

CONTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SCHOOL-CONTEXT FACTORS TO JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN COAST PROVINCE, KENYA

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Abstract

This study explored demographic and school-context predictors of teachers' job satisfaction. The study was conducted among a convenient sample of 123 primary school teachers from Coast Province, Kenya, attending a seminar on strategic planning in schools in Mombasa. A researcher-developed questionnaire was administered. Descriptive statistics in the form of percentages, means and frequencies were used for analysis and presentation. In addition multiple regression analysis was used to predict relationships between variables. Teacher job satisfaction was found to be influenced by job demands, school resources and work-related relationships. No significant relationship was found between demographic characteristics and teachers' job satisfaction. Recommendations for staffing and resource allocation are given.

Key words: Demographic characteristics, Job demands, School resources, Work-related relationships, Teachers' job satisfaction

1. Introduction

1.1 Teacher Job Satisfaction

Teachers can be said to be satisfied when they are motivated to do their jobs well and have a high level of morale (Beer et al., 2007, cited in, Strydom, Nortjé, Beukes, Esterhuyse & van der Westhuizen, 2012). Research in the area of teachers' job satisfaction has focused on the contributors and consequences of satisfaction. It has been shown that job satisfaction is related to positive

outcomes including teacher retention and increased performance. Conversely, low job satisfaction has been related to teacher attrition, absenteeism and poor performance among others (Ofuani, 2010). Teacher job satisfaction is a dynamic process dependent on a number of factors - including factors of the job i.e. achievement in the schools, different activities performed, authority in the school, coworkers relations, moral values, responsibility of job, security of job, social service, social status, supervision regarding human relations, supervision regarding technical aspects and variety in tasks (Ali, uz-Zaman, Tabassum & Iqbal, 2011) and individual factors (personal experiences, demographic factors, physical, psycho-social and economic factors) (George, Louw & Badenhorst, 2008). These factors can be broadly divided into two groups - intrinsic and extrinsic factors: where intrinsic factors are mainly determined by a person's motivation and individual factors that the person brings to the job; and where extrinsic factors include the work-environment, supervision and working conditions (Santos, 2002). Studies reveal that teachers' job satisfaction is low. The Teacher Working Conditions Initiative Preliminary Report of Findings, Executive Summary (March 2003), a working paper developed from NCES (1997) shows that teachers are not satisfied with their conditions of work and feel least satisfied with the amount of time they have to do their jobs. Other studies (George et al., 2008; Strydom et al., 2012) indicate that teachers have average job satisfaction which does not differ on grounds of gender.

1.2 Demographic variables and teachers' job satisfaction

Research has posted mixed results concerning the relationship between demographic variables and teacher job satisfaction. One line of findings has shown a positive correlation between job satisfaction and teachers' age, gender and educational level. However, concerning some demographic characteristics, no consensus exists on the direction of influence.

1.2.1 Age: Research on the influence of age on job satisfaction gives mixed results. One argument assumes a linear and direct relationship between age and job satisfaction, where the higher the teacher's age, the higher the level of job satisfaction. Findings of a study conducted among teachers in Finland revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between the teachers' age and job satisfaction (Rasku and Kinnunen, 2003). They found that teachers' job satisfaction was linked to their age. This point of view finds support in Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) who found out that young Tanzanian teachers were less satisfied with their jobs than their older counterparts. Contrary findings by studies (Crossman & Harris, 2006; George et al., 2008; Otube, 2004) indicate that age has no significant influence on teachers' job satisfaction. However, Dehaloo (2011) found that the least motivated teachers were from the age categories 27 to 39 years (with approximately 6 to 15 years of experience), and 40 to 54 years (with 16 to 25 years of experience)

1.2.2 Gender: Studies report inconsistent findings on the role of gender in teacher job satisfaction. Some reveal that job satisfaction levels differ significantly between male and female teachers (Bishay, 1996; Ma & MacMillan, 2001). While a number of studies have found male respondents to report higher job satisfaction than females (Ali et al., 2011), other studies have reported contrary findings (Bishay, 1996). Further, research has isolated specific facets of the job and measured satisfaction based on them. In one such study, male teachers were more satisfied than female teachers with school policies, interpersonal relations and the schools' overall organization (Dehaloo, 2011) and job characteristics and meaningfulness of the job (Ngimbudzi, 2009). A further line of research shows that gender has no significant relationship with teacher job satisfaction (George et al., 2008; Madera, 2005; Strydom et al., 2012). In a study by Otube (2004) T-test show no significant differences in the responses of the male and female special education teachers. Similarly,

Crossman and Harris (2006) conducted a study on job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in United Kingdom and their findings indicated that their satisfaction levels did not differ significantly by gender. These inconclusive findings require further study in different environments.

1.2.3 Length of teaching: Length of teaching has been found to influence job satisfaction. As with other demographic variables, findings show inconsistencies concerning the direction of influence, with some indicating that levels of satisfaction increased with the increase of years in the teaching service while others post contradictory positions. The former position is premised on the hypothesis that as teachers grow older, they earn more and they also adjust their expectations with reality and consequently report more job satisfaction (Karugu, 1980; Kimengi, 1991). This line of findings contradicts David (1997), Gatzke (1993) who argue that teaching experience is associated with decrease in job satisfaction and Ma and MacMillan (1999) who found that older and more experienced teachers expressed significantly less satisfaction with their professional role than their younger and less experienced colleagues. These findings are corroborated by Sari (2004) whose study in Turkey concluded that more working experience was associated with less job satisfaction. It was found that younger and less experienced teachers had higher levels of job satisfaction.

Yet another line of research has found similar variance in teachers' job satisfaction irrespective of years of experience (Ofuani, 2010). Similarly Crossman and Harris (2006) found that teaching experience or length of service did not contribute to any significant differences in job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in the United Kingdom. The implication is that years of work experience do not significantly affect teachers' job satisfaction.

1.2.4 Teachers' level of education

Teachers' level of education and training has also been found to significantly predict job satisfaction with some studies arguing that higher educational qualifications are positively correlated with job satisfaction (Perrachione, 1998). However, other findings show that lower educational findings are positively correlated with job satisfaction among teachers. In the study by Otube (2004), results of the one-way ANOVA test indicate significant differences in the teachers' responses based on their level of education. This trend in results indicates that respondents with a lower education level appear better motivated with their jobs than those with higher education training. This was understood to imply that stable jobs gratify teachers with lower qualifications while teachers with higher qualifications feel their educational effort is wasted. This is often the case where pay is not determined by educational qualification in the teaching profession. Some researchers have delineated specific aspects of the job and their relationship with the job satisfaction of teachers of various levels of educational qualifications. Dehaloo (2011) found out that teachers with bachelor's and master's degrees were significantly more satisfied with their physical environments and overall school organisation than teachers with certificates. A further line of research has found that educational qualifications have no significant effect on teacher job satisfaction (George et al., 2008).

1.3 Job demands and teacher job satisfaction

Studies have suggested an inverse relationship between role overload and teachers' job satisfaction. A study by Alt, Kwon and Henke (1999) as cited in Nelson (2008) indicated that teacher job satisfaction fell as the sizes of their classes rose. Conversely, small class size is associated with increased learning, fewer discipline problems, higher parent satisfaction, and improved learning. Studies show that teachers performed other duties outside the classroom hence putting them under pressure. Additionally, overloading teachers with lessons has been found to lead to dissatisfaction.

In a study by Dehaloo (2011) only 26% of teachers were satisfied with their workloads. In tandem with curricular demands, 72% of teachers contended that they also performed pastoral duties to learners, such as being caregivers, social workers and counsellors. This is worsened by perceived lack of support from department heads, lack of resources, large class size and poor remuneration. In a related study in Botswana, Chimbanga (1999) found out that workload including extra-curricular activities, class size and working conditions played an important role in determining whether teachers found their job satisfying. Work overload was also found to be a reason for dissatisfaction in a study by Sari (2004). However, other studies have found no statistical relationship between class size and amount of work on teacher job satisfaction (Turner, 2007).

1.4 School resources on job satisfaction

Studies have shown that the specific elements of the work environment that matter the most to teachers include working conditions such as clean and well-maintained facilities and access to modern instructional technology (Johnson et al., 2012). Research indicates that classrooms should be comfortable and conducive for learning. They should be ventilated and manageable. Studies show a positive relationship between the academic performance of students and the availability and nature of classrooms. Shortage of classrooms, furniture, equipment and other material resources can affect the productivity of the teacher and this affects levels of job satisfaction (Ingolo, 1991; Matheka, 2005). Under-resourced physical working environments were found by Dehaloo (2011) to lead to less teacher job satisfaction.

1.5 Relationships on teachers' job satisfaction

Teachers spend a lot of time in school. It is their social circle and hence should have healthy relationships with students, peers and school administration. Meaningful interpersonal relationships are essential for learner success. Such relationships include but are not limited to teamwork, joint decision-making, amiable superior-subordinate relations, praise and recognition, appreciation of work done, learner cooperation and good academic performance, empowerment opportunities through fair delegation of tasks, and parental support (Dehaloo, 2011). Some studies have rated relationships as the facet highest on teacher satisfaction scales (Shann, 2001). Studies reveal that teachers have different views concerning their perceptions of relationships at the workplace and such viewpoints directly relate to job satisfaction. In one such study (Dehaloo, 2011) 46% of the respondents believed that teachers supported one another in the realisation of educational outcomes; and 42% that collegial support raised motivation. 41% of respondents believed that learners and teachers enjoyed positive working relations. However, only 32% of the teachers viewed their principals as fair leaders (Dehaloo, 2011). Scott, Cox and Dinham (1999) reveal that relationships with colleagues influenced teachers' job satisfaction in their study in the UK. Similarly Mwamwenda (1995) found a link between positive relationships between teachers and principals, colleagues, learners and parents and teachers' ratings of job satisfaction.

2.1 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. Find out the influence of teachers' background characteristics of age, gender, teaching experience and level of education on job satisfaction.
- ii. Establish the influence of job demands on job satisfaction.
- iii. Determine the influence of school resources on job satisfaction.
- iv. Establish the influence of social relationships at work on job satisfaction

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study was specifically based on the intrinsic and extrinsic nature of factors leading to job satisfaction in Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (1959) of job satisfaction. In his work, Herzberg theorized that job satisfaction was influenced by "intrinsic factors" or relating to actual job content and by "extrinsic factors" associated with the work environment. Examples of intrinsic factors for teachers would be their demographic characteristics and working relationships. Job demands including role overload and resources are extrinsic in nature. It is the focus of this paper to determine whether both intrinsic and extrinsic factors lead to teacher job satisfaction.

2.3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual model of the study illustrates the influence of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors on teachers' job satisfaction. The intrinsic factors being investigated are demographic characteristics and interpersonal relationships while the extrinsic factors are job demands and school resources. From Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, it is hypothesized that teachers will be satisfied by the nature of their work and their personal characteristics. The model also hypothesizes that if job demands are balanced by resources, teachers will report higher levels of job satisfaction. The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

3.1 Research methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was done using a convenient sample of 123 primary school teachers attending a seminar on strategic planning for schools held in Mombasa, Kenya. Data were collected using a researcher-developed paper-based questionnaire. The questionnaire items were grounded in literature related to the facets of teacher job satisfaction under study. Data analysis was done using descriptive (frequencies, means and standard deviations) and inferential (regression analysis) statistics. Results were presented in tables.

3.2 Findings and Discussion

3.2.1 Contribution of demographic characteristics on teachers' job satisfaction

Teachers' job satisfaction was measured in four areas: demographic variables, job demands, school resource and work-related relationships. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution and the means of job satisfaction of the sample for each demographic factor. Findings from Table 1 show that majority of the respondents were female (77.2%). This generally agrees with studies which have found higher numbers of females in the teaching profession (Billingsley, 2004; Stempien & Loeb, 2002; Strydom et al., 2012). There was not a marked difference in the levels of job satisfaction on the basis of gender. The absence of any differences in levels of teachers' job satisfaction on the basis of gender supports findings of other studies (George et al., 2008; Madera, 2005; Otube, 2004; Strydom et al., 2012).

About two-thirds (68.9%) of the sample were aged over 40 years which may be an indicator of the age at which teachers are given senior responsibilities (the teachers were attending a seminar on strategic planning). As a group, teachers aged 35-39 reported the highest levels of job satisfaction similar to those with between 5-9 years of teaching experience. This finding supports the point of view that there's a positive relationship between age and teachers' job satisfaction (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Rasku & Kinnunen, 2003) and contradicts other studies which found no relationship (Crossman & Harris, 2006; George et al., 2008; Otube, 2004). The finding concerning the lack of relationship between years of teaching experience and teachers' job satisfaction seems to support findings of Crossman and Harris (2006) and Ofuani (2010) who argue that length of service did not contribute to any significant differences in job satisfaction among schoolteachers. From the

findings, it can be concluded that teaching experience does not influence job satisfaction. P1 teachers recorded the highest levels of satisfaction while those with postgraduate qualifications were the least satisfied. This finding supports the findings of Otube (2004) who found out that respondents with a lower education level appear better motivated with their jobs than those with higher education training.

Further, a regression analysis was done to establish the contribution of each of the demographic variables on job satisfaction. However, none of the regression equations was significant. It can be concluded that demographic variables of gender, age, years of teaching experience and level of academic training are not significant predictors of teacher job satisfaction.

3.2.2 Contribution of job demands on teachers' job satisfaction

The study then sought to establish the contribution of job demands on teachers' job satisfaction. Job demands were described in terms of time spent in academic and other duties; the amount of work assigned and class size. The findings are presented in Table 2. Findings in Table 2 indicate that the highest number of teachers 52 (42.6%) were satisfied with the assignments in school while similarly high numbers were dissatisfied with the number of non-teaching hours they spent in school and class size respectively. All three facets but class size were significantly related to job satisfaction. ANOVA results for the influence of the number of working hours, number of hours of non-teaching assignments and amount of assignments in school were significant [$F(4, 116) = 4.740, p < .05$; $F(4, 116) = 3.184, p < .05$; $F(4, 117) = 3.690, p < .05$] respectively. Class size was not a significant predictor of teacher job satisfaction. Hierarchical regression was done to determine the contribution of the four facets of job demands. The results are presented in Table 3. Results of the regression analysis in Table 3 show that number of working hours accounted for the highest change in variance in teacher job satisfaction (9.7%). The least change was due to class size (0.5%). Cumulatively the four variables accounted for 15.1% variance in teacher job satisfaction and the regression equation was significant $F(1, 117) = 14.465, p < .05$. The implication is that job demands cumulatively significantly predict teacher job satisfaction. These findings show an inverse relationship between work overload and teachers' job satisfaction. The findings support findings of other studies (Chimbganda, 1999; Dehaloo, 2011; Sari, 2004). However, inconsistencies remain concerning the influence of class size on teachers' job satisfaction. Failure to find any statistical relationship between class size and job satisfaction supports the findings of Turner (2007).

3.2.3 Contribution of school resources on teachers' job satisfaction

The study also sought to determine the influence of school resources on teachers' job satisfaction. Findings of descriptive analysis are presented in Table 4. Findings in Table 4 reveal very low means for all the facets of school resources. Findings also indicate that library and other learning resources contribute the least satisfaction among teachers 15 (12.2%). The implication is that schools from where this sample of teachers works are likely to be severely under-resourced. On the whole, it appears that resources in such schools are a major handicap. Fewer numbers of teachers 27 (21.9%) expressed satisfaction with the physical conditions of classrooms while a third 40 (32.8%) were satisfied with the physical conditions of staffrooms and offices. To further determine the influence of school resources, a hierarchical regression analysis was done and the findings presented in Table 5. Findings in Table 5 reveal that physical conditions of staffrooms and offices accounted for 5.4% change in teachers' job satisfaction while the whole model explained 8.3% variance in teachers' job satisfaction. Of the three, the availability of library and other learning resources contributed the least change in job satisfaction (1.3%). ANOVA results for the three facets were significant implying that they positively predicted satisfaction. When regression analysis of the group variable (school resources) was done, the regression equation was found to be significant [$F(1, 120) = 10.740, p < .05$]. As a group, the variables accounted for 8.2% of variance in teacher job satisfaction

($M = 6.81$, $t = 3.277$). The finding shows that school resources are significant predictors of teacher job satisfaction. The implication is that the more school resources are available, the higher is the teachers' job satisfaction. These findings support studies which have found out that shortage of classrooms, furniture, equipment and other material resources are related to high levels of job satisfaction (Dehaloo, 2011; Ingolo, 1991; Matheka, 2005).

3.2.4 Contribution of relationships at work on teachers' job satisfaction

The study further sought to determine the influence of relationships at work on teachers' job satisfaction. Relationships were described in terms of school administration, fellow teachers and students. The results of the descriptive analysis are presented in Table 6. Findings in Table 6 reveal that teachers' relationships in school play a very important role in job satisfaction. Relationships with other teachers and with students scored the highest means (4.20 and 4.09) respectively. Majority 106 (86.2%) were satisfied with their relationships with students while an equally high number 98 (79.7%) expressed satisfaction with their relationships with fellow teachers.

To further understand the contribution of the facets incorporating work-related relationships, hierarchical regression analysis was done. The results are presented in Table 7. Findings in Table 7 reveal that the largest change in job satisfaction was due to availability of useful advice while relationships with students did not add any changes to the model. Relationships with school administrators and with fellow teachers were not significant in the model. However, the regression equation for the whole model was significant $F(1, 120) = 11.645$, $p < .05$. It can therefore be concluded that work-related relationships predict teachers' job satisfaction. The findings on the influence of work-related relationships support other findings from previous studies (Mwamwenda, 1995; Scott, Cox & Dinham, 1999; Shann, 2001). These studies reveal a link between positive work-related relationships and teachers' ratings of job satisfaction.

On the whole, this study found out that teachers reported average levels of job satisfaction ($M = 3.15$). This corroborates findings of other studies (George et al., 2008; Strydom et al., 2012) which indicate that teachers have average job satisfaction which did not differ on grounds of gender. Additionally, it was found out that work-related relationships was the variable most related with job satisfaction followed by school resources, while demographic variables influenced the least. It can also be concluded that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influenced teacher job satisfaction of this sample.

4.1 Recommendations

This study has contributed to the body of research in the area of demographic and school-related influences of teachers' job satisfaction. The findings of this study have a few implications for policy. There's is need for the government and other stakeholders in the area of education to staff schools in order to ease the work overload on available teachers. It may also be important to decongest schools which may require more capital investment in expanding physical infrastructure like classrooms and offices. Schools should also be equipped since it was found out that school resources predict teacher job satisfaction. This is especially in the area of teaching-learning resources like provision of library facilities. For better interpersonal relationships, deliberate efforts should be made by school administrators to establish conducive working environments in their schools. In addition, school administrators should undergo management courses in human resource management to improve interpersonal relationships with staff working under them.

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APPENDICES

Table 1 Frequency distribution and means of job satisfaction according to the demographic variables

Demographic variables	f	%	M	SD
Gender				
Male	28	22.8	3.14	1.04
Female	95	77.2	3.15	1.16
Total	123		3.15	1.13
Age (years)				
Below 22	1	.8	4.00	
22-29	9	7.4	3.11	1.45
30-34	8	6.6	3.37	1.30
35-39	20	16.4	3.45	.82
40 and above	84	68.9	3.05	1.15
Total			3.15	1.13
Teaching experience (years)				
1-4	8	6.6	2.87	1.35
5-9	12	9.8	3.50	.79
10 and above	102	83.6	3.13	1.15
Total			3.15	1.13
Level of training				
P1	43	35.5	3.30	1.18
Diploma	24	19.8	3.16	1.04
Undergraduate	50	41.3	3.10	1.09
Postgraduate	4	3.3	2.50	1.73
Total			3.16	1.13

Table 2 Means, standard deviations and frequencies of school demands and influence on job satisfaction

Job demands	M	SD	Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		r
			f	%	f	%	f	%	
No. of working hours	2.87	1.30	43	35.0	37	30.6	41	33.9	.298**
No. of non-teaching hours	2.35	1.32	24	19.8	35	28.9	62	51.2	.231*
Assignments	2.52	1.42	52	42.6	37	30.3	33	27.0	.273**
Class size	2.52	1.42	37	30.1	24	19.5	62	50.4	.086

** Significant at $p < .05$

* Significant at $p < .01$

Table 3 Hierarchical regression analysis of the influence of job demands on job satisfaction

Model	R square	R square change	F	t	p
1	.097	.097	12.508	3.537	.001
2	.121	.025	8.009	1.808	.001
3	.146	.025	6.564	1.830	.000
4	.151	.005	5.061	-.784	.001

Table 4 Means, standard deviations and frequencies of school resources and influence on job satisfaction

School resources	M	SD	Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		r
			f	%	f	%	f	%	
Physical conditions: staffroom, offices	2.65	1.41	40	32.8	25	20.5	57	46.8	.232
Library and other resources	1.78	1.15	15	12.2	17	13.8	91	74.0	.195
Physical conditions of classrooms	2.34	1.33	27	21.9	30	24.4	66	53.7	.251

Table 5 Hierarchical regression analysis of the influence of school resources on job satisfaction

Model	R square	R square change	F	t	p
1	.054	.054	6.838	2.615	.010
2	.067	.013	4.251	1.276	.016
3	.083	.017	3.582	1.470	.016

Table 6 Means, standard deviations and frequencies of work-related relationships and influence on job satisfaction

Relationships	M	SD	Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		r
			f	%	f	%	f	%	
With school administrators	3.52	1.17	74	60.1	25	20.3	24	19.5	.160
With other teachers	4.20	.98	98	79.7	16	13.0	9	7.3	.097
Useful advice	2.64	1.26	39	32.0	36	29.5	47	38.5	.336**
With students	4.09	1.01	106	86.2	6	4.9	11	9.0	.080

**Significant at $p < .05$

Table 7 Hierarchical regression analysis of the influence of work-related relationships on job satisfaction

Model	R square	R square change	F	t	p
1	.027	.027	3.288	1.813	.072
2	.035	.009	2.177	1.031	.118
3	.122	.087	5.465	3.413	.001
4	.122	.000	4.064	.034	.004

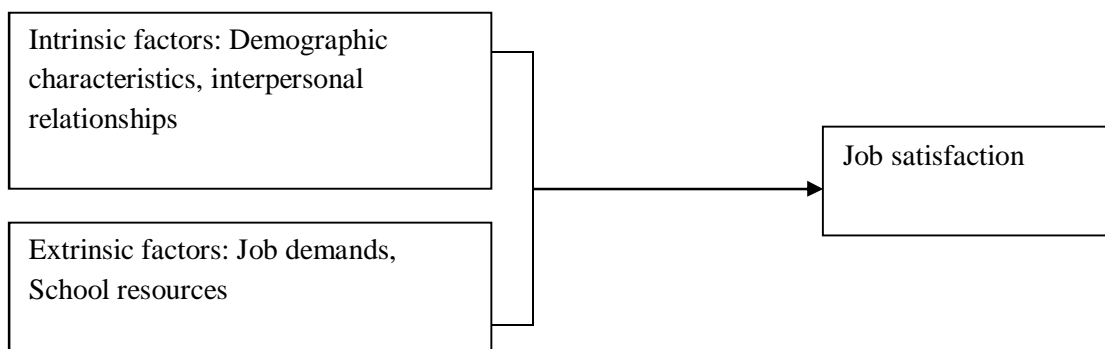


Figure 1 Conceptual framework