

## ENHANCING TEACHER WELL-BEING IN MALAYSIA: AN EXPLORATION OF JOB SATISFACTION - A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Norbaiti Hanum Binti Hedzir<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Effat Bin Mokhtar<sup>1</sup>, Fahmi Zaidi Bin Abdul Razak<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Islamic Studies, Sultan Ahmad Shah Pahang Islamic University (UnIPSAS)

### Abstract

*This research article delves into the critical issue of job satisfaction among teachers in Malaysia, acknowledging the pivotal role of education in national development. The study emphasizes the evolving complexity of teachers' roles and responsibilities and the necessity for continuous professional development. Focusing on the importance of job satisfaction, the research explores the challenges faced by teachers, including issues of credibility, lack of focus, and increased workload, which contribute to dissatisfaction in fulfilling their responsibilities. The definition of job satisfaction, drawing from various studies, highlights its multifaceted nature, encompassing psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that contribute to an individual's contentment with their job. The article examines the scenario of job satisfaction among teachers in Malaysia, citing instances of dissatisfaction leading to early retirements and a casual approach towards teaching, ultimately affecting student discipline. A comprehensive discussion integrates findings from multiple studies conducted between 2014 and 2022, employing various theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and communication models like Shannon and Weaver's. Notably, Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation Theory emerges as a recurrent framework in these studies. The research highlights the moderate overall job satisfaction among teachers, with specific dimensions such as promotion opportunities and current work conditions exhibiting low satisfaction and heightened work-related stress. In conclusion, the study underscores the intricate interplay of factors influencing teacher job satisfaction and advocates for a holistic approach by schools and the government to enhance teacher well-being. The research also notes a gap in exploring the impact of integrity and religiosity on job satisfaction, suggesting a potential avenue for future research. Enhancing teacher job satisfaction is deemed imperative for the improvement of education quality and societal well-being.*

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Teacher, Motivation, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

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\*Corresponding Author: Fahmi Zaidi Bin Abdul Razak, Sultan Ahmad Shah Pahang Islamic University (UnIPSAS).

Email: [fahmizaidi@unipsas.edu.my](mailto:fahmizaidi@unipsas.edu.my)

## **INTRODUCTION**

The education system serves as a catalyst for the development of a nation Ek Klai (2020). This is because an efficient education system produces a knowledgeable and morally upright society, capable of producing highly skilled individuals with a first-class mindset.

However, nowadays, the role and responsibilities of a teacher are becoming increasingly complex. As a result, teachers must continually equip themselves with various knowledge, skills, and be prepared for any changes occurring within the national education system (Rahman, 2019). To ensure the field of teaching continues to evolve positively, the job satisfaction among teachers is crucial to be studied. This is because it is a branch of research that assesses the performance of teachers in their teaching careers. Teachers serve as the medium for the dissemination of knowledge and culture, and their profession plays a vital role in the development of Islam since its inception up to the present day. Teachers shape attitudes, skills, personalities, and ways of living as servants of Allah Ishak et al., (2021). In today's society, various issues and problems have arisen in relation to this profession. Among them, teachers often fail to demonstrate true credibility in their roles, leading to a lack of positive performance and professional commitment. Moreover, teachers often lack focus and clear objectives while teaching, resulting in a negative portrayal of the profession and affecting its image (Rahman, 2019).

Furthermore, teachers are also blamed for the decline in students' moral values. These challenges are compounded by the workload teachers bear, including school management and administration, lesson preparation, attending courses, workshops, seminars, and more. These issues significantly contribute to the dissatisfaction among teachers in carrying out their responsibilities.

## **DEFINITION OF JOB SATISFACTION**

The most frequently referenced definition of job satisfaction in various studies is provided by Locke et al (1976), who define job satisfaction as an internal positive state arising from a person's assessment of their job or work experiences, closely tied to feelings and thoughts. This definition is also supported by Malek (1998) dan Phoa & Nazarudin (2019), who describe job satisfaction as the manifestation of positive feelings such as joy, comfort, and contentment resulting from work experiences. This is a significant factor in shaping motivated and high-performing employees. This definition is further expanded by Mihat et al (2020), stating that job satisfaction is a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that make an individual feel content with their job. Job satisfaction clearly represents a set of factors that result in a sense of contentment after performing one's role in the workplace. It generates positive and negative feelings towards the job and is closely related to employee behavior at the workplace. It symbolizes achievement, productivity, self-well-being, and can evoke joy and happiness towards one's work. Syakirah Binti Zakaria et al (2016) emphasize that job satisfaction contributes to producing workers with higher levels of job performance.

## THE SCENERIO OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS IN MALAYSIA

Teachers who are satisfied with their duties are certain to educate their students well, and as a result, a brilliant generation is nurtured for the nation. However, in the current Malaysian scenario, we are often confronted by mass media reports about teachers' dissatisfaction in their careers. This is evidenced by recent news in Berita Harian Online, Tuesday, January 3, 2023, where the National Union of Teaching Professions (NUTP) claims that more than 10,000 teachers have opted for early retirement almost every year recently due to excessive workloads. Job dissatisfaction also leads to teachers adopting a casual and undisciplined approach, which in turn gives rise to problematic students Sidi et al., (2021).

A recent study conducted by Mustapa (2022) stated that 52.7% of academic staff at the Malaysian Teacher Education Institutes feel dissatisfied with their current work. Teacher dissatisfaction is not limited to government teachers; it is also prevalent among private school teachers, as reported in the findings of the study by Darsan et al (2022). The study found that half of the respondents agreed (58.3%) that they might not have a promising future if they continue working in their current schools. Additionally, half of the respondents also agreed (54.3%) that they might leave their current school and seek employment with other organizations in the coming year. Furthermore, an earlier study by (Hassan & Wahab, 2017) indicated that teachers in Secondary Schools in the Bangsar Zone were also dissatisfied with their jobs, especially in terms of the current work conditions, salary, promotion opportunities, and supervision.

Table 1: List Of Related Theories In Job Satisfaction Studies

JOURNAL	TEORY	INSTRUMENT	RESULT
(Rosli & Ibrahim, 2021)	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory (1954) posits that there are five levels of self-needs.  Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1959), in terms of workload and responsibility, achievement, development potential, and recognition.	Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), Spector (1994)	The level of work-family conflict is low, while job satisfaction is at a moderate level.
(Nazri Et Al., 2022)	Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model (1949)  Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model by Trauth (1986).	Brayfield and Rothe's Job Satisfaction Index (1951)	The job satisfaction of secondary school teachers is at a moderate level, and there is a positive relationship between the communication elements practiced by principals and teachers' job satisfaction.
(Tengku Elmi Azlina Tengku Muda & Noriah	Smith et al.'s Model (1985), comprising six components: work environment, salary, colleagues,	Job Descriptive Index (1975). Smith, et.al. (1975)	In terms of job satisfaction, out of the six measured components, only one

Mohd Ishak, 2014)	supervision, promotion opportunities, and side jobs.		component is at a high level, four components are at a moderate level, and one component is at a low level.
(Norhazwani & Jamalullail, 2017)	Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory emphasizes two categories: hygiene factors and motivators.	Job Descriptive Index (JDI) by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969)	Teachers in National Secondary Schools in the Bangsar Zone are dissatisfied with their jobs, particularly regarding the current work conditions, salary, promotion opportunities, and supervision.
Zainudin & Muhamad, 2021)	Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Herzberg's.	Job Descriptive Index (JDI) by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969)	Teacher job satisfaction is at a high level. The dimensions of supervision, colleagues, salary, and the work itself exhibit high levels of satisfaction, except for the promotion opportunities dimension, which registers a moderate level. The level of teacher burnout is also at a moderate level.
(Saad Et Al., 2014)	Teori Kejadian Manusia	The adaptation of the Integrity InNi instrument (Amini Abdullah et al., 2005) and the job performance instrument (Mohd. Zakaria, 2005) was conducted. Meanwhile, the job satisfaction questionnaire from an Islamic perspective was developed by the researchers themselves. This questionnaire was based on the elements of human creation according to the Quran and the interpretation of these elements by Imam Al-Ghazali (1980 and 1976).	The spiritual well-being aspect (KKI ruhiyyah) exerts a stronger influence on the integrity of GPI compared to other satisfaction aspects.
(Salleh & Abdullah, Salbiah Mohamed Salleh, 2021)	Teori SPIES	Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ)	There exists a significant relationship between the spiritual aspect and the emotional aspect of teachers. This implies that the stronger

an individual's spiritual aspect, which includes faith, piety, responsibility, trustworthiness, and sincerity, the higher the level of job satisfaction among religious teachers.

(Lia Indah Ahmad & Ruslin Amir, 2018)	"And say, 'Do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers. And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do.'" (Quran, Surah At-Tawbah, 9:105)	Job Descriptive Index (JDI) by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969)	There is a significant relationship between the level of job stress and the level of job satisfaction among teachers. Furthermore, the level of job stress among teachers is at an expert level. This indicates that teachers have experienced stress but are still capable of managing this stress.
(Setiyati & Hikmawati, 2020)	Teori Maslow		There is a significant relationship between the instructional leadership practices of the principal and teachers' job satisfaction.
(Anita Ahmad & Mohd Izham Hj Mohd Hamzah, 2022)	Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Herzberg's		
(Karnan & Marimuthu, 2021)	Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Herzberg's	Job Descriptive Index (JDI)	The level of collaborative leadership practices by the principal and the overall level of teacher job satisfaction are at a high level. The study also found a positive and very strong relationship between collaborative leadership practices by the principal and teacher job satisfaction.
(Ajilin Tawan Et Al., 2020)	Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Herzberg's and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory (1954)	Job Descriptive Index (JDI), Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), Teacher Sense Efficacy Scale dan Job Satisfaction Index (JSI).	The levels of motivation, efficacy, and teacher satisfaction are high, except for emotional intelligence, which is at a moderate level.

## DISCUSSION

When studying job satisfaction among teachers in Malaysia, from the reading of past studies spanning a period of 10 years from 2014 to 2022, Table 1 demonstrates the use of various theories and models related to job satisfaction and motivation. These include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs emphasizes five levels of self-needs. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory differentiates between hygiene factors and motivational factors contributing to job satisfaction. Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model and Trauth's Input-Process-Output Model provide frameworks for analyzing communication processes. Additionally, some studies incorporate an Islamic perspective, linking job satisfaction with interpretations related to the creation of humans and the importance of work in the eyes of Allah SWT. These interpretations inspire individuals to maintain and improve their work quality, as it is observed by Allah and will be accounted for in the afterlife.

Overall, these articles provide a comprehensive overview of various theories and models related to job satisfaction and motivation among teachers in Malaysia. The following theories were used in these studies (Nazri et al., 2022), (Anita Ahmad & Mohd Izham Hj Mohd Hamzah, 2022), (Zainudin & Muhamad, 2021), and (Karnan & Marimuthu, 2021) employed Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory and its impact on motivation and job satisfaction. On the other hand, studies by (Rosli & Ibrahim, 2021), (Setiyati & Hikmawati, 2020) discuss the five basic human needs proposed by Maslow. SPIES theory (Salleh & Abdullah, Salbiah Mohamed Salleh, 2021), (Lia Indah Ahmad & Ruslin Amir, 2018) references Quranic verses that encourage teachers to maintain and enhance their work quality, as their work is observed by Allah, the Prophet, and believers. (Norhazwani & Jamalullail, 2017) discusses Smith et al.'s six-component model of job satisfaction and its relation to employee satisfaction, (Saad et al., 2014) interprets the elements of human creation according to the Quran and Imam Al-Ghazali, (Tengku Elmi Azlina Tengku Muda & Noriah Mohd Ishak, 2014) discusses Shannon and Weaver's communication model and Trauth's Input-Process-Output model. Overall, Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation Theory emerges as the most frequently cited theory in studying job satisfaction among teachers in Malaysia. Regarding the instruments used to measure job satisfaction in these studies, they include the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), Job Description Index (JDI), and Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ). The majority of these studies employed the Job Description Index (JDI) as the instrument to measure job satisfaction among teachers.

The studies also found that overall job satisfaction among teachers is moderate, with instances of low job satisfaction and high work-related stress in certain dimensions such as promotion opportunities and current work conditions. Furthermore, the studies found significant relationships between factors such as spiritual aspects, communication, and leadership practices with job satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, these findings demonstrate that teacher job satisfaction is influenced by various complex and interconnected factors. Therefore, it is important for schools and the government to consider a range of

factors in efforts to enhance teacher job satisfaction and well-being. This is crucial to help improve the quality of education and the well-being of society as a whole. Interestingly, from the past 10 years' worth of research, there appears to be a lack of emphasis on the study of factors related to integrity and religiosity that impact job satisfaction. However, integrity and religiosity are essential elements in nurturing high-quality teachers.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest, whether financial or otherwise, in conducting this research.

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