

# Happy Teachers, Successful Students: The Link Between Job Satisfaction and Student Achievement

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## Abstract

Teachers' job satisfaction is a critical determinant of educational quality and student achievement. This paper explores various theories and factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and the Job Characteristics Model. Key determinants such as school culture, professional development opportunities, salary, job security, and work environment are analyzed to understand their impact on teachers' motivation and performance. Research findings indicate that higher job satisfaction leads to better teaching quality and improved student outcomes. The study emphasizes the need for educational institutions to implement policies that enhance teachers' well-being, promote professional growth, and create a supportive work environment. Addressing these factors will contribute to long-term improvements in both teacher retention and educational standards.

**Keywords:** Teachers' job satisfaction, educational quality, professional development, school culture, student achievement.

## 1. Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in the school education system. The determinants influencing student achievement are multifaceted, with teachers being one of the most critical elements impacting students' academic outcomes (Ma, 2012). Teachers' job satisfaction pertains to the level of contentment educators have with their profession, which can be classified into internal and external satisfaction (Wang, 2019). Examining teachers' job satisfaction can enable administrators to gain insights into teachers' professional attitudes, prevent burnout, and inform effective management strategies. Improved teachers' job satisfaction helps teachers sustain a high level of enthusiasm and dedication to their work over time, which ultimately allows them to perform better in the classroom and uphold consistent teaching quality (Zong, 2016). For teachers to be fully prepared to impart knowledge and skills essential for students' academic growth, they must experience sufficient job satisfaction. Teachers are often regarded as "nation builders." In particular, teachers at higher education institutions who nurture students into skilled professionals across various subjects are vital to a nation's development. Conversely, inadequate teachers' job satisfaction can contribute to a decline in educational standards (Borah, 2016). Many studies indicate a strong positive link between teachers' job satisfaction and job performance. For instance, Hayati & Caniogo (2012) established that higher job satisfaction fosters improved job performance. Similarly, Ejimofor (2015) identified a triadic relationship, suggesting that teacher job satisfaction enhances teaching quality, which in turn positively impacts student performance. Teachers' job satisfaction and student achievement remain central topics of discussion in academic institutions. Beyond increasing efficiency, teachers' job satisfaction fosters an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. Given its significance, people associated with academic administration should prioritize addressing teachers' needs to enhance their motivation, ultimately advancing educational objectives and improving students' academic achievements (Ihueze et al., 2018). Teachers' job satisfaction significantly and directly influences student achievement (Fisher, 2003). Furthermore, Lopes & Oliveira (2020), utilizing data from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey, emphasized that teachers' job satisfaction is a key determinant of both school and student performance. Their findings revealed that interpersonal relationships are among the most influential factors contributing to job satisfaction, leading them to recommend that schools address relational challenges, particularly in classroom settings, where job

satisfaction is most prominently perceived. Additionally, the results indicated that among personal attributes, teacher efficacy had a substantial impact on job satisfaction (You et al., 2017).

## 2. Conceptualizing Teachers' Job Satisfaction

### 2.1 Definition and Key Components

Teachers' job satisfaction primarily revolves around their professional outlook, enthusiasm for teaching, and dedication to their work, all of which influence the educational system (Fuming & Jiliang, 2014; Sumanasena et al., 2020). According to George and Jones (2011), a more contemporary understanding of job satisfaction encompasses an individual's feelings and beliefs across mental, emotional, and physical dimensions. Judge et al. (2011) describe job satisfaction as a collection of psychological reactions that a person has toward their job, highlighting that these reactions consist of three elements: cognitive (evaluative), behavioral, and affective (emotional). Sen (2008) also interprets job satisfaction as an interplay of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors. Among the various studies on job satisfaction, the Hawthorne study conducted by Elton Mayo in the 1920s at the Western Electric Company is regarded as the pioneering research in this field (Sumanasena et al., 2020). This study suggested that employees who experience job satisfaction tend to enhance organizational productivity (Jayathilake, 2014). Vroom defines job satisfaction as an individual's emotional inclination toward their work role (as cited in Aziri, 2011). A widely recognized definition by Locke (1976) underscores the positive emotional state that emerges from job experiences and the favorable attitudes or emotional responses that individuals develop through their work (as cited in Anderson et al., 2001).

### 2.2 Theories Related to Job Satisfaction

#### **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory:**

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, distinguishes between two sets of factors that influence job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). Hygiene factors, including salary, job security, working conditions, and company policies, do not necessarily lead to higher job satisfaction but can cause dissatisfaction if inadequate. On the other hand, motivators—such as recognition, achievement, professional growth, and meaningful work—enhance job satisfaction and drive employees to perform better. Herzberg argued that organizations should focus on improving motivators rather than just eliminating dissatisfaction, as true job satisfaction stems from intrinsic factors that encourage professional development and engagement (Herzberg et al., 1959).

#### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) is a psychological theory that explains human motivation through a five-tier model of needs, progressing from basic physiological needs to self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Applied to job satisfaction, Maslow's theory suggests that teachers must have their fundamental needs—such as salary (physiological), job security (safety), and a supportive work environment (belongingness)—fulfilled before they can experience higher levels of motivation and satisfaction, such as professional recognition (esteem) and personal development (self-actualization). In educational settings, ensuring that teachers' lower-tier needs are met is essential for fostering an environment where they can achieve their full potential and remain committed to their profession (Maslow, 1954).

#### **Job Characteristics Model (JCM):**

The Job Characteristics Model (JCM), developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), identifies five core job dimensions—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback—that influence job satisfaction and motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Of these, autonomy (the degree of control over work tasks), task significance (the perceived impact of one's work on others), and feedback (receiving clear information on performance) are particularly critical in shaping job satisfaction. According to the model, when these factors are present, employees, including teachers, experience greater motivation, work engagement, and a sense of purpose in their roles. The JCM emphasizes designing jobs that enhance these dimensions to create a more fulfilling and productive work environment (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

### 3. The Relationship Between Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Student Achievement

The role of teachers in ensuring quality education is paramount, with job satisfaction being one of the key factors that influence their professional engagement. An analysis of existing literature identifies dominant factors that contribute to teachers' job satisfaction. These factors include internal aspects, such as the relationship between teachers and students and the intrinsic motivation of teachers to pursue a career in education. Research findings suggest that teachers' job satisfaction is generally positive, as most scales assessing satisfaction levels are above average. The highest-rated aspects of job satisfaction include responsibility, relationships with colleagues, and the nature of the work itself. However, the lowest-rated aspect of job satisfaction is salary, followed by concerns regarding job security. A correlation analysis between teachers' job satisfaction and the quality of education reveals that teachers in schools with higher student achievement tend to report more statistically significant positive correlations. Furthermore, significant associations exist between various levels of interpersonal relationships and different dimensions of educational quality.

In psychology, the relationship between job satisfaction and work efficiency has long been debated (Vroom, 1964). Prior studies have established a close link between employee job satisfaction and performance (Petty, McGee & Cavender, 1984). It is assumed that job satisfaction not only correlates with but also directly affects job performance (Furnham, 2005). Theoretically, this implies that teachers' job satisfaction is intricately linked to their professional activity and, consequently, the quality of education. Job satisfaction is defined as a fluctuating emotional state influenced by working conditions (Chapman, 1994; Spector, 1997). It is a subjective assessment shaped by an individual's expectations and experiences (Arnold, Feldman & Hunt, 1992). Numerous factors, both direct and indirect, influence job satisfaction, including age, health, job experience, emotional stability, social status, leisure activities, and family circumstances (Schultz & Schultz, 2006).

Job satisfaction is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include classroom dynamics, teacher-student relationships, and students' individual characteristics and perceptions (Sharma & Jyoti, 2006). Teachers derive satisfaction from engaging in classroom activities (Perie & Baker, 1997). External factors involve salary, administrative support, cooperation, job security, and the availability of resources in schools (Sharma & Jyoti, 2006). Few teachers enter the profession due to external factors; most are driven by intrinsic motivations. However, while internal factors encourage individuals to pursue teaching, external factors can negatively impact job satisfaction and may even lead to career changes (Perie & Baker, 1997). Several factors influencing job satisfaction have been categorized in various ways. Research on job satisfaction examines employee satisfaction with different job-related aspects, including supervision, work environment, salary, job security, career advancement, and recognition.

Different scholars define educational quality in varied ways. Some consider it to be the fulfillment of predetermined goals (Winch & Gingell, 1999), while others view it as a process-oriented concept (Urwick & Junaidu, 1991; Chapman & Adams, 2002; Coates, 2009). The evaluation of educational quality also differs. Literature suggests that a comprehensive assessment of educational quality should incorporate perspectives from various stakeholders (Koç, 1999; Coates, 2009), as perceptions vary based on an individual's role within the educational system (Stephens, 2008). Evaluating educational quality requires analyzing multiple dimensions, including teaching and learning processes, outcomes, environment, school management, and broader educational contexts. To achieve an objective assessment, both internal and external evaluations are necessary (Coates, 2009; Kristofersen, Sursok & Vesterheiden, 1998). Internal evaluations involve self-assessments conducted by educational institution staff, whereas external evaluations are carried out by independent experts.

Enhancing educational quality necessitates ensuring adequate material resources (Coates, 2009), financial support, a conducive working environment, and effective teaching and learning processes. However, a major challenge arises from the gap between financial constraints and the necessity of maintaining high educational standards. This discrepancy necessitates alternative strategies for improving educational quality. One such approach is enhancing the professional conditions of teachers to promote job satisfaction. Teachers' job satisfaction is a crucial component of educational quality, with strong correlations between the two. Job satisfaction directly affects teachers' motivation, enthusiasm, and attitudes toward work, which, in turn, influence their professional performance and ultimately impact educational quality.

### 4. Determinants of Teachers' Job Satisfaction

- i. **School Culture:** A positive school culture significantly influences job satisfaction. Collaborative leadership, professional development opportunities, and collegial support contribute to teachers' sense of belonging and motivation (Abdulahi, 2020). Schools with a strong culture of teamwork and shared decision-making tend to have more satisfied teachers (Belias&Koustelios, 2014).
- ii. **Professional Development:** Opportunities for continuous learning and career growth play a crucial role in job satisfaction. Teachers who engage in professional development programs report higher levels of satisfaction due to increased competency and confidence in their teaching abilities (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2020).
- iii. **Work Environment and Relationships:** The quality of relationships with colleagues, administrators, and students affects teachers' job satisfaction. A supportive and cooperative work environment enhances job satisfaction, while conflicts and lack of support can lead to dissatisfaction (Morris & Bloom, 2002).
- iv. **Salary and Job Security:** Financial compensation and job stability are major external factors affecting satisfaction. While teachers often enter the profession due to intrinsic motivations, inadequate salaries and job insecurity can lower overall job satisfaction (Treputtharat&Tayiam, 2014).
- v. **Working Conditions:** The physical and psychological work environment, including class size, workload, access to teaching resources, and administrative support, impacts satisfaction levels. Poor working conditions contribute to stress and dissatisfaction among teachers (Mertler, 1992).
- vi. **Recognition and Career Advancement:** Teachers who feel recognized for their efforts and have opportunities for career growth tend to experience higher job satisfaction. A lack of acknowledgment and limited career progression can lead to frustration and disengagement (Ekpenyong& Joseph, 2017).
- vii. **Job Autonomy and Decision-Making:** Teachers who have a say in school policies and classroom management tend to be more satisfied. Organizational structures that allow teachers to participate in decision-making processes foster a sense of ownership and motivation (Hosseinkhanzadeh et al., 2013).
- viii. **Student Behavior and Performance:** The behavior and academic success of students influence teachers' job satisfaction. Teachers who see their students performing well and showing progress feel more fulfilled in their roles (Srivastava, 2004).

##### 5. Level of School Academic Achievement in Malda District

The results of a test for schools in Malda District indicate that overall student performance is progressing towards proficiency, with an average mean percentage score of 82.75%. One of the schools achieved the highest mean percentage score of 94.82%, categorizing it under Highly Proficient. More than half of the schools recorded mean percentage scores that fall under the Approaching Proficiency category, while the lowest-performing school had a mean percentage score of 69.85%, indicating Developing Proficiency.

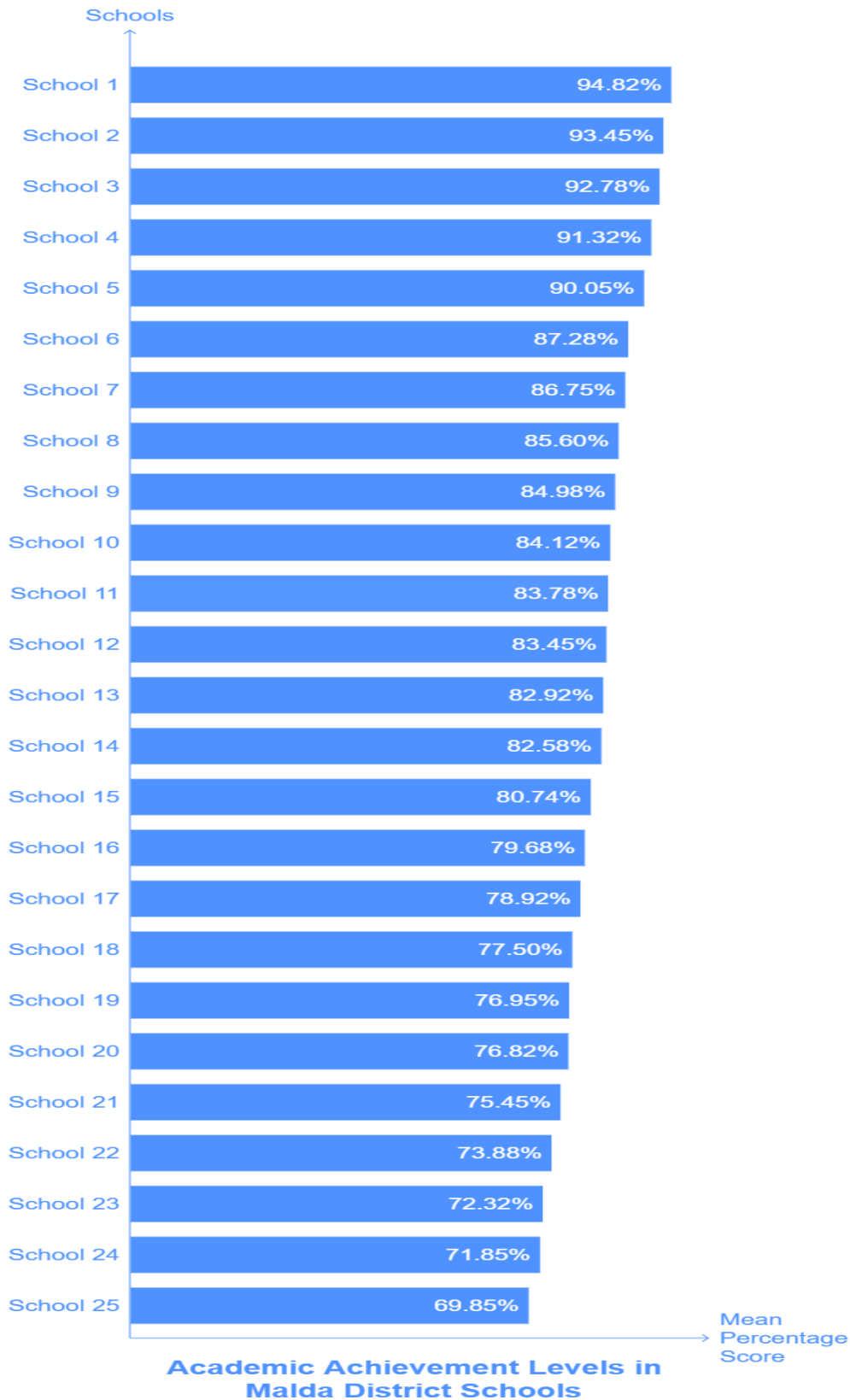
School No.	Test Mean Percentage Scores	Interpretation
1	94.82%	Highly Proficient
2	93.45%	Nearing Proficiency
3	92.78%	Nearing Proficiency
4	91.32%	Nearing Proficiency
5	90.05%	Nearing Proficiency
6	87.28%	Approaching Proficiency
7	86.75%	Approaching Proficiency
8	85.60%	Approaching Proficiency
9	84.98%	Approaching Proficiency
10	84.12%	Approaching Proficiency
11	83.78%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
12	83.45%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
13	82.92%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
14	82.58%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
15	80.74%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
16	79.68%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
17	78.92%	Progressing Towards Proficiency

18	77.50%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
19	76.95%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
20	76.82%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
21	75.45%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
22	73.88%	Progressing Towards Proficiency
23	72.32%	Developing Proficiency
24	71.85%	Developing Proficiency
25	69.85%	Developing Proficiency

**Grand Mean Percentage Score: 82.75% (Progressing Towards Proficiency)**

These results indicate that schools with higher scores have implemented effective teaching strategies, regular academic monitoring, additional support sessions for weaker students, and peer-assisted learning initiatives. Meanwhile, schools with lower performance have cited challenges such as large class sizes and the presence of students struggling with basic literacy and numeracy skills in higher grades, which have negatively impacted overall academic progress.





## 6. Relationship Between Teachers' Job Satisfaction and School Academic Achievement in Malda District

An analysis of the correlation between **teachers' job satisfaction and academic performance** in Malda schools revealed no significant relationship between these two variables. This indicates that while teachers may express job satisfaction, it does not directly translate to improved student outcomes in standardized assessments.

Variable	School Academic Achievement
r-value	-0.138 (Not Significant)
p-value	0.512

(*ns* – not significant, \* - significant at  $\alpha < 0.05$ , \*\* - highly significant at  $\alpha < 0.01$ )

These findings align with the studies, which suggest that factors such as student motivation, family background, school infrastructure, and teaching methodologies play a more direct role in determining student academic performance than teachers' job satisfaction alone.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Although various other factors influence students' academic achievements, teachers' job satisfaction is one of the crucial factors influencing both the effectiveness of educators and the quality of education provided to students. A high level of job satisfaction fosters motivation, enthusiasm, and professional commitment, ultimately enhancing teaching performance and student achievement. The analysis of various theories and determinants of job satisfaction highlights the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including school culture, professional development, salary, job security, and working conditions. Research findings consistently indicate that teachers who experience job satisfaction are more likely to be dedicated, efficient, and committed to their profession. Conversely, dissatisfaction among teachers can lead to burnout, reduced teaching quality, and a decline in student outcomes. Given the strong correlation between teachers' job satisfaction and educational quality, stakeholders in academic institutions must prioritize policies and initiatives that promote a positive and supportive working environment for teachers. Addressing the key determinants of job satisfaction will not only benefit teachers but also contribute to the overall success of the education system.

School administrators should foster a collaborative and supportive school culture by encouraging teamwork, shared decision-making, and professional relationships. A positive work environment contributes significantly to teacher satisfaction and engagement. Schools and educational institutions should provide ongoing professional development programs to help teachers enhance their skills, stay updated with modern teaching methodologies, and grow in their careers. This will increase their confidence and job satisfaction. Governments and policymakers should ensure that teachers receive competitive salaries and job stability. Financial incentives and benefits should be reviewed periodically to reflect the teachers' contributions and cost-of-living adjustments. Educational institutions should improve physical and psychological working conditions by providing adequate teaching resources, reducing class sizes, and ensuring manageable workloads. A well-equipped and structured environment enhances job satisfaction and overall performance.

Schools should implement systems that recognize and reward teachers for their efforts and achievements. Career advancement opportunities should be clearly defined to encourage teachers to stay in the profession and remain motivated. Teachers should have the autonomy to make decisions regarding their teaching strategies, classroom management, and student assessments. Involving teachers in school policies and decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership and satisfaction. Positive relationships between teachers, students, and administrators should be promoted through open communication, mentorship programs, and conflict resolution mechanisms. Strengthening these relationships enhances teachers' emotional well-being and job satisfaction. Schools should implement measures to support teachers in managing student behavior effectively. Providing counseling services, behavioral support programs, and parental involvement initiatives can create a more conducive learning environment.

We should implement measures that support teachers' work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, mental health support, and wellness programs. This can prevent burnout and improve overall job satisfaction. Educational

institutions should periodically assess teacher job satisfaction through surveys and feedback mechanisms. Identifying concerns and implementing necessary improvements can ensure a sustainable and supportive teaching environment. By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions can create a more fulfilling and motivating environment for teachers, ultimately improving the quality of education and fostering long-term professional commitment among educators.

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