Original Paper

The Relationship between Job Satisfaction of Iranian English Teachers and Their Students' Achievement

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Abstract

Teachers' satisfaction with their career influences the quality and stability of instruction given to students. The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement among Iranian high school English teachers and to investigate the effect of factors such as gender, employment type and working place on job satisfaction in order to provide better insights for the educational authorities and teachers to look for possible ways of improving the existing situation. Data were collected through Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985) distributed among 84 Iranian high school English teachers. End of the term results were used as an indicator of the students` achievement. The findings of the present study suggested that there was a significant relationship between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement. But there was not any significant difference between male and female teachers regarding job satisfaction. Besides, working at public vs. private schools did not make any significant difference in the level of job satisfaction. But a significant difference was found between the part-time and full-time teachers' job satisfaction. The full-time teachers were more satisfied with their job.

Keywords

teacher job satisfaction, improvement in teaching situation, student achievement

1. Introduction

The role of teachers is crucial for the transfer of knowledge. Teacher satisfaction with their career may have strong implications for student learning. Moreover, a teacher's satisfaction with his or her career may influence the quality of instruction. Since daily interaction between teachers and students is at the center of the educational process, attracting and retaining high quality teachers is a primary necessity for educational systems. Job satisfaction is an affective reaction to the individual's work situation. It can be defined as an overall feeling about one's job or career or in terms of specific facets of the job or career (e.g., compensation, autonomy, coworkers) and it can be related to specific outcomes, such as productivity (Rice, Gentile, and McFarlin, 1991). Locke (1976) defines Job Satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences"

(Locke, 1976, p.130). Job satisfaction depends on an evaluation the employee makes of the job and its environment surrounding. This evaluation involves a comparison between "what is" and "what should be".

Some researchers argue that teachers who do not feel supported in their work may be less motivated to do their best in the classroom (Ostroff, 1992; and Ashton & Webb, 1986). In addition, highly satisfied teachers are less likely to change schools or to leave the teaching profession altogether than those who are dissatisfied with many areas of their work conditions (Bobbitt, S. A., Choy, S. P., Henke, R. R., Medrich, E. A., & Lieberman,.1993). These actions disrupt the school environment and result in shifting valuable educational resources away from actual instruction towards costly staff replacement efforts.

Locke's Range of Affect Theory (1976) is arguably the most famous job satisfaction model. The main premise of this theory is that satisfaction is determined by a discrepancy between what one wants in a job and what one has in a job. Further, the theory states that how much one values a given facet of work (e.g., the degree of autonomy in a position) moderates how satisfied/dissatisfied one becomes when expectations are/aren't met. When a person values a particular facet of a job, his satisfaction is more greatly impacted both positively (when expectations are met) and negatively (when expectations are not met), compared to one who doesn't value that facet.

Another well-known job satisfaction theory is the Dispositional Theory. It is a very general theory that suggests that people have innate dispositions that cause them to have tendencies toward a certain level of satisfaction, regardless of one's job. This approach became a notable explanation of job satisfaction in the light of evidence that job satisfaction tends to be stable over time and across careers and jobs. A significant model that narrowed the scope of the Dispositional Theory was the Core Self-evaluations Model, proposed by Judge (1998). Judge argued that there are four Core Self-evaluations that determine one's disposition towards job satisfaction: self-esteem, general self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism. Judge et al. (1997) hypothesized that the core self-evaluations would be related to job satisfaction through both direct and indirect means and each of them, independently and significantly correlated with job satisfaction.

Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (also known as Motivator Hygiene Theory) attempts to explain satisfaction and motivation in the workplace (Hackman, J. R. Oldham, 1976). Herzberg's theory posits that job satisfaction comes from one set of job variables (called motivator needs or satisfiers) and job dissatisfaction from another set of variables (hygiene factors or dissatisfiers). Satisfiers include, for example, recognition, responsibility for one's work, personal growth, achievement and advancement, while dissatisfiers include many aspects of work external to the self such as pay, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, work conditions and security (Herzberg, 1968). It is important to note that, according to this theory, job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction were considered separate constructs. The absence of hygiene factors was believed to lead to job dissatisfaction, but their fulfillment did not lead to job satisfaction. Similarly, the presence of motivator

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needs led to job satisfaction, but their absence did not lead to dissatisfaction.

Antecedents of job satisfaction can be classified into two major categories. First, the job environment itself and factors associated with the job are important influences on job satisfaction. It includes how people are treated, the nature of job tasks, relations with other people in the workplace, and rewards. Second, there are individual factors the person brings to the job. It includes both personality and prior experience. Both categories of antecedents often work together to influence employee job satisfaction. The fit between the individual and the job has been shown to be an important influence on the employee job satisfaction (Kristof, 1996).

There are many behaviors and employee outcomes that have been hypothesized to be the result of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. These include not only work variables such as job performance and turnover, but also non-work variables such as health and life satisfaction. Many of these hypothesized effects of job satisfaction have been shown to correlate with it (Spector, 1997).

2. Teacher Job Satisfaction and Student Achievement

It is believed that satisfaction at work may influence various aspects of work such as efficiency, productivity, absenteeism, turnovers rates, and intention to quit, and finally employees' well-being (Baron, 1986). This premise holds for a variety of employees, including qualified educational staff. Indeed, educators' well-being has serious implications for the quality of the education they provide (Fenech, 2006). Satisfied teachers are expected to hold their jobs longer, to be able to engage in more responsive, positive and consistent interaction with students, and to positively influence students' performance (Maslach and Leiter, 1999).

Research on teachers' job satisfaction suggests that educators are most satisfied with teaching itself and their supervision and dissatisfied with their salary and promotional opportunities (Dinham and Scott, 2000). These findings seem to be robust across several different countries and cultural contexts (Koustelios, 2001). As far as early educators are concerned, Fenech (2006) reported poor work conditions, low salaries, heavy workloads, unrealistic expectations from managers, low professional status, organizational conflict, and reduced autonomy as important factors that contribute to teacher dissatisfaction. For teachers, satisfaction with their career may have strong implications for student learning. The hypothesized outcomes of job satisfaction include the use of new techniques in class for better performance which, in turn, may be conducive to students' better achievement.

Given the importance of job satisfaction, special attention should be dedicated to determine why some teachers express dissatisfaction in their jobs. Some researchers argue that teachers who do not feel supported in their work may be less motivated to do their best in the classroom (Ostroff, 1992; and Ashton and Webb, 1986). In addition, highly satisfied teachers are less likely to change schools or to leave the teaching profession altogether than those who are dissatisfied with many areas of their work life (Choy et al., 1993). These actions disrupt the school environment and result in the shift of valuable educational resources away from actual instruction towards costly staff replacement efforts.

The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement among Iranian high school English teachers as well as the effect of gender, employment type and working place on the level of Iranian teachers' job satisfaction. More specifically, the following research questions were posed:

1) Is there any significant relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and students' achievement?

2) Is there any significant difference between male and female English teachers in terms of job satisfaction?

3) Does working at private/state schools make any significant difference in English teachers' job satisfaction?

4) Is there any significant difference between part-time and full-time English teachers in terms of job satisfaction?

5) How is job satisfaction affected by the interaction of gender and employment type (full-time vs. part-time)?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Eighty-four high school English teachers voluntarily participated in this study. The researcher distributed the questionnaires in person to all those who expressed willingness to participate in the study. Regarding the characteristics of the teachers, 52% in the sample were male and 48% were female. 72.6 % of teachers were full-time and 27.4% were part-time. 64.3% of the participants worked in public schools and 35.7% worked in both public and private schools.24 % of the teachers held M.A and 76% had B.A.

This study focused on a single grade level to maintain homogeneity. While the full data were available for both first and second grade students, only information concerning the third grade was included into the analysis. The teachers who completed the questionnaire, were asked to provide the researcher with the end of the term scores of one of their classes.

3.2 Instrumentation

Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) (Spector, 1985) was used in the present study which assesses six facets of job satisfaction, as well as overall satisfaction. The scale contained 36 items and uses a summated rating scale format. This format is the most popular one for job satisfaction scales. Each of the nine facet subscales contained four items, and a total satisfaction score can be computed by combining all of the items. Each item is a statement that is either favorable or unfavorable about an aspect of the job. Respondents are asked to circle one of the five numbers that corresponds to their agreement or disagreement. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' perceptions of job satisfaction. Respondents were asked to choose one of the five response options: 1=*strongly agree*, 2= *agree*, 3=somewhat agree, 4=disa*gree*, and 5=*strongly disagree*.

4. Results

In order to address the first research question, concerning the relationship between high school English teachers' job satisfaction and students' achievement, Pearson correlation revealed a significant relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and students' achievement.

Table 1. Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Students' Achievement

		Students' Achievement
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.521[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	84

The second research question examined the difference between male and female English teachers in terms of job satisfaction. An independent t-test was run which showed that there was not any significant difference between male and female in terms of job satisfaction.

Table 2. Independent t-test Job Satisfaction by Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
JS	Equal variances assumed	.016	.901	1.586	82	.117	3.257	2.053	-.828	7.341
	Equal variances not assumed			1.588	81.58	.116	3.257	2.051	-.823	7.337

To investigate the third question of the present study, an independent t-test was run to compare the teachers' job satisfaction level working at public and public and private schools. Based on the results of t-observed value, it can be concluded that working at private/state schools does not make any significant difference in English teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 3. Independent t-test Job Satisfaction by Type of School

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
						Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df				Lower	Upper
JS	Equal variances assumed	.503	.480	.309	82	.758	.670	2.171	-3.649	4.990
	Equal variances not assumed			.305	57.89	.762	.670	2.198	-3.730	5.071

The fourth research question examined the difference between part-time and full-time English teachers in terms of job satisfaction. An independent t-test was run which showed a significant difference between the part-time and full-time teachers' job satisfaction level. The full-time teachers enjoyed a higher level of job satisfaction.

Table 4. Independent t-test Job Satisfaction by Type of Employment

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
						Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df				Lower	Upper
JS	Equal variances assumed	1.130	.291	3.088	82	.003	6.825	2.210	2.429	11.221
	Equal variances not assumed			3.371	47.79	.001	6.825	2.025	2.754	10.896

The fifth research question focused on how job satisfaction was affected by the interaction of gender and employment type (full-time vs. part-time). A two-way ANOVA revealed that job satisfaction was affected by the interaction of gender and employment type (full-time vs. part-time).

Table 5. Interaction between Gender and Employment Type

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender * Employment	510584.287	4	127646.072	1641.034	.000
Error	6222.713	80	77.784		
Total	516807.000	84			

5. Discussion

The findings of the present study suggested that a there was a significant relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and students' achievement. The results indicated that there was not any significant difference between male and female teachers' job satisfaction and also working at public/private schools did not make any significant difference in English teachers' job satisfaction. But a significant difference was found between the part-time and full-time teachers in term of job satisfaction level. The full-time teachers enjoy a higher level of job satisfaction. Finally, the findings indicated that teacher job satisfaction was affected by the interaction of gender and employment type (full-time vs. part-time).

These findings can contribute to a growing body of research that suggests that teacher job satisfaction may have strong implications for student learning. Educators' well-being has serious implications for the quality of the education they provide (Fenech, 2006). Satisfied teachers are expected to hold their jobs longer, to engage in more responsive, positive and consistent interaction with students, and to influence students' performance positively (Maslach and Leiter, 1999).

Literature review indicated that with respect to therelationship between teachers' gender and their job satisfaction, the results are contradictory. For example, Greenberg and Baron (1993) reported that employed women, in general, seem to be less satisfied with their work than their counterpart men. On the other hand, McNeely (1984) found a significant difference between employed women and men's job satisfaction. Women were found to be more intrinsically satisfied than men. However, our results did not show a significant difference between male and female teachers' job satisfaction. Furthermore, whether a teacher was teaching in a public or private school did not have a significant effect on teacher satisfaction. In other words, the analysis showed that teacher variables like gender and school characteristics like working in a public or private school were not significantly related to teacher satisfaction. In general, they were not useful in predicting a teacher's satisfaction with teaching as a career.

6. Conclusion

This study corresponded to the previous research that teacher job satisfaction significantly related to

students` performance (for example: Ostroff, 1992; Mathieu, 1991; Fenech, 2006; Maslach and Leiter, 1999). Teacher satisfaction with their career may have strong implications for student learning. Moreover, a teacher's satisfaction with his or her career may influence the quality and stability of instruction given to students.

Since a high-quality teaching staff is the cornerstone of a successful educational system, daily interaction between teachers and students is at the center of the educational process; attracting and retaining high quality teachers is, thus, a primary necessity for educational systems. If, as the literature suggests, teacher satisfaction relates to both teaching quality, students` achievement and turnover rates, focusing on policies related to satisfaction may go a long way towards improving the quality of instruction in our nation's schools.

The results of this study indicate that there are a number of aspects of workplace conditions that are within the realm of education policy. They can compensate for numerous areas of teacher dissatisfaction such as low salaries, increased teacher loads and lack of involvement in program planning, and a myriad of other factors The findings of present investigation can provide some insights for the educational authorities and teachers to look for possible ways of improving the level of job satisfaction among high school teachers in order to attract and retain the best ones.

Another important factor in this study which had a significant effect on teachers' satisfaction was whether the teachers are working as a full-time or part-time teacher. The results indicated a significant difference between the part-time and full-time teachers' job satisfaction level. The full-time teachers enjoy a higher job satisfaction. It may be estimated that because part-time teachers have less job security and because they do not feel supported in their work may be less motivated to do their best in the classroom. Surprisingly, the end of the term scores and students achievement for part-time teachers were higher than full-time teachers. It may be concluded that it is because there are no motivation and reward for full-time teachers if they do their jobs better than their colleagues and they enjoy job security in the education office. On the other hand, part-time teachers try their utmost to be known qualified and hired in the upcoming years if needed in the education office.

As a conclusion, despite being an interesting topic for the study, Job Satisfaction happened to be the most noteworthy subject for any organization. An indelible fact is that amongst all the resources, human resource is the most significant resource of any organization. The resources of men, money, and materials are collected, coordinated and utilized through people. Thus, it can be concluded that the overall productivity of any organization largely depends upon the efficiency of the Human Resource of that organization. The efficiency of employees depends, to a great extent, on the environment in which they work. Work environment consists of all the factors which act and react on the body and mind of an employee. Anything that education office can do to make the workplace a better place for teacher has the potential of enhancing job satisfaction and consequently higher students' achievement.

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Demographic Survey

(All responses will be kept confidential by the researcher.)

1. Gender: Male □ Female □

2. Age…………………..

3. Total year of work experience as a teacher at school.

4. How many hours (on average) do you work per week? _____.

5. Degree

Bachelor's Degree   Major_____

Master's Degree   Major_____

Other (specify) _____

6. Which of the following best describes your current status as a teacher?

Full-time (Employed)   Part-time

7. What kind of schools do you teach at?

State   Private

8. Have you continued your education after employment?

Yes   No

If yes identify: ………..

In-Service Courses   how many hours per year? ……….. …….

University Education   The degree you have got? ....

The following questionnaires are designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their teaching activities. For the Following Questions, Please Circle the Answer that Best Describes Your Views. *Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not be identified by name.*

Directions: Please indicate your feelings towards the university by circling appropriate numbers on the right hand side of each descriptor.	Strongly Agree	Agree	somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I had a good idea of what this position involved before I began.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
2. I feel that I am valued by enough.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
3. I receive adequate training to do my job well.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
4. I feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities at work.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
5. Other people view my job as a valuable profession.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					

Directions: Please indicate your feelings towards your job by circling appropriate numbers on the right hand side of each descriptor.	Strongly Agree	Agree	somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. The orientation I received prepared me well for teaching at school.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
7. I am confident of my abilities to succeed at teaching.	1	2	3	4	5

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Comments if any:					
8. I believe that my position at work is a professional position.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
9. I am satisfied with my income.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
10. I have mastered the skills necessary to perform my work.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
11. For the work I do, the pay is good.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
12. Prior to accepting this position, I understood my job.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
13. I make a difference in the lives of other people.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
14. I have ample opportunities for advancement in this profession.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
15. This job demands too much (physically, emotionally, mentally).	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					

Directions: **Please indicate your feelings towards your job by circling appropriate numbers on the right hand side of each descriptor.**	Strongly Agree	Agree	somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. I am fully able to use my skills in this position.	1	2	3	4	5
Comments if any:					
17. I make pretty good money compared to others in this field.	1	2	3	4	5

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Comments if any:					
18. If I felt that I needed extra training, it would be made available for me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					
19. I believe the principals care deeply for me and for other teachers.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					
20. The work I do is interesting.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					
21. This job adds significant pressure and anxiety to my life.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					
22. I am satisfied with the benefits offered to me through this job.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					
23. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					
24. I receive adequate support from my supervisors.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					

Directions: **For this section, consider as a whole the PD (professional development) activities in which you participated.**	Strongly Agree	Agree	somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My Professional Development Activities :					
Improved my knowledge of the academic subjects I teach	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Comments if any:					
Were an integral part of a board school-wide or district-wide educational improvement plan	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

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	Comments if any:				
Increased my ability to prepare students to meet challenging State academic standards and student academic achievement standards	1	2	3	4	5
	Comments if any:				
Improved my classroom management skills	1	2	3	4	5
	Comments if any:				
Are likely to have a positive and lasting impact on my classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5
	Comments if any:				
Advanced my understanding of effective instructional strategies that derived from scientifically-based research	1	2	3	4	5
	Comments if any:				
Advanced my understanding of effective instructional strategies for improving student academic achievement	1	2	3	4	5
	Comments if any:				
Are aligned with state academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and state assessments (TCAP)	1	2	3	4	5
	Comments if any:				
Were developed with extensive participation of teachers, administrators, and parents in my school of district	1	2	3	4	5
	Comments if any:				

Directions: **For this section, consider as a whole the PD (professional development) activities in which you participated.**	Strongly Agree	Agree	somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My Professional Development Activities :					
Are designed to increase the success of teachers providing instruction or support to limited English proficient children	1	2	3	4	5

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	Comments if any:				
Provided training to help teachers effectively use technology in the classroom to improve instruction and learning	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Comments if any:				
Are regularly evaluated for their impact on teaching and learning	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Comments if any:				
Provided training in methods of teaching children with special needs	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Comments if any:				
Included instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform classroom practices	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Comments if any:				
Provided training in ways of working more effectively with parents	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Comments if any:				