

The relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia. Utilising the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), data were collected from 100 participants to measure their levels of job motivation and job satisfaction. The results indicated a moderately high level of motivation ($M=103.47$, $SD=16.12$) and a generally high level of job satisfaction ($M=78.50$, $SD=11.06$). Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between job motivation and job satisfaction ($r = .572$, $p < .001$), with approximately 32.7% of the variance in job satisfaction explained by job motivation. This highlights the substantial impact of motivation on job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. The findings underscore the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in enhancing job satisfaction. Practical implications, recommendations, and limitations are further discussed in this paper.

Keywords:

Job satisfaction, motivation, secondary school teachers

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Teachers play an important role as the contributors to social transformation and are regarded as individuals who shape future leaders (Leow et al., 2020). However, the Malaysian Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reported a significant portion of Malaysian teachers reported feeling stressed, overworked and dissatisfied with their job (TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II), 2020). This detrimental issue should be addressed as teachers job satisfaction is essential for both students and teachers (Toropova, 2020). As studies showed that teacher job satisfaction causes many positive outcomes, such as a better life for a teacher, his/her dedication, motivation, performance, organisational behaviour, student welfare, and school (Pervaiz et al., 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019). Similarly, Kessler (2020) stated that by increasing employee job satisfaction, it will have an impact on increasing teacher's performance. Other than that, despite efforts to enhance the educational system, secondary school teachers in Malaysia face challenges that impact their job satisfaction and consequently, their performance. High workload, administrative duties, low salaries, and limited professional development opportunities among the factors contributing to low teacher satisfaction with their job (Abdullah & Ismail, 2019).

Hence, it is crucial to ensure that teachers possess high job satisfaction to increase the holistic learning outcome of education. Additionally, this issue can be addressed through fulfilling core psychological needs such as autonomy, competence and relatedness which is theoretically known as Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (2008). By addressing psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness leads to higher motivation and ultimately greater job satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Studies indicate that Studies higher levels of intrinsic motivation like enjoyment of working and sense of purpose report greater job satisfaction while extrinsic factors like fair pay, recognition, and manageable workloads predicted employees job satisfaction (Sari & Nugroho, 2023). Hence, teachers' motivation and job satisfaction are interconnected, playing critical roles in student learning outcomes, school climate, and overall educational success (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010).

In recent years, the field of education has increasingly recognized the significant role of teacher's motivation and job satisfaction in fostering a positive teaching environment and enhancing students' outcome (Dinham & Scott, 2000). While several studies have explored these variables independently (Ayalew et al., 2019; Sari & Nugroho, 2023), current research in Malaysia has not fully explored the complex relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. This gap in knowledge limits our understanding of the factors that influence teacher well-being. This study aims to address this gap by specifically examining the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among Malaysian secondary school teachers. The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia. And the research question is what is the relationship between teacher motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia?

METHOD

This study employed a cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia. Survey research method will be used in this study. The survey will be divided into 4 sections which start with the

informed consent, demographic questions, motivation scale known as Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) by Gagné and Deci (2005) and job satisfaction scale known as Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Shortened Version by (Weiss et al., 1967).

The study recruited a sample of 100 secondary school teachers in Malaysia with diverse backgrounds (socioeconomic level, marital status, years of experience, and age) to ensure generalizability. Purposive sampling was employed due to its practicality to ensure the participant is fit to certain criteria and cost-effectiveness for data collection within a limited timeframe. The inclusion criteria for participants were being 18 years old or older and currently employed as a secondary school teacher in Malaysia.

Informed consent is the first section of this questionnaire (refer Appendix A) followed by the demographic information to collect the information about participants, including the age, gender, type of school (private or public), marital status, salary income and years of working experience. Later, there are two types of scales used to collect information about job motivation and job satisfaction.

The third section assessed motivation using the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) developed by Gagné and Deci (2005). This 19-item self-report instrument measured both positive and negative self-perceptions of motivation. Participants rated items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all" to "completely." (see Appendix B). The Cronbach's alpha for the MWMS in this study was not reported but was referenced from Alqarni and Khan (2021) to range from $\alpha=0.69$ to $\alpha=0.88$.

Job satisfaction was assessed in the fourth section using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Short Form developed by (Weiss et al., 1967). This 20-item scale measured employee satisfaction. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." (see Appendix C). Higher scores indicated greater satisfaction. The internal consistency for the MSQ subscales (Intrinsic Satisfaction and Extrinsic Satisfaction) and overall satisfaction were not reported in this study but were referenced from (Weiss et al., 1967) to be $\alpha = .84$, $\alpha = .71$, and $.87$ to $.92$, respectively.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically using Google Forms, an online survey platform. The form included a brief introduction to the study and a mandatory informed consent form to ensure participant confidentiality. The survey consisted of demographic information, followed by the MWMS and MSQ scales. The estimated completion time was 20 minutes. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26 software. Pearson correlation coefficients were intended to be used to examine the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction scores.

The study ensured participant autonomy by including a voluntary consent form and the option to withdraw from the survey at any point. A comprehensive briefing section within the survey explained the study's objectives, scales used, and data confidentiality procedures. Additionally, a written briefing section was ensured to inform participants before the research commenced. Following data collection, a written debriefing session was conducted to explain how the research findings would be reported and how the study could benefit others.

RESULT

Demographic data of participants

The sample consisted of 100 participants (33 males, 67 females) ranging in age from 23 to 57 years old ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .473$). School background was split between public ($n = 55$) and private schools ($n = 45$). Marital status distribution included 35 single and 64 married participants. Income distribution revealed three categories: RM1500-RM3000 ($n = 35$), RM3001-RM6000 ($n = 48$), and RM6001-RM13000 ($n = 17$). Work experience varied, with 32 participants having less than 3 years, 32 participants having 3-7 years, and 36 participants having more than 7 years of experience. Descriptive statistics for age and income will be presented in table 1.

Table 1

Demographic data of participants

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	33	33%
Female	67	67%
Category of School		
Public	55	55%
Private	45	45%
Marital Status		
Single	35	35%
Married	64	64%
Others	1	1%
Salary		
RM1500 – RM3000	35	35%
RM3001 – RM6000	48	48%
RM6001 – RM13000	17	17%
Years of Working Experience		
Less than 3 years	32	32%
3 to 7 years	32	32%
More than 7 years	36	36%

Descriptive statistics for scales

The descriptive statistics for the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) are presented in table 2. The sample consisted of 100 participants. For the MWMS, scores ranged from 54 to 131, with a mean score of 103.47 ($SD = 16.12$). This indicates a moderately high level of motivation at work among the participants. For the MSQ, scores ranged from 37 to 100, with a mean score of 78.50 ($SD = 11.06$), suggesting a generally high level of job satisfaction among the participants. These descriptive statistics provide a foundational understanding of the central tendencies and variabilities within the dataset.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for scales

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS)	100	54	131	103.47	16.120
Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)	100	37	100	78.50	11.058

Pearson Correlation

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia. The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between job motivation, as measured by the total score of the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale ($M = 103.47$, $SD = 16.12$), and job satisfaction, as measured by the total score of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire ($M = 78.50$, $SD = 11.06$), $r = .572$, $p < .001$. This indicates that higher levels of job motivation are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. The strength of this relationship is moderate, as a correlation of 0.5 is generally considered moderate (Cohen, 2013). The significance level of $p < .001$ suggests that the probability of this result occurring by chance is less than 0.1%, thereby confirming the robustness of the observed relationship.

To further interpret the strength of this association, the effect size r^2 was calculated. An r value of .572 results in an effect size of $r^2 = .327$, indicating that approximately 32.7% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by job motivation. This suggests a substantial impact of job motivation on job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. Thus, these findings highlight the important role of job motivation in enhancing job satisfaction among secondary school teachers.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia and to identify which subscales of job motivation are most strongly correlated with job satisfaction. Job motivation was assessed using the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS), which includes five subscales: External Regulation, Introjected Regulation, Identified Regulation, Intrinsic Motivation, and Amotivation meanwhile Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) refer Table 2 for summary of Work Motivation Scales with Job Satisfaction.

The overall job motivation showed a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction, $r = .572$, $p < .001$, indicating that higher levels of job motivation are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among teachers. Furthermore, each MWMS subscale consists of External Regulation, Introjected Regulation, Identified Regulation, Intrinsic Motivation and Amotivation was tested to measure which factors or motivational aspects are most important to predict Job Satisfaction. Table 3 summarised the correlation of MWMS scales with Job Satisfaction.

Table 3
Correlation of MWMS scales with Job Satisfaction

MWMS Subscale	Correlation with Job Satisfaction (<i>r</i>)	p-value
External Regulation	.482	<.001
Introjected Regulation	.472	<.001
Identified Regulation	.280	.002
Intrinsic Motivation	.488	<.001
Amotivation	-.085	.202

Examining the subscales of job motivation revealed varying degrees of correlation with job satisfaction. Firstly, for External Regulation, there was a significant positive correlation between External Regulation and job satisfaction, $r = .482, p < .001$. External regulation refers to the type of motivation that arises from external pressures or influences, rather than from a personal interest in the activity itself, such as salary, bonuses, and praise (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It contributes to job satisfaction because these tangible rewards can enhance an employee's sense of achievement and financial security as Gagné and Deci (2005) argue that they can also lead to increased job satisfaction when aligned with employees' values and needs. This suggests that external rewards and recognition are important factors contributing to teachers' job satisfaction.

Introjected Regulation also showed a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction, $r = .472, p < .001$, indicating that internal pressures and obligations positively influence job satisfaction. Introjected regulation refers to a form of motivation that lies between external regulation and more autonomous forms. It represents a partially internalised version of external pressures (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This type of regulation can contribute to job satisfaction by compelling individuals to meet their own standards and societal expectations, leading to feelings of accomplishment and self-worth as Vallerand, (1997) suggests that introjected regulation can enhance motivation when individuals feel a strong internal pressure to perform well, contributing positively to their job satisfaction.

Next, Identified Regulation had a weaker but still significant positive correlation with job satisfaction, $r = .280, p = .002$. Identified regulation represents a more internalised and autonomous form of extrinsic motivation compared to external regulation and introjected regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). It describes a stage where individuals come to understand and personally endorse the underlying purpose, value, or benefits of following rules or engaging in behaviours, even if the initial motivation might have been external (Van den Berghe et al., 2014). This means that personal endorsement of work values contributes to job satisfaction, although smaller than external and introjected regulation.

Intrinsic motivation exhibited a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction, $r = .488, p < .001$, suggesting that inherent enjoyment and interest in the job significantly enhance job satisfaction. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal desire to engage in an activity for the inherent satisfaction and enjoyment it brings, rather than external pressures or rewards (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Intrinsic motivation contributes to job satisfaction by fostering a sense of personal growth, creativity, and fulfilment as Bayona et al. (2020) found that intrinsic motivation is strongly linked to job satisfaction because it fosters a positive work environment and personal growth.

Amotivation, on the other hand, was negatively correlated with job satisfaction, $r = -.085$, $p = .202$. Although this correlation was not statistically significant, it implies that a lack of motivation is associated with lower job satisfaction. Within Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), amotivation refers to a psychological state characterised by a lack of volition (desire or intention) and regulation (direction and control) towards an activity (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Howard et al. (2016) found that while amotivation is associated with negative outcomes such as burnout and disengagement, the presence of positive motivators like intrinsic motivation can significantly reduce these effects.

The findings indicate that all four positive regulation types (External, Introjected, Identified, and Intrinsic Motivation) are significantly related to job satisfaction, with external regulation showing the strongest correlation. This highlights the importance of both external rewards and internalised forms of motivation in fostering job satisfaction among teachers.

From a practical standpoint, school administrators should consider strategies that enhance both external and internal forms of motivation as (Klassen & Chiu, 2010) found that both public and private school teachers experience similar levels of job satisfaction due to comparable work conditions, such as supportive administration and professional development opportunities. For instance, providing tangible rewards and recognition can cater to external regulation needs, while professional development opportunities and supportive work environments can nurture introjected, identified, and intrinsic motivation.

Moreover, the lack of a significant negative correlation between Amotivation and job satisfaction suggests that while amotivation is detrimental, it may not be as impactful as the presence of positive motivators. Efforts to reduce amotivation should focus on addressing factors that lead to disengagement and lack of control in work as Su et al. (2020) found that a lack of job control is likely to diminish employees' motivation.

Other than that, the difference in job satisfaction levels between teachers in public and private schools also was examined using independent samples t-test to compare the job satisfaction scores between these two groups. The descriptive statistics indicate that teachers in private schools ($M = 79.40$, $SD = 10.168$) reported slightly higher job satisfaction compared to their counterparts in public schools ($M = 77.76$, $SD = 11.777$). However, the means are quite close, suggesting a potential lack of substantial difference between the groups.

The results of the independent samples t-test showed that there was no significant difference in job satisfaction scores between teachers in public and private schools, $t(98) = -0.734$, $p = .464$. The mean difference in job satisfaction scores between the two groups was -1.636 , with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -6.057 to 2.785 . This non-significant result suggests that the category of school (public vs. private) does not have a substantial impact on teachers' job satisfaction levels.

The findings of this study also indicate that job satisfaction among teachers is relatively consistent across public and private schools. Despite the slightly higher mean satisfaction score in private schools, the difference is not statistically significant. This suggests that factors influencing job satisfaction might be similar in both settings or that the differences in the work environment between public and private schools are not significant enough to impact overall job satisfaction levels among teachers. However, the slightly higher job satisfaction in private schools may be due to better resources, smaller class sizes, and more administrative support compared to

public schools as Ingersoll et al. (2021) found that private schools often provide better working conditions and resources, contributing to higher job satisfaction.

These results could imply that efforts to improve job satisfaction should focus on common factors that affect teachers across both types of schools, rather than tailoring interventions specifically for public or private schools. Additionally, future research could explore other variables that might interact with the type of school to affect job satisfaction, such as administrative support and teacher autonomy as Worth and Van den Brande (2020) highlighted that these factors strongly correlate with job satisfaction.

Moreover, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the job satisfaction scores for single and married participants. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in job satisfaction scores between single ($M = 76.00$, $SD = 13.69$) and married participants ($M = 79.91$, $SD = 9.24$); $t(97) = -1.688$, $p = .095$ (equal variances assumed). The mean difference in job satisfaction scores between the two groups was -3.906 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -8.499 to $.687$.

Although the mean job satisfaction score was higher for married participants compared to single participants, this difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that marital status does not have a significant impact on job satisfaction in this sample. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that demographic variables such as marital status often have limited influence on job satisfaction (Al-Tit & Suifan, 2015).

The result is consistent with some previous studies suggesting that marital status may not play a significant role in determining job satisfaction. For instance, Al-Tit and Suifan (2015) found that individual factors such as personality traits and job characteristics were more significant predictors of job satisfaction than marital status. However, other factors such as work environment, job role, and personal characteristics might have a more substantial impact on an individual's job satisfaction. For example, a study by Bayona et al. (2020) emphasised the importance of job characteristics and intrinsic motivation in determining job satisfaction. Further research could explore these factors in more detail to better understand the determinants of job satisfaction.

Overall, this analysis suggests that there is no significant difference in job satisfaction between single and married individuals in this sample, which is in line with previous empirical evidence that demographic factors such as marital status are not strong predictors of job satisfaction (Al-Tit & Suifan, 2015; Judge et al., 2000).

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia, with a specific focus on identifying which aspects of motivation are the most significant predictors of job satisfaction. The findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of job satisfaction among teachers and highlight the critical role of various motivational factors.

The analysis revealed that job motivation is significantly correlated with job satisfaction, with intrinsic motivation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and identified regulation all showing positive relationships with job satisfaction. Among these, external regulation emerged as

the strongest predictor, indicating that external rewards and recognition are highly important for enhancing job satisfaction among teachers.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of motivation in predicting job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. The findings highlight the critical role of external rewards and recognition, internal pressures and obligations, and personal endorsement of work values in enhancing job satisfaction. By addressing both external and internal motivational needs, school administrators can create a more fulfilling and satisfying work environment for teachers, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction and better educational outcomes.

SUGGESTION

These findings contribute to the understanding of job satisfaction by emphasising the importance of both external and internal forms of motivation. The significant positive correlations between the different forms of motivation and job satisfaction suggest that a multifaceted approach is necessary to enhance job satisfaction among teachers. This highlights the need for school administrators to implement strategies that address both external and internal motivational needs. For example, the policymakers and school administrators can focus on providing tangible rewards and recognition that cater to external regulation needs, while professional development opportunities and supportive work environments can nurture introjected, identified, and intrinsic motivation.

Future research should consider larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal studies could provide more insights into the causal relationships between motivation and job satisfaction. Additionally, exploring other variables such as administrative support, teacher autonomy, and job characteristics could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction among teachers.

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