). Hygiene factors are analogous to lower tiers of Maslow's hierarchy.

Motivators increase positive emotions that employees hold regarding their work. Motivators can take the form of increased responsibility, recognition and rewards for good performance, collegiality, and opportunities for personal growth (Herzberg et al., 1993/1959). These factors are analogous to the highest tiers in Maslow's hierarchy. One of the novel conclusions of Herzberg's analysis was his determination that job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction were not two ends of the same spectrum, but rather two separate continua. In his analysis, the opposite of "job dissatisfaction" is "no dissatisfaction," and the opposite of "job satisfaction" was "no job satisfaction." Improvement in hygiene factors, such as compensation and overall working conditions, would minimize dissatisfaction, but not lead to job satisfaction or increased motivation to work. To increase motivation and job satisfaction, employers should focus on job content (the nature of the work), recognition, and achievement.

Although some researchers have discredited his research (e.g., Vroom, 1964; Gardner, 1977), subsequent research, especially on job satisfaction in higher education, has vindicated Herzberg's construct by replicating and validating his concepts (Nanna, 2018).

Pink (2011) uses some of the same constructs as Herzberg, albeit with different wording, that monetary incentives do not motivate workers or improve productivity once basic level of salary is attained. Instead, intangible characteristics such as autonomy, mastery, and purpose have a favorable effect on motivation and satisfaction. Autonomy entails granting control over how work is conducted to employees themselves. Professional and personal development, the chance to improve or learn new skills, is referred to as Mastery. Purpose is the sense that one's labor has a higher purpose or meaning than survival or corporate profit. Just as in Herzberg's construct, deeper job satisfaction derives not from meeting the extrinsic, basic "hygiene" needs, but from the intrinsic, higher order "motivators."

### *Vroom's Expectancy Theory*

Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) is founded on the cognitive thought processes of the people performing the job. Vroom's hypothesis attempts to explain why people are motivated to achieve at various levels. In contrast to Herzberg's theory, which suggests manipulating motivators in the design of employment would result in job satisfaction for people doing the job, Vroom posits a connection between effort and reward. His framework considers an employee's perception of their job in terms of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. Valence refers to the degree to which employees feel that the action will benefit or harm them. Expectancy considers that those who are confident in their abilities to execute a task will be more driven to do so. The final factor, instrumentality, is when an employee assesses the likelihood that his or her performance will result in the achievement of a personal objective. According to Vroom, motivation is influenced more by a person's perception of the task and potential rewards, rather than the specific motivators themselves.

In the university context, the quality and quantity of research publication could be explained with reference to academic rank and the need or desire to earn tenure, academic rank, and a resulting increase in salary. Such a short-term, goal-oriented approach is applicable to the business world, but it is not as readily applicable in academia, as rewards such as pay are not consistently tied to performance, especially once tenure has been attained. This theory relates particularly to the thematic analysis, where respondents describe the valence certain aspects of their jobs have on their motivation to perform them.

This study aims to examine and categorize what aspects of motivation and job satisfaction are mentioned by respondents and use Herzberg's and Vroom's constructs to explain and interpret the results.

### *Empirical Studies*

In a study based in the United States, Ott and Cisneros (2015) analyzed responses from more than 14,000 full-time faculty, both non-tenured and tenure-track about their job satisfaction in terms of concepts such as "collegiality" and "autonomy." They found no significant differences in attitudes towards job attributes between these two groups. In a recent nationwide study of tenured and tenure-track faculty in the United States, Agah et al. (2020) found that the attainment of tenure and higher rank correlated with higher levels of "motivation" as measured by "academic activities" and "number of articles published."

A similar comparison of job satisfaction was conducted between adjunct faculty, tenure-track, and tenured faculty by Nelson et al. (2020). The survey in Nelson et al. (2020) was administered to three types of instructors (tenured, tenure-track, and adjunct) and the results showed that satisfaction with the job itself, between the tenured and tenure-track instructors and adjuncts, was quite similar, despite their rank and duties.

However, on the dimension of salary and benefits, adjuncts were more dissatisfied. Arimoto and Daizen (2013) found that among Japanese academics, overall job satisfaction correlated strongly with higher academic rank and income. They speculated that junior academics may feel that there exists a "seemingly inequitable division of labor between junior and senior academics" (p. 150). Tsusumi (2014) surveyed 12 language instructors of several ranks and types of employment, finding that they felt unstable job conditions to be a demotivator, while intrinsic motivation such as autonomy in the classroom and personal growth for them and students were motivators.

### *Summary and Research Gaps*

The research gap that this study seeks to fill is to explore contract status as a variable in determining factors related to job satisfaction using a qualitative approach and collecting data from instructors that are not only tenured, but also limited-term contract, and part-time. Previous studies localized in Japan, such as Nagatomo (2012; 2016) and Tsutsumi (2014) that were qualitative in nature and had a limited number of participants ( $n < 10$ ,  $n=12$ , respectively). Arimimoto and Daizen (2013) and Huang (2017, 2018) had nationwide coverage and a high number of respondents, but they both focused exclusively on tenured staff. Burrows (2007) and Milliner (2017) wrote about the issues facing contingently employed instructors, but in an anecdotal, rather than empirical style.

### **3. Methodology**

This data for this study were obtained as part of a longer survey conducted as part of the author's master's research. This study was conducted as a cross-sectional analysis. The survey instrument provided a snapshot of the opinions of foreign university instructors regarding their working conditions at the moment when they took the survey. This data is based on the responses to open-ended questions, designed to elicit longer, more detailed answers, relating to the factors affecting instructors' satisfaction with their job, as well as the institution where they worked. The purpose was to provide more context to responses to the Likert scale data collected in the other sections of the survey. There were four questions in total: two asked for responses from the personal perspective of the individual instructor and two for information at the institutional level. In each group, one question asked for positive and satisfactory aspects and one asked about negative and unsatisfactory aspects of teaching or of their institution (see the appendix for the full text).



The target population was all international faculty at Japanese universities, estimated to be 21,435 by Japan Association of National Universities (2017). The survey was administered online using Google Forms. Some participants (approximately 100) known personally to the researcher were contacted directly via email, the majority of responses were obtained by posting a link on the Facebook page of the Japan Association of Language Teaching, a national academic organization devoted to foreign language teaching. The sample comprised 207 participants, with 177 valid responses (part-time, 44; full-time, 66; tenured, 73). A valid response represents any respondent who answered at least one of the four questions. There was a good distribution of institution types, locations, and position types. The data was collected voluntarily, with written consent. The surveys were anonymous, and every effort was made to maintain the security and confidentiality of the data collected.

The researchers performed a thematic analysis to explore and develop insights and generalizations from the data. Thematic analysis applies a systematic method to analyze qualitative data. It involves identification of themes or commonalities in meaning; codification and classification of data, often in the form of text or speech, into relevant categories; and finally, interpretation of the resulting categories or thematic pattern by looking for common traits, relationships, or overarching themes (Cassel & Grandy, 2018). The use of thematic analysis, according to Peel (2020), provides a "rich description that emanates from the data extracts using the participants' own words (p. 4). The analysis in the current study was based on data collected via open-ended, free-response questions. These questions related to perceived positive and negative aspects of the university instructor position, and institutions' treatment of faculty. The responses were coded into categories (themes) based on four main themes derived from the literature: workload, opportunities for professional development, participatory decision making, and terms of employment. Responses were further coded as generally positive or negative, and into further subcategories regarding the general content of the response.

#### **4. Findings**

##### ***Favourable aspects of the profession***

To interpret the aspects that respondents enjoy about their position as a university instructor, the study identifies and uses several categories and codes. The main categories of responses were terms of employment, workload, professional development, and participatory decision making, in line with previous research and the larger study from which this was extracted. Some of the frequently used terms were autonomy, student interaction, colleague interaction, free time, research support, flexibility, facilities, compensation, and a balanced workload.

According to the views of the international university instructors, they enjoy teaching students, watching students learn, interacting with them, and solving their issues. One of the instructors stated that, "I enjoy helping students improve and enjoy when I see that my lessons are appreciated." Another respondent expressed that, "I enjoy having new students every semester. It allows me to engage and build relationships with a wide range of students from different faculties." Instructors find it motivating and personally rewarding to be involved in youths' intellectual and personal development. It shows the importance of teacher-student interaction, which motivates instructors and could enhance their job satisfaction. Previous literature also supports the link; it is observed that student success and teacher satisfaction are associated (McCaffery, 2019).

Autonomy is another important factor; it was one of most mentioned terms in the survey responses. The respondents enjoy the freedom of designing their courses and assessments as they choose. They like the autonomy to manage their classes. Respondents have expressed their preferences by stating that the aspects of university teaching that they prefer are having "autonomy over course content and materials selection and use" and "autonomy in material selection and teaching style" and being "free to coordinate material and teachers." Sometimes, autonomy was expressed in slightly negative terms of being "ignored" or "left alone," but the overall sentiment was that there was not too much interference by administration in daily classroom matters. Greater autonomy is one of the common factors that influence job satisfaction, due to a greater perceived freedom and authority to work (Hoyt and Egget, 2007).

The instructors also enjoy interactions with other professors in professional work, such as "collaboration with colleagues," as one of the respondents stated. Interaction with teaching staff could be a motivating aspect. One stated, "I have experienced and professional colleagues/bosses who inspire me and help me with my work" Previous literature has also emphasized that working with interesting students and colleagues could positively influence job satisfaction (Mbogo, 2015; Rogers, 2013).

The results of the study also indicated that flexibility in scheduling and teaching approach, school facilities, and free time were considered important, as observed in previous literature (Mbogo, 2015; Rogers, 2013). The instructors responded that they preferred "flexible working hours" and "flexible schedules." They appreciate university facilities, physical layout, and open space. This suggests that there are multiple elements or aspects that university instructors enjoy, which could positively influence their job satisfaction.

### *Aspects that should be changed about the profession*

Respondents were also asked about the aspects of their jobs that they would like to change. Some of the main themes identified include compensation, workload, and terms of employment. Some other factors are a focus on research, communication, collaboration, and less administrative work.

According to respondents, financial security and employment terms should be improved, requesting "unlimited term contracts/ better job security, [and] higher pay." Another instructor raises a serious issue faced by part-time teachers and full-time instructors: "being part-time instructors, we don't [sic] receive pay raises in 25 years." Thus, employment terms are important. According to Huang et al. (2019), there are serious salary differences between different types of employment and between institutions. For instance, permanent faculty enjoy higher pay and greater job security than those on full-time limited-term contracts. That disparity could influence the job satisfaction level of contingent faculty; in line with Vroom's expectancy theory, instructors of similar experience and education might expect comparable pay. Moreover, pay is termed as "fluctuating," particularly in the case of part-timers, whose hours can be cut from year to year. Many instructors work on contracts that are non-renewable, which is "extremely stressful." Such responses show how pay and employment terms negatively impact instructors' job satisfaction. One of the respondents highlights that, "I would prefer to be in a workplace that had more stability. Many teachers work on limited-term contracts or are juggling multiple part-time jobs."

Other than these pressing issues, the respondents would like to have more research funds. One of them stressed that there is a need for "more encouragement and focus on research" in universities. Research can be classified as a motivator under Herzberg's construct, as it is a satisfying activity. While under Vroom's construct, it would have valence and serve as an instrumental task designed to improve chances for hiring or promotion. Universities need to have more base funding of research activities and professional development. According to an instructor, "I want to work at a university that supports research and rewards it." This shows international instructors value research, and they want more time to pursue research that could help students excel in language learning.

The workload is another important issue identified in the open-ended responses. According to a respondent, "I would like job security and a lower workload, but I also feel that I am underpaid." The high perceived workload is also connected with the terms of employment and length of the contract. For instance, one instructor notes, "The contract makes it seem we can be asked to work on any and every weekend of the year."

There are no clearly defined summer holiday times without faculty meetings." Other issues mentioned regarding workload were complaints about the number of courses, class size, lack of or too much variety in courses, and amount of class management and marking required. Higher workload is a demotivating factor. It is often non-instructional, administrative work that negatively influences employee wellbeing and satisfaction (Nagai et al., 2007).

There is also a lack of collaboration and coordination observed by the international instructors, which should be changed. Moreover, the respondents have a burden of excessive administrative work, which is not productive. They would prefer less administrative and entrance exam preparation-related duties. Also, meetings are also termed as mostly non-productive, and, if needed, could be more easily conducted online. According to a respondent, "I would like to dump all of the committee work, etc. and focus on teaching only." There is a need to reduce the administrative responsibilities of the instructors, which could enable them to focus better on their main tasks, teaching and research.

### *Positive actions of institutions*

In response to the "treatment of faculty" by their institutions, multiple code categories or themes are identified, such as autonomy, respect, and staff support. According to an instructor, "At most of my institutions, I have autonomy over my classes." Another respondent replied, "We have a lot of freedom, and I believe job satisfaction is high, overall."

Most of the respondents believe that they are given enough freedom to teach their courses. They are trusted to teach their classes and allowed to flexibly manage resources. Academic freedom is an important construct that nurtures a supportive and open atmosphere and enables greater job satisfaction (Arimoto & Daizen, 2013).

As opposed to respondents in the previous section, who highlight the issue of a lack of research funds and research support, responses in this section often appreciate the fact that their institutions provide financial support for research. Although no part-timers mentioned research funds specifically, one part-time respondent said that the administrators "encourage research and excellence in teaching".

It is observed that teachers are helpful and collaborate in projects. Teachers are treated well and fairly; however, it could be argued that university treatment may differ between permanent and temporary positions, since permanent staff are generally better treated. Supervisors are helpful and fair in assigning work. One of the instructors highlights that, "Faculty at my university have considerable freedom, and any direct guidance is usually fairly gentle, indirect, and low key."

Moreover, it is found that some institutions communicate effectively and display basic professional respect. They also provide administrative and curricular support. Other full-timers mentioned that they felt the administration was genuinely concerned with the instructors' "health and well-being." The responses indicate that in many respects universities have a good supportive and collaborative atmosphere.

### *Areas for institutional improvement*

Finally, the instructors were asked about recommendations for better treatment of faculty, where compensation and communication issues are particularly highlighted. Moreover, the themes of faculty development and professional development are also mentioned.

According to the respondents, there is a need for "better compensation for 'extra' administrative tasks that get tacked on throughout the year." Teachers stress their desire for a higher pay scale and fewer numbers of students per class. There is a need to better recognise the work of foreign instructors, which could lead to fairer compensation. According to a teacher, "I am paid at the same rate as other part-timers, even though I have a PhD and 40+ years of teaching experience. I think there should be a special pay category for teachers in my situation." It shows that compensation is one of the factors most significantly linked with job satisfaction.

In addition to concerns about financial compensation, some respondents mentioned the issue of unclear or even discriminatory personnel policies, mentioning issues such as sexism in the workplace, mandatory retirement, maternity leave, assignment of duties, rules for determining promotion, and restrictions on length of contract. One instructor sums up the issues well:

No matter how many years you work there, you are given the same one-year contract with a raise that barely covers inflation (and sometimes no raise at all). Therefore, there is no stability, even more so for women who may wish to have a child. They could only rely on maternity/parental leave for the length of the contract and would likely face a non-renewal. (Full-time, limited term contract instructor)

These issues of contract instability and lack of consideration for family responsibilities are clearly important to instructors' job satisfaction. They may lead to dissatisfaction according to Vroom's expectancy theory.

Aside from contractual and financial issues, institutions need to focus on improving interpersonal communication and pedagogical skills that could enable international instructors to do their job more effectively. One instructor suggests that institutions should "provide more support for teacher development; disincentivise lectures and promote active learning." Institutions should invest in upgrading not only facilities, but also their human resources. There was also a call for more collaboration and communication between department administrators and rank-and-file teachers, including a call for more honesty and transparency. Respondents claim that administrators often did not consult with teaching staff for their opinions and feedback prior to making decisions. If foreign instructors were asked, their input was often ignored. Respondents indicated a strong preference for timely and complete communication, preferably translated into English, and more say in making policy. It is also recommended to reduce the teaching load and administrative burden on teachers in the first year of their contract and create an environment that promotes sharing and a sense of equality.

In short, it means that universities must address issues related to low compensation, unfavourable employment terms, and communication issues, issues that echo concerns of university instructors across the globe, in North America and Africa (Ololube, 2006; Yakoboski, 2017). Contract terms should be supportive and protect the rights of foreign teachers. Administrators should promote more inclusive hiring and decision-making policies.

Table 1 presents a comprehensive description of the frequency of appearance of positive comments organized according to keyword concepts falling under the four main themes: terms of employment, workload, participatory decision-making, professional development, and other. Responses are divided according to the three terms of employment.

**Table 1. Thematic Analysis: Positive Comments**

	<b>Part-time (n=44)</b>	<b>Full-time (n=60)</b>	<b>Tenured (n=73)</b>
<b>Terms of Employment</b>	5 (11.4%)	12 (20%)	17 (23.3%)
<i>Pay &amp; benefits</i>	1	6	12
<i>Job security</i>	3	6	3
<i>Title</i>	1	0	1
<i>Other</i>	0	3	1
<b>Workload</b>	34 (77%)	63 (105.0%)	52 (71.2%)
<i>Teaching &amp; student interaction</i>	19	31	33
<i>Free time</i>	9	7	10
<i>Flexible schedule</i>	2	8	7
<i>Limited administrative duties</i>	4	7	0
<i>Work-Life balance</i>	0	3	2
<i>Interesting content</i>	3	7	6
<i>Research</i>	0	0	3
<b>Participatory decision-making</b>	25 (56.8%)	63 (98.4%)	70 (95.8%)
<i>Autonomy</i>	20	39	46
<i>Communication &amp; collaboration</i>	3	15	12
<i>Bilingual support</i>		3	0
<i>Respect, appreciation</i>	2	6	9
<i>Good management</i>	0	0	3
<b>Professional development</b>	2 (4.5%)	24 (40.0%)	30 (41.1%)
<i>Faculty &amp; professional development</i>	2	1	6
<i>Research funding</i>	0	15	12
<i>Research support</i>	0	8	12
<b>Other</b>	17 (38.6)	25 (42.3%)	35 (47.9%)
<i>Relationship w/ colleagues</i>	11	19	25

	<b>Part-time (n=44)</b>	<b>Full-time (n=60)</b>	<b>Tenured (n=73)</b>
<i>Facilities</i>	1	4	3
<i>Nothing positive</i>	4	2	5
<i>Everything positive</i>	1	0	2
	0	0	0
<b>No answer</b>	2	9	6

**Note.** The percentages are based on the number of respondents who mentioned the theme. Because multiple responses were allowed and each theme is comprised of several sub-themes, some percentages exceed 100%

Table 2 presents a comprehensive description of the frequency of appearance of negative comments organized according to keyword concepts falling under the four main themes: terms of employment, workload, participatory decision-making, professional development, and other. Responses are divided according to the three terms of employment.

**Table 2. Thematic Analysis: Negative Comments**

	<b>Part-time (n=44)</b>	<b>Full-time (n=60)</b>	<b>Tenured (n=73)</b>
<b>Terms of Employment</b>	25 (56.8)	45 (75.0%)	31 (42.5%)
<i>Pay &amp; benefits</i>	16	12	10
<i>Job security</i>	6	24	5
<i>Other</i>	3	9	16
<b>Workload</b>	15 (34.1%)	25 (41.7%)	68 (93.3%)
<i>Class size, course load, content</i>	7	12	13
<i>Commute time</i>	1	0	2
<i>Schedule and free time</i>	4	1	6



	<b>Part-time</b> <b>(n=44)</b>	<b>Full-time</b> <b>(n=60)</b>	<b>Tenured</b> <b>(n=73)</b>
<i>Administrative duties and meetings</i>	3	8	37
<i>Research duties</i>		3 (1) <sup>1</sup>	8 (2) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Professional development</b>	4 (9.1%)	9 (15.0%)	18 (24.5%)
<i>Lack of research funds</i>	1	6	3
<i>Lack of research support</i>	0	2	3
<i>Lack of professional development</i>	3	1	12
<b>Participatory decision-making</b>	10 (22.7%)	27 (45.0%)	32 (43.8%)
<i>Limited autonomy, consultation</i>	6	4	
<i>Communication &amp; collaboration</i>	2	15	21
<i>Lack of respect, appreciation</i>	2	5	7
<i>Poor management</i>	0	3	4
<i>Lack of bilingual support</i>	3	6	6
<i>Require more coordination</i>	1	1	
<b>Other</b>	14 (31.8%)	11(18.3%)	11 (15.1%)
<i>Relationships with colleagues</i>	2	3	
<i>Facilities &amp; instructional resources</i>	3	3	4
<i>Student policies</i>	3	1	
<i>Nothing needs changing</i>	6	4	7

**Note.** The percentages are based on the number of respondents who mentioned the theme. Because multiple responses were allowed and each theme is comprised of several sub-themes, some percentages exceed 100%.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The thematic analysis indicates that terms of employment can be important for international instructors. Many respondents noted dissatisfaction with the level of pay and the instability of limited-term contracts for both full-time and part-time instructors. Respondents repeatedly highlighted issues with low compensation due to excessive administrative tasks, and concerns about job stability for limited-term contract and part-time positions. The concrete issues of job stability and compensation, governed by contract type, might be significant to job satisfaction.

Although there are concerns about compensation, the thematic analysis reveals that the workload of teaching is perceived as reasonable and usually allows for a good work-life balance. However, some responses, particularly from tenured staff, indicated that administrative tasks are perceived to be very time consuming. Interpreting these results in terms of Herzberg's theory, workload is both a motivator and a hygiene factor; instructors can be motivated by having a variety of satisfying and challenging tasks, including teaching and research, but on the other hand, the position requires a certain amount of demotivating and time-consuming administrative duties.

The most common positive comments found in the thematic analysis were related to autonomy or flexibility in classroom matters. This implies that a higher level of autonomy in decision making will lead to greater job satisfaction among non-Japanese English instructors working in the universities of Japan. Observing this concept from the lens of descriptive analysis, and the words frequently used in the open-ended responses—terms such as autonomy, flexibility, and good facilities—indicates that participatory decision-making authority is now increasingly being given to international instructors of foreign language, especially at the classroom level. Nevertheless, numerous comments found in the thematic analysis related to issues of poor communication between administrators and instructors, which could serve as a demotivator. The evaluation of changing trends is verified by reviewing the past study of Falout (2010), who demonstrated a lack of decision-making autonomy in the hands of international instructors and Lassegard and Tajima (2020) who cited communication and language barriers as an impediment to shared decision making and collaboration. This implies that a higher level of autonomy in decision making will lead to a greater job satisfaction level among the non-Japanese English instructors working in universities of Japan .

### ***Recommendations***

Drawing on the in-depth insights found in the open-ended questions in the survey, it is advised that universities should improve the terms of employment of international instructors in several ways. The first way is by improving job stability for both part-time workers and full-time limited term contract instructors. The need for change was evident, particularly in the desire for more stable employment contracts and tenure in some form. More stable forms of employment might include longer terms for employment contracts and ensuring consistent numbers of courses taught for part-timers. One compromise would be to create positions that eliminate term limits on non-tenured, full-time positions. In addition to more stable contracts, the compensation of part-time or contingent employees should be improved, because these employees risk a lack of job security, due to proposed term limits on contracts and uncertainty about future student enrolment. Additionally, salaries should be adjusted periodically to reflect increased cost of living. Hence, they should be compensated more highly to increase motivation to work in the less desirable part-time or contingent positions. Higher salaries could encourage part-timers to take on fewer extra classes, thereby increasing quality and decreasing burn-out.

An additional recommendation drawn from the current research is to reduce the burden of administrative-related tasks levied on instructors, or at least compensate them through higher salaries or extra stipends. Often, these administrative tasks are demotivating and take away from other more motivating work tasks, such as research and student interaction. Transparency in how committee assignments are delegated was also mentioned as an issue, so finding ways to reduce, consolidate, or distribute these tasks equitably could improve morale and satisfaction.

In addition, administrators could promote mentoring, peer-learning, and professional development in terms of pedagogical practices and joint research projects. This will promote collaboration among tenured faculty and contract and part-time non-tenured faculty. Some further recommendations to build on the power of inclusiveness include devolving more decision-making authority to instructors and giving them more freedom to decentralise the class curriculum. Administrators should strive to increase communication and transparency about expectations and decision making regarding university policies. One other way to improve communication and participation is to provide access to lessons or inducements for foreign instructors to improve their practical Japanese skills.

Julie Bevacqua (2017) states, "In order to build a rewarding employee experience, you need to understand what matters to your people." It is hoped that this research can increase the knowledge about what aspects of work are important and influential to foreign instructors working in Japan, and thus improve their working lives and to maintain a high level of instructional quality for their students.

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## 7. APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire items

Open-ended, free response questions (optional)	
A	What aspects do you enjoy about your position as a university instructor?
B	What are some things that you would like to change about your job as a university instructor
C	What is your institution doing well regarding treatment of faculty in your position ?
D	What could your institution do better in terms of its treatment of faculty?