

## **JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY AMONG TEACHER AT MEICHENG PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN NINGXIANG, HUNAN PROVINCE, CHINA**

**Yangbo Liu <sup>1\*</sup>**

**Tzu-Shan Cheng <sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Master Candidate in Educational Administration, Stamford International University of Thailand

<sup>2</sup> Stamford International University of Thailand

\* Corresponding Author, E-mail: 1521702116@qq.com

**Abstract:** This study used a questionnaire survey method and focused on teachers at Meicheng Public Primary School in Ningxiang City, Hunan Province. It explored the differences in job satisfaction among teachers in different positions and the factors that affected their satisfaction. The findings showed that the overall job satisfaction of the teachers was at a medium level. Teachers in teaching positions had significantly lower satisfaction than those in administrative positions. The key factors that affected job satisfaction were salary, relationships with others, and the content of their work. To address salary issues, the study suggested improving the pay system, applying for policy subsidies, and offering non-cash benefits to increase fairness and the sense of reward. For interpersonal relationships, it recommended strengthening teamwork and communication between different levels of staff. Regarding work content, it advised reducing non-teaching tasks and giving teachers more freedom and chances to grow. In addition, the study suggested that future research could include more schools across different areas to make the results more general and reliable. This research provided useful ideas for improving job satisfaction among primary school teachers and for helping schools manage better.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Primary School, Primary School Teachers, Public Primary School

### **Introduction**

Teacher job satisfaction has long been a key focus in educational research, with over 80 years of study since Hoppock & Robinson (1950) introduced the term. Satisfaction levels directly affect teaching performance, burnout, and turnover. Studies have shown that many teachers globally are dissatisfied, leading to high attrition and reduced teaching quality (Susmitha & Reddy, 2017).

International comparisons reveal differing satisfaction levels due to varied conditions. U.S. teachers cite salary, work environment, and administrative support as key factors (Nguyen et al., 2019), while Nordic countries like Finland report higher satisfaction due to favorable working conditions (OECD, 2020). In Asia, improvements in salary and status exist, but heavy workloads remain a major

concern (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

Key factors influencing public school teacher satisfaction include excessive workload, inadequate compensation, poor work environments, and limited support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). These issues impact teacher retention and education system stability.

In China, teacher satisfaction is increasingly emphasized amid education reform. The shift toward a “people-oriented” approach highlights the need to support teachers’ professional and emotional well-being (Zong, 2023). Policies like the “Opinions on Deepening Reform of the Teaching Workforce” stress enhancing working conditions, incentives, and professional development. Teachers are central to educational progress, and improving their satisfaction is crucial for building a high-quality, sustainable education system.

### **Research Objectives**

(1) To examine the demographic distribution of teachers at Meicheng Public Primary School, including their gender, age, education level, teaching experience, and position.

(2) To determine the level of job satisfaction among teachers at Meicheng Public Primary School.

(3) To analyze the differences in teachers’ job satisfaction at Meicheng Public Primary School based on different demographic variables.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Concept and Definition of Job satisfaction***

Job satisfaction, first noted by Mayo (1933) and later defined by Locke et al. (1976) as a positive emotional state stemming from job evaluation, is shaped by expectations, needs, and experiences. It reflects employees’ attitudes toward their work (Robbins, 2001), and when satisfaction is high, individuals tend to exhibit more positive behaviors and greater motivation. Teachers’ job satisfaction specifically involves their emotional and cognitive responses to various job aspects, such as duties, salary, recognition, and work environment. Herzberg’s (1966) Two-Factor Theory identified both intrinsic motivators and hygiene factors as key to understanding teacher satisfaction. Smith et al. (1969) developed tools like the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) to measure it. More recent studies (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Wei, 2008) link teacher satisfaction to mental health, retention, and teaching quality, reinforcing its importance in educational outcomes.

The factors that influenced teacher job satisfaction were observed through several interconnected dimensions. Work content played a central role, including teaching duties, autonomy, and workload. When teachers faced excessive administrative responsibilities or broader role expectations beyond instructional tasks, as noted by the OECD (2019), their satisfaction tended to decrease, often resulting in elevated stress levels (Johnson et al., 2020). Interpersonal relationships

within the school environment also significantly impacted satisfaction. Strong peer support, a collaborative culture, and positive interactions with students and administrators contributed to a more fulfilling professional experience and helped reduce turnover intentions (OECD, 2020; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Salary and benefits represented another critical factor. According to Herzberg's (1966) Two-Factor Theory, compensation functioned as a hygiene factor—while insufficient pay and limited benefits led to dissatisfaction and higher attrition, fair and transparent pay systems enhanced morale and improved teacher retention (Nguyen et al., 2019). Lastly, the broader work environment—including physical infrastructure, campus safety, school culture, and opportunities for professional autonomy—shaped overall job satisfaction. Supportive work conditions reduced the risk of burnout and strengthened teachers' commitment and engagement in their roles (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018; Ingersoll, 2001).

In summary, teacher job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct with implications for professional well-being and educational quality. Understanding these factors is key to formulating effective school management and policy interventions.

### ***Research on Public School Teacher Job Satisfaction***

Research on public school teachers' job satisfaction had long recognized the complex influence of various demographic and contextual factors. Globally, studies revealed that most teachers were moderately or even poorly satisfied with their work, often due to inadequate salary and benefits, which ranked as the least satisfactory dimension. In contrast, teachers generally expressed more satisfaction in interpersonal relationships and work environments. Gender differences had been observed, with female teachers frequently reporting greater satisfaction, particularly in areas such as work content and social relations, though not all findings were consistent across contexts. Age and educational attainment also showed mixed effects—some studies found younger teachers to be more satisfied, while others reported no significant age-related differences. Teachers with higher education levels often prioritized career advancement, whereas those with lower qualifications focused more on basic compensation and working conditions.

Teaching experience played an important role: newer teachers tended to value growth opportunities, while experienced teachers emphasized social support and leadership involvement. Similarly, teachers' positions influenced satisfaction depending on grade-level duties or administrative responsibilities, although evidence on this was inconclusive. Overall, satisfaction levels varied significantly depending on school type, environment, and policy background.

In Meicheng Public Primary School, located in a semi-urban former coal-mining area of Ningxiang, Hunan, teachers faced a mix of challenges. Although the region had transformed toward tourism, the school still operated under resource constraints. Built in 2014, it served over 1,100 students but struggled with outdated facilities, limited professional development opportunities, and inadequate compensation. These limitations reduced teacher satisfaction and increased turnover. Teachers reported

frustration over slow career progression and limited training, particularly when compared to better-resourced schools in urban areas. While interpersonal dynamics remained positive, institutional support and material conditions fell short. Thus, analyzing job satisfaction in this specific context was essential for informing practical improvement strategies that could enhance teaching quality and staff retention.

## Methodology

This study focused on teachers at Meicheng Public Primary School in China and examined job satisfaction among public primary school teachers. As of the end of December 2024, the school had a total of 112 teachers. Therefore, a convenience sampling method was used, and all 112 teachers were invited to participate in the survey. The questionnaire was planned to be distributed electronically after the beginning of the second semester of the 2024 academic year. After the questionnaires were distributed and collected, invalid responses were removed. The valid responses were then organized, coded, and scored. The final data were analyzed to explore the research questions.

The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from the Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey by Zhou & Li (2019). It consists of 28 questions across four dimensions: work content, interpersonal relationship, salary and benefits, and work environment. The questionnaire also collected basic personal information from public primary school teachers, including five demographic variables: gender, age, education level, teaching experience, and position.

## Results

### *Demographic Analysis of Questionnaire Participants*

**Table 1:** Demographic Distribution of Sample

Demographic Variables	Group	f	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	83	79.0
	Male	22	21.0
Age	30 Years or Below	7	6.7
	31–40 Years	10	9.5
	41–50 Years	47	44.8
	51+ Years	41	39.0
Education Level	Associate Degree	14	13.3
	Bachelor's Degree	91	86.7
Teaching Experience	1–3 Years	6	5.7
	4–9 Years	5	4.8
	10+ Years	94	89.5
Position	Full-Time Teacher	100	95.2
	Part-Time Administrator	5	4.8
Total		105	100.0

Among the 105 valid questionnaires, Table 1 presented the demographic distribution of the sample. By gender, 79.0% (n = 83) were female and 21.0% (n = 22) were male. In terms of age, 6.7% (n = 7) were 30 years or below, 9.5% (n = 10) were aged 31–40 years, 44.8% (n = 47) were 41–50 years, and 39.0% (n = 41) were 51 years and above. Regarding education level, 13.3% (n = 14) of the teachers held an associate degree, and 86.7% (n = 91) held a bachelor's degree. In terms of position, 95.2% (n = 100) were full-time teachers, and 4.8% (n = 5) were part-time administrators.

### ***Descriptive Statistics on the Levels of Teacher Job Satisfaction***

According to Table 2, the mean score for the work content dimension was 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.58, indicating a moderate level.

**Table 2:** The Levels of Teacher Job Satisfaction

Dimension	n	M	SD	Interpretation
Work Content	105	3.01	0.58	Moderate
Interpersonal Relationship	105	3.21	0.73	Moderate
Salary and Benefits	105	2.90	0.70	Moderate
Work Environment	105	3.42	0.87	Moderate
Total	105	3.13	0.62	Moderate

The interpersonal relationship dimension had a mean of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.73, also reflecting a moderate level. The salary and benefits dimension showed a mean score of 2.90 with a standard deviation of 0.70, which was interpreted as moderate. The work environment dimension had the highest mean score of 3.52 with a standard deviation of 0.87, still within the moderate range. The overall job satisfaction score was 3.13 with a standard deviation of 0.62, suggesting a moderate level of satisfaction among teachers.

### ***Analysis of Differences in Teacher Job Satisfaction Across Demographic Variables***

Table 3 showed that no significant differences were found in total teacher job satisfaction or its individual dimensions across different genders. Therefore, there were no significant gender differences in teacher job satisfaction ( $t = -0.90$ ,  $p = .372$ ).

**Table 3:** Independent Sample T-Test Analysis of Teacher Job Satisfaction by Gender

Dimension	Male (n=83)		Female (n=22)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Work Content	3.01	0.53	3.01	0.77	-0.00	.997
Interpersonal Relationship	3.18	0.70	3.31	0.83	-0.70	.487
Salary and Benefits	2.87	0.72	2.97	0.64	-0.59	.555
Work Environment	3.35	0.89	3.67	0.74	-1.54	.127
Total	3.11	0.61	3.24	0.70	-0.90	.372

Table 4 showed that no significant differences were found in total teacher job satisfaction or its individual dimensions across different age groups. Therefore, there were no significant age differences in teacher job satisfaction ( $F = 0.38$ ,  $p = .768$ ).

**Table 4:** ANOVA Analysis of Teacher Job Satisfaction by Age

Dimension	≤30 Years		31–40 Years		41–50 Years		51+ Years		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	(n=7)		(n=10)		(n=47)		(n=41)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Work Content	3.04	0.77	2.89	0.61	2.98	0.61	3.08	0.52	0.40	.751
Interpersonal Relationship	3.20	0.49	3.53	0.67	3.18	0.71	3.16	0.80	0.72	.544
Salary and Benefits	3.12	0.72	2.77	0.53	2.81	0.65	2.99	0.78	0.85	.469
Work Environment	3.55	0.68	3.83	0.55	3.31	0.89	3.43	0.92	1.06	.369
Total	3.23	0.53	3.25	0.53	3.07	0.63	3.16	0.66	0.38	.768

Table 5 showed that no significant differences were found in total teacher job satisfaction or its individual dimensions across different education levels. Therefore, there were no significant education level differences in teacher job satisfaction ( $t = 0.10$ ,  $p = .924$ ).

**Table 5:** Independent Sample T-Test Analysis of Teacher Job Satisfaction by Education Level

Dimension	Associate Degree		Bachelor's Degree		t	p
	(n=14)		(n=91)			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Work Content	3.08	0.72	3.00	0.56	0.48	.632
Interpersonal Relationship	3.27	0.84	3.20	0.71	0.31	.761
Salary and Benefits	2.83	0.68	2.91	0.71	-0.39	.697
Work Environment	3.42	1.04	3.42	0.84	-0.00	.999
Total	3.15	0.75	3.13	0.61	0.10	.924

Table 6 showed that no significant differences were found in total teacher job satisfaction or its individual dimensions across different teaching experience groups. Therefore, there were no significant differences in teacher job satisfaction based on teaching experience ( $t = 1.11$ ,  $p = .335$ ).

Table 7 showed that significant differences were found in the dimensions of salary and benefits and work environment across different positions. Significant differences were also observed in total teacher job satisfaction by position ( $t = -2.01$ ,  $p = .047$ ). Therefore, teacher job satisfaction differed significantly across positions. Part-time administrators reported higher job satisfaction than full-time

teachers.

In short, when comparing differences in teacher job satisfaction across different demographic backgrounds, the results showed that only job position had a significant impact.

**Table 6:** One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Teacher Job Satisfaction by Teaching Experience

Dimension	Teaching Experience						<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	1–3 Years		4–9 Years		10+ Years			
	<i>(n=6)</i>		<i>(n=5)</i>		<i>(n=94)</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Work Content	2.93	0.80	3.14	0.39	3.01	0.58	0.18	.834
Interpersonal Relationship	3.12	0.48	3.71	0.15	3.19	0.75	1.30	.278
Salary and Benefits	2.86	0.67	3.37	0.39	2.87	0.71	1.22	.301
Work Environment	3.48	0.73	3.91	0.46	3.39	0.86	0.88	.419
Total	3.09	0.52	3.54	0.25	3.12	0.64	1.11	.335

**Table 7:** Independent Sample T-Test Analysis of Teacher Job Satisfaction by Position

Dimension	Position				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Full-Time Teacher		Part-Time			
	(n=100)		Administrator (n=5)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Work Content	3.00	0.57	3.26	0.88	-0.06	.340
Interpersonal Relationship	3.19	0.72	3.57	0.94	-1.14	.258
Salary and Benefits	2.86	0.69	3.57	0.73	-2.25	.026
Work Environment	3.38	0.86	4.29	0.49	-2.34	.021
Total	3.11	0.61	3.67	0.68	-2.01	.047

## Discussion

### *Moderate Level of Teacher Job Satisfaction Among the Sample*

The survey on teacher job satisfaction at Meicheng Public Primary School in Ningxiang City revealed that overall job satisfaction was at a moderate level. Among the four dimensions, salary and benefits received relatively higher scores, while work content and interpersonal relationships scored lower. This finding differed from the conclusion of Chen (2012), whose study indicated that primary school teachers were generally dissatisfied with their income. The relatively high score for salary and benefits in this study might have been related to the recent implementation of rural teacher living subsidies in Ningxiang.

***Significance of Position and Work-Related Factors in Teacher Job Satisfaction***

The significant impact of position level on job satisfaction aligned with Zhang and Wu's (2000) findings. Teachers in administrative roles reported higher satisfaction in salary, benefits, and autonomy, likely due to performance bonuses and involvement in decision-making. Additionally, low satisfaction with work content echoed Qi's (2024) study on the "double reduction" policy. In this study, 62.3% of teachers spent over 1.5 hours daily on non-instructional tasks, reducing time for lesson preparation—a serious issue in rural schools.

In summary, traditional demographic factors like gender, age, and education appeared less influential in this context. Instead, work-related factors such as position and workload had a stronger effect. Understanding these influences is essential for developing policies that enhance teacher motivation and satisfaction, supporting the sustainable development of primary education.

**Conclusions**

This study examined the current status of job satisfaction among teachers at Meicheng Public Primary School in Ningxiang City, China, and identified differences in job satisfaction across various demographic variables. The key findings of the study are summarized as follows.

1) Conclusion 1: The overall job satisfaction of teachers at Meicheng Public Primary School in Ningxiang, Hunan Province, was at a moderate level.

2) Conclusion 2: There were significant differences in job satisfaction among teachers based on their position within the school.

This study focused on teachers at Meicheng Public Primary School in Ningxiang City, Hunan Province, China, and conducted a statistical analysis of 105 valid questionnaires using a survey method. However, during the actual investigation and research process, the study faced certain limitations due to constraints of geography, time, and scope. Therefore, future research could consider expanding the sample size and broadening the geographic coverage to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

The survey results revealed that teachers were relatively less satisfied with their salary and benefits, indicating a perceived mismatch between their work contributions and compensation. While significantly increasing salaries may be limited by local financial constraints, schools can adopt flexible strategies to improve perceived satisfaction in this area. For example, schools may seek support from local education authorities to secure rural teaching allowances, performance-based bonuses, or government subsidies. Internally, schools can optimize salary distribution systems to ensure that compensation is based on merit and workload.

Additionally, non-monetary benefits such as free housing, meal subsidies, and transportation allowances could help reduce living expenses. Short-term incentives such as teaching achievement bonuses and open-class subsidies can also be introduced. Furthermore, establishing a teacher

development fund through community donations or school-enterprise partnerships could diversify income sources. Improving transparency and fairness in compensation allocation—by regularly communicating financial conditions and distribution criteria—can prevent misunderstandings.

Considering the rural context, policies such as fast-track promotion for rural teachers could be implemented to increase long-term earning potential. Improving working conditions by providing teaching assistants or reducing administrative tasks, along with offering psychological support through regular meetings or festive care programs, may help teachers feel respected and supported even under limited financial resources.

## References

- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285.
- Chen, G. L. (2012). Literature review on teacher job satisfaction. *Co-Operative Economy & Science*, (20), 50-51.
- Herzberg, F. I. (1966). *Work and the nature of man*. Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company.
- Hoppock, R., & Robinson, H. A. (1950). Job satisfaction researches of 1949. *Occupations: The Vocational Guidance Journal*, 29(1), 13-18.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.
- Johnson, S. M., Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2020). How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers' working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students' achievement. *Teachers College Record*, 122(4), 1-42.
- Liu, S., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2012). Chinese teachers' work stress and their turnover intention. *International journal of educational research*, 53, 160-170.
- Locke, E. A., Sirota, D., & Wolfson, A. D. (1976). An experimental case study of the successes and failures of job enrichment in a government agency. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 61(6), 701.
- Mayo, E. (1933). *The human problems of an industrial civilization*. London: Macmillan.
- Nguyen, T. D., Pham, L., Springer, M. G., & Crouch, M. (2019). The factors of teacher attrition and retention: An updated and expanded meta-analysis of the literature. *Annenberg Institute at Brown University*, 19, 1-73.
- OECD (2019). TALIS 2018 results: Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners (Vol. 1). OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en>
- OECD (2020). TALIS 2018 results: Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners (Vol. 2). OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en>
- Qi, Z. Y. (2024). Empowering agricultural modernization through rural vocational education: logical dimensions, practical challenges, and implementation pathways. *Journal of Central China*

*Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 63(5), 166-176.

- Robbins, S. P. (2001). *Perilaku organisasi: Konsep, konrtoversi, aplikasi*. Jakarta: Pt. Prenhallindo.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Dimensions of teacher burnout: Relations with potential stressors at school. *Social Psychology of Education*, 20(4), 775-790.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2018). Teacher stress and teacher self-efficacy: Relations and consequences. *Educational Psychology*, 38(8), 1056-1074.
- Smith, P. C., Kendall, L. M., & Hulin, C. L. (1969). *The measurement of satisfaction in work and retirement*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Susmitha, G., & Reddy, G. L. (2017). A Study on job satisfaction of teachers working at secondary level. *The research journal of social sciences*, 8(11), 4-16.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and teacher education*, 17(7), 783-805.
- Van Maele, D., & Van Houtte, M. (2012). The role of teacher and faculty trust in forming teachers' job satisfaction: Do years of experience make a difference?. *Teaching and teacher education*, 28(6), 879-889.
- Wei, S. H. (2008). Research on teachers' professional identity. *Doctoral dissertation of Southwest University*.
- Zhang, Z. S., & Wu, Z. H. (2000). A Study on leadership behavior of primary school principals. *Psychological Development and Education*, 16(2), 57-60.
- Zhou, H. & Li, L. X. (2019). Study on the influencing factors of college teachers' job satisfaction. *Modern Education Management*, 11, 69-73.
- Zong, T. (2023). Teacher Job Satisfaction in public primary schools: A Case Study of City S. *Master's thesis of Shenyang Normal University*.