

## A review of Teacher Job Satisfaction: An Annotated Bibliography

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### **Developmental (Discussion) Paper**

#### **Abstract**

Teaching is an example of stressful work in many countries around the world. Therefore, teacher satisfaction at work is an essential issue. Holdaway (1978) states that satisfied employees are the most productive ones. The purpose of this essay is to review seven articles on the topic of teacher satisfaction and to investigate the sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction among teachers in different countries. The first article focuses on the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in the UK. The next article is about job stress and the satisfaction of minority ethnic teachers in the UK. Sources of teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Cyprus is the subject of the third article. The fourth article focuses on sources of job satisfaction amongst secondary school science teachers in Chile. The paper also reviews two articles about teacher job satisfaction in Greece and among Saudi Female teachers in Riyadh. The paper ends by reviewing a paper which discusses whether or not the humour of the principal has any effect on teacher job satisfaction or contributes to improving teacher satisfaction in schools.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction, teacher.

**1. CROSSMAN, AND HARRIS, P., 2006. Job satisfaction of secondary school teachers. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 34(1),29-46.**

The article by Crossman and Harris (2006) states at the start that a possible source of recent teaching problems in the UK is low job satisfaction. The aim of the study was to investigate the level of job satisfaction amongst secondary school teachers in different types of secondary schools (foundation, community, Roman Catholic, Church of England, independent and privately-managed

schools). It aimed to discover whether the type of school had any effect on teacher job satisfaction. Furthermore, an examination of the relationship between job satisfaction and demographic variables (length of service, gender and age) was included in the study. From a wide-ranging review of the literature, the researchers formulated four null hypotheses in terms of the relationship between demographic variables (gender, age and length of service), type of schools and teacher job satisfaction. The hypotheses were that the type of school, gender, and age and length of service had no effect on teacher job satisfaction. To test the relationships, the researchers administered a questionnaire to 395 participants in eleven selected schools in England. The results of the survey revealed that there were differences in the level of job satisfaction according to type of school. Teachers in independent and privately-managed schools were more satisfied than those who worked in foundation and Church of England schools. The research also indicated no significant relationship among the demographic variables of age, gender and length of service with type of school and teacher job satisfaction. At the end of the article the researchers stated that their study had limitations in common with other studies. The first limitation was that they did not include in their investigation other factors of school type, such as school organisation, ethos, style or pupil achievement. These factors may have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study involved a small sample size and restricted geographical scope. It was recommended that these limitations could be overcome in future research in order to identify any possible links between type of school and sort of school in terms of organisational climate and style of management, in order to identify more possible drivers of teacher job satisfaction.

**2. MILLER, G. V. AND TRAVERS, C. J., 2005. Ethnicity and the experience of work: job stress and satisfaction of minority ethnic teachers in the UK. *International review of psychiatry*, 17 (5), 317-327.**

The study by Millerand and Travers (2005) investigated job stress, mental well-being and job satisfaction among minority ethnic teachers in the UK. It was sponsored by the National Union of Teachers (NUT). Through their review of the literature, the researchers highlighted that teaching in the UK is considered to be one of the most stressful jobs, and such stress can be caused by, for example, students' bad behaviour and workload. It was also stated that, according to governmental statistics, 8 % of the population in the UK are minority groups. Recently, the teacher training agency has aimed to build a new strategy to increase minority ethnic teachers in order to cope with the increase in the number of minority ethnic children in the UK and to fill the shortfall of teachers in schools. This research aimed to investigate the job stress and satisfaction of minority ethnic teachers (rather than native teachers) to identify the sources of stress and satisfaction in this group of teachers. Four main questions were asked. The first one asked about the relationship between ethnicity and job stress. The second question enquired about predictors of job satisfaction. The third one asked about predictors of mental well-being and the last one was about the impact of ethnicity on coping strategies. The research used both open and closed questions and quantitative and qualitative measures to gather data for the study. Before the distribution of the questionnaires, sixteen in-depth interviews were carried out with teachers from different parts of the UK in order to identify the sources of stress and ethnic discrimination indicators. After that the questionnaire was designed, beginning with personal and professional demographics and continuing to obtain measures of ethnic discrimination, coping strategies, self-esteem, job satisfaction and sources of stress. The questionnaire was sent to a sample of 1,900 ethnic teachers in the UK. The response rate was only 9%. The researchers suggested that this low response might be due to the fact that some teachers believe that this kind of study is hopeless and will not change their situation. The article reports that some teachers believed that, because of their different accent, pupils and staff felt that they were not able to perform as professional teachers. It also revealed that this group of teachers may suffer from poor mental health and a low level of job satisfaction. The research indicated that there were four main sources of stress for this minority. The first source was workload. The second source was lack of promotion opportunities or opportunity to prove themselves. It was found that teachers who had never received a promotion had a higher level of stress than those who had received at least one. It was also found that this group of teachers faced ethnic discrimination at least several times a week, and this may have contributed to stress. In addition, many minority ethnic teachers believed that they worked in a racist environment. Finally, the analysis in the report

revealed that there were several factors that may have contributed to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. They predicted that 'total discrimination', 'workload', 'total general health', 'resolution strategy' and the 'lack of status and promotion' may all have contributed to job dissatisfaction. Other factors such as total stress, total self-esteem, working conditions, job satisfaction and total discrimination may be the major reasons for mental ill-health among minority ethnic teachers.

**3. ZEMBYLA, M. and PAPANASTASTASIOU, E., 2006. Sources of teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Cyprus. *Compare*, 36 (2), 229-247.**

The study by Zembyla and Papanastasiou (2006) aimed to contribute to the literature by investigating job satisfaction in developing countries. Their study was carried out in Cyprus. At the start, the researchers stated that teacher job satisfaction had been discussed for many years in developed countries, with limited focus on other parts of the world. An interesting point is that Cypriot teachers go into teaching for extrinsic motives, like salary, hours and holidays. Studies in developed countries, on the other hand, claim that the motivation for entering teaching might be intrinsic. The major objective of the study was to describe and analyse the main sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction for teachers in Cyprus. The qualitative research was based on interviews with fifty-two teachers and administrators in seventeen schools. The broad analysis of the interviews gave two results: sources of satisfaction and sources of dissatisfaction. In terms of sources of satisfaction, almost every teacher interviewed stated that working with children and contributing to their growth and development was the main source of satisfaction. The second important aspect of job satisfaction for Cypriot teachers and administrators was the feeling of making a contribution to the community. They felt that teaching gave them a great opportunity to make a difference in young people's lives. Working collaboratively with colleagues was the third aspect of teacher satisfaction. Some teachers stated that working with other teachers and exchanging ideas was interesting and helpful. Some stated that teaching helped them achieve personal growth. Salary, holidays and working hours were considered to be the most important sources of job satisfaction among Cypriot teachers. In terms of sources of job dissatisfaction, the analysis found that social problems and recent changes in Cyprus affected teacher satisfaction negatively. One element of dissatisfaction was students' bad behaviour and the failure or ineffectiveness of the system of education in the country. Many teachers expressed their rejection of the centralisation of the educational system. Lack of respect and recognition from community members, especially parents, dissatisfied many teachers. The final great source of dissatisfaction with the majority of teachers was the issue of teacher promotion and evaluation.

**4. HEAN, AND GARRETT, R., 2001. Sources of job satisfaction in science secondary school teachers in Chile. *Compare*, 31 (3), 363-379.**

Hean and Garrett (2001) aimed to investigate and provide knowledge about sources that may contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction amongst teachers in Chile. Their study focused on science teachers. Forty-seven physics, chemistry and biology teachers from different schools were selected for the investigation. Open-ended questions gave teachers the opportunity to respond with greater freedom. Data from this research were analysed according to gender, age, experience and school administration (municipal/private subsidised). One result was that working and creating relationships with young students contributed to the community and led to job satisfaction among Chilean teachers. Surprisingly, it was found that only 12% of teachers mentioned the enjoyment of teaching a subject. On the other hand, it was found that salary was the greatest source of dissatisfaction among teachers. The second source of dissatisfaction was workload. The huge number of students in the municipal and privately subsidised sectors caused pressure among teachers. Student characteristics and background are other sources of teacher dissatisfaction, where students from poorer backgrounds do not have the ability to follow academic programmes. The last disappointment source was resources and infrastructure. Interestingly, the research found a relationship between job satisfaction and teacher characteristics (age, experience, gender) and the kind of school administration. In terms of age and experience, it was reported that students have a strong relationship with teachers who are younger and have less experience. The suggested reason

was the gap or misunderstandings among students and older teachers. In terms of gender, it was suggested that female teachers are more interested in working with young students than males. It was also suggested that females pay more attention to external rewards and a friendly atmosphere than men. On the other hand, contribution to the development of students and a respectable position provided satisfaction for men. In terms of school administration, the researchers stated that state teachers have a more selfless perspective than those who are in the privately subsidised sector. The article recommended that training programmes to enhance satisfaction are essential in order to improve relationships between students and old, male, municipal teachers. Such programmes may also help teachers to improve their skills in communication with colleagues and parents. It was stated that dealing with sources of satisfaction is easier than dealing with sources of dissatisfaction. However, it is important to continue research in order to discover how sources of dissatisfaction can be reduced. In terms of workload as an important source of dissatisfaction, it was recommended that science teachers' salaries should be improved in order to enhance their satisfaction.

**5. KOUSTELIOS, A., 2001. Personal characteristics and job satisfaction of Greek teachers. The international journal of educational management, 15(7), 354-358.**

Koustelios (2001) aimed to explore the level of satisfaction among a sample of Greek teachers and to investigate the link between personal characteristics, and aspects of job satisfaction. The researcher indicated that personal characteristics such as age, gender, experience and marital status may affect job satisfaction in different ways. The research was based on 720 questionnaires distributed in 40 state schools in Greece. The sample included 354 primary and 366 secondary teachers, 28 to 59 years of age. The main findings of the study were that the job itself and supervision are the main factors in Greek teacher satisfaction, whereas this sample of teachers appeared dissatisfied with promotional and pay opportunities. At the end of the study the researcher referred to cultural differences between Greece and other countries, such as the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand, in terms of personal characteristics and teacher job satisfaction. However, these interesting differences did not impinge on job satisfaction. The study recommended that organisational variables should be included in any future research to specify teacher job satisfaction more clearly.

**6. AL-OBAID, H., 2002. An assessment of Saudi female teachers' job satisfaction in the city of Riyadh, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Dissertation (Masters). University of Wales.**

Hanan Al-Obaid, (2002) submitted a dissertation for a Masters degree, which assessed Saudi female teachers in the capital of Saudi Arabia. The main purpose of the study was to explore the level of female teachers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction and to identify the main factors that may influence this group of teachers. The study was based on an eight-part questionnaire, including five demographic items and open questions for comment. The researcher preferred to use a questionnaire as the main methodology (rather than interviews) because of the limited time available. Teachers were very busy and were not happy to be interviewed. 500 questionnaires were distributed to twelve primary school teachers in the north, south, east and west of Riyadh city. The research reported that the majority of female primary schools were satisfied with their jobs, while 105 supply teachers seemed to be dissatisfied, because they felt that they were excluded from some activities or contributions to school achievements because of their restrictive contracts. The salary seemed to some teachers to be inadequate, but others were satisfied with what they were paid. It was also found that teaching materials and continuity in education programmes were not satisfactory in specific schools. The findings indicated that personal relationships among teaching staff were very good. Other factors that dissatisfied teachers were lack of participation in curriculum development and decision making as regards issues of student behaviour. It was also found that teachers were not happy with school administration rules and regulations. Some recommendations were provided at the end of the study, the researcher suggesting that some factors had not been studied in as great a detail as others. So, further investigation into the factors of job satisfaction is needed in order to obtain more accurate results. As regards the 150 supply teachers who seemed to be dissatisfied with their jobs, the researcher suggested that reducing the maximum number of

years of employment before retirement may allow younger female teachers opportunities to work as main teachers in schools. It was also suggested that schools should give teachers the opportunity to be more influential and creative in schools.

**7. HURREN, B. L., 2006. The effects of principals' humour on teachers' job satisfaction. *Educational studies*, 32(4), 373-385.**

Hurren (2006) aimed to investigate principals' overall frequency of use of humour in school and the relationship between it and teachers' job satisfaction. The article began by stating that there are thousands of books dealing with different kinds of human emotions, such as anxiety, fear and anger, while few books or articles talk about humour. The researcher stated that the study of humour is generally considered to be lightweight among academics and serious study of it to be a waste of time.

Hurren reviewed the literature to show the relationship between a principal's humour and school culture, climate and teacher stress, which may affect teacher job satisfaction. The researcher also reviewed the importance of humour in schools. The article was based on a quantitative methodology. Questionnaires were sent to 650 teachers in elementary, middle and secondary schools in the state of Nevada, USA. The article reported that there is a relationship between a principal's humour and teacher job satisfaction. It was found that teachers have higher job satisfaction when their principals use humour in the workplace. At the end of the article the researcher showed his opinion of the phenomenon in a different way. He stated that teaching is an extremely hard job, where teachers deal with large numbers of students, sometimes with bad behaviour. They also have to follow educational change and technology, and planning and managing each daily lesson is also hard. So the teachers need a pleasant, comfortable environment in which to do all this hard work, and principals should play a role in order to decrease their stress.

The principal's humour in school is important as a way of improving teacher job satisfaction. Satisfying teachers in schools will contribute to successful educational processes, and students who come to learn will gain benefits and will be satisfied. The principal's humour has been shown to be essential in order to enhance teacher job satisfaction, but it was also stated that there are risks for principals who are not naturally gifted comedians. They may cause annoyance or fail to be funny. They may cause offence. However, at the end of the article, the researcher still felt that the principal's humour was important for teachers' job satisfaction, for students and the whole educational process. In my opinion, the head teacher just has to be a pleasant, hard-working and responsible person, who earns respect. Being humorous is certainly a bonus. I would also add that 'personality' is an important quality in teachers and head teachers.

## **8. Conclusion**

To sum up, the researcher aimed to review the topic of teacher job satisfaction and to identify the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among teachers in different countries of different cultures worldwide. The first six articles reviewed included the issue of teachers' job satisfaction in the UK, Cyprus, Chile, Greece and Saudi Arabia. An interesting addition was in the article on principals' sense of humour. In summary, the seven articles revealed some interesting points about sources of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction among teachers in different countries. First, it was found that there was no relationship among demographic variables (age, gender, length of service) and teacher job satisfaction in the UK, while in Cyprus it was found that students had better relationships with young teachers. Cypriot female teachers paid attention to a friendly environment and external rewards, while male teachers were more interested in promotion and students' achievements. The second point was that Greek teachers were satisfied with teaching their subjects, while only 12% of Chilean teachers mentioned that. The third point was that in terms of type of school and teacher satisfaction, it was found that state school teachers in Chile had a more selfless perspective than those who were in the private sector. Furthermore, in the UK, teachers in independent and privately-managed schools were more satisfied than those who were in foundation or Church of England schools. The next interesting point is that Saudi female teachers and Cypriot teachers were

not satisfied with the educational systems in their countries. In addition, workload, lack of promotion and salary were the main sources of dissatisfaction among teachers in the UK, Greece and Chile, while teachers in Saudi Arabia and Cyprus were satisfied with their salary. It was also shown that students' problems and bad behaviour were considered to be a source of dissatisfaction among teachers in both Chile and Cyprus, while contribution to the community and helping students in their study were the most important sources of satisfaction among teachers in these particular countries. It was suggested that there were slight differences between sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among teachers in developed and developing countries. In terms of head teachers, Alzaidi (2008) found in his review of a wide range of cultural and educational contexts that culture has a great influence on the way head teachers perceive job satisfaction. He found that western (capitalist) developed countries were concerned about intrinsic factors, such as promotion and recognition and the work itself, while head teachers in Eastern developing countries were more concerned with extrinsic factors such as salary and intrapersonal relationships. More studies about head teachers are presented below. This section has concentrated on the topic of job satisfaction in different countries in the world. The researcher believes that cultural differences and economic factors make a difference across Greece, KSA, America and the UK.

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