

Empowered or Overlooked? Examining the Role of Employment Status in Public Welfare Workers' Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Employee well-being is critical to organizational success, particularly in public service sectors where job satisfaction and self-efficacy influence performance. This study examines the relationship between self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and employment status among public social welfare agency personnel in the Philippines. A sample of 215 employees, comprising permanent, contractual, and contract of service workers, participated in the study. Data were collected using validated self-efficacy and job satisfaction scales. Findings revealed consistently high levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction across employment types, with no significant statistical differences between groups. Results indicated consistently high self-efficacy and job satisfaction across employment types, with no significant differences between groups. However, a positive correlation was identified between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, with contractual employees exhibiting a weaker association, potentially due to employment insecurity. These findings underscore the necessity of policies that promote job stability, professional development, and workplace camaraderie to enhance employee well-being. Strengthening these factors may contribute to increased motivation, resilience, and service efficiency in social welfare institutions. Policymakers and organizational leaders should consider these insights to refine workforce management strategies and ensure the sustained effectiveness of public service delivery.

Keywords: self-efficacy; job satisfaction; public social workers, employment status, social services

INTRODUCTION

Employee well-being and job performance are essential components of organizational success, particularly in public service sectors where employees play a critical role in addressing societal needs. In these sectors, the combination of self-efficacy and job satisfaction can significantly impact employee motivation, performance, and overall organizational effectiveness. Self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks effectively, is positively correlated with job satisfaction and work performance (Bandura, 1997). It plays a

pivotal role in shaping employees' confidence and motivation in high-demand environments (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2018). Since social welfare workers play a key role in providing vital social services, it is imperative to comprehend the elements that lead to high levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction in the public sector. In social welfare agencies, employees face high workloads, emotional demands, and administrative challenges, making self-efficacy and job satisfaction crucial factors in sustaining productivity and service quality (Van Loon et al., 2018).

This study focuses on the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) employees in the Philippines, specifically those working at the Field Office Cordillera Administrative Region (FO CAR). The workforce within this office comprises personnel with diverse job classifications, reflecting a range of roles and responsibilities in the delivery of social welfare services. As a government organization, the DSWD is essential in helping vulnerable groups receive welfare and social protection services. Improving employee performance and human resource initiatives in this setting requires understanding how employment status influences self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Examining how job security—or lack thereof—affects public employees' well-being and effectiveness is crucial, given the public sector's increasing reliance on contract labor.

Several studies have explored the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction across different sectors, consistently demonstrating that higher levels of self-efficacy are linked to greater job satisfaction and commitment (Liu et al., 2022). Donkor (2022) found that public sector employees in Ghana with higher self-efficacy demonstrated increased work commitment. Del Rosario et al. (2018) reported that Filipino Child Development Workers with higher self-efficacy and resilience experienced enhanced job and life satisfaction, supported by their barangay officials. These findings highlight the importance of self-efficacy in shaping positive work outcomes, particularly in service-oriented roles like social welfare.

Job satisfaction, the level of contentment employees feel toward their jobs, is also a key factor influencing organizational success. Locke's (1976) job satisfaction theory suggests that when employees feel their job meets or surpasses their expectations, they tend to feel more satisfied. This idea has been backed by research in fields like healthcare and education, showing that higher job satisfaction improves performance and lowers the chances of employees wanting to leave their jobs (Wolomansi et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2022). These findings highlight the powerful link between satisfaction and success in the workplace. In the Philippines, however, overall job satisfaction remains moderate, with employment status significantly determining employee satisfaction, particularly regarding career advancement opportunities (JobStreet.com, 2022).

The relationship between self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and organizational performance has been well-documented in both private and public sectors. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model posits that job resources—such as autonomy, professional development opportunities, and social support—enhance employee motivation and well-being, leading to higher job performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Studies in the public sector highlight that employees with high self-efficacy are more likely to experience job satisfaction, which in turn contributes to improved service delivery and organizational efficiency (Kim & Wright, 2020). However, contractual employment conditions and job insecurity can moderate this relationship, affecting employees' long-term engagement and productivity (Nguyen et al., 2021).

In the context of public social welfare agencies, where employees provide critical services to marginalized populations, understanding the interplay between self-efficacy and job satisfaction is essential for optimizing workforce management. This study examines the relationship between these variables across different employment classifications within a government social welfare agency in the Philippines. By identifying factors that influence employee well-being, the findings can inform policies aimed at enhancing job stability, professional development, and organizational support structures, ultimately improving service efficiency in the public sector.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the relationship between self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and employment status among DSWD FO CAR personnel. Specifically, the objectives of the current study are as follows:

1. To compare levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction among DSWD FO CAR personnel across different employment statuses.
2. To explore the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction.
3. To assess whether employment status moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

The study tests the following hypotheses:

1. There is a significant difference in self-efficacy and job satisfaction across employment status.
2. Self-efficacy is positively correlated with job satisfaction.
3. Employment status moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, with permanent employees having the strongest relationship.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design utilizing descriptive and correlational analyses to investigate the relationships between self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and employment status among personnel from the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office Cordillera Administrative Region (DSWD FO CAR). The design allowed for comparing self-efficacy and job satisfaction across different employment statuses and exploring the correlation between these two variables.

A random sampling technique was used to select 215 employees from DSWD FO CAR, including 31 permanent employees (14.5%), 53 contractual employees (24.8%), and 131 contract of service personnel (60.7%). Personnel stationed in centers and institutions, individuals with incomplete questionnaire submissions, voluntary non-participants, and staff engaged in fieldwork were excluded from the study.

Two validated instruments were used to measure self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE) was selected due to its strong psychometric properties and applicability across various work settings, including the public sector. This 8-item Likert scale assesses an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in different situations. Responses were rated on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater self-efficacy. The NGSE has demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.85 to 0.90 (Chen et al., 2001), ensuring its reliability in measuring self-

efficacy. Sample items include statements such as “*I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself*” and “*Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.*”

To assess job satisfaction, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was employed to measure job satisfaction, as it provides a comprehensive evaluation of both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction factors. This 20-item scale uses a 4-point response format (1 = very dissatisfied, 4 = very satisfied), making it a widely accepted tool in organizational research. The MSQ has consistently shown high reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha values ranging from 0.81 to 0.92 across different cultural adaptations (Weiss et al., 1967). Sample items include “*The chance to do different things from time to time*” and “*The way my boss handles his/her employees.*”

Both instruments were selected for their validity, reliability, and widespread use in employee well-being research, particularly in assessing self-efficacy and job satisfaction in diverse occupational settings.

Table 1 presented the weighted mean and the qualitative description as follows: Very low level (1.00 – 1.74), Low level (1.75 – 2.49), High level (2.50 – 3.24), and Very high level (3.25 – 4.00)

Table 1. Qualitative Interpretation of 4-Point Likert Scale

Likert-Scale Description	Likert-Scale	Likert-Scale Interval
Very Low Level	1	1.00 - 1.74
Low Level	2	1.75 - 2.49
High Level	3	2.50 - 3.24
Very High Level	4	3.25 - 4.00

Approval was secured from the Saint Louis University Research and Innovations Center (SLU UnRIC), followed by formal permission from the DSWD FO-CAR Regional Director. Printed survey questionnaires, including an informed consent form, were distributed to the selected participants. The informed consent form outlined the study’s purpose, inclusion criteria, potential risks, confidentiality assurances, and participants’ rights to withdraw without penalty. Surveys took approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete, and submission of the completed questionnaire was considered as voluntary consent to participate.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were computed to summarize participants’ demographic characteristics and assess overall levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction. To determine whether significant differences existed in self-efficacy and job satisfaction across employment statuses, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. If ANOVA results indicated statistical significance, a post hoc Tukey’s test was applied to identify specific group differences.

To examine the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was used, as it is well-suited for analyzing relationships between ordinal data from Likert-scale measurements. Additionally, a regression analysis was performed to investigate whether employment status moderated the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, allowing for an assessment of how different employment categories influenced

the strength of this association. Statistical significance for all tests was set at $p < 0.05$, ensuring that only meaningful relationships and differences were considered in interpreting results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined self-efficacy and job satisfaction levels among DSWD FO CAR personnel across different employment statuses, specifically permanent, contractual, and contract of service employees. The results, analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, correlation, and regression analyses, provide insights into the relationships between these variables and the moderating effect of employment status.

The mean self-efficacy scores were relatively high across all employment statuses, with permanent employees reporting a mean score of 3.35 (SD = 0.38), slightly higher than that of contractual (M = 3.23, SD = 0.62) and contract of service personnel (M = 3.31, SD = 0.50). However, the differences were not statistically significant, as shown by ANOVA results ($F = 0.643$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that self-efficacy levels were similar regardless of employment status (Table 2). This finding suggests that self-efficacy, or an employee's belief in their ability to perform effectively, is not heavily influenced by whether their employment is permanent or contractual.

Table 2. Mean Self-Efficacy Scores Across Employment Status

Employment Status	N	Mean Self Efficacy	Standard Deviation	F-Value	p-Value
Permanent	35	3.35	0.38	0.643 ^{NS}	0.527
Contractual	53	3.23	0.62		
Contract of Service	131	3.31	0.50		

Similarly, job satisfaction levels across employment statuses were high, with no significant statistical differences. Permanent employees reported a mean job satisfaction score of 3.21 (SD = 0.35), while contractual employees reported a mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.31), and contract of service workers had a mean of 3.14 (SD = 0.38). The ANOVA results ($F = 1.482$, $p > 0.05$) showed no significant difference in job satisfaction across employment types, as presented in Table 3. This suggests that DSWD FO CAR employees, regardless of their employment status, generally experience similar levels of job satisfaction.

Table 3. Mean Job Satisfaction Scores Across Employment Status

Employment Status	N	Mean Self Efficacy	Standard Deviation	F-Value	p-Value
Permanent	35	3.21	0.35	1.482 ^{NS}	0.230
Contractual	53	3.07	0.31		
Contract of Service	131	3.14	0.38		

A significant positive correlation (Spearman's $\rho = 0.341$, $p < 0.01$) was found between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, indicating that employees with higher self-efficacy tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Table 4). This aligns with previous studies

highlighting the critical role self-efficacy plays in shaping job satisfaction (Bandura, 1997; Donkor, 2022). The relationship between these two variables was evident across all employment statuses, confirming that employees who believe in their ability to perform well are more likely to feel content in their roles.

Table 4. Correlation Between Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction

Variable	Spearman's rho	p-Value
Self-Efficacy & Job Satisfaction	3.21	<0.01

However, when considering the moderating effect of employment status on the self-efficacy-job satisfaction relationship, regression analysis revealed interesting dynamics. The relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction was stronger for permanent employees compared to contractual workers, where the association was somewhat diminished due to job insecurity. Contractual employees, despite possessing high self-efficacy, may feel less satisfied due to the uncertainty surrounding their job status. This finding reflects broader concerns in the public sector about the impact of job insecurity on employee morale and satisfaction (Naratoma & Sintaasih, 2022).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the study employed two well-established instruments: the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). Both instruments demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.85 to 0.90 for NGSE and 0.81 to 0.92 for MSQ, ensuring that the measurements were reliable. Additionally, random sampling helped mitigate bias, and statistical tests were conducted at a significance level of $p < 0.05$ to ensure robust results.

Interpretation of Results

The lack of statistically significant differences in both self-efficacy and job satisfaction across employment statuses suggests that DSWD FO CAR employees share a uniform sense of efficacy and job contentment, irrespective of whether they are permanent, contractual, or contract of service employees. This finding is important because it shows that DSWD personnel, regardless of their employment status, view their roles as meaningful and fulfilling. Bandura's (1997) theory emphasizes that self-efficacy empowers individuals to set higher goals and stay determined in the face of challenges, a pattern that seems to hold true across all types of employment in this context.

The strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction highlights the need to nurture self-belief among public sector employees to boost their job satisfaction. This finding aligns with earlier studies that demonstrate how self-efficacy contributes to better employee outcomes, including improved job performance and greater organizational commitment (Donkor, 2022; Liu et al., 2022).

The findings indicate a positive correlation between self-efficacy and job satisfaction among DSWD-CAR employees, reinforcing previous studies that link higher self-efficacy to increased work motivation, resilience, and job fulfillment (Judge et al., 2017; Kim & Wright, 2020). However, the analysis reveals that this relationship is weaker among contractual employees,

suggesting that factors beyond individual confidence influence job satisfaction in the public sector.

One key factor affecting contractual employees is job insecurity, which has been consistently associated with lower job satisfaction in government institutions (Nguyen et al., 2021). Unlike permanent employees, contractual workers in the public sector often face uncertainty regarding tenure, renewal of contracts, and limited access to employment benefits, all of which contribute to stress and reduced work satisfaction (Naratoma & Sintaasih, 2022). In the Philippine public sector, the continued reliance on contract of service (COS) and job order (JO) workers has raised concerns about employment stability, with studies highlighting that these workers experience higher levels of workplace anxiety and lower organizational commitment compared to their tenured counterparts (Presidential Communications Office, 2024). This uncertainty may diminish the motivational benefits of self-efficacy, as employees with strong confidence in their skills may still feel dissatisfied due to a lack of job permanence and career progression opportunities.

Additionally, the level of workplace integration and organizational support plays a crucial role in explaining the weaker self-efficacy–job satisfaction relationship among contractual employees. Public administration studies emphasize that perceived organizational support (POS) is a significant predictor of job satisfaction, particularly in government agencies where social service work is demanding (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Contractual employees often receive fewer training opportunities, limited engagement in decision-making, and less access to mentorship programs, which can lead to feelings of exclusion and decreased workplace morale (Hechanova et al., 2018). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model supports this perspective, arguing that employees require sufficient job resources—such as career development programs, leadership support, and role recognition—to experience sustained job satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). When these resources are absent, as is often the case for contract workers in government institutions, the ability of self-efficacy to drive job satisfaction is weakened.

These findings align with research on public service motivation (PSM), which suggests that government employees derive job satisfaction from a sense of purpose and community impact (Perry & Wise, 1990). However, contractual employees may experience dissonance between their intrinsic motivation and external employment constraints, particularly when they perceive limited career mobility and lack of institutional recognition (Liu et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of structural interventions that provide contractual employees with greater job security, access to professional development, and institutional support to reinforce the link between self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Implications

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on public sector employee well-being, particularly in the context of social welfare services. By demonstrating that self-efficacy plays a critical role in shaping job satisfaction across different employment statuses, the findings provide valuable insights for human resource strategies in public organizations like the DSWD. Enhancing self-efficacy and addressing job insecurity could significantly improve employee satisfaction and, consequently, the quality of services delivered to vulnerable populations.

In conclusion, the results highlight the importance of universal organizational strategies that focus on both self-efficacy and job permanency to promote overall employee satisfaction, particularly in sectors where contractual employment is common. These findings not only contribute to academic knowledge but also offer practical implications for improving employee well-being in the public service, ultimately benefiting society at large.

Research Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the self-efficacy and job satisfaction of employees at the Department of Social Welfare and Development – Cordillera Administrative Region (DSWD-CAR), several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study's sample was limited to DSWD-CAR employees, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other government agencies or social welfare institutions in different regions of the Philippines. Future research may benefit from expanding the study to multiple field offices or other organizations with similar work structures.

Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or response inaccuracies. Participants may have provided responses that they perceived as favorable rather than fully reflecting their actual experiences. Employing mixed methods, such as interviews or observational data, could enhance the validity of future findings.

Lastly, external factors influencing job satisfaction and self-efficacy, such as organizational policies, leadership styles, and work environment, were not extensively explored in this study. Incorporating qualitative insights from focus group discussions or in-depth interviews may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping employees' perceptions.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the growing body of research on employee well-being in government agencies and underscores the importance of workplace support in fostering self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship between self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and employment status among DSWD FO CAR personnel, finding that while self-efficacy and job satisfaction levels were generally high across all employment types, no statistically significant differences were observed between permanent, contractual, and contract of service employees. The positive correlation between self-efficacy and job satisfaction suggests that employees who believe in their abilities tend to feel more content in their jobs, regardless of their employment status. However, this relationship was moderated by employment status, with contractual employees showing a weaker connection between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, likely due to concerns about job security. These findings highlight the importance of fostering self-efficacy, but they also indicate that enhancing job security for contractual workers could further boost their job satisfaction. Future research could investigate other factors, such as organizational support and career development opportunities, that might affect self-efficacy and job satisfaction, especially for temporary employees in the public service sector. Expanding this

research across various public organizations and regions could yield valuable insights into how different employment conditions impact employee well-being in diverse contexts.

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