



TEACHERS JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract

Given that teacher shortage is an international problem, teacher job satisfaction merits closer attention. Not only is job satisfaction closely related to teacher retention, but it also contributes to the well-being of teachers and their students, overall school cohesion and enhanced status of the teaching profession. This study investigates the relations between teacher job satisfaction, school working conditions and teacher characteristics for eighth grade mathematics teachers. The study employs TIMSS 2015 (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) data from Sweden. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling are used as main methods. Results demonstrate a substantial association between school working conditions and teacher job satisfaction. More specifically, teacher workload, teacher cooperation and teacher perceptions of student discipline in school were the factors most closely related to teacher job satisfaction. As to teacher characteristics, female teachers, teachers with more exposure to professional development and more efficacious teachers tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction. In addition, it was found that the relationship between the extent of teacher cooperation and job satisfaction was more pronounced for male teachers, while student discipline was more important for job satisfaction of teachers with lower self-efficacy beliefs. Implications for policy are further discussed.

Key Words: Job Satisfaction, School Working Conditions, Teachers Characteristics

Background

While the role of teachers' work for student outcomes is widely recognised, the question whether teachers are content with their working environment is often overlooked (Bascia & Rottmann, 2011; Liang & Akiba, 2017). Meanwhile, teacher job satisfaction has many important and far-reaching implications. First, it contributes to teacher well-being as satisfied teachers are less susceptible to stress and burnout (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). In addition, there is evidence that students of teachers who are content with their job also feel better (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). Furthermore, satisfied teachers offer higher instructional quality and better learning support for their

students (Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2008; Kunter et al., 2013). Finally, content teachers demonstrate stronger job commitment and are less prone to leave the profession (Blömeke, Houang, Hsieh, & Wang, 2017; Klassen & Chiu, 2011), which is especially crucial in times when teacher turnover is high.

Increasing teacher turnover rates and a subsequent shortage of qualified teachers is a growing concern internationally (European Commission, 2018; Ingersoll, 2017). Teacher turnover comprises interrelated notions of teacher migration and attrition, where migration describes teachers moving to other schools, while attrition pertains to teachers leaving the profession altogether (Ingersoll, 2001; Rinke, 2008). However, regardless the type of turnover, there are always negative consequences for a particular school from which a teacher is departing. Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff 2013 suggest a disruptive impact of turnover beyond compositional changes in teacher quality, especially in lower-performing schools. Besides affecting student learning and motivation, teacher turnover negatively affects faculty collegiality and trust and leads to a loss of institutional knowledge, which is critical for supporting student learning. In the end, overall school performance is affected Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004.

In this section, we take a closer look at the conceptualisation of teacher job satisfaction, as well as its predictors described in previous research, such as school working conditions and teacher characteristics. Even though the focus of the study is on teacher job satisfaction, the literature on closely associated factors, such as teacher turnover and retention, was also reviewed.

In this study, we use the definition of job satisfaction provided by Evans (1997), who describes it as “a state of mind determined by the extent to which the individual perceives her/his job-related needs to be met” (p. 328). In addition, two main components in teacher job satisfaction are recognised: job comfort and job fulfilment. The former refers to how satisfactory job conditions and circumstances are to an individual, while the latter refers to the extent of one’s satisfaction by personal accomplishments within meaningful aspects of the job (Evans, 1997).

Considering the above-mentioned background, the current study aims to investigate how the following factors are related to teacher job satisfaction:

- a. school working conditions
- b. teacher characteristics.

Method

Data sources and sample

The data in the present study were obtained from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2015. TIMSS is a regularly recurring assessment of fourth- and eighth-grade students' mathematics and science achievement conducted on a four-year cycle. The international design of the TIMSS study is described in the TIMSS 2015 framework (Mullis & Martin, 2013) as well as in the technical report (Martin, Mullis, & Hooper, 2016). In 2015, 46 countries participated in the survey for grade 8. The database holds information provided by students, their teachers and their principals. In Sweden, 150 schools, 200 teachers and 4090 students in grade 8 participated in the study in 2015 (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016). The current study uses the Swedish data from grade 8 mathematics teachers.

Variables and measures

Teacher assessment of their satisfaction with the job as well as working conditions most often cited in the literature (student discipline, leadership support, school resources, teacher cooperation and teacher workload) were retrieved from the international TIMSS database

The items denoting teacher job satisfaction were recoded so that higher values correspond to higher levels of job satisfaction. It can be observed that the largest variation in teacher perceptions of job satisfaction concerned the item "I am going to continue teaching as long as I can", while teachers' views were most unanimous for the item "I am enthusiastic about my job". Cronbach's alpha for teacher job-satisfaction scale was .87 for six items.

All of the reliability indices for the items denoting aspects of school working conditions were good to excellent with .84 for student discipline (five items), .87 for leadership support (three items), .76 for school resources (five items), .86 for teacher cooperation (six items), and .71 for teacher workload (five items). Higher scores on these aspects represent better working conditions.

Teacher self-efficacy items were recoded in order for higher values to denote higher levels of self-efficacy. Cronbach's alpha for teacher self-efficacy was .87 for six items. It can be observed that teachers were rather confident in performing various teaching tasks, with somewhat lower self-efficacy reported for developing student critical thinking.

In addition, teacher demographic and professional characteristics, such as gender, experience, teacher certification, mathematics and mathematics education as a major, and number of hours of professional development, were used. A standard deviation of classroom achievement level (ACH_sd) and a classroom mean of the number of books at home (BOOKS_m) were used as indicators of student achievement heterogeneity/social composition, respectively. ACH_sd purported to capture the achievement heterogeneity in the classroom, which is not necessarily higher in classrooms with lower-SES students. However, given higher levels of achievement heterogeneity, teachers may perceive their working conditions as more

problematic. BOOKS_m aimed to capture school segregation with respect to student social background. Manifest variables' correlations are presented in

Results

In the following section, latent measurement models of teacher job satisfaction, school working conditions and teacher self-efficacy are formulated and evaluated, and results of structural models are presented. As all analyses were carried out on teacher level, student SES and achievement heterogeneity were aggregated measures (mean of books at home and the standard deviation of mathematics achievement, respectively) on classroom level.

A latent model of teacher job satisfaction

First, a latent model of the study's outcome measure, teacher job satisfaction, (*JOBSAT*) was formulated ([Figure 1](#)). In the SEM models, ellipses or circles denote latent constructs, and manifest variables are shown in squares or rectangles. The model obtained an excellent fit to the data. The indicator "My work inspires me" had the highest factor loading (.82), and others ranged from .57 to .80.

The pairs of items "I am content with my profession as a teacher" and "I am satisfied with being a teacher in this school" shared substantial commonalities in terms of job comfort, while the items "I am enthusiastic about my job" and "I am proud of the work I do" shared substantial commonalities in terms of job fulfilment, as per Evans (1997) definition. The introduction of corresponding correlated residuals has led to an improved model fit.

Which factors are related to teacher job satisfaction?

Relations between school working conditions and teacher job satisfaction

Relations between teacher background characteristics and job satisfaction

Exploring the moderating roles of teacher characteristics

Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate the relations between school working conditions and teacher characteristics on job satisfaction of eighth-grade mathematics teachers in Sweden. Among aspects of school working conditions, teacher workload, teacher cooperation and student discipline were most important for teacher job satisfaction. Female teachers, teachers with more experience of professional development and more efficacious teachers tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction. In addition, teacher cooperation carried much more importance for male teachers' job satisfaction, while teacher perceptions of student discipline in school were crucial for job satisfaction of the least efficacious teachers.

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