



## EMOTIONAL CONTAGION AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN PAKISTAN

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### Abstract:

The objective of current study was to investigate the relationship between emotional contagion, job satisfaction and different demographic variables among special education teachers. A sample of 80 special education teachers with age range of 20 to 50 years, from all kinds of learning disabilities, more than six months teaching experience were recruited from different special education centers of federal and Punjab. Emotional contagion was measured by Emotional Contagion Scale developed by Doherty (1997) and job satisfaction of teachers was measured by Teaching Satisfaction Scale (TSS) developed by Ho and Au (2002). Result showed that happiness was positively associated with job satisfaction, anger and sadness were negatively associated with job satisfaction, whereas emotions of love and fear were not associated with job satisfaction. Moreover, it has been found that different demographic variables of special education teachers such as education and pay scale were associated with job satisfaction whereas gender, age, job experience and marital status were not associated with job satisfaction. Results suggest that in order to improve job satisfaction of teachers their emotional contagion should be considered.

**Keywords:** emotional contagion, job satisfaction, special education teachers, students with learning disabilities

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## 1. Introduction

Teachers play a very significant role in the modification of academic capability of students. Special education institutions are the vital sources of education and rehabilitation for children with learning disabilities. Special education teachers have high attrition rates due to stress, poor working conditions and lack of organizational support. About twenty five percent of the special education teacher leave their institutes in early years of their career (Ingersoll, 2011), whereas children with learning disabilities are increasing drastically (Nance, 2009).

One of the important challenges for an organization is to ensure the well-being of their employees. The extent to which an individual is content with his job, plays a significant role in shaping up his emotions and temperaments at the workplace. People constantly induce mood, decision and behavior to other people. In workplace, not every emotion can be controlled, therefore, it is very important to know how different emotions are contagious and associated with our satisfaction with job. It is not easy for an individual to leave his feelings at home before entering to work place. Even when it is attempted to suppress the emotions, they come out in more uncontrollable way. When person experience negative emotion in morning it spoils his whole day, emotions stick with the individual and affect his rest of the day.

Emotions are important to same degree as cognitive skills. Emotional contagion is the extent to which an individual or group influence mood and behavior of people around them through conscious and unconscious generation of attitudes, behavior and emotional states. Redundant and stressful work may influence adversely an employee's state of mind and causes failure in completion of task. Positive emotions are linked with increased productivity, creativity, and commitment of individual with his organization to meet the goals of the organization, whereas negative emotions are associated with low job satisfaction, more dysfunctional attitudes, negative thinking and low commitment with organization (Schoenewolf, 1990).

Individual have ability to leave their impact on others. This phenomenon of emotional contagion was investigated by Sigal and Barsade (2002) under the term known as 'the ripple effect', to observe the transference of emotions within certain group members in an organization. Emotional contagion has significant influence on individual-level and group processes. The positive emotional contagion group members experienced improved cooperation, decreased conflict and increased perceived task performance as compared to group with negative emotional contagion. Barteland and Saavedra (2000) found that group members as well as external individual to group can also recognize and measure mood of the group. They found positive relationship between mood and commitment to group. Individual who experience positive emotional contagion rate their performance better.

Job satisfaction is most widely studied variable in the field of psychology, it is extent to which an individual like his job (Spector, 1997). It is not only important for an individual's psychological wellbeing but also important for the culture and goals of that

organization. Individual gender, education and duration of job influence his perception of satisfaction with job. An important factor that influences the level of contentment of the teachers is the presence or absence of a collaborative team force at the workplace. If job isn't challenging enough for the most of special education teachers to keep them interested and fails to give them the kind of independence that they required to perform their responsibilities decreases their job satisfaction whereas increase absenteeism from their duties (e.g., Hackett & Guion, 1985; Hulin, Roznowski, & Hachiya, 1985; Kohler & Mathieu, 1993). Tabatabaei, Ghaneh and Shokri (2011) found in their study with employees of an industrial company that job satisfaction is positively correlated with different demographic variables like educational level, age, job experience and monthly income.

Teacher attrition is widespread that investigators are attempting to regulate by understanding the problems associated with job satisfaction that whether teacher wants to choose another profession or wants to stay in teaching profession (Tillman & Tillman, 2008). Perrachione et al (2008) found in their study that low job satisfaction also influence the commitment of teachers with their institutes, whereas teachers who are satisfied with their job remain committed to their institutes. Attracting and retaining the special education teachers is biggest challenge of 21 century. Studies have shown that teachers leave their profession within first year of their career (Singer, 1992, 1993, Ingersoll, 2011).

It is very important to take into account the emotional state, wellbeing and job satisfaction of special education teacher. In Pakistan no study has been conducted on the relationship of emotional contagion and job satisfaction among special education teachers. Therefore, current study aimed at exploring the relationship between emotional contagion, job satisfaction and different demographic variables among special education teachers of Pakistan.

Consequently, following hypothesis were developed:

1. There will be relationship between emotions of happiness, love, anger, fear sadness and job satisfaction among special education teachers.
2. There will be a relationship between job satisfaction and different demographic variables such as age, education, marital status, duration of job, monthly income, and job scale among special education teachers.
3. There will be difference in job satisfaction and different demographic variables (marital status, education, type of recruitment of job and monthly income) of special education teachers.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Participants**

In the current study, Cross sectional study design was used. Data was collected through purposive convenient sampling technique. Data was gathered from 80 special education teacher from different special education institution of federal and Punjab. Inclusion

criteria included informed consent, age range from 20 to 50 years and teaching experience more than six month. Teachers were approached in their free periods and break time. They were guided about questionnaire. Characteristics of participants are presented in table 2.

## 2.2 Measure

**A. Demographic sheet:** In the current study, demographic data was collected in term of age, gender, education, marital status, job experience, type of recruitment of job, monthly income and pay scale.

**B. Emotional Contagion Scale:** Emotional Contagion Scale developed by Doherty (1997) was used to measures the emotions of special education teachers. It basically measure the individual ability to imitate the five important emotions such as sadness, fear, anger, happiness and love. It has 15 item rated on five point liker scale ranged from 1 (Never) to 3 (Always).

**C. Teaching Satisfaction Scale:** Job satisfaction of special education was assessed through teaching satisfaction scale (TSS) developed by Ho and Au (2002). This scale investigates teacher's satisfaction with their work in various ways. Items for this scale are derived from life satisfaction scale. It has five items which are rated on five point likert scale ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

## 2.3 Procedure

Current study is approved by ethical committee of International Islamic University Islamabad and directorate of special education institutes, Punjab. An informed consent was taken from participant before taking part in research. They were assured about confidentiality and anonymity of data. Nature of research explained to them. Participants were encouraged to ask questions, if they could not understand anything. Participant took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete the both questionnaires.

## 2.4 Data analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to process the results. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was carried out to measure the relationships between the variables, i.e., between emotional contagion, job satisfaction and different demographic variables. Independent t test was used to analysis the differences in job satisfaction of different demographic variables of special education teachers.

## 3. Results

Table 1 shows that emotional contagion and job satisfaction scales are reliable instruments in measuring contagion emotions such as happiness, love, fear, anger sadness as well as job satisfaction among special education teachers.

**Table 1:** Means, Standard deviations and alpha reliability coefficient of emotional contagion and job satisfaction among special education Teacher (N=80)

Scales	N	M	SD	Alpha Coefficient
Job satisfaction	80	15.85	3.89	.79
Happiness	80	5.88	2.15	.62
Love	80	7.27	2.85	.75
Fear	80	5.83	2.71	.60
Anger	80	7.33	2.43	.72
Sadness	80	11.07	2.86	.60

**Table 2:** Frequencies and percentages of demographic variables of special education teachers (N = 80).

Description of Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	16	18.8%
	Female	64	75.3%
Age	20-30 years	30	35.3%
	31-40 years	29	34.1%
	41-50years	13	15.3%
	Above 50 years	8	9.4%
Education	Post-graduation	30	37.5%
	Graduation	50	62.5%
Monthly income	25,000 - 50,000	43	50.0%
	51,000-80,000	37	43.5%
Service Record	1-10	50	62.5%
	11-20	14	17.5%
	Above 20 years	16	0.2%
Teaching Field	Intellectual disability	20	23.5%
	Hearing impairment	39	45.1%
	Physical Handicap	14	16.5%
	Visual Impairment	7	8.2%
Employment Situation	Permanent	30	37.6%
	Contract	50	62.5%

**Table 3:** Correlation among emotional contagion and job satisfaction among special education teachers in Pakistan (N=80)

	Job satisfaction	
	r	P
Happiness	.33	.009
Love	.03	.85
Fear	.03	.78
Anger	-.30	.02
Sadness	-.35	.006

Table 3 shows that job satisfaction is positively correlated with happiness whereas negatively correlated with anger, and sadness among special education teachers. Moreover, emotions of love and fear are not associated with job satisfaction among special education teachers.

**Table 4:** Correlation among job satisfaction and different demographic variables of special education teachers in Pakistan (N=80)

Demographic variable	Job satisfaction	
	r	P
Age	.02	.82
Education	-.28	.01
Job scale	-.30	.008
Gender	-.04	.76
Marital Status	.03	.79
Monthly income	.11	.54
Job experience	.17	.12

Table 3 shows that education and job scale are associated with job satisfaction whereas there is no statistical significant relationship between job satisfaction and age, gender, monthly income and job experience among special education teachers.

**Table 5:** Mean, standard deviation and t-test of job satisfaction of different demographic variables of special education teachers (N=80)

Variable	Level	M	SD	T	Df	Sig
Job satisfaction	Married	15.78	4.25	-.27	78	.79
	Single	16.04	3.18			
Job satisfaction	Post Graduate	16.48	3.95	2.53	78	.01
	Graduate	14.00	3.29			
Job satisfaction	Permanent	15.10	4.63	-1.35	78	.18
	Contract	16.32	3.40			
Job satisfaction	25,000 to 50,000	15.47	3.55	-.97	78	.33
	51,000 to 85,000	16.32	4.36			

Table 5 shows the mean difference in job satisfaction of different demographic variable (marital status, education, recruitment of job, and monthly income) of special education teachers. It shows that there is significantly difference in job satisfaction of post graduate and graduate teachers, whereas there are no significant differences in job satisfaction of married and single, permanent or contract teachers and monthly income of special education teachers.

#### 4. Discussion

Current study aimed at investigating the relationship between emotional contagion and job satisfaction among special education teachers. Results showed that emotion of happiness is positively correlated with job satisfaction, whereas emotions of anger and sadness are negatively associated with job satisfaction. Moreover, it has been found that emotions of love and fear are not significantly associated with job satisfaction among special education teachers in Pakistan. Emotions are related with satisfaction of the individual with his job. Individual have ability to significantly influence the behavior of

others. Individuals who receive positive emotions experience more cooperation, higher productivity and decrease conflicts (Baron, 1984).

Results of the current study are consistent with the study of Totterdell et al (1998), who found in their study that emotions of team of nurses and accountants were the same even when their shared task problems were controlled. Totterdell et al (2000) found similar findings with a cricket team, while controlling the status of the team in the game. Emotional contagion is helpful in instilling positive or negative emotions in other individuals, which further influence individual cognition, behavior and attitudes. Baron (1984) found a significant effect of positivity in his experimental method that when group members experience positive emotional contagion, it leads to the positivity and decrease negativity in the group.

It is also investigated that whether different demographic variables (marital status, education, type of recruitment of job and monthly income) of special education teachers are associated with job satisfaction. Results showed that education level and pay scale are associated with job satisfaction whereas gender, age, job experience, marital status and monthly income are not associated with job satisfaction among special education teachers. Findings of the current study are consistent with the results of Shafie Abadi and Khalajasad (2010), who found that job satisfaction of Islamic Azad University workers is not associated with gender, age and marital status. Rajabbeigi et al (2006) also concluded in their study that there is no relationship between salary, kind of recruitment and job satisfaction.

Lori, Stempien, Roger, and Loeb (2002) compared job satisfaction of special education school teachers and general education teachers at their workplace. Results showed that special educators were more dissatisfied with their job as compared to general education teachers. Different factors such as lack of prior experience in the field and the demographic variable such as age contribute to more stress. Those special educators who were younger experienced higher dissatisfaction than the others. There is no doubt that special education schools work under an elevated level of pressure as compared to the general education schools, as they trained children with learning disabilities which automatically increase the responsibilities of teachers. The amount of time and the energy spent on each child individually is higher than the energy and time spent in general education schools.

In the current study, it was also hypothesized that there will be differences in job satisfaction of different demographic variables such as marital status, education, type of recruitment of job and monthly income of special education teachers. Consistent with findings of Shafie Abadi and Khalajasad (2010), it has been found that there is a significant difference in job satisfaction of post graduate and graduate teachers, whereas there are no significant differences in job satisfaction of married or single, permanent or contract teachers and more or less monthly income of special education teachers. Results are inconsistent with the findings of Golafruz et al (2002) and McGovney (2006) who argued that single workers have higher job satisfaction than married workers, and workers with more monthly income were more satisfied with their job than

with less monthly income. Bukers (2010) found in his study that job title, age and marital status have positive impact on the job satisfaction of employees, whereas organizational factors have negative impact on job satisfaction. Kavanaugh et al (2006) in his study conducted in mental rehabilitation center explored the relationship between job satisfaction and demographic variable of health care professional appointed there. He found that commitment of health care professional with their institute was dependent on their satisfaction with their job.

Billingsley (2003) concluded that positive school environment, sufficient organizational support specifically principal's cooperation, opportunities for personal growth and manageable workloads reduced stress, enhances job satisfaction and commitment with organization.

The current study also has a few limitations. First of all sample size of the study is very small only 80 teachers were recruited. Secondly, data was collected from few cities of Punjab which reduces its generalization. Thirdly, data was collected through self-report inventory which may lead to biased response. Future study should investigate the level of teacher's awareness of emotional contagion and its possible influence on their positive and negative mental health.

Current study would provide an understanding of different emotions associated with job satisfaction to educationists, management of special education institutes and policy makers, so that they can develop appropriate strategies to improve the emotional contagion and job satisfaction of teachers who provide their services to children with learning disabilities. As most of the teachers reported causes of their negative emotions and low job satisfaction such as biased working condition, work overload, and lack of administration cooperation. Since attrition rate in special education teachers is higher, so it is important to understand the cognitive factors associated with low job satisfaction.

Results proposed that emotion of happiness is associated with job satisfaction, whereas emotion of aggression and sadness are negatively associated with job satisfaction. Moreover, education and pay scale are related with job satisfaction, whereas age, marital status, job experience and monthly income are not associated with job satisfaction among special education teachers.

## 5. Declarations

### **Funding**

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### **Availability of data and materials**

Data will be made available on request through proper channels.

### **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

### **Consent for publication**

Consent to publish is not applicable.



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