

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE



**MJSSH**  
Muallim Journal of  
Social Science and Humanities

## TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33306/mjssh/209>

### Abstract

Teachers have a significant impact on the quality of education in any country. Therefore, teachers' job satisfaction would lead to quality education. However, several factors influence job satisfaction among teachers. This paper aimed to review motivation theories and selected empirical studies to identify factors influencing job satisfaction. In addition, this paper also aimed to find out the studies carried out in Sri Lanka about teacher job satisfaction. Therefore, the authors selected some significant studies from journals and dissertations related to the teachers' job satisfaction to determine the factors influencing job satisfaction. This paper's findings reveal that most of the factors related to motivation and hygiene factors presented by Herzberg's Two-factor theory are influential on teachers' job satisfaction. However, it indicates that some factors are inconsistent with the given aspects by Herzberg in his Two-Factor theory. It also identifies new concepts related to teachers' job satisfaction and how these factors differ according to societal or cultural values. Furthermore, it has been discovered that there is a lack of studies concerning job satisfaction among teachers in the context of Sri Lanka, particularly teachers working in the most difficult areas. Therefore, it is recommended to carry out more studies on teachers' job satisfaction considering the factors, difficult areas and gender.

**Keywords:** Influencing factors, job satisfaction, motivation theories, most difficult schools, Sri Lanka, Teachers

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Received 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022, revised 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022, accepted 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## **Introduction**

Teachers play a significant role in providing education and believe that it significantly impacts qualitative development in education. Therefore, job satisfaction among teachers is an essential phenomenon (Yusuf et al., 2015)<sup>1</sup>. It brings out the importance of studying teachers' job satisfaction to develop qualitative education development. Therefore, the concept of job satisfaction among teachers has become popular in recent times. Teachers' job satisfaction focuses mainly on their professional attitudes, passion for teaching, and work enthusiasm, which affects the educational system (Fuming & Jiliang, 2014; Sumanasena et al., 2020)<sup>2, 3</sup>. From George and Jones (2011)<sup>4</sup>, a more recent definition of job satisfaction combines feelings and beliefs in the mental, emotional, and physical domains. Judge et al. (2011)<sup>5</sup> have noted that job satisfaction is a set of psychological responses of an individual towards his or her job. He also describes that these personal responses have three components: cognitive (evaluative), behavioural and affective (or emotional). Sen (2008)<sup>6</sup> also viewed it as a combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances. Among the studies on job satisfaction, the study of Elton Mayo's Hawthorne, conducted in the 1920s at the Western Electric Company, is considered the first research study on job satisfaction (Sumanasena et al. 2020)<sup>3</sup>. It suggested that satisfied workers contribute more to the productivity of an organization (Jayathilake, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. Vroom defines job satisfaction as individuals' affection orientations towards work roles in which they are engaged (as cited in Aziri, 2011)<sup>8</sup>. The commonly used definition of job satisfaction by Locke (1976)<sup>9</sup> emphasizes the positive emotional state of mind that results from job experiences and the positive attitudes or emotional dispositions that people may gain from work (as cited in Anderson et al., 2001)<sup>10</sup>. Employee job satisfaction has become a central concern in organizational psychology research because it is thought to have a relationship with job performance.

## **Relationship between Motivation and Job Satisfaction**

The phenomenon of job satisfaction is inextricably linked to motivation (Mbua, 2003)<sup>11</sup>. As a result, it is assumed that there is a relationship between motivation and job satisfaction, i.e., motivation increases as job satisfaction increases and vice versa (Singh & Tiwari, 2011)<sup>12</sup>. Although job satisfaction and motivation are two concepts, these are not similar; they may be associated with a personal sense of accomplishment. The connection between the two concepts implies that theories of motivation are also considered theories of job satisfaction (Ngimbudzi, 2009).<sup>13</sup>

Motivation theories are typically divided into two approaches: content theories and process theories. Content theories consist of Maslow's Need theory, Herzberg's two-factor theory, McClelland's achievement motivation theory, Alderfer's existence theory and Macgregor's Theory X and theory Y. While, equity theory of motivation, expectancy theory, Locke's value theory, and attribution theory are considered as process theories. Considering the content theories, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory forms the basis of many researchers' job satisfaction assessments (Ngimbudzi, 2009)<sup>13</sup>. Researchers discovered a direct relationship between job satisfaction and satisfaction with the hierarchy of needs. Through this model, Maslow brings out five human needs; psychological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization, which emerge in a specific hierarchy of importance (Fiore, 2009)<sup>14</sup>. He explains that when an individual satisfies one group of needs, then the next step of needs has to be satisfied. Satisfaction of the next step will not be demanded until the current group of needs is satisfied. This theory has been primarily used in understanding

the employee's behaviour. However, there are also arguments for this hierarchy. Some argue that it is incorrect to assume that every individual may advance through Maslow's hierarchy. Fiore (2009)<sup>14</sup> also explains that there are instances where people get higher level needs before satisfying lower-level needs. Herzberg's Two-Factor theory is the outgrowth of a research study. After extensive research on accountants' and engineers' job attitudes and satisfaction, Herzberg has developed a set of factors that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work. He distinguished two types of work factors that determined job satisfaction or dissatisfaction: motivational (intrinsic) and hygiene factors (Miner, 2005)<sup>15</sup>. Herzberg suggests that intrinsic factors lead to job satisfaction and hygiene factors lead to job dissatisfaction. As per Herzberg, satisfaction or dissatisfaction factors at work are not opposite, but they bring out different attitudes of a worker towards the job he does (Fiore, 2009)<sup>14</sup>.

Clayton Alderfer's Existence Theory, developed in 1972, can be considered an extension of Maslow's Need Hierarchy (Fiore, 2009)<sup>14</sup>. He also believes that fulfilling the needs of an individual is vital for motivating him or her. Alderfer has recognized three groups. These three levels are existence needs, relatedness needs and growth needs. This theory is also known as the ERG theory. Although Maslow and Alderfer's categorization of needs is similar, their perspectives have some differences (Fiore, 2009)<sup>14</sup>. Maslow strictly believes that these needs should be satisfied or met with the given hierarchical model. However, Alderfer suggests an individual may need to satisfy more than one at a time which may belong to two different types of needs. Maslow and Alderfer both believed that needs always energize individuals. In his Achievement Motivation Theory, McClelland (2014)<sup>16</sup> explains three critical needs or motives that predominate in different people. They are as follows:

- 1. The need for Achievement: The desire to achieve a high level of standard.
- 2. The need for Affiliation: The desire to have a close interpersonal relationship.
- 3. The need for power: The need to have control over others.

He argues that when an individual's need becomes strong, it will lead or motivate the individual to engage in behaviour to satisfy the need. Following this theory, organizations use a needs model to improve worker performance by placing employees in jobs according to their predominant needs (Singh et al., 2007)<sup>17</sup>. In 1960, Douglas McGregor presented Theory X and Theory Y. It suggests two aspects of human behaviour at work. One is a negative theory known as Theory X, and the other is a positive theory known as Theory Y. According to Theory X, employees generally do not want to work or take on responsibility. or take responsibility. Since employees do not like to work, they should be compelled to work, and their work should be supervised. Theory Y assumes that employees put their effort into their work in a relaxing manner. Supervision is not needed much, and they use self-direction and self-control to achieve organizational objectives. If the job is rewarding, employees become committed and loyal. These content theories provide an insight into what motivational factors are. When it comes to satisfying the workers, the authorities should consider fulfilling the needs of workers. However, these theories give little support to understand the way of motivating the workers. Process theories explain how workers' certain behaviours are initiated (Fiore, 2009)<sup>14</sup>.

Vroom (1964) was the first to propose the expectation theory, which comes under process theories of motivation. Motivation and job satisfaction are similar concepts in this theory because if someone is motivated to work, he can achieve job satisfaction in his career. This theory focuses on three relationships: effort- performance, reward, and rewards- personal goal relationship.

Locke's Value Theory offers another vital perspective on job satisfaction (Furnham, 2005)<sup>18</sup>. Locke believes that even though needs such as pay, fringe benefits and working conditions are the same for two workers, their satisfaction will differ to the extent that their values differ. He also explains that people choose and change their jobs based on these values. Thus, according to Locke, these values lead to the levels of satisfaction of a worker. As per the Equity Theory of Motivation, an individual observes a link between the rewards he receives and his performance.

The principle of balancing or equity is at the heart of equity theory. That implies an individual's motivation level is correlated to his perception of equity, fairness and justice practised by the management. In this theory, ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck has been identified as the most critical factors affecting attributions for achievement. There are three aspects in attributions; locus of control, stability and controllability. Edwin Locke put forward the Goal-setting theory of motivation in the 1960s. This theory states that goal setting is connected to task performance. The encouragement to achieve the goal is the primary source of job motivation. This theory also explains that clear, realistic, and challenging goals may lead to a worker's better output or performance. Appropriate feedback is also essential in this process (Locke & Latham, 2013)<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, goal setting can be considered a technique that can motivate workers to complete the work efficiently.

There is no consensus on which theory best explains why people are satisfied with their jobs. However, it is generally agreed that job satisfaction can be seen as the employee's feeling about the job. Despite the disparities between the content and process theories of motivation, Herzberg's two-factor theory (also known as the Motivation / Hygiene theory) has been proposed as a more plausible alternative to Maslow's theory for studying job satisfaction (Worlu & Chidoze, 2012)<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, in this study, Herzberg's Two-factor theory has been used as the theoretical base for studying the effect of motivational and hygiene factors on job satisfaction among teachers in difficult schools.

### **Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Empirical Studies**

Numerous studies are being done on job satisfaction. In this paper, studies conducted related to school teachers' job satisfaction are selected and reviewed. In early periods, most of the studies on job satisfaction were conducted in industrial settings, examining the effects of physical conditions, facilities and so forth. However, later they believed that factors of social nature also affect job satisfaction. Human relations in an organization are also essential to improving workers' happiness (Spector, 1997)<sup>21</sup>. Studies on job satisfaction in recent years suggest that it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and it is, therefore, different scholars identified different determinants for teachers' job satisfaction (Ngimbudzi, 2009)<sup>13</sup>. Understanding the critical factors influencing teacher job satisfaction is important for assisting an educational system in achieving its goals. According to Bogler (2001)<sup>22</sup>, teachers' occupational perceptions significantly impact their job satisfaction. Principals' transformational leadership affects teachers' satisfaction through their occupational perceptions. Hui et al. (2013)<sup>23</sup> have done a case study in China on "Principal's Leadership Styles and Teacher Job Satisfaction". It has been done mainly focusing on principals' leadership styles and principals' decision-making styles. It was found that there is a significant positive relationship between the principal's leadership styles with the principal's decision-making styles. Aydintan & Koç (2016)<sup>24</sup> conducted a correlational study investigating the relationship between job

satisfaction and life satisfaction in the context of Turkey. They found that there was a high correlation between job and life satisfaction.

The study on “Job satisfaction among Public and Private College Teachers of Dhaka City” in Bangladesh by Rahman (2008)<sup>25</sup> focuses on the influential factors contributing to the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers. Results show that gender significantly influences job satisfaction, while age and job experience did not affect it. In addition, female respondents were found more satisfied than male counterparts. The analysis also reveals that private college teachers are enjoying modern classroom equipment and technological facilities than public college teachers. Therefore, public-school teachers become dissatisfied because of this disparity.

Another comparative study was conducted in Pakistan (Mahmood et al., 2011)<sup>26</sup> to examine the distinction in job satisfaction between gender (male and female teachers) and school types (urban and rural). According to their study, teachers are less satisfied with advancement, salary, supervision, human-relation, and working conditions. However, female teachers are more satisfied than male teachers. There was no statistically significant difference in job satisfaction based on the types of school. In addition, administrative support was also found as an important factor in teachers' job satisfaction in this study.

Pabla (2012)<sup>27</sup> revealed that teachers working in rural areas are less satisfied than teachers who work in colleges in urban areas. The disparities between those schools are the primary cause of the differences mentioned above. Salary, benefits, prestige, opportunities for professional advancement, personal and professional challenges, level of autonomy, decision-making authority, general working conditions, interactions with colleagues, and interactions with pupils have been identified as key determinants for teacher job satisfaction. Demographic factors have little impact on teacher satisfaction.

Dutta and Sahney (2016)<sup>28</sup> contributed to the current literature on teacher job satisfaction by exploring the mediating role of school climate. The determinants such as principals' leadership styles, teachers' perception of the school climate, job satisfaction, and student achievement have been examined in this study. They have found that principals' leadership behaviours are not associated directly with either teacher job satisfaction or student achievement. Even though the transformational leadership behaviours showed an indirect effect on teacher job satisfaction, it also suggests that instructional leadership behaviours have positive relationships with teacher job satisfaction. Such principals are always concerned with providing adequate resources and facilities to teachers, maintaining pupil-teacher ratios, maintaining average class sizes, planning training for teachers so forth. On the other hand, the physical climate appeared to play a significant role in teacher job satisfaction.

In their study, Singh et al. (2007)<sup>16</sup> discuss the relationship between stress & job satisfaction. The results indicate that prevention and reducing stress are vital to enhancing the teachers' job satisfaction of both genders. The researchers point out that responsibility for stress reduction lies with the school administrators.

According to Sargent and Hannum (2005)<sup>29</sup>, teacher retention is a growing concern, particularly in low-income communities. They emphasize that the distribution of quality teachers is a critical factor for all schools. However, recruiting and retaining qualified teachers could be challenging in high-poverty areas and rural areas of developing countries. It leads to a situation

where the neediest children are often paired with the least qualified teachers with other life challenges. Sargent and Hannum (2005)<sup>29</sup> administered three linked questionnaires to 100 village leaders, 128 principals, and 1,003 teachers in the selected low-resourced district in China. This study has understood three variables: community factors, school environment, and teachers' background information. There are more minor associations between teacher satisfaction and community factors. According to the study, one possible explanation for teacher dissatisfaction is that they are dissatisfied with remuneration.

Moreover, economic resources for teaching and teacher welfare are also significant in teachers' job satisfaction. This study discusses factors related to teachers' job satisfaction extensively. However, the researcher feels that qualitative fieldwork and the quantitative study could have provided a clear and more accurate picture.

Anastasiou (2014)<sup>30</sup> examined the influential factors for secondary education teachers' job satisfaction and stress levels in Northwest Greece. The study suggests that teachers generally are more satisfied with the intrinsic aspects of their work. However, high levels of stress were exhibited among young female teachers. Environmental factors such as the provision of ethical rewards, good working conditions, motivation by the school principal and participation in school administration and decision making have positive effects on teachers' work performance.

Reilly et al. (2014)<sup>31</sup> have studied "Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, self-esteem, and job stress as determinants of job satisfaction" in Ireland. The results indicate no significant differences in job satisfaction, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and perceived stress between male and female school teachers. There was no significant relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Years of teaching experience was found to have a weak negative relationship with job satisfaction. It suggests that as the number of years in teaching increases, job satisfaction decreases. More effective and systematic training and professional development opportunities, teachers' participation in decision making and better working conditions are factors that need to improve job satisfaction and reduce emotional work stress.

Calimeris (2016)<sup>32</sup> contributes to the current literature on teacher job satisfaction by exploring the relationship between job satisfaction and students' performance. A school survey in New York has been done to determine the student outcomes. The effects of teacher job satisfaction on student outcomes have been measured using multiple estimation methods. According to the findings, there is a positive relationship between teacher job satisfaction and student outcomes.

Melter (2002)<sup>33</sup> has researched "Job satisfaction and perception of motivation among middle school and high school teachers". The study aimed to find school-based and non-school-based motivational factors. Teachers who are new to their careers and those nearing the end indicated higher job satisfaction levels than the teachers in the middle of their careers. Furthermore, it has been reported that a significant proportion of teachers in their 20s and those in their early 50s indicated a desire to enter the teaching profession, and those teaching in suburban settings reported significantly unmotivated teachers than the urban or rural areas. In this study, males have been reported a higher level of job satisfaction than did females.

The study on "Are Principal Background and School Processes Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction?" brings out a different aspect of teacher satisfaction (Shen et al., 2012)<sup>34</sup>. This study examines the relationship of teacher job satisfaction with the principal's background and school processes. The researchers have built a series of models to examine this, including the

unconditional model, the control model, the principal background model, and the school process model. The findings of this study suggest that the teachers are more satisfied with teaching as a career when they receive support from administrators and cooperation from their colleagues. Therefore, principals' administrative leadership is essential to develop a collaborative culture and a supportive structure that facilitates teachers.

Klassen and Anderson (2009)<sup>35</sup> did a comparative study on teachers' job satisfaction in 1962 and 2007. The study results suggest that secondary teachers in the 2007 sample rated their job satisfaction significantly lower than secondary teachers in Rudd and Wiseman's 1960s sample. In 1962, teachers' top concerns were salary, poor human relations and the state of buildings and equipment, which are externally related. In sharp contrast, teachers in 2007 were concerned about the absence of satisfiers, pupils' behaviour and attitudes. This study points out that the shift over time in teachers' perceptions of the behaviour of pupils needs to be addressed directly and systematically by education officials because the quality of teacher-student relationships not only influences teachers' job satisfaction but is also related to students' school academic outcomes.

Gius (2013)<sup>36</sup> studied "The effects of the merit pay on teacher job satisfaction" using a large sample of public-school teachers. It suggests that even though teachers are paid merit pay due to their difficulties in such rural communities, they are still not satisfied with their job. Those teachers do not think that teaching is not essential for them, and they are less enthusiastic. This study has been done for Irish teachers in Western communities. This situation may be different for Asian communities. Sometimes the teachers of low resource communities become less satisfied as they are under esteemed by society but not for the salary or rewards. Most Asian teachers in urban schools believe that giving up a job is better than working in difficult schools.

Participative leadership is a new concept that the researchers pay attention to improve teacher satisfaction. Benolial & Barth (2017)<sup>37</sup> did research in Israel to study the influence of participative leaders on teachers' outcomes of job satisfaction and burnout. A survey has collected data from a sample of 367 teachers in Israel. It has been found that teachers who participate in pedagogical and organizational decisions are more satisfied, and they have become committed teachers with feelings of empowerment. This study also reveals that participative leadership is a valuable management practice in Western societies, primarily multi-cultural societies. However, the researchers believe that this situation may be different in Eastern societies. In this process, flexible leadership qualities of principals are essential to understand the school cultural values when getting the teachers for the decision-making process.

### **Teachers' Job Satisfaction in the Context of Sri Lanka**

The phenomenon of teacher job satisfaction has been widely studied for over six decades (Klassen & Chiu 2010)<sup>38</sup>. However, there is limited literature about teachers' job satisfaction in developing nations, particularly Sri Lanka. Kappagoda (2011)<sup>39</sup>, in his study in National Schools of Sri Lanka, has focused on a different dimension that affects teacher job satisfaction. He highlights the importance of the principals' emotional intelligence and its relationship with teachers' job satisfaction. It will be helpful to enhance the job satisfaction of the teachers. By understanding the teachers' attitudes, principals can motivate them and improve their job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the researcher suggests that this concept needs to be concerned by all the educators and policymakers. Wijerathne (2013)<sup>40</sup>, in his study on "School-based factors affecting on job satisfaction of teachers", explains that teachers who are satisfied with their teaching profession are comparatively higher than those who are dissatisfied. He also suggests that school-based factors greatly influence their job satisfaction. It has been identified that providing opportunities for professional development is also very important. Similarly, "A study on the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers" by Panditharatne & Wijesundara (2012)<sup>41</sup> reveals that teachers are dissatisfied mostly with societal and school-level factors and with the opportunities for their professional development. Sumanasena et al. (2020)<sup>3</sup> conducted a study to identify the school-based satisfaction of teachers working in the difficult schools in the Puttalam Education Zone. It was discovered that the majority of teachers were married women. Significantly, more than 80% of teachers working in the most difficult schools have less than ten years of experience. They found that job satisfaction and intrinsic and extrinsic factors have a significant relationship. A bivariate analysis found that a sense of achievement of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, work conditions, pay, and rewards were found to have no significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction. Therefore, to provide a long-term solution for teacher shortages in such schools in Sri Lanka, the study recommends that the state address teachers' problems by providing adequate teaching facilities, in-service training, promotions, housing, and incentives, as well as revising transfer policies to motivate and retain teachers in the most difficult schools.

In addition, in their study, Amarasena et al. (2015)<sup>42</sup> pointed out that job satisfaction of academics differs based on current working status and monthly salary. However, there is no statistically significant relationship with other demographic factors: teaching experience, gender, age, the highest level of education, marital status and number of children. In this study, the results of the multivariate regression analysis indicate that the degree of overall job satisfaction has a positive relationship with the monthly gross salary and number of their children. Therefore, it is inconsistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, salary as a hygiene factor. Mangaleswarasharma (2017)<sup>43</sup> carried out a study on "Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction: A Study on Three Districts in Northern Sri Lanka" revealed that some teachers are satisfied with their job because they have selected this profession as they preferred it, it is a permanent job and it has long holidays and less working hours. It has also been identified that relevant training, professional development opportunities, salary increase, respect, and recognition are factors that increase their job satisfaction. The study of Thevanes and Jathurika (2021)<sup>44</sup> suggested that happiness is also a factor that significantly increases job satisfaction. Employee happiness and job satisfaction have been found to have a significant and positive relationship. In the Sri Lankan context, most of the teachers are satisfied with the factor, job security. Maithili et al. (2014)<sup>45</sup>, in their study on "The teacher-librarians, working in the Jaffna District, Sri Lanka", have identified colleagues' behaviour, supervision, social relation to the work, decision-making authority, administration, opportunity for education and personal career growth, gaining respect, assigned duties, and management policy are the factors positively influence on teachers' job satisfaction. However, recognition, promotion, salary, and working facilities are identified as essential factors that have negatively impacted the satisfaction of teacher-librarians. It alarms the government to take necessary measures in order to increase job satisfaction.



## Conclusion

In this article, the concept of job satisfaction is explained broadly along with the empirical studies and theories of motivation. It is widely accepted that job satisfaction can be defined as the employee's attitude toward their job. Though job satisfaction and motivation are two different concepts, these are closely intercalated with each other. Theories on motivation facilitate understanding the factors that impact job satisfaction in any profession. Despite the disparities between the content and process theories of motivation, Herzberg's two-factor theory has been proposed as a more plausible alternative to Maslow's theory for studying job satisfaction (Worlu & Chidoze, 2012)<sup>46</sup>. The determinants for teachers' job satisfaction were widely discussed. Those suggest that job satisfaction is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. In addition, different scholars identified different determinants for teachers' job satisfaction. It brings out most of the factors related to motivation and hygiene factors presented by Herzberg Two-factor theory influence teachers' job satisfaction. When comparing the literature on teacher job satisfaction according to the different regions, it was found that the facets differ according to societal or cultural values. For instance, recognition is a highly influential factor in Asian regions but not much concern in Western regions (Benolial & Barth, 2017)<sup>47</sup>. Studies in Sri Lanka emphasize recognition from the school community, school facilities, teachers' welfare, and flexible practices at school; emotional intelligence and supervision are influential factors that enhance teachers' job satisfaction. More research is required to focus on teachers' job satisfaction in the context of Sri Lanka. Remarkably, there is a need to focus on the job satisfaction of female teachers who work in schools remote areas.

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