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ABSTRACT

The study has given particular attention to the kindergarten teachers' job satisfaction levels and plans to leave their current positions while they are employed in Hong Kong. Only 395 local kindergarten teachers who have experience teaching in kindergartens and who are between the ages of 18 and 60 were chosen for the study. In addition, they had to be strong communicators and be able to read and write traditional Chinese. Additionally, the research was carried out from August to October 2020. The study used a mixed-method of research. This study took into account all aspects of academic practice, including ethical research practices. For achieving the goals of the present study, numerous motivational theories, statistical analysis, and an extensive literature review were applied. According to the study, having high levels of job satisfaction has good effects and increases staff productivity; the lack of it greatly results to intentions of leaving the job. Additionally, it showed that there was a strong correlation between the communication gap between kindergarten kids and teachers and their satisfaction with their work in those settings. The level of job satisfaction is not dependent on just one factor. To address the issues raised by the study's findings, it is strongly advised to implement adequate recognition, career promotion, training programs, suitable workplace resources, and healthy work-life balance, among other things.

Keywords-job; teaching; work-life balance; early-childhood education; motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten education has come to be regarded as crucial over the years and is now a requirement in Hong Kong. Parents have a crucial role in helping their kids find a kindergarten that will satisfy their needs for growth and foster their interests in learning. However, teachers had been favorably influencing this prosperity and had reached a high degree of job satisfaction [1]. To achieve high productivity and fruitful outcomes from their duties, however, it is crucial to ascertain the teacher's job satisfaction. Additionally, instructors who are happy with their jobs do a better job of putting educational policies and procedures into practice, which helps them achieve their goals of developing effective adult learning practices. Early education must be provided in a high-quality and positive manner in order to give pupils a strong foundation. If this is not done, achievement gaps will develop, further limiting the students' chances.

Teachers in kindergartens needed to feel content with their degree of responsibility [2]. Kindergarten teachers' contentment was influenced by their position and the environment at work. Depending on the workload, incentives, and working environment, teacher job satisfaction differs from region to region [3]. In Hong Kong, a variety of factors, including a heavy workload, behavioral issues, dealing with students who have special educational needs, students who are non-Chinese speakers (NCS), problems related to their own capacity, and others, have an impact on how satisfied kindergarten teachers are with their jobs. These led to a decline in the teachers' motivation at sHowever, prior research [4] has only found modest evidence of the job satisfaction of these kindergarten instructors in Hong Kong's kindergartens.

The findings of this research would be three-fold: (1) contributing to Herzberg's two-factor theory in the context of Chinese Kindergarten institutions; (2) investigating the practice of early-childhood education at the point of view of kindergarten teachers, their motivation and job satisfaction; and, (3) exhibiting valuable data and information as a support for further research which had been catered on other factors and levels of the teachers' doing jobs in the Hong Kong.

Objectives of the Study

To this end, it's critical to determine which factors are having a negative effect on teachers' job satisfaction. The goal of the current study was to provide an effective approach for overcoming these challenges and improving the

job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong. Specifically, the following are to be met in this research study, to wit:

- i. To assess the job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong;
- ii. To assess the intention of leaving of kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong;
- iii. To explore the relationship between the kindergarten teachers' job satisfaction and intention of leaving; and,
- iv. To identify the kindergarten teachers' reasons of leaving.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The educational system in Hong Kong is mainly patterned from that of the UK system, with changes occurring after the handover of Hong Kong to China. Modernizing the system to meet globalization and 21st century requirements was imperative [5]. Recent survey shows that only around 33% of students pursue tertiary education [6], and thus, parents with high education background imposes more pressure on the kindergarten teachers especially in terms of providing full care to their children. This was the fact that according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Hong Kong ranked second in reading and is also second in mathematics and science [7]. This accolade demonstrated the caliber of instruction and the caliber of the lecturers and teachers who assisted the students in achieving top places. Parents were expecting kindergarten teachers to maintain high quality in early childhood education. Teachers needed to have broadened knowledge to enhance students' learning, generic skills, and positive attitudes towards their life.

This kind of pressure necessitates that near to 45% kindergarten teachers have been working more than 60 hours in a week [8]. Same study showed that kindergarten teachers are also facing financial problems in terms of their salary, and that they feel unappreciated and not recognized. Accordingly, almost 40% of the respondents intends to change careers, jobs or industry just to relax their mind and to reduce their stress.

However, it is but logical that the number of kindergarten teachers increase with the increase in enrollees from 2013 to 2020 [9]. This enticed young professionals to pursue this career, thus, the rise of both local and non-local (public and private) kindergartens. However, this also resulted to hiring teachers who are not well trained, which triggers the loss of confidence by the institution's stakeholders especially on local (public) schools. Workloads and other work burden has been increasing steadily, and this has negatively affected their performance and concentration to their instructional work. Accordingly, kindergarten teachers were required to work at least 60 hours per week due to the extra administrative burden. It has also been found that "teachers are self-motivated and committed to work despite the necessary overtime" [10]. They also needed to hurry the students to complete the assigned daily activities within the time limit. Hence, they felt compelled to ignore individual differences among students in their classroom [11]. On the other hand, the well-known kindergartens avoid the students who need special educational attention from the teachers to manage their efficiency and to secure their teachers in terms of putting extra efforts on these students [12].

The good behavior of the teachers left a strong effect on the children, which led to lesser absenteeism and greater commitment from the teachers when viewed through the lens of their job satisfaction. Raising salary and receiving promotions were necessary for having a favorable impact on job satisfaction, which led to high employee motivation [13]. If teachers were happy with their professions, they gave high-quality lectures that resulted in an effective understanding of the pupils and helped them achieve good scores and results [14]. In light of this, the high job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers may have a significant positive impact on both the pupils and the kindergarten. Positively, this had been the standard for high-quality basic education [15]. Other forms of motivational strategies, financial or non-financial, including training and teacher development programs and good leadership and work-life balance are vital indicators for improving job satisfaction and job turnover [16]. Good relationship with colleagues and professional response from parents constitute positive workplace

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study made use of the descriptive-correlational method of research supplemented with a validated questionnaire, which looks into both quantitative and qualitative data to meet the objectives. The main objective of using this mixed approach was the two open ended questions in the questionnaire that were also the part of the research. It was a quantitative research approach by survey and supplemented by two qualitative questions allowing for comprehensive analyses of phenomena [17].

B. Research Strategy

The reality of the satisfaction of the job and intention of leaving among kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong can be explored. The results were valid, reliable, and generalizable to a larger population.

C. The Respondents and Instrumentation

All the data of the quantitative research collected through the online self-administered questionnaire covering 395 teachers in kindergarten within the Hong Kong through WhatsApp, email, or the mail. The survey activity was focused on the satisfaction of the job, and it complied the Paul Spector survey model initiated in 1994 [18] for

attaining more authenticity of the activity. However, the intention of leaving the job had been adopted from the study of Youcef, Ahmed, and Ahmed [19]. The first section caters the level of job satisfaction; the second section covers the intention of leaving and rest of the two questions were open-ended.

D. Data Gathering Procedures

The methods used in the research helps the research to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the data that was collected during the activity through systematic plan. The online questionnaire had been designed for obtaining the quantitative data through the questions that are closed-ended in terms of catering wide range of area. Further, there were multiple choice answers for saving the time.

The researcher asked permission from the different heads of agencies. The participants were oriented about the objectives of the study to avoid misinterpretations. Research ethics and academic protocols are observed throughout the conduct.

E. Data Analysis

After the data are gathered, it is processed and analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. Extensive calculations with mean scores in terms of accurate figure for each of the group defined under the subscale for the satisfaction of the job and intentions for leaving the job. Correlation between the job satisfaction and intentions for leaving were also determined.

The analysis of qualitative questions was aimed at understanding the challenges and problems of kindergarten teachers' intention of leaving in Hong Kong. It might help to explore the strategies to retain talented teachers in kindergarten.

F. Ethical Considerations

Consent was taken from the respondents before their online interview to have their consensus. They were given sufficient time to sign and consider participation. There were no risks directly related to the study. Before collecting the information from the respondents of the research, it was compulsory to take them into the confidence about the whole conduct of the research. All data collected were encrypted to avoid the identification of respondents' personal information. Respondents may skip any questions they do not want to answer, and they may end the survey at any time when they feel threatened or uneasy.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. On the Job Satisfaction of Kindergarten Teachers in Hong Kong

TABLE1:MEAN SCORES OF THE NINE SUBSCALES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Subscale	Mean
(1) Pay	13.69
(2) Promotion	11.62
(3) Supervision	14.91
(4) Fringe benefits	13.55
(5) Contingent rewards	14.23
(6) Operating conditions	10.34
(7) Co-workers	16.14
(8) Nature of work	16.36
(9) Communication	14.65

Subscale 6, Operating conditions got the lowest mean score of 10.34, which implies that the respondents do not agree as to how they are appraised or evaluated. Principals, leading by example, must be a role model of commitment, skillful communicator and neutral in their judgement. As such, they are essential in maintaining the teacher's job satisfaction and retention [16].

On the other hand, Subscale 8, Nature of Work got the highest score of 16.36 implying that the teachers are really enjoying their profession. Having varied and meaningful tasks may boost employee satisfaction with their work [20].

Table 2 depicts the frequency distribution of dissatisfied, ambivalent, and satisfied kindergarten teachers in the survey.

TABLE2:FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF DISSATISFIED, AMBIVALENT, AND SATISFIED TEACHERS

Satisfaction regarding the job	Overall scores (S)	Frequency	Percentage
Dissatisfied	$36 \leq S \leq 108$	93	23.5%
Ambivalent	$108 < S \leq 144$	211	53.4%
Satisfied	$144 < S \leq 216$	91	23.0%

Assessing their job satisfaction through a Likert-scale with six-degree scale of agree-disagree responses, it could be assumed that all the agreement with the positive wording in responses and disagreement with the negative wording responses reflects the satisfaction, otherwise, it reflects dissatisfaction or ambivalence in between. Majority of kindergarten teachers (53.4%) are either satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. A great number (23.5%) of the kindergarten teachers dissatisfied with their current jobs. As per Table 1, operating conditions, promotion, and fringe benefits were the top three dissatisfied subscales of satisfaction regarding the job.

B. Kindergarten Teacher’s Intentions of Leaving

Table 3 manifests the mean scores of the variables indicating the intention of leaving of the kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong.

TABLE3:MEAN SCORES OF THE VARIABLES OF INTENTION OF LEAVING

Variable	Question description	Mean
Leave	I would like to leave my present kindergarten.	3.344
New	I am looking for a new job in the coming academic year.	2.681
Retire	I decided to take early retirement after this academic year.	1.792
Plan	I plan to leave my present kindergarten as soon as possible.	2.970
Intention	Overall intention of leaving.	2.397

At the moment, the respondents do not intent to leave their present kindergarten institutions as shown in the score of 3.344. Accordingly, they were not looking for a new job in coming academic year, as implied in the mean score of 2.681. Further, the score of 1.792 hints that they are not decided to take early retirement whereas the mean score of 2.970 clearly implies that leaving as soon as possible is not part of their current career plans. Overall, their intention of leaving score was 2.397, which tells us that the intention is quite low.

This result is consistent with the findings showed in Table 2, where majority of kindergarten teachers are not dissatisfied with their job, and so, in contrast, low dissatisfaction may not prompt them to leave their job [21]. However, the rate to which kindergarten teachers leave their jobs in Hong Kong reached 26% in 2018 [22].

C. Relationship between the Respondents’ Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave

Amongst the nine (9) satisfactions regarding the job sub-scales, kindergarten teachers reported a higher satisfaction level with their co-workers, nature of work, and supervision. However, they hated the kindergarten operating conditions most.

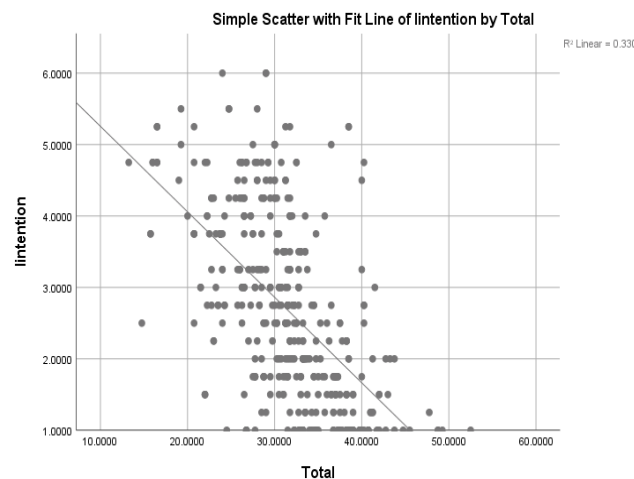


Figure1:Scatter Diagram of Job Satisfaction and Intention of Leaving

Figure 1 reflects the data had a downhill pattern from left to right hinting a negative relation between job satisfaction and intention of leaving. As the job satisfaction level increases, the intention of leaving tends to decrease.

Satisfaction regarding the job and intention of leaving had a statistically significant linear relationship ($r = -0.575, p < 0.01$). The negative value meant that the level of satisfaction regarding the job varies inversely with intention of leaving. The strength of the association was slightly above the moderate.

D. Content Analysis of the Reasons of Leaving

Content analysis provides the researcher with additional ways of gaining insight into responses to questions and concepts pertinent to the investigation.

Table 4 reflects the content analysis of the reasons for leaving current kindergarten.

Table 4: Content Analysis Of Major Reasons To Leave

Codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Low salary ✧ Few prospects for a permanent position ✧ Earnings is not guaranteed ✧ Lack of promotion 	Low salary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Conflicts with the principal or colleagues ✧ Little support from the principal ✧ Little guidance and support ✧ Little recognition and respect ✧ Lack of encouragement from colleagues ✧ Bullied by colleagues 	Conflicts with the principal or colleagues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Too much teaching work ✧ Too little time to prepare lessons ✧ Lesser autonomy ✧ Time pressures ✧ Too much administrative work ✧ Difficulties with class management ✧ Workplace barriers 	Rigid school's policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Experienced difficulties with parents ✧ Little support from parents 	Dealing with parents

The major reasons for leaving their current kindergarten were low salary, conflicts with principals or colleagues, rigid school's policy, and dealing with parents. Salary, promotion were a driving force of motivation for improving performance [23]. Principals and colleagues are vital to retaining the teachers: they provide guidance, promotion, encouragement [24] in a fair and justifiable fashion [20]. Further, school policies could influence teacher's stress [26] and that tailored policy interventions could be reduce teacher's intention of leaving [27]. Lastly, a cooperative parent-teacher relationship is beneficial in the teaching-learning process in the classroom [21].

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher reached the following conclusions, to wit:

1. Among the nine (9) subscales of job satisfaction, *operating conditions* is the one that kindergarten teachers rated the lowest. How the school is administered, the nature of their work and the autonomy over it are major influencers in their job satisfaction. Workload, salary and promotion affects their job satisfaction in a moderate way. However, administrative paperwork and other extra-curricular activities impedes their satisfaction. Moreover, the study revealed that only a mark percentage (23.5%) firmly sees themselves as dissatisfied.
2. The kindergarten teacher's intention of leaving is low. Every variable whether to leave immediately, having prospects for new work, thinking to retire early or planning to leave shows low intentions.
3. The relationship between the kindergarten teachers' job satisfaction and intention of leaving has seen a sloping pattern to the right reinforcing the previous data that their job satisfaction is high, and thus, their intention to leave is low.
4. For those kindergarten teachers who are dissatisfied with their job and intends to leave, their reasons parallel *Conclusion 1* showing the following: (a) low salary including promotion, (b) conflicts within the school especially with the administrators, (c) restrictive school policies including strenuous work load and work pressure, and, parent-teacher problems. These has been extensively supported by previous literature to influence job satisfaction and intention to leave of teachers.

B. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researcher reached following conclusions, to wit:

1. The school administration is encouraged to look into enhancing its policies, working conditions and update its compensation, advancement and promotions system. Training needs assessment (TNA) is suggested to be done, and workloads is considered to each teacher's capacity and capability. The school should also consider upgrading the facilities and classroom equipment that best suits the teaching-learning process, including but

- not limited to forging harmonious partnerships and understanding with the government, civil society organizations, and parent associations.
2. With reference to *Conclusion 2 and 3*, it is also recommended that further study is to be done considering a wider scope, correlating socio-economic factors, as well as new research locale and wider sample size. Other variables like culture, religion and technological competence can be considered to study the intention of leaving the job. Comparative studies and analysis can also be done industry-wise or profession-wise.
 3. In relation to *Conclusion 4*, it is highly encouraged that kindergarten institutions to adapt a teacher-oriented policy and program where cooperation among them, federations and the Education Bureau is institutionalized ascertaining that their voice and suggestions are well heard.

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