

# **JOB SATISFACTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TAWAU, SABAH**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In order for the teachers to function effectively in a school system, it is important that teachers need to seek satisfaction and happiness not only in the intrinsic aspects of teaching job but also in other dimensions related to the teacher work experience in the wider social environment. This paper examines the level and differences in the job satisfaction of 200 Sabah secondary school teachers with respect to the various teachers characteristics identified as gender, service category, job title, tenure and place of origin. Data was collected through survey questionnaire. The finding reveals that secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah are generally satisfied with their job. There is significant relationship between job satisfaction and gender, whereby the male teachers are generally more satisfied than female teachers. The graduate teachers are more satisfied than non-graduate teachers. The higher ranking teachers are more satisfied than the ordinary teachers. Also, older teachers are more satisfied than younger teachers. However, there is no significant relationship between places of origin of teachers with job satisfaction. Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed.

*Keywords* : *Job satisfaction, Sabah, Secondary school, Teachers*

Sub theme: Managing Education and Social Problems

## **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. They would not be performing at the best of their capabilities if they are not truly satisfied. According to Ministry of Education report (1995), human resource development (HRD) through policies, system and better educational opportunities is the strongest assurance to achieve the nation's vision in becoming an industrialized nation with unique characteristics and values in the year 2020.

In order for the teachers to play a key role in the educational process, they need to be satisfied with their teaching job; otherwise the government policy and effort will fail. Teachers, who receive great satisfaction from their job, will largely contribute towards

effective program of education and finally helping the country to achieve the vision 2020. In other words, the teachers truly need to be satisfied with their work in order for them to function efficiently and also effectively. By doing so, the schools can achieve their goals and missions and can contribute to the nation success.

Many high schools - leavers and university graduates, especially male shy away from the teaching professions. This has created a serious problem of teachers' shortage throughout the country. According to NUTP, as at July 1998 there is an acute shortage of secondary school teachers especially English, Mathematics and Science teachers round to about 3,000. As an effort to attract more school - leavers to take-up teaching as a career, our government has upgraded teachers with teaching certificate as equivalent to a diploma scale. Thus, effective from July 1, 1999 the starting basic pay of the non-graduate teachers with teaching certificate was increased from RM 652 to RM 917 (NSTP, 1997). When a comparison is made between the present teachers of the government and the private teaching institutions, it is very obvious that the teachers in government schools are receiving lower income than teachers working in the private sector.

The general perception is that teachers in our country are dissatisfied with their profession and their morale is low. The report made by the NUTP claims that the teachers' morale was low and teachers are frustrated not just over poor salary schemes but also poor working conditions especially in rural areas and over - burdened with unnecessary workload which eventually force them to leave and find other jobs. It is believe that, people generally have high morale, and is committed toward achieving organizational goals when their personal resources and talents are being fully used. By increasing the level of morale and satisfaction, motivation and also commitment of members, organization's performance can be improved.

In view of the teachers' problems depicted above, therefore, it is important for the government to look into this matter very seriously and urgently. Although it is the responsibility of Education Ministry to continue its effort to create a harmonious and conducive teaching and learning environment for teachers as well as pupils in schools, it is timely that a study is carried out to investigate the disgruntled teachers who are dissatisfied with their jobs, uncommitted and unproductive. In view of the seriousness of this situation, this study seek to investigate who are the dissatisfied teachers, the underlying factors associated with teachers' job satisfaction and recommend ways to increase the morale of teachers to a higher level especially in Sabah.

## **Literature Review**

### **Conceptualization of Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction has been defined and conceptualized in many ways. Schaffer's (1953, p.3, cited in Evans, 1997) interpreted job satisfaction is one of individual's needs fulfillment: "overall job satisfaction will vary directly with the extent to which those needs of an individual which can be satisfied in a job are actually satisfied; the stronger the need, the more closely will job satisfaction depend on it's". Sergiovanni (1968) also supports the personal needs' fulfillment interpretation, and draws attention to the evident link between Herzberg's (1968), motivation - hygiene theory and Maslow's (1954), theory of human motivation, based upon a hierarchy of human needs.

Lawler and Porter (1973) focuses on expectations, rather than needs; "overall job satisfaction is determined by the difference between all those things a person feels he "should" receive from his job and all those things he actually "does" receive. Locke (1969) however, dismisses both needs and expectations in favor of values. He defines job satisfaction as: "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or

facilitating the achievement of one's values while Nias (1989) accepts Lortie's (1975) cited in Evans (1997), interpreted job satisfaction as a summary of the total rewards experienced (in teaching). Kalleberg (1977) on the other hand, identifies both job rewards and job values as the determinants of job satisfaction, which he defines as: "an overall effective orientation on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying"

Katzell (1964) adopts the all-encompassing term "frame of reference" to include values, goals, desires or interests. He refers to job features which a person perceives as attractive or repellent, desirable or undesirable and interprets job satisfaction as "a response to the activities, events and conditions which compose of the job" (p.348). Similarly, Rosen and Rosen (1955) use the rather generic term "desires". The source of much of this disagreement lies with the hierarchical positions, as determinants of satisfaction of what Katzell (1964) identifies as the different "frames of reference". It arises over whether, for example, needs determine values or vice versa. As you may recall, job satisfaction can be defined as the amount of overall positive effect (feeling) that an individual has towards his job. In other words, job satisfaction is the extent to which is a worker feels positively or negatively about his or her job (Locke, 1976). As we have been previously, it can be conceptualized in variety of ways, such as extrinsic, intrinsic or general satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1980) have commented that, an individual who had high satisfaction means that the individual generally likes and values his job highly and feels positively towards it. In sum, job satisfaction is one's attitudes towards one's job, which reflect assessment on both internal and external factors surrounding one's job.

### **Sources of Job Satisfaction**

A large volume of the job satisfaction literature that has been reviewed by many writers comes from the field of industrial/occupational psychology, For example, research reviewed by Robinson et al. (1969) discusses the following factors as main sources to job satisfaction: pay, supervision, the work group, job content, and working conditions.

Kalleberg (1977) based on the varimax orthogonal factor analysis procedures identified six factors which were deemed to reflect workers job satisfaction. He interpreted these six factors as the: (i) intrinsic dimension, (ii) convenience dimension, (iii) financial dimension, (iv) co-workers dimension, (v) career dimension, and (vi) resource dimension.

Quitugua (1976) reviewed and determined that the following factors have been the most frequently investigated factors by the past researchers: (i) school administration and supervision, (ii) salary, (iii) community aspects, (iv) faculty relations, (v) teacher pupil relations, (vi) working conditions, (vii) teacher-principal relations, (viii) work itself, (ix) physical conditions and facilities available (x) teacher status, (xi) job security, (xii) teacher work load, (xiii) curriculum, (xiv) schoolboard, (xv) school financial support, and (xvi) parent support.

In sum, there are a variety of factors that lead people to feel positively or negatively about their jobs. From the many factors that can contribute to a person's job satisfaction, there are six most frequently studied causes job satisfaction considered to be the main factors that greatly associated with job satisfaction of an individual: (1) Pay; (2) The work itself; (3) promotions; (4) Supervision; (5) The work group; and (6) Working conditions (Arnold and Feldman, 1986).

### **Studies on Job Satisfaction in Malaysian Context**

In Malaysia, on the private organizations, Md Zabid (1990) studied on job satisfaction and motivation among bank managers. Abdul Mutalib (1992) searched on the topic entitled "Kepuasan kerja pekerja-pekerja di kem pembalakan". Chin (1993) on the other hand, studied

on perceived job characteristics and job satisfaction among production workers of a garment export factory in Muar, Johor. Tee (1994) discussed on job satisfaction among supermarket employees in Negeri Sembilan and Lee and Chan (1996) studied on job satisfaction and conflict among technical employees in selected Malaysian engineering firms.

On the government agencies, Abdul Latif (1979) conducted a study on job satisfaction, a look at the plantation workers. Abdul Main (1989) studied on 'Perkaitan kepuasan kerja dan pencapaian mendelegasi tugas dengan faktor-faktor personal dan pentadbiran di kalangan pengetua sekolah menengah'. Zaiton (1982) studied about kepuasan kerja guru-guru di tiga sekolah di Pahang. Che Omar (1985) discussed on kepuasan kerja di kalangan pekerja-pekerja di salah sebuah syarikat kenderaan di Kelantan. Mazlan (1990) researched on faktor-faktor berkaitan dengan kepuasan kerja pengetua sekolah menengah. Koh (1992) studied on kepuasan kerja di kalangan guru-guru pendidikan jasmani lepasan maktab perguruan di Malaysia, Daerah Kuantan, Pahang. Mohamed (1993), focused on overall job satisfaction among managerial employees in the Public Services Department. Hamzah (1994) studied on job satisfaction of secondary school agriculture teachers and agricultural institute lecturers in Peninsular Malaysia. Ramlah (1984) studied on Nature of job and job satisfaction of extension officers in development agencies in Selangor and Federal Territory. Finally, Ghazali (1994) investigated on Kepuasan kerja di kalangan pengawal keselamatan Universiti Pertanian Malaysia and Abdul Wahab (1992) studied about Persepsi pekerja kerani pelabuhan terhadap kepuasan kerja: Perbandingan sektor awam dan swasta.

### **Research Objectives**

The main aim of the paper is to examine teachers' job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah. For that purpose, this study examine: (i) The level of job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah related to their teaching profession, and (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).

### **Research Framework**

In this study, job satisfaction is conceptualized to include both overall job satisfaction and facet specific satisfaction. Overall Job Satisfaction measures teacher's overall satisfaction with teaching as a career and also by asking to evaluate their teaching job as a whole while facet specific satisfaction measures teacher's satisfaction towards specific aspects of their job or specific 'dimensions' of the teaching job such as pay, work itself, supervision, promotions, working conditions and co-workers.

Empirical studies had established that the specific dimensions of work are associated with job satisfaction (Arnold and Feldman, 1986). The main intention of this study is to identify the important factors associated with job satisfaction of Secondary school teachers in Tawau, Sabah. The research framework is shown in Figure 1.

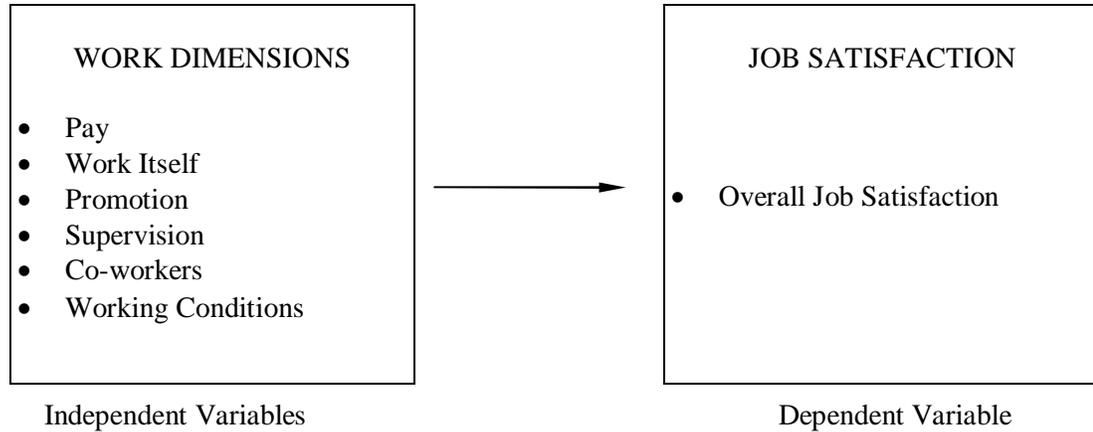


Figure 1: Research Framework

## 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 primary data were collected by means of survey 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 job satisfaction instrument was adopted from previous literature and it was found to be reliable and valid for this study.

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 sent out and only 200 of them were returned and usable. The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for MS Windows for personal computer program.

## The Survey Findings and Discussion

### Analysis of Teacher's Overall Job Satisfaction Level

Table 1 shows the respondents overall job satisfaction level. The overall job satisfaction was divided into two levels comprising low overall satisfaction and high overall satisfaction. The maximum score observed for the overall job satisfaction was 15 while the minimum score was 5.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Overall Job Satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction	N = 200	
	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Low (5 - 9)	38	19.0
High (10 - 15)	162	81.0
Mean = 11.26	SD = 1.988	Max = 15
		Min = 5

As depicted in Table 1, the majority of the respondents (81%) had a high level of overall job satisfaction while 19% of the respondents had a low level of overall job satisfaction. This finding suggests that there are significant numbers of teachers who are not satisfied with their teaching job. The mean of the present overall job satisfaction measure is 11.26 and its standard deviation is 1.99. This implies that Tawau, Sabah secondary school teachers, in general, are quite satisfied with their overall teaching job.

### Comparisons of Teachers' Background and Overall Job Satisfaction

The second objective of this study is to determine whether there are any significant differences between the respondents' background and their job satisfaction. The variables selected for teachers' background were gender, service category, career stage, tenure and place of birth. For gender and service category an independent t-test was used to determine any differences in the mean job satisfaction while F-test was used to analyze the variables for similar purpose.

Based on the results of the t-test (Table 2) conducted, there is a significant difference between overall job satisfaction and gender. The t-value was 3.63 and the associated p-value was 0.0005. Thus the mean overall job satisfaction of male teachers found to be significantly higher than the female teachers. The mean score of male teachers was 11.8 compared to the female teachers of 10.81. This result confirms to the findings of Quitugua (1976) who found that the male teachers were overall more satisfied than female teachers. This finding, however, contradicts that of Ghazali (1979) who showed that there was no significant difference in overall job satisfaction between sex although female teachers tend to be slightly more satisfied.

Table 2: Independent t-test for Overall Job Satisfaction by Gender

Gender	Mean	Levene test (p)	t-value	p-value
Male	11.80	0.277	3.63	0.0005
Female	10.81			

Note: Levene test indicates that the t-value of equal variances assumed was used.

Table 3 presents the results of the analysis of the t-test, assessing the differences in mean overall job satisfaction by teachers' service category. Since the associated p-value for the test was 0.0005, it indicates a significant difference in the mean overall job satisfaction between the two categories of teachers. It shows that graduate teachers are more satisfied with their job than non-graduate teachers. The mean score for the non-graduate teachers was 10.61 compared to graduate 12.04. Hence, it can be concluded that, the graduate teachers included in the sample are more satisfied compared to non-graduate teachers. The finding is in contrast with the findings of Ghazali who showed that the non-graduate teachers were more satisfied than the graduate teachers.

Table 3: Independent t-test for Overall Job Satisfaction by Service Category

Service Category	Mean	Levene test (p)	t-value	p-value
Non-graduate	10.61	0.01	-5.56	0.0005
Graduate	12.04			

Note: Levene test indicates that the t-value of equal variances not-assumed was used.

The F-test conducted on teachers' mean overall job satisfaction and their career development stage in school is depicted in Table 4. Since the p-value obtained is lesser than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between teachers' career stage and their mean overall satisfaction of teaching. This finding implies that, with different job titles in their job, the teachers' overall satisfaction will vary. Table 4 also shows that there is an interaction between mean overall job satisfaction of teachers and their job titles in school. The teachers who hold higher positions in their school reported higher satisfaction in their profession compared to lower rank teachers. The teachers who hold the post of the department head had a very high mean overall job satisfaction with a mean score of 12.39. Generally, ordinary teachers had the lowest mean overall satisfaction with their present teaching job (10.91).

Table 4: F-test for Overall Job Satisfaction by Job Title (Career Stage)

Job Title	Mean	ANOVA	
		F-ratio	p-value (sig.)
Teacher	10.91	7.608	0.0005
Subject Head	11.56		
Department Head	12.39		
Others (School Head)	13.33		
Total	11.26		

Table 5: F-test for Overall Job Satisfaction by Tenure (Length of Service)

Length of Service (Tenure)	Mean	ANOVA	
		F-ratio	p-value (sig.)
1 - 5 years	10.95	4.537	0.0002
6 - 10 years	12.16		
11 - 15 years	12.11		
16 - 20 years	12.17		
21 years & above	14.00		
Total	11.26		

Table 5 above summarizes the F-test conducted on mean overall job satisfaction of the respondents by tenure (the length of service in schools). The F-value of 4.537 and its associated p-value of 0.002 indicate that there is a significant difference in the mean overall job satisfaction by tenure. The longer serving teachers were more satisfied than those who served shorter periods. The teachers with a teaching experience of 21 years and above tend to have the highest mean score (14.00) and on the other hand, teachers with 1 to 5 years of teaching experience scored the lowest mean (10.95). Hence, this study concluded that the older teachers included in the study are more satisfied with their teaching job than the younger teachers. These findings contradict the results of earlier studies reported by Quitugua (1976) where younger teachers were found to be more satisfied than older teachers. However, the result of this study supports Ghazali's (1979) conclusion that younger teachers are more dissatisfied compared to older teachers.

Table 6: F-test for Overall Job Satisfaction by Place of Origin

Place of Origin (Hometown)	Mean	ANOVA	
		F-ratio	p-value (sig.)
West Malaysia	11.31	0.633	0.532
Sabah	11.25		
Others	10.00		
Total	11.26		

The F-test conducted on teachers' mean overall job satisfaction by place of origin is depicted in Table 6. The result indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean overall satisfaction of teachers by place of origin. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean overall job satisfaction of those teachers originated from West Malaysia and those from Sabah ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### Conclusion and Implication

The major findings of this study compared to earlier perceptions are summarized as follows: (i) The secondary school teachers included in this study are generally satisfied with their teaching job. This finding is not confirmed our general perception of this study that the teachers in our country are dissatisfied with their profession, (ii) This study found that the secondary school teachers included in this study are generally 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.

Apart from that, the findings of this study imply that the six work dimensions selected have positive effects on teachers' overall job satisfaction. In other words, these work dimensions of teaching job should be taken into account when planning for teachers' global overall job satisfaction. This means that teachers' work dimensions data are an important source of consideration for maintaining their job satisfaction.

### Limitation and Future Research

The limitation of this study is it is a cross-sectional study, therefore it is recommended that future study could embark on longitudinal research that can provide more valuable and comprehensive results for theory development. The present study is 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 researcher's observations in the past, the teachers' place of origin does affect the teachers' job satisfaction.

The overall findings of this study provide us with considerable evidence and information toward our understanding of the variations in overall job satisfaction as it affects the various demographically distinct groups of teachers as identified in the study. Inquiries are also directed towards determining the work dimensions related to teacher job satisfaction, and also assess the extent to which these dimensions are related to job satisfaction of teachers and their influence on various distinct groups of teachers. Finally, the findings of this study help to increase our understanding of the problems related to social and environments forces that impinge upon the work of secondary school teachers in Sabah especially. We do hope that this study has achieved its original objectives to enlighten our knowledge with regard to the antecedents and empirical correlates of teacher morale and job satisfaction as it affects the quality of work experience of Sabah school teachers.

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