

Job satisfaction among secondary school teachers

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Abstract

This paper provides empirical evidence on the differences in the job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Sabah with respect to gender, service category, job title, tenure and place of origin. It also attempts to identify the work dimension factors that affect the job satisfaction of the teachers and to ascertain how these factors relate to the aforementioned teachers' characteristics. A survey was conducted with the participation of 200 teachers. The teachers' job satisfaction were determined by two separate measures namely overall and facet specific overall job satisfaction. The work dimension factors were clustered into six comprising pay, working conditions, co-workers, promotion, work itself and supervision. This study reveals that secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah were generally satisfied with their job; there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and gender, whereby the male teachers were generally more satisfied than female teachers. The graduate teachers were more satisfied than non-graduate teachers. The higher ranking teachers were more satisfied than the ordinary teachers while the older teachers were more satisfied than their younger counterparts. However, there is no significant relationship between places of origin of teachers with job satisfaction. Based on the bivariate correlation tests, six work dimensions of teaching job are significantly related to teachers' job satisfaction. In addition, there were significant difference between the six dimensions by gender and service category of teachers. Only co-workers dimension is not significantly different among teachers' career stage and their tenure of service. There was no significant difference between all the work dimensions and teachers' place of origin. Based on the findings of the study several recommendations are forwarded.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, Secondary schools, teachers*

Introduction

Teachers play a very crucial role in achieving the objectives of Malaysia's vision 2020. Disgruntled teachers who are not satisfied with their job could not be committed and productive and would not be performing at the best of their capabilities. Teaching profession is facing problems related to teachers' job satisfaction. The general perception is that teachers in the government school are dissatisfied with their profession. They are said to be dissatisfied with teaching in the government

schools. If the claim is true that the government school teachers are dissatisfied, what then is this dissatisfaction? In what aspects are they satisfied? Therefore, it is necessary to probe into this matter through a careful study. The questions that this study seeks to probe are as follows:

- i) What is the level of job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah related to their teaching profession?
- ii) Is there any significant difference between the job satisfaction of the Sabah secondary school teachers by gender, academic and professional qualification, tenure in service, career development stage and place of origin?
- iii) What are some of the dimensions of work that affect job satisfaction of Sabah secondary school teachers?
- iv) What is the relationship between the work dimensions with teachers' job satisfaction and is there any significant difference between the work dimensions with some of the teacher characteristics as identified in question two?

The general objective of the study is to examine teachers' job satisfaction in government schools and the specific objectives of the present study are as follows:

- i) To assess the level of job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah related to their teaching profession.
- ii) To compare job satisfaction of the secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah by gender, academic and professional qualification, career development stage, tenure in service and place of origin (hometowns).
- iii) To identify the dimensions of work that affect job satisfaction of Sabah secondary school teachers.
- iv) To examine the relationship of work dimensions with job satisfaction and their influence on various groups of teachers identified in the second objective.

Methodology

A sample of 200 respondents was included in this survey. The respondents were selected from five secondary schools located in the Tawau region of Sabah. The five schools were chosen by using a probability sampling. The sampling design employed was cluster sampling. The respondents were teachers in the selected schools. The primary data were collected during the month of July 1998, by means of questionnaires. The questionnaires consist of four main parts: (i) respondents' background information on age, sex, education level, tenure, pay received, teaching experience in the present school, career stage in school, marital status and teachers' place of origin, (ii) respondents' overall job satisfaction, (iii) respondents' facet specific job satisfaction, (iv) respondents' work-load.

The target population for the present study is government secondary school teachers in Sabah who had taught for at least one year. Both trained as well as non-trained teachers were included in the survey. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed and only 200 of them were returned and usable.

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for MS Windows". To describe the respondents' background information, the statistical techniques such as frequency, mean and percentage were used. T-tests and F-tests (ANOVA) were employed to determine the differences between job satisfaction and other selected independent variables of this study. Pearson's correlation was used to determine the direction and magnitude of association between the independent and dependent variables. The correlation coefficients (denoted by r) range from 0 to

+1.0 (Miller, 1991). The description on the magnitude of the relationship between dependent and independent variables was based on Guilford's interpretation as follows:

- Less than 0.20 - Slight, almost negligible relationship
- 0.21- 0.40 - Low correlation; definite but small relationship
- 0.41- 0.70 - Moderate correlation; substantial relationship
- 0.71- 0.90 - High correlation; marked relationship
- 0.91- 1.0 - Very high correlation; very dependable relationship

Findings and discussions

Profile of respondents

In this study, more than half of the respondents are female (54.5%) and the remaining 45.5% are male. The majority (48.0%) of the respondents were in 26-30 years age group. The majority (55.5%) of the respondents are Sabahans and about 52.5% of the respondents are single.

About 71% of the respondents received monthly income of between RM 1001-RM 2000. Only 1% of the respondents received monthly income of RM 3000 and above. More than half of the respondents (54.5%) included in this survey are non-graduate teachers. A substantial number (39.5%) of the respondents obtained a bachelor degree. Another 45.5% of the respondents obtained at least HSC or STPM qualifications. More than half of the respondents (75.5%) had a teaching experience of between 1-5 years. The majority (88.5%) of the teachers has taught in the present school for 1-5 years. Only 1% of the respondents have taught in the present school for more than 21 years. In this study, 69.5% of the respondents are ordinary teachers and the remaining 30.5% are holding the post of subject heads, department heads and also senior assistants.

This study reveals that 43% of the respondents were teaching at least two subjects in their schools. Only 0.5% of them were teaching 5 subjects. The majority (82.5%) of the respondents taught between 21-30 periods per week. The majority (90%) of the respondents taught between 3-6 hours per day. Finally, about 71.0% of the respondents were engaged in at least between 3-6 activities in their respective schools. These activities cover both the curricular and co-curricular activities which are carried out either inside or outside the schools.

Analysis of job satisfaction level

The first objective of the study is aimed at assessing the level of job satisfaction of the secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah. In this study, the job satisfaction of the respondents was divided into two aspects. The first was on their overall job satisfaction and the other was on their facet-specific job satisfaction. The overall satisfaction is quantified by the composite scores of five items, whereas the facet-specific job satisfaction is obtained by the composite scores of twenty six items pertaining to various different aspects of teaching job. These scales have reliability coefficients of 0.72 and 0.92 respectively. To accomplish this part of the analysis, the distribution of the overall and facet-specific job satisfaction scores is categorised into two levels, high and low. For the overall job satisfaction measurement, the total maximum score is 15 and the total minimum score is 5. On the other hand, the total maximum score for the facet-specific job satisfaction is 78 and the total minimum score is 26.

This study reveals that majority of the respondents (81%) had a high level of overall job satisfaction. More than half of the respondents (55.5%) had a high level of facet specific overall job satisfaction. The mean score for the overall job satisfaction was 11.26 and for the facet-specific overall job satisfaction the mean score was 52.19.

Differences in the level of job satisfaction by respondents' background

The result of the analysis shows that the male respondents had a relatively higher level of overall job satisfaction compared to the female respondents. The mean score for the female respondents was 10.8 and for the male respondents were 11.8. This result supports the findings of Quitugua (1976) who showed that male teachers were overall more satisfied than female teachers but contradict the findings of Ghazali (1979) who reported that there was in significant relationship between sex and teachers' overall job satisfaction. The present study reveals that, there is a significant relationship between teachers' overall job satisfaction and sex, whereby the male teachers generally felt more satisfied than female teachers.

When the teachers' overall job satisfaction are compared, a significant different between graduate and non-graduate teachers was observed. This confirms that the graduate teachers were more satisfied with their overall teaching job than the non-graduates. This probably because the graduate teachers receive higher monthly income than the non-graduate teachers and they usually occupy higher positions in schools. The findings of this present study do not support that of Ghazali (1979) who concluded that non-graduate teachers were more satisfied than the graduate teachers.

The study also found that there was a significant different in the mean overall job satisfaction among teachers at various career stage. The teachers holding higher position in schools tend to have high level of overall job satisfaction compared to those who do not. The probable reason is that the teachers who hold higher positions in schools have less number of teaching periods and they were more involved in other more challenging administrative duties in their schools. In contrast, ordinary teachers are teaching the same subjects continuously and are burdened with heavy teaching period and other co-curricular activities.

Teachers with more than 21 years of teaching experience were more satisfied than others. Usually teachers who remain in their job for a long time are normally those who are satisfied with their job. This study concludes that senior teachers were more satisfied with their teaching job than the younger ones. This finding disagrees with the results of earlier study by Quitugua (1976) which reported that younger teachers were found to be more satisfied than senior teachers. However, this study supports the conclusion made by Ghazali (1979).

Based on the result of the F-test, there was no significant different between teachers' mean overall job satisfaction by place of origin (hometowns). In other words, there is significant different in the mean overall job satisfaction of Sabah and West Malaysia teachers.

Facet Specific Overall Job Satisfaction (FSJS)

This study shows that there was significant different between teachers' facet specific overall job satisfaction by gender. The male teachers were relatively more satisfied than female teachers. This

study also indicates that the graduate teachers tend to be more satisfied than non-graduate teachers with respect to their facet specific overall satisfaction.

This study also reveals that the senior teachers were found to have higher facet specific satisfaction compared to younger teachers. There was also significant difference between teachers' facet specific overall job satisfaction by career stage. The teachers who hold higher positions in schools are more satisfied than the lower ranking teachers.

Work dimensions satisfaction

The work dimensions included in this study are: working conditions, pay, supervision, co-workers, and promotions and work itself. The study reveals that the teachers are generally dissatisfied with their pay and their working conditions. On the other hand, they express general satisfaction over other work dimension such as supervision, promotions, co-workers and work itself. This implies that pay and working conditions are the two main dissatisfiers among secondary school teachers.

Relationship between work dimensions and job satisfaction

Based on the bivariate correlation tests, six work dimensions show significant relationship with teachers' overall job satisfaction and also with their facet specific overall job satisfaction. Firstly working conditions is moderately correlated with both overall job satisfaction ($r = 0.51$) and facet specific overall job satisfaction ($r = 0.59$). This finding suggests that the working conditions in schools need to be improved to ensure higher job satisfaction level among the teachers. Secondly co-workers correlate positively with overall job satisfaction and also with facet specific overall job satisfaction. Khaleque and Rahman (1987) in their study observed that the good working relationship among the co-workers in an organisation is very important in determining higher job satisfaction of employees. In this study, the co-workers dimensions had a moderate correlation with teachers' overall job satisfaction ($r = 0.42$, $p = 0.00$) and facet specific overall job satisfaction ($r = 0.40$, $p = 0.01$). This suggests that, the school management should provide a conducive environment to ensure cohesive relations between teachers and also between teachers with their school heads.

Next, pay and promotion have low correlation with overall job satisfaction but moderately correlated with facet specific overall job satisfaction. Weiner (1980) showed that the more dissatisfied employees are with their pay, the more likely they are to be absent and to quit. Hare (1966) cited in Ramlah (1984) stated that "failure to obtain promotion is a blow to a man's self respect from which it will arouse and causes dissatisfaction and also frustration in work". Finally supervision and work itself are also positively related with teachers' job satisfaction. Supervisors who establish a supportive personal relationship with their subordinates and take a personal interest in them contribute to their employees' satisfaction and take a personal interest in them contribute to their employees' satisfaction Flesihman et al. (1995) and Barowe et al. (1972) found that by and large, workers want their jobs to be challenging; they do not want to be doing mindless jobs day after day.

Therefore the six work dimensions are found to be very important in determining teachers' job satisfaction. This implies that the school management should focus on these six dimensions to ensure the satisfaction of school teacher.

Difference in work dimension satisfaction by respondents' background

The study shows that there are significant different between the six work dimensions by gender. In addition, the present study also reveals that there are significant different between work dimensions and service category of teachers (Graduate and non-graduate teacher). Only co-workers dimension shows no significant different with teachers' career development stage and also with teachers' service tenure. Finally there is no significant different between work dimensions and teachers' place of origin.

Teachers' preferred variety in job

Almost three quarter (72%) of the respondents prefer moderate type of variety in their job while 12% of the respondents prefer little variety in their teaching job. The finding supports the general perception of this study whereby moderate job variety was more preferred by employees in an organization.

Teachers' work load and job satisfaction

The variables selected for teachers' work load were: (a) number of subjects taught, (b) total teaching periods, (c) average teaching hours, and (d) number of activities involved. The t-test shows that mean total teaching periods was significantly related with teachers' overall job satisfaction and also with their facet specific overall job satisfaction. The others are not significantly related with teachers' job satisfaction.

Conclusion and recommendations

The secondary school teachers included in this study are generally satisfied with their teaching Job. This finding does not confirm our general perception of this study that the teachers in our country are dissatisfied with their profession. This study also found that the secondary school teachers are not satisfied with their pay and working conditions. This finding confirms our general perception of this study whereby the Malaysian school teachers are not satisfied over poor pay system and also over poor working conditions especially in the rural schools.

Findings from this study imply that secondary schools in Tawau, Sabah is in urgent need to improve the working conditions in most schools. Special plans are needed to improve the school working conditions in order to provide a better working environment for the teachers to perform better. Special considerations and allocations from the Ministry of Education are needed so as to enhance the working conditions and the school physical conditions. In addition, the findings of this study imply that the six work dimensions selected have positives effects on teachers' overall job satisfaction. In other words, these work dimensions of teaching job should be taken into account when planning for teachers overall job satisfaction. This means that teachers' work dimensions data are important source of consideration for maintaining their job satisfaction.

The findings of this study reveal that the six dimensions of the teaching job are significantly associated with teachers' job satisfaction. The school management and also the Education Department should look into carefully all these six dimensions which are found to be positively affecting the secondary school teachers satisfaction. Schools should be equipped with adequate

facilities and other teaching materials sufficiently in order for the teachers to function effectively and efficiently in the school context.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) should look into special material inducement in the form of higher salary scheme, higher salary increment or higher year end bonuses in order to motivate and increase the secondary school teachers' morale and job satisfaction. Hence, it is recommended that the MOE offers a more attractive salary scheme for both graduate and non-graduate teachers. The government should review the current salary scheme for a teacher which commensurate with their responsibilities and teaching loads. The researchers believe that school management has a duty to find out if their teachers are satisfied with their jobs. If they are not satisfied, the management especially the head school should find out why and determine tangible solutions towards improving the morale and teachers' satisfaction.

The present research has raised some questions that need to be answered through a systematic research study. Since the present study only limited to six dimensions of teaching job, it is hoped that in future other various dimensions of work be included to examine the teachers' satisfaction. Further research should empirically examine the relationship between teacher overall job satisfaction with a school's academic performance. Although it is important that teachers in general are able to achieve an optimum level of satisfaction with all aspects of their job, the ultimate goals of any educational system is the achievement of a high level of academic performance by the students. It is also recommended that further research should examine closely the difference in the job satisfaction of urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sabah. In this present study, it was found that there was no significant difference between job satisfaction and teachers' place of origin. Further detail study need to be carried out to investigate into this subject because based on the researchers' observation, the teachers' place of origin does affect the teachers' job satisfaction.

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