

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Performance of Saudi EFL Elementary School Teachers in Taif City

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Abstract

The increasing number of incapable elementary school students failing to achieve learning outcomes is attributed to their teachers' low performance, indicative of a lack of ability or willingness to teach according to prescribed standards, stemming from teachers' job dissatisfaction. Thus, this study will discuss the relationship between Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) elementary teachers' job satisfaction and their job performance and how job satisfaction influences performance. The field of job satisfaction research is international. However, few studies have been conducted in the Saudi contexts, while the existing literature does not adequately describe job satisfaction among Saudi elementary teachers. This study, which was conducted in Taif, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will fill that gap by examining the job satisfaction of Saudi EFL elementary school teachers and its relationship to their work performance. It is a mixed-methods study where the data will be gathered in two different ways: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Thus, this study will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods. The participants will include 111 Saudi EFL teachers teaching at the elementary level. The questionnaire that has been created consists of three dimensions. The first dimension is general information about the participants. The second and third dimensions of the questionnaire are developed by Werang et al. (2017b). Then, the interview will be conducted with three participants from the same sample. (2017b). The research finding indicates that there is a positive relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and their performance.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, job performance, Saudi EFL elementary teachers, teachers' job satisfaction

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

English has become an international language and is spoken by millions of people around the world. Therefore, the number of people who speak English as a second language exceeds the number of native English speakers (García, 2013). Since the use and users of the English language have dramatically changed over the years, English language teaching (ELT) has experienced dynamic and complex changes. Therefore, English language teachers need to have a deep understanding of their teaching strategies to increase student learning (Renandya & Widodo, 2016).

It is unclear when English was introduced into the Saudi context because the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not under the control of any European power that imposed English; thus, the Saudi government introduced this foreign language to their people and the learning system to increase trade with non-Arabic speaking countries (Al-Seghayer, 2021). Accordingly, English has been taught as a foreign language for a long time. However, there is an urgent demand for teaching English as a foreign language due to a change in the status of teaching English in Saudi Arabia which has occurred in recent years to maintain Saudi Vision 2030. The Vision of 2030 aims to privatize many government-sponsored businesses and private employers often require English proficiency or prefer candidates who can speak two languages. This means job seekers need to learn English along with Arabic language. (Khawaji, 2022). Recently, English teachers with an excessive workload may struggle with emotional pressure, leading to burnout and hindering student learning. Burnout syndrome is a situation that appears in teachers in response to stressors in the job context (Alqassim et al., 2022).

Since this profession has a high local status, teachers are expected to help students in the learning process and motivate them. Alqassim et al. (2022) state in their study most teachers exhibited burnout symptoms. Some of the symptoms that were observed are of the use of psychotropic medications, absenteeism, changing institutions and high job dissatisfaction. Since the teaching–learning process depends on interactions between teachers and their students, teachers’ job satisfaction plays a crucial role in their work performance. Thus, this study hypothesises that there is a relationship between elementary school teachers’ job satisfaction and their performance in Saudi Arabia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In 2019–2020, a Russian study stated that teachers dissatisfied with their workload leave the education system. Moreover, there is a strong connection between workload dissatisfaction and teachers’ willingness to leave the job (Matveev, 2021).

Many studies have been conducted on job satisfaction globally; however, there are few from the Saudi context and most were related to the field of nursing. The few studies that were conducted in the Saudi context measured job satisfaction and found that different factors affect teacher job satisfaction in the academic field but none looked at the area of elementary education.

Al Tayyar (2014) conducted a study in Riyadh to measure job satisfaction and motivation for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) secondary school teachers, and more recently, a study of female teachers in Riyadh addressed the topic of teacher job satisfaction (Dhaifallah, 2017). This study aims to bridge the gap in existing literature because does not adequately describe the relationship of EFL elementary teachers' job satisfaction and their performance in the Saudi context, particularly in Taif city.

Therefore, this study tries to describe the relationship between the job satisfaction of Saudi EFL elementary school teachers and their performance and how this satisfaction influences their work performance.

1.3 Research Question

The study aims to answer the following question:

1) Is there a relationship between teacher job satisfaction and their effectiveness in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to elementary students?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Addressing this topic in the Saudi context will promote teacher job satisfaction and thus enhance teacher job performance in elementary Saudi schools. It will be the first study of its kind conducted in the western region, specifically Taif city, focusing on EFL elementary teachers. Additionally, it will help the Ministry of Education (MoE) to improve the sustainable development of the educational system.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Teacher Cognition

Teacher cognition plays a vital role in teaching; therefore, Borg (2003) defined this term as a mental state that includes thinking, beliefs and knowledge that cannot be observed. Vijayarathan-R (2018) has suggested that it is important to prepare teachers to improve their pre and post teaching services to have more impact on self-awareness and make a significant difference in the educational system.

2.1.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been the focus of much of the research on understanding the employee experience. This concept originated in the world economic revolutions of the early 1930s. In the 1960s, job satisfaction research became empirical, and researchers developed theories. They focused on job satisfaction as a means of measuring individuals' experiences at work. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) developed one famous theory: the affective events theory (AET). AET proposes that workplace environments and events may provoke employees' emotions such as moods and specific feelings, which subsequently impact their attitudes and behaviours. (Weiss & Merlo, 2015).

According to Buckman and Pittman (2021), Locke first defined job satisfaction in 1976. Subsequently, researchers debated developing a suitable definition of job satisfaction, and there is no universal consensus in favour of a single definition. Job satisfaction is best defined as a state that is affected by both a worker's cognitive and emotional state and how they feel about their job experience.

Judge et al. (2001) stated that theories of job satisfaction are classified into three categories. Situational theories maintain that job satisfaction is an outcome of jobs themselves or of different environmental factors. Dispositional approaches posit that job satisfaction depends on an employee's characteristics. Interactive theories regard job satisfaction as mutable and shaped by situational and personal factors that also affect each other. Since this research focuses on the workplace context and how it affects employee satisfaction, situational theories will primarily be utilised.

2.1.3 Work Performance

Work performance is important for an organisation's development. Workers try to achieve their company's goals, and employee performance therefore affects the company's performance (Indra Setia et al., 2022). Pandey and Chauhan (2021) studied workplace performance, and they found that employee performance is a result of work environment satisfaction and employees' efforts to achieve their organisation's ultimate goals by performing their duties and utilising their abilities towards that end. Job satisfaction is therefore necessary for improving workplaces and worker efficiency.

2.1.4 The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

Researchers have long observed the relationship between job satisfaction and work performance. In their research, Judge et al. (2001) first identified the Hawthorne studies, which examined the relationship between work performance and environmental factors. This positive relationship has become a critical subject of discussion, and researchers have been divided over whether happy workers are more productive or whether there is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and work performance. A third position maintains that the difficulty of a job shapes how the latitude which employees are given at work affects their job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001).

On the one hand, employees working difficult jobs need more autonomy, and therefore worker satisfaction or dissatisfaction will be affected. On the other hand, workers in less difficult jobs are autonomously motivated to work and are satisfied. This perspective confirmed the moderate relationship between job satisfaction and work performance. There is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and work performance, although debate persists as to precisely how the former affects the latter (Judge et al., 2001).

2.2 Empirical Studies

The empirical study by Abdullah et al. (2009) was conducted in Sabah city, state of Malaysia to measure the factors that influence secondary school teachers' job satisfaction and if these factors are related to their personalities. This study revealed a strong relationship between job

satisfaction and factors such as age, gender, and workers' educational backgrounds. In addition, the study concluded that overall, secondary teachers in Malaysia were satisfied with their jobs, except for factors such as low pay and poor working conditions.

According to Demirtaş (2010), who conducted a study in Turkey which measured the level of job satisfaction of primary school teachers, when teachers' emotions are stable and positive, they perform better in their jobs. The findings of the study disclosed that Turkish teachers showed a high level of job satisfaction. Thus, this satisfaction helps to improve the educational system.

Naz (2017) conducted quantitative research at a school in Karachi, Pakistan which was facing problems, such as high teacher turnover and poor work performance, due to dissatisfied teachers. She measured the factors that affect teachers' job satisfaction, such as career goals and conditions, positive attitudes towards the job and self-efficiency. The results showed that teachers' self-efficiency and working conditions, such as infrastructure, educational institution policies and teacher empowerment, have a positive influence on teachers' job satisfaction.

In their research, Wolomasi et al. (2019) demonstrated that the classroom atmosphere influences educational attainment. They conducted a quantitative study on 352 elementary school teachers from 412 schools in the Boven Digoel district in South Papua. They used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the data. The data revealed a strong relationship between learners' educational achievement and their teacher's work performance. Therefore, educational achievement is affected not only by the classroom atmosphere but also by teaching practices.

Iqbal et al. (2017) conducted a study in the business sector with similar results. It studied the factors that impact employee retention, such as job satisfaction, workplace culture, rewards and payment. It was found that there is a close connection between high payments and employee satisfaction and thus increased employee retention rates.

Many studies on job satisfaction have been conducted around the world but very few in the Saudi context. The focus here has been on fields other than education, such as medicine. Al-Rubaish et al. (2011) were unable to find any research conducted on job satisfaction in the academic field in Saudi Arabia. Most of the studies on job satisfaction in Saudi Arabia they found examined nursing. They worked to fill that gap by measuring the level of job satisfaction and the psychometric factors of the proposed questionnaire among 340 faculty members at 5 colleges in Dammam by developing suitable Academic Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (AJSQ) for university instructors. They demonstrated the AJSQ's consistency, reliability and validity and thus its utility for future research.

While Al-Rubaish et al. (2011) investigated factors that affect university faculty members' job satisfaction, Alzaidi (2008) investigated factors affecting job satisfaction among secondary school head teachers in Jeddah. He used mixed methods to analyse the data. He found that factors affecting head teachers' jobs and leading to satisfaction through qualitative methods could be categorized into eight themes: the relationship between head teachers and educational administration, head teachers' attitude, headteachers' performances, physical school

environment, head teachers' relationship with students and parents, head teachers' power over teachers, head teachers' educational supervision duties and responsibilities and head teachers' relationships with other teachers. While the quantitative method identified factors contributing to head teachers' dissatisfaction, these include: the inability to transfer underperforming teachers due to lack of authority, insufficient funds and staff for school building maintenance, limited financial resources for upgrading school facilities, low income from school meals as a financial constraint, and inadequate financial incentives.

The existing literature does not adequately describe the level of job satisfaction among Saudi elementary school teachers. This study will fill that gap by examining the job satisfaction of Saudi elementary school teachers and its relationship to their work performance.

3. Methodology

This part of the paper will discuss the research method.

First, the study aimed to examine job satisfaction and teacher performance and describe the influence of this satisfaction on performance. To reach the aim of the current study, quantitative techniques and a descriptive approach were adopted. Creswell (2014) stated that a descriptive study is when the study contains a description of participants' responses to the dependent, independent or mediating variables of the study. As stated by Gray (2013), descriptive research investigates particular features of a specific group at a specific time or over a period of time to answer the question of what happened, not why. Descriptive surveys are made to assess a population's characteristics, either in relation to other populations at the same time or over a period of time. They are intended to measure what happened, not why.

This is a mixed-methods study that uses two stages (a questionnaire and an interview) for gathering data to answer the research questions. According to Creswell and Clark (2017), mixed-method research is when the study combines and analyses qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions and hypotheses.

This study needs both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the problem and show different participants' perspectives about the topic and show the relationship between the two variables in the study (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Applying mixed methods will allow for hearing participants' voices, which is not possible using a quantitative method. Additionally, there will be an unbiased opinion, and the result can be generalised for a large group since these characteristics are exclusive to quantitative research and not qualitative. Mixing these two approaches will provide strengths to balance the individual weaknesses of each and enable collection of more than one type of evidence to analyse the research problems. (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

3.1 Ethical Considerations

The study's participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and their responses would be kept confidential.

3.2 Study Participants

The participants were 111 Saudi, elementary-level, EFL teachers. This study aimed to reach a majority of elementary EFL teachers. However, after distributing the questionnaires, the majority of responses came from Taif city because the questionnaire was distributed in Taif since it is the home city of the researcher; therefore, the study focuses on Taif. Following this, three teachers from the same questionnaire sample were asked to answer the interview questions in a semi-structured interview to provide an in-depth explanation of the quantitative data. The interview questions were asked depending on the teachers' answers.

3.3 Instruments Used for Data Collection

After reviewing the literature related to job satisfaction, the researcher found a questionnaire developed by Werang et al. (2017b) in Indonesia. The reliability of this questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient; 0.667 is for the job satisfaction scale and 0.711 is for the teacher performance scale. This questionnaire was adopted without any modifications. First, the questionnaire contains three dimensions: general information about the participants, teacher job satisfaction and teacher performance.

The second dimension consists of 12 items and the third consists of 7 items. Both dimensions have a six-point scale (6 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree), and each statement is on a scale of six alternatives, which are strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, slightly disagree and strongly disagree. The statements of the quantitative data, which is the questionnaire, will be assessed using a 6-point Likert scale where 6 stands for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree.

The second method is the semi-structured interview. It contains seven questions that were answered by all three interviewees. The three participants are from the same questionnaire sample. All interview questions were descriptive and written to answer the research question: ***How does Saudi teachers' job satisfaction influence Saudi teachers' performance?***

3.4 Limitations and Delimitations

The researcher encountered some difficulties while collecting the data: the number of teacher-interviewees was not enough due to the shortage of time to submit this project; the teachers who were eager to participate were just three. This is because the study was conducted at the same time as student exams, and because the teachers were busy, so the participation was low.

4. Results

4.1 Questionnaire Data Analysis

The linear regression analysis technique was used to obtain an accurate and valid result, using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to measure the data.

Table 1

Tests of normality for the variables.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			
Sig.	df	Statistic	
0.078	111	0.080	Job Satisfaction
0.001	111	0.126	Teacher Performance

The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS to address the initial research query: "Is there a relationship between teacher job satisfaction and their effectiveness in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to elementary students?" Kolmogorov–Smirnova was utilised in Table 1. According to the findings, to understand the distribution normality of the variables, the data are both normally distributed since ($P > 0.05$ means Normally) $P = 0.078$ and not normally distributed because ($P < 0.05$ means not normally) $P = 0.001$, thus Spearman’s correlation is applied to measure the relationship.

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics of the variables of the study.

Std. Deviation	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	
10.64655	48.1532	72.00	18.00	Job Satisfaction Scale
6.49291	28.5586	36.00	7.00	Teacher Performance Scale

The findings in Table 2 indicate that 111 teachers participated in the current study. These findings also show that the mean and SD for job satisfaction ($M = 48.15$, $SD = 10.65$) are higher than those for teacher performance ($M = 28.56$, $SD = 6.49$).

Table 3.

Results of the Cronbach’s Alpha Test.

N of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Questionnaires
12	0.883	Job Satisfaction Scale
6	0.908	Teacher Performance Scale

As illustrated in Table 3, Cronbach’s alpha test was used to evaluate the reliability of each scale. The job satisfaction scale has twelve items ($\alpha = 0.88$); the teacher performance scale has six items ($\alpha = 0.91$). Cronbach’s alpha test was used to evaluate the reliability of each scale.

Table 4

Correlations -The results of Spearman Rho correlation between Job Satisfaction and Teacher Performance.

Job Satisfaction	Teacher Performance			
0.327**	1.000	Correlation coefficient	Job Satisfaction	Spearman's rho
<0.001				Sig. (2-tailed)
111	111			N
1.000	0.327**	Correlation coefficient	<i>Teacher Performance</i>	
	<0.001			Sig. (2-tailed)
111	111			N

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows the correlation between job satisfaction and Saudi EFL teacher performance at the elementary level as determined using the Spearman Rho correlation. Job satisfaction and teacher performance were found to be significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.327$, $n = 111$, $p = 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.01$).

4.2 Interview Data Analysis

This section will analyse the quantitative data that used excerpts from interviews with three elementary school teachers in Taif city who work in different schools.

First, all three teachers indicated that students' success in the learning process is important, and they are trying to help learners to find their weaknesses and gaps. One participant (A) said, "I usually give my students examples of quality work so they have something they can compare their work to and can identify their learning gaps themselves". In addition, all of them want to motivate their students to encourage English Foreign Language EFL learning. Another participant (B) said, "I help my students improve their English language skills through daily lessons".

Second, the teachers were unanimously agreed on the following: that their satisfaction is influenced by different factors, such as a high salary, promotions and the support of administrators. As one teacher(B) stated, 'Job satisfaction can be influenced by a variety of factors such as the level of support from school administrators, the quality of relationships with

colleagues, the resources and materials available for teaching and the level of autonomy and flexibility in the classroom.' Thus, teachers who are supported will have a high level of performance. (B) said, I think rewards, such as bonuses or salary increases, strongly affect performance.

Third, most teachers mentioned that when they are satisfied, their performance improves and they are motivated to work. One teacher (B) said, "When teachers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and motivated to do their best work"; therefore, job satisfaction can lead to a higher quality of educational outcomes. According to one teacher, teaching effectively...helps pupils to learn more in the classroom.

Fourth, most teachers gave their views on the importance of job satisfaction; on the other hand, they also showed the negative effect of job dissatisfaction. They mentioned the factors that may lead to dissatisfied teachers. One teacher (A) said, "...Pressure from school administrators...". Another teacher (B) said, "Unstable education methodology... The stakeholders capable of initiating change show little concern for teachers' job satisfaction".

Finally, only one teacher indicated that she had not received any benefits from her institution when asked if collaboration with the organization had got her any benefits. The rest, gave a positive answer to the question

5. Discussion

This study explored the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance and whether job satisfaction influences Saudi EFL elementary teachers. This section will discuss and interpret the results of the data while taking into consideration the main theories and findings previously covered in the Literature Review to answer the research questions.

Table 4 demonstrates the Spearman Rho correlation between the categories Job Satisfaction and Teacher Performance, with the numerical evidence showing a strong correlation. Additionally, there is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance variables.

The result of this study indicates agreement with the literature, including Al Tayyar's (2014) research which was conducted in Saudi Arabia. This study proved most Saudi EFL teachers who teach at the secondary level are satisfied with their jobs.

Job satisfaction has a strong impact on teacher performance, which may be a consequence of the emotional and financial support that teachers receive. Analysis of the interview data supported this claim. The teachers were asked the question: In your opinion what is the purpose of the promotion in your organisation and how can someone be promoted based on your criteria? All teachers answered that they wanted a promotion, a higher salary and recognition by administrators. Iqbal et al. (2017) confirmed this, finding a strong relationship between high compensation and employee retention. Therefore, when employees at an organisation receive high income for long working hours, they will be more satisfied and turnover rates will be low.

This finding is consistent with previous studies, such as the conclusion of Demirtaş (2010) which confirms that primary school teachers in Turkey have high levels of job satisfaction regardless of differences in age; this level of job satisfaction will help to meet educational goals. The qualitative data were in agreement; the teachers interviewed said that by performing well in their teaching, they can achieve desired results and educational outcomes will improve.

Furthermore, 47 teachers agreed, 10 slightly agreed and 11 strongly agreed with the statement: I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do. Hence, they are satisfied with their salaries, which contributes to job satisfaction. These findings seem to disagree with the study of Abdullah et al. (2009) since Malaysian secondary school teachers were mostly satisfied with their jobs, except for salaries and working conditions, which revealed the poor payment system in that country caused job dissatisfaction among teachers.

Overall, elementary school teachers are generally satisfied regardless of the factors that may lead them to be dissatisfied, such as technological and governmental educational changes, since they confirmed this in the qualitative data by saying they wanted to do their best in teaching students by helping them to develop and learn. This finding agrees with previous studies; for example, Naz (2017) confirmed that when teachers have a high level of self-efficacy, they positively influence the classroom environment and have a desire to effectively teach. Thus, there is a close connection between job satisfaction and self-efficacy.

6. Conclusion

The current study examined job satisfaction in Saudi Arabian EFL elementary school teachers and the impact of this satisfaction on teacher performance in elementary schools in Saudi Arabia, specifically Jeddah, Makkah and Taif. It used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The collected data was measured using SPSS. The results of this study found a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance, which is consistent with the existing literature.

This topic addressed an issue that has a largely international component, but there are few studies from Saudi Arabia, especially Taif in the western regions of Saudi Arabia. This paper will fill the gap in the existing research literature and describe the connection between the job satisfaction of EFL elementary teachers and their performance in the Saudi Arabian context, specifically Taif.

6.1 Implications and Recommendations

This study's findings can improve the Saudi Arabian education system. Since this study was conducted on both government and private schools, it is recommended that future studies investigate the EFL job satisfaction of elementary teachers in private schools because the results indicate few private school teachers are dissatisfied.

6.2 Limitation of the Study

Despite the researcher's efforts to obtain valid and reliable results, this study had some

limitations that were similar to other empirical studies. The first limitation is geographic; in other words, this result is not representative of Saudi Arabia as a whole because it is a large country with regional differences; hence, some research results may be applicable in one region but not in others.

Finally, since this study examined only Saudi Arabian EFL teachers who teach at the elementary-school level, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to different educational levels, such as the secondary, intermediate and university contexts.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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