

Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction of Primary School Teachers

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Abstract: This study presents an in-depth investigation into the predictors of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in China. The study is grounded in the theoretical framework of self-efficacy and job satisfaction theories, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction in the unique socio-cultural context of China. The research employs a descriptive-comparative correlational research design, utilizing a comprehensive questionnaire survey to collect data from a representative sample of primary school teachers in Wuhan, China. The questionnaire covers demographic information, self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, classroom management, and job satisfaction levels. Based on these findings, the study concludes that enhancing teacher self-efficacy, providing a supportive work environment, and improving classroom management practices are key to improving job satisfaction among primary school teachers in China.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Teacher Self-Efficacy, Primary School Teachers, China.

1. Introduction

Primary education in China is changing dramatically as society and the economy change quickly, and primary school teachers are the key players in this change. They have the important role of fostering the intellectual and moral growth of the young, which has become more difficult with educational reforms and changing teaching expectations. It is important to know what factors affect the job satisfaction of these teachers because it affects how well they teach and how students learn. One major problem that teachers face is burnout at work, which is a common problem for teachers around the world, but it has a special form in China's educational system. Teachers are more likely to feel burned out because of the large class sizes, high competition, and heavy workload (Li, 2016). To help primary teachers cope with these issues, it is necessary to have a good understanding of how burnout affects job satisfaction.

There is a lack of research on the factors that influence job satisfaction among primary school teachers in China, even though they face unique difficulties in the current educational situation. Aspects such as demographic variables, self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management may affect job satisfaction, but their exact roles and relationships in the Chinese context are not well investigated. Recent studies show the importance of demographic characteristics and self-efficacy in influencing teachers' professional experiences and satisfaction levels (Shen et al., 2019; Wang & Hall, 2018). However, the literature has not sufficiently examined how these factors, along with instructional strategies and classroom management practices, predict job satisfaction among China's primary school teachers. This gap is especially noticeable in the context of China's different educational, cultural, and social environments. Self-efficacy has also been identified as a key factor in teacher performance and job satisfaction (Bandura, 1997), but its complicated role among primary teachers in China is still not fully clear. To better understand the specific challenges that Chinese primary educators encounter, it is useful to know more about how self-efficacy

and job satisfaction relate.

This study aimed to address this gap by examining how demographic profiles, teacher self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management affect job satisfaction among Chinese primary school teachers. The originality of this research is that it adopts a comprehensive approach to explore and analyze these factors in a Chinese educational setting, offering insights that could help design interventions to improve teacher satisfaction among primary school teachers and, consequently, educational quality. Moreover, the link between effective classroom management and job satisfaction is still not well studied, especially in the Chinese educational context. The research by Marzano and Marzano (2003) shows the crucial role that classroom management has in creating a positive learning environment. However, the specific influence that classroom management has on job satisfaction for primary teachers in China needs more investigation.

A number of aspects are shaped by the cultural and educational environment of China, including effective classroom management. The way that teachers manage their classrooms may be affected by the Confucian heritage culture, which values respect for authority and discipline (Ho, 1994). By doing research on the connection between classroom management and job satisfaction in this cultural setting, it is possible to learn more about the dynamics of primary education in China. Moreover, the unique cultural and societal expectations that exist in China may influence the self-efficacy beliefs of primary school teachers. Hofstede (1980) suggests that the collectivist nature of Chinese society may have an impact on how teachers view their own effectiveness in the classroom. Within this sociocultural framework, it is very important to examine the role of self-efficacy in job satisfaction. The aim of this research was to not only add to the global discussion on teacher job satisfaction but also to achieve a deeper understanding of the difficulties and possibilities that primary teachers in China encounter. This was done by basing the study on the specific features of the educational context in China.

2. Method

2.1. Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to examine the predictors of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in China, with a focus on demographic profiles, teacher self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The study found several significant predictors of job satisfaction, including high levels of self-efficacy, certain demographic factors such as age, sex, and years of teaching experience, and effective classroom management practices. These findings have important implications for educational policymakers, school administrators, and teacher training programs, as they highlight the need for enhancing teacher self-efficacy, providing a supportive work environment, and improving classroom management practices to improve job satisfaction among primary school teachers in China. The study also underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and empowering work environment to enhance job satisfaction and, ultimately, improve the quality of education.

2.2. Research Design

The research on the factors that influenced job satisfaction among primary teachers in China used a descriptive-comparative research design that combined descriptive statistics, inferential analysis, and correlation analysis. The descriptive-comparative correlational research design is a comprehensive method that includes descriptive statistics to describe and summarize the characteristics of the data collected from the primary school teachers in Hubei, Wuhan, China. This part of the design was important for answering Research Questions 1 and 2, which aimed to profile the teachers and measure their levels of job satisfaction across various aspects. Comparative analysis was used to find and examine differences in job satisfaction levels and self-efficacy among different groups based on their demographic profiles (Research Questions 3 and 5). This involved comparing means, medians, or proportions to identify variations across different demographic categories such as sex, age, employment status, etc. Correlational analysis was used to investigate the relationships between teachers' demographic profiles, their sense of self-efficacy, and their job satisfaction levels (Research Question 6). This involved using statistical methods to assess the magnitude and direction of associations between variables.

2.3. Research Sample

This study employed quota sampling technique to ensure adequate representative sample of primary school teachers in Hubei, Wuhan, China. The distribution of the number of respondents for each school is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to school

| School Name | Total Teachers | Teachers Participated |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| W Primary School | 86 | 73 |
| H Primary School | 92 | 78 |
| S Primary School | 83 | 72 |
| G Primary School | 83 | 71 |
| Y Primary School | 76 | 66 |
| Total | 420 | 360 |

The study used the quota sampling method to select

teachers from different backgrounds, such as age, sex, teaching experience, and education level, to represent the primary teacher population in Wuhan. The quota sampling method was used to improve the reliability and applicability of the research findings. By picking teachers from different schools and considering demographic diversity, the study aimed to capture the variation that exists in the larger population of primary teachers in Wuhan. This method ensured that the findings could be more confidently generalized to the broader context of primary education, providing insights that were relevant to a diverse range of educators. Through this careful sampling method, the study sought to increase the external validity of its results, making them more robust and useful for informing policies and interventions that aimed to enhance job satisfaction among primary teachers. To calculate the sample size within each school, a proportional allocation method was used. This involved finding out the proportion in relation to the total teacher population and then applying this proportion to the overall sample size. A Survey Monkey sample size calculator was used to determine the sample size with a 95% confidence interval, a 5% margin of error, and setting the population at 50%, which resulted in a conservative sample size estimation of 360.

2.4. Data Collection Tool

The main method used in this study was a questionnaire survey, and five questionnaires were chosen to collect data for this study. All of the instruments used in this study went through content validation, forward and backward translation, and pilot testing analysis before they were used in the actual data collection. See the appendices for evidence of these activities. The survey questionnaire had 3 parts:

Part 1: Academic and Demographic Background Questionnaire: This part of the questionnaire aimed to get information from primary school teachers about their demographic backgrounds.

Part 2: Self-Efficacy: Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES): The TSES was a widely used scale to measure teacher self-efficacy.

Part 3: Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ). The work of Maslow and Herzberg (1998) was the basis for the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ), which had 77 questions.

2.5. Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher first cleaned and coded the collected questionnaires to remove invalid ones, and then used statistical software to process and analyze the data. The analysis methods included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics described the data and calculated the mean, standard deviation, and other statistics of each variable to know the overall performance of each factor.

Non-parametric statistics such as the Wilcoxon, Kruskal Wallis, Mann-Whitney tests were used to determine significant differences in the demographic profile of teachers regarding the domains of job satisfaction and self-efficacy.

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between factors such as job burnout, teacher leadership skills, self-efficacy, and classroom management. We also explored how these factors were related to primary school teachers' job satisfaction.

Regression analysis was used to establish multiple linear

regression analyses, with job satisfaction being predicted by self-efficacy and the demographic profile of teachers. Through the regression analysis, we could reveal the predictive effect and degree of each factor on job satisfaction. Moreover, we also did some further analysis, such as investigating the differences in job satisfaction among teachers based on sex, age, teaching experience, etc., and how these factors were associated with job satisfaction. These analyses helped us better understand the work situation and needs of primary school teachers and provided more specific suggestions for enhancing their job satisfaction.

3. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of this study:

3.1. Demographic Profile

The study found that demographic factors such as sex, age, and employment status significantly influence job satisfaction. Female teachers reported higher satisfaction levels compared to male teachers. This implies that sex-specific interventions may be necessary to enhance job satisfaction among male teachers. However, the study did not explore the reasons behind this sex disparity, which could be a limitation.

3.2. Job Satisfaction Levels

Teachers generally expressed average satisfaction across various aspects such as supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, and responsibility. Recognition was identified as a critical factor for job satisfaction. This suggests that schools should prioritize recognition to improve teacher satisfaction. The limitation here is that the study did not delve into the specific forms of recognition that teachers prefer.

3.3. Self-Efficacy

The research highlighted a low sense of self-efficacy among teachers, particularly in instructional strategies and classroom management, suggesting a need for professional development in these areas. However, the study did not investigate the barriers to self-efficacy, which is a limitation.

3.4. Predictors of Satisfaction

Instructional strategies emerged as a significant predictor of job satisfaction, indicating that effective teaching methods contribute to teachers' professional contentment. This underscores the importance of continuous professional development in teaching methodologies. A potential limitation is that the study did not consider other possible predictors of job satisfaction, such as work-life balance or administrative support.

3.5. Developed Teaching Program

Based on the findings, the study proposed a teaching program aimed at enhancing job satisfaction by addressing the identified predictors, including demographic characteristics and self-efficacy. The limitation is that the effectiveness of this program was not empirically tested.

3.6. Significance for Stakeholders

The study's insights are valuable for educational policymakers, teacher training programs, primary school teachers, and researchers, offering guidance for improving teacher well-being and educational quality. However, the study's findings are specific to primary school teachers in

China, limiting their generalizability to other contexts.

The study emphasizes the importance of recognizing and supporting teachers to foster a positive educational environment. Despite its limitations, it provides a valuable starting point for further research and intervention development.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

4.1. Professional Development

Enhance teacher training programs to include modules on reducing work burnout, developing leadership skills, and improving classroom management. The rationale behind this is the study's finding of a low sense of self-efficacy among teachers, particularly in instructional strategies and classroom management. By addressing these areas through professional development, teachers' self-efficacy and, consequently, job satisfaction can be improved.

4.2. Policy Formulation

Educational policymakers should use the study's insights to create interventions that improve the work environment and job satisfaction of primary teachers. The study found that recognition was a critical factor for job satisfaction. Therefore, policies that promote recognition of teachers' efforts and achievements could significantly enhance their job satisfaction.

4.3. Supportive Environment

Schools should foster a collaborative culture with trust, support, and effective communication to increase teacher job satisfaction. The study found that teachers generally expressed average satisfaction across various aspects such as supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, and responsibility. By creating a supportive environment, these aspects of job satisfaction can be improved.

4.4. Recognition and Advancement

Acknowledge and reward teachers' achievements and provide clear opportunities for career advancement to boost job satisfaction. The rationale for this recommendation is the study's finding that recognition was identified as a critical factor for job satisfaction. By providing recognition and opportunities for advancement, schools can enhance teachers' job satisfaction and motivation.

These recommendations, if implemented effectively, could significantly improve job satisfaction among primary school teachers, leading to better teaching outcomes and a more positive educational environment. However, it's important to note that these recommendations are based on a single study, and further research is needed to validate and refine them.

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