

A Comparative Study of Teacher Job Satisfaction Across Malaysian Primary School Types: Factors, Theories, and Implications for School Success

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates teacher job satisfaction in Malaysian primary schools, focusing on differences across Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK), Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) (SJK(C)), and Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil) (SJK(T)). Employing a quantitative, comparative research design, data were collected from 1,520 teachers in the Batang Padang district using a validated Job Descriptive Index (JDI) instrument. The results indicated a high overall job satisfaction mean score of 63.65 (SD = 5.97), with SK teachers reporting the highest satisfaction (M = 64.35), followed by SJK(T) (M = 63.02), and SJK(C) (M = 61.91). ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences in overall satisfaction across school types ($F = 22.13$, $p < .001$), with post-hoc tests showing SK teachers significantly more satisfied than their counterparts in SJK(C) and SJK(T). Sub-component analyses via MANOVA indicated significant effects of school type on all seven facets of job satisfaction ($p < .05$), notably in promotion opportunities, principal leadership, and work environment. For example, SK teachers scored higher in promotion opportunities (M = 61.72) and leadership satisfaction (M = 62.50) compared to SJK(C) and SJK(T). These findings underscore the complexity of teacher motivation, contextualized within Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Equity, and Expectancy theories, offering insights into targeted strategies for enhancing teacher well-being and school success. The study emphasizes the need for tailored policies to improve leadership practices, working conditions, and career development opportunities, thereby fostering higher teacher satisfaction, retention, and overall educational outcomes in Malaysia.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Job Satisfaction, Malaysian Primary Schools, School Type Comparison, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, School Leadership, and Environment

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher job satisfaction is a critical factor influencing the quality of education and the overall success of schools. In Malaysia, the diverse educational landscape, characterized by different types of primary schools such as Sekolah Kebangsaan (National Schools - SK), Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) (Chinese National-Type Schools - SJK(C)), and Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil) (Tamil National-Type Schools - SJK(T)), presents a unique context for examining teacher well-being and its impact on educational outcomes. Understanding the nuances of job satisfaction across these school types is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies that aim to improve teacher retention, motivation, and ultimately, student achievement.

Previous research has consistently highlighted the importance of teacher job satisfaction. Satisfied teachers are more likely to be committed to their profession, exhibit higher levels of performance, and contribute positively to the school environment (Velayudhan et al., 2025a).

Conversely, low job satisfaction can lead to increased stress, burnout, and a higher propensity for teachers to leave the profession, thereby exacerbating teacher shortages and impacting educational continuity (Velayudhan et al., 2024a). This study builds upon existing literature by providing a detailed comparative analysis of teacher job satisfaction in Malaysian primary schools. It aims to identify specific factors that contribute to or detract from teacher satisfaction within each school type, drawing insights from various sub-components of job satisfaction, including the work environment, salary, promotion opportunities, principal leadership style, relationships with colleagues, student behavior, and general work conditions. Furthermore, this research integrates the concepts of self-actualization and leadership styles, as explored in related studies, to provide a comprehensive perspective on their impact on teacher satisfaction and school success. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educational policymakers, school administrators, and teacher training institutions about the specific needs and challenges faced by teachers in different Malaysian primary school settings. By identifying areas where job satisfaction is particularly high or low, and by understanding the underlying reasons for these variations, stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to enhance teacher wellbeing, foster a supportive work environment, and ultimately contribute to the broader goal of school success.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Theoretical Frameworks of Job Satisfaction

Understanding teacher job satisfaction requires a robust theoretical foundation. Several prominent theories of job satisfaction offer valuable lenses through which to analyze the factors influencing educators' contentment and commitment. These theories provide a framework for interpreting the empirical findings and formulating effective strategies for improving teacher well-being.

2.1 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposite ends of the same continuum but rather are influenced by two distinct sets of factors: motivators and hygiene factors (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Motivators, or satisfiers, are intrinsic to the job itself and include aspects like achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. These factors lead to positive satisfaction. Hygiene factors, or dissatisfiers, are extrinsic to the job and include company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, salary, status, and security. These factors do not lead to satisfaction but can prevent dissatisfaction if adequately addressed. If hygiene factors are poor, they can lead to dissatisfaction, but their improvement does not necessarily lead to satisfaction, only to a reduction in dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg, 1968). In the context of teaching, motivators might include the joy of seeing students learn, professional growth opportunities, recognition from peers and administrators, and the autonomy to design engaging lessons. Hygiene factors would encompass salary, school policies, administrative support, working conditions (e.g., classroom facilities, resources), and relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Herzberg's theory suggests that merely improving hygiene factors (e.g., increasing salary) might reduce dissatisfaction but will not inherently motivate teachers or increase their satisfaction. True satisfaction comes from the presence of motivators (Al-Omari, 2019). This theory is particularly relevant to the current study as it examines various sub-components of job satisfaction, some of which align with Herzberg's motivators (e.g., promotion opportunities, aspects of the work itself) and others with hygiene factors (e.g., salary, work environment, principal leadership style).

2.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a psychological theory proposing that human needs can be arranged in a hierarchy, with basic physiological needs at the bottom and self-actualization at the top (Maslow, 1943). Individuals are motivated to fulfill lower-level needs before progressing to higher-level ones. The hierarchy includes: physiological needs (e.g., food, water, shelter), safety needs (e.g., security, stability), social needs (e.g., belonging, love), esteem needs (e.g., recognition, respect), and self-actualization needs (e.g., personal growth, fulfillment of potential) (Maslow, 1954). For teachers, physiological and safety needs relate to adequate salary, job security, and a safe working environment. Social needs involve positive relationships with colleagues, students, and parents. Esteem needs are met through recognition for their work, professional respect, and leadership opportunities. Finally, self-

actualization, the highest level, involves teachers feeling that they are fulfilling their potential, making a significant impact, and continuously growing professionally (Ghaffari & Pihie, 2019). The concept of self-actualization is directly addressed in some of the provided references (Velayudhan et al., 2025c; Velayudhan, 2013), making Maslow's theory a crucial framework for understanding how the fulfillment of various needs contributes to overall teacher job satisfaction and well-being. A school environment that supports teachers in moving up this hierarchy is likely to foster higher levels of satisfaction and commitment (Aksoy, 2019).

2.3 Equity Theory

Adam's Equity Theory, developed by J. Stacy Adams, proposes that individuals are motivated by fairness, and they seek to maintain equity between their inputs (e.g., effort, experience, education, loyalty) and outcomes (e.g., salary, benefits, recognition, job security) compared to those of others (Adams, 1963). Perceived inequity can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction, demotivation, and a desire to restore equity, either by altering inputs or outcomes, distorting perceptions, or leaving the situation (Adams, 1965). In the educational context, teachers compare their efforts and contributions to their rewards and conditions relative to other teachers within their school, across different school types, or even in other professions. If a teacher perceives that their efforts are not adequately rewarded compared to their peers, or if they feel unfairly treated, it can lead to significant dissatisfaction. This theory is particularly relevant when comparing job satisfaction across different school types (SK, SJK(C), SJK(T)), where differences in resources, workload, or perceived recognition might lead to feelings of inequity among teachers (Ololube, 2006). The study's findings on salary, for instance, which showed no significant differences, might suggest a perceived equity in this specific hygiene factor, preventing it from being a major source of dissatisfaction.

2.4 Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation suggests that individuals are motivated to act in a certain way based on the expectation that their effort will lead to performance, that performance will lead to a desired outcome, and that the outcome will be valuable to them (Vroom, 1964). The theory involves three key components: expectancy (the belief that effort will lead to performance), instrumentality (the belief that performance will lead to an outcome), and valence (the value or attractiveness of the outcome) (Vroom, 1995). For teachers, expectancy means believing that their hard work in the classroom will result in improved student learning or school success. Instrumentality refers to the belief that this improved performance will be recognized and rewarded, perhaps through promotion, increased autonomy, or positive evaluations. Valence is the value teachers place on these potential outcomes. If any of these links are weak, motivation and job satisfaction can suffer. For example, if teachers feel their efforts are not recognized (weak instrumentality) or that the rewards are not valuable (low valence), their motivation and satisfaction will decrease (Porter & Lawler, 1968). This theory helps explain how factors like promotion opportunities and principal leadership style (which can influence recognition and rewards) contribute to teacher job satisfaction.

2.5 Teacher Perspectives on School Success

Teacher perspectives are pivotal in shaping the educational landscape and contributing to school success. Velayudhan et al. (2025) explored teacher perspectives on school success specifically from Sekolah Kebangsaan Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia (Velayudhan et al., 2025b). Their study likely delves into how teachers define and perceive success within their school environment, encompassing aspects such as student achievement, school culture, community engagement, and professional development. Understanding these perspectives is crucial as they directly influence teacher motivation, pedagogical approaches, and overall commitment to the school's objectives. A positive teacher perspective on school success often correlates with a more vibrant and effective learning environment. This aligns with the idea that teachers who feel their contributions are valued and that they are part of a successful endeavor are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Day & Gu, 2014).

2.6 Self-Actualization and Teacher Well-being

Self-actualization, a concept popularized by Maslow, refers to the realization or fulfillment of one's talents and potentialities, especially considered as a drive or need present in everyone. In the context of education, self-actualization among teachers can significantly impact their job satisfaction and effectiveness. Velayudhan et al. (2025) conducted a comparative study on self-actualization levels among primary school teachers, providing insights into how teachers' personal growth and fulfillment relate to their professional lives (Velayudhan et al., 2025c). Furthermore, Velayudhan (2013) explored

job satisfaction and self-actualization among primary school teachers in a doctoral dissertation, establishing a foundational understanding of these interconnected constructs (Velayudhan, 2013). Teachers who feel self-actualized are more likely to be innovative, resilient, and dedicated, contributing to a more dynamic and supportive educational setting. The interplay between self-actualization and job satisfaction is critical; when teachers' work allows for personal and professional growth, their satisfaction levels tend to be higher (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This highlights the importance of providing opportunities for professional development, autonomy, and creative expression to foster self-actualization among educators.

2.7 Leadership Styles and School Success

Effective leadership is a cornerstone of school success. The leadership style of school principals, or 'Guru Besar' in the Malaysian context, profoundly influences the school climate, teacher morale, and ultimately, educational outcomes. Velayudhan et al. (2024) investigated leadership styles and school success within the School Transformation Program 2025, highlighting the importance of leadership in driving educational reforms and improvements (Velayudhan et al., 2024b). Another study by Velayudhan et al. (2024) emphasized that leadership style combined with a happy personality is key to school success, suggesting a holistic approach to leadership that considers both professional competence and personal well-being (Velayudhan et al., 2024c). These studies underscore that supportive, visionary, and empathetic leadership can significantly enhance teacher job satisfaction by fostering a sense of belonging, providing opportunities for professional growth, and effectively managing school operations. Conversely, ineffective leadership can lead to dissatisfaction and hinder the school's progress (Leithwood et al., 2004). Transformational leadership, for instance, where leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes, has been consistently linked to higher teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bass, 1985; Geijsel et al., 2009).

2.8 Organizational Commitment and Teacher Retention

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to an organization. It is often categorized into affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (feeling of obligation) (Meyer & Allen, 1991). High organizational commitment among teachers is crucial for teacher retention and school stability. Studies have shown a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment; teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be committed to their schools and less likely to leave the profession (Bogler, 2001; Somech & Bogler, 2002). Factors such as supportive leadership, positive school culture, and opportunities for professional growth contribute significantly to teachers' organizational commitment (Lo, Ramayah, & Min, 2009). In Malaysia, teacher retention is a growing concern, and understanding the factors that influence organizational commitment is vital for developing effective policies to retain experienced and qualified educators (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing a comparative approach to examine differences in teacher job satisfaction across various primary school types in the Batang Padang district of Malaysia. The design allowed for the statistical analysis of job satisfaction levels and their sub-components among teachers from Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK), Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) (SJK(C)), and Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil) (SJK(T)) schools.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study comprised primary school teachers from the Batang Padang district. A total of 1520 teachers participated in the initial overall job satisfaction analysis, with the distribution across school types as follows: 990 teachers from SK schools, 320 from SJK(C) schools, and 210 from SJK(T) schools. For the detailed analysis of sub-components of job satisfaction using MANOVA, a sample size of 1460 respondents was utilized.

3.3 Instrument

The study likely utilized a survey instrument to measure teacher job satisfaction, encompassing seven sub-components: work environment, salary, promotion opportunities, principal leadership style, colleagues, student behavior, and general work conditions. While the specific instrument is not detailed in the provided text, it is implied to be a quantitative measure yielding interval-scaled data, suitable for the statistical analyses performed.

This study uses the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) instrument, developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) and adapted for local use by Mohd Majid (2000). The JDI instrument has a reliability coefficient ranging from 0.80 to 0.88.

This study utilizes five subcomponents from the JDI, namely: work environment, salary, promotion, headteacher's leadership style, and colleagues. According to the Likert Scale by Smith et al. (1969), the JDI is a job satisfaction measurement tool with higher reliability compared to other job satisfaction instruments. The sub-constructs of student behavior and general job satisfaction were adopted from Noran Fauziah and Sharifah Nor (1990).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using both one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), along with Tukey's post-hoc tests. **One-Way ANOVA:** This test was employed to determine if there were significant differences in the overall mean job satisfaction levels among teachers across the three types of primary schools (SK, SJK(C), SJK(T)). The assumptions for ANOVA, including the interval scale of the dependent variable (job satisfaction), categorical independent variable (school type), and normal distribution of data, were met. Although the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not fully met for all variables, the study proceeded with the analysis, acknowledging that the large sample size ($n=1520$) could mitigate this limitation, particularly when focusing on mean differences. **Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA):** MANOVA was used to analyze the differences in the seven sub-components of job satisfaction simultaneously across the three school types.

This approach allowed for the examination of the main effect of school type on the combination of these dependent variables. The assumptions for MANOVA, including interval-scaled dependent variables, categorical independent variables, normal distribution of dependent variables, and linearity among dependent variables, were satisfied. Similar to ANOVA, the non-fulfillment of variance equality for two variables was acknowledged, but the analysis proceeded due to the use of an 'enter' procedure rather than a 'stepwise' one. **Tukey's Post-Hoc Test:** Following significant ANOVA and MANOVA results, Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test was applied. This test was used to identify specific pairs of school types that exhibited significant differences in overall job satisfaction and in each of the seven sub-components, providing a more granular understanding of the observed.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Overall Job Satisfaction

The study revealed a high overall level of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in the Batang Padang district, with a mean score of $M = 63.65$ ($SD = 5.97$, $n = 1520$). When examining job satisfaction across different school types, distinct patterns emerged. Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) teachers reported the highest mean job satisfaction ($M = 64.35$, $SD = 6.27$, $n = 990$), followed by Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil) (SJK(T)) teachers ($M = 63.02$, $SD = 5.24$, $n = 210$), and Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) (SJK(C)) teachers ($M = 61.91$, $SD = 4.98$, $n = 320$). These findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Job Satisfaction Scores by School Type

School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean (Lower Bound)	95% Confidence Interval for Mean (Upper Bound)	Minimum	Maximum
SK	990	64.3512	6.27441	.19941	63.9599	64.7426	44.09	100.00
SJK(C)	320	61.9148	4.97771	.27826	61.3673	62.4622	46.82	79.09
SJK(T)	210	63.0195	5.23502	.36125	62.3073	63.7316	48.18	78.18
Total	1520	63.6543	5.96792	.15307	63.3540	63.9546	44.09	100.00

An ANOVA test was conducted to assess the statistical significance of these differences. The results indicated a significant difference in overall job satisfaction among teachers across the three school types ($F = 22.13$, $p < .05$). This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that school type has a significant influence on teacher job satisfaction. Table 2 presents the ANOVA results.

Table 2: ANOVA Test for Differences in Overall Job Satisfaction by School Type

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1533.802	2	766.901	22.132	.000

Within Groups	52566.948	1517	34.652		
Total	54100.750	1519			

Post-hoc Tukey tests were performed to identify specific pairwise differences. The analysis revealed significant differences in mean job satisfaction between SK and SJK(C) ($M = 2.44$, $p < .05$), and between SK and SJK(T) ($M = 1.33$, $p < .05$). However, no significant difference was found between SJK(C) and SJK(T) ($M = -1.10$, $p > .05$). These results are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: Tukey's Post-Hoc Test for Overall Job Satisfaction by School Type

(I) School	(J) School	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval (Lower Bound)	95% Confidence Interval (Upper Bound)
SK	SJK(C)	2.43647*	.37854	.000	1.5484	3.3245
	SJK(T)	1.33176*	.44723	.008	.2826	2.3810
SJK(C)	SK	-2.43647*	.37854	.000	-3.3245	-1.5484
	SJK(T)	-1.10471	.52278	.087	-2.3311	.1217
SJK(T)	SK	-1.33176*	.44723	.008	-2.3810	-.2826
	SJK(C)	1.10471	.52278	.087	-.1217	2.3311

Job Satisfaction Sub-Components Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the impact of school type on the seven sub-components of teacher job satisfaction. The multivariate test results indicated a significant main effect of school type on the combined dependent variables (Pillai's Trace = .072, $F(14, 2904) = 7.75$, $p < .05$). This finding suggests that school type significantly influences the various facets of teacher job satisfaction. Table 4 presents the multivariate test results.

Table 4: Multivariate Tests of Job Satisfaction by School Type

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
School	Pillai's Trace	.072	7.750	14.000	2904.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.929	7.760	14.000	2902.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.075	7.771	14.000	2900.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.050	10.372	7.000	1452.000

Further analysis of the individual sub-components revealed significant effects of school type on each of the seven dimensions of job satisfaction, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Job Satisfaction Sub-Components

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School	Work Environment	2366.325	2	1183.163	19.248	.000
	Salary	578.244	2	289.122	3.100	.045
	Promotion Opportunities	2810.394	2	1405.197	13.476	.000
	Principal Leadership Style	908.414	2	454.207	4.847	.008
	Colleagues	2163.421	2	1081.710	18.579	.000
	Student Behavior	1585.015	2	792.508	11.142	.000
	General Work Conditions	3262.507	2	1631.254	18.767	.000

The descriptive statistics for each sub-component across school types are presented in Table 6. These means highlight the specific areas where satisfaction levels vary.

Table 6: Descriptive Analysis of Job Satisfaction Sub-Components by School Type

Component	School Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Work Environment	SK	71.5083	7.49019	963

	SJK(C)	68.7085	7.49603	301
	SJK(T)	72.6722	9.80161	196
	Total	71.0873	7.93775	1460
Salary	SK	52.4760	10.42036	963
	SJK(C)	52.6993	7.54633	301
	SJK(T)	50.7015	8.58044	196
	Total	52.2838	9.67167	1460
Promotion Opportunities	SK	61.7156	10.57371	963
	SJK(C)	59.7651	9.17224	301
	SJK(T)	57.8717	9.90482	196
	Total	60.7975	10.29832	1460
Principal Leadership Style	SK	62.4957	10.27933	963
	SJK(C)	60.5759	8.58243	301
	SJK(T)	62.6488	8.09900	196
	Total	62.1204	9.70595	1460
Colleagues	SK	62.5675	7.99448	963
	SJK(C)	59.6512	6.50343	301
	SJK(T)	60.7526	7.39291	196
	Total	61.7226	7.72171	1460
Student Behavior	SK	62.9716	8.66944	963
	SJK(C)	60.3682	7.75496	301
	SJK(T)	61.9260	8.25433	196
	Total	62.2945	8.49207	1460
General Work Conditions	SK	66.5369	9.77221	963
Component	School Type	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
	SJK(C)	62.7788	8.33354	301
	SJK(T)	66.0168	8.45523	196
	Total	65.6923	9.43594	1460

Further pairwise comparisons using Tukey's post-hoc tests for each sub-component revealed specific differences:

- Work Environment: Significant differences were found between SK and SJK(C) ($M = 2.80, p < .05$), and between SJK(C) and SJK(T) ($M = -3.96, p < .05$). SJK(T) teachers reported the highest satisfaction in this area.
- Salary: No significant differences were found among SK, SJK(C), and SJK(T) schools ($p > .05$ for all pairwise comparisons). SJK(C) teachers reported slightly higher satisfaction.
- Promotion Opportunities: Significant differences were observed between SK and SJK(C) ($M = .95, p < .05$), and between SK and SJK(T) ($M = 3.84, p < .05$). SK teachers reported the highest satisfaction.
- Principal Leadership Style: A significant difference was found between SK and SJK(C) ($M = 1.92, p < .05$). SJK(T) teachers reported the highest satisfaction.
- Colleagues: Significant differences were found between SK and SJK(C) ($M = 2.92, p < .05$), and between SK and SJK(T) ($M = 1.82, p < .05$). SK teachers reported the highest satisfaction.
- Student Behavior: A significant difference was found between SK and SJK(C) ($M = 2.60, p < .05$). SK teachers reported the highest satisfaction.
- General Work Conditions: Significant differences were found between SK and SJK(C) ($M = 3.76, p < .05$), and between SJK(C) and SJK(T) ($M = -3.24, p < .05$). SK teachers reported the highest satisfaction.

Overall, the independent variable 'school type' accounted for 11.9% of the variance in the dependent variable 'job satisfaction' across all seven sub-components. The individual contributions of each sub-component to the R-squared value were: Work Environment (2.6%), Salary (0.4%), Promotion Opportunities (1.8%), Principal Leadership Style (0.7%), Colleagues (2.5%), Student Behavior (1.5%), and General Work Conditions (2.4%).

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of teacher job

satisfaction across different primary school types in Malaysia. The overall high level of job satisfaction among teachers in the Batang Padang district is a positive indicator, suggesting a generally conducive environment for educators. However, the significant differences observed between school types (SK, SJK(C), and SJK(T)) underscore the importance of disaggregated analysis to identify specific areas for improvement and targeted interventions.

The consistently higher overall job satisfaction among teachers in SK schools compared to SJK(C) and SJK(T) schools warrants further investigation. This could be attributed to various factors, including potentially better resources, different administrative structures, or a more homogeneous student population that might lead to fewer behavioral challenges. The lack of significant difference in overall job satisfaction between SJK(C) and SJK(T) schools suggests that these two school types, despite their distinct cultural and linguistic contexts, may share similar challenges or strengths that influence teacher well-being.

Delving into the sub-components of job satisfaction reveals a more nuanced picture. The work environment, for instance, showed SJK(T) teachers reporting the highest satisfaction, followed by SK and SJK(C). This suggests that SJK(T) schools might possess unique characteristics in their physical or social environment that foster greater comfort and productivity for their teachers. Conversely, the lower satisfaction in SJK(C) schools regarding the work environment could point to areas needing attention, such as classroom conditions, facilities, or internal school culture. This aligns with Herzberg's hygiene factors, where a poor work environment can lead to significant dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966).

Salary, surprisingly, did not show significant differences across school types, indicating that this factor might be standardized or perceived similarly regardless of the school's classification. This contrasts with some general assumptions that salary might be a major differentiator in job satisfaction across diverse educational settings. However, it is important to note that while statistically insignificant, SJK(C) teachers reported slightly higher satisfaction in this area, which could be a point for further qualitative exploration. From an Equity Theory perspective, this suggests that teachers across these school types may perceive their compensation as relatively equitable compared to their peers, thus preventing salary from becoming a major source of inequity-driven dissatisfaction (Adams, 1963).

Promotion opportunities emerged as a significant differentiator, with SK teachers expressing the highest satisfaction. This could imply more transparent, accessible, or frequent promotion pathways within SK schools, or perhaps a larger pool of opportunities due to their prevalence. For SJK(C) and SJK(T) schools, this finding suggests a need to review and potentially enhance their promotion structures to boost teacher morale and career progression. This directly relates to Herzberg's motivators, where advancement and growth are key to job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), and Maslow's esteem needs, where recognition and respect through career progression are vital (Maslow, 1943).

Principal leadership style also played a role, with SJK(T) teachers reporting the highest satisfaction, closely followed by SK. This aligns with the broader literature on school success, where effective leadership is consistently identified as a key determinant (Velayudhan et al., 2024b; Velayudhan et al., 2024c; Leithwood et al., 2004). The lower satisfaction in SJK(C) schools regarding leadership style highlights a critical area for leadership development programs and support for principals in these schools. The studies by Velayudhan et al. (2024) on leadership styles and school success, and the emphasis on a happy personality as key to school success, are particularly relevant here (Velayudhan et al., 2024b; Velayudhan et al., 2024c). A supportive principal can fulfill teachers' social and esteem needs, as per Maslow's hierarchy, and provide the necessary conditions for motivators to thrive, according to Herzberg's theory (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Furthermore, a principal's leadership directly impacts the expectancy and instrumentality components of Vroom's Expectancy Theory, as they influence whether teachers believe their efforts will lead to desired outcomes and rewards (Vroom, 1964).

Satisfaction with colleagues and student behavior was generally higher in SK schools. This could reflect a more cohesive staff environment or student populations that present fewer disciplinary challenges in SK schools. For SJK(C) and SJK(T) schools, these findings suggest the need for initiatives that foster stronger collegial relationships and strategies to manage student behavior effectively, potentially through professional development or enhanced support systems. The study by Velayudhan et al. (2025)

on teacher perspectives on school success provides a valuable lens through which to interpret these findings, as teacher perceptions of their work environment and student interactions directly contribute to their overall satisfaction (Velayudhan et al., 2025b). Positive collegial relationships contribute to fulfilling social needs in Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1943), and a supportive environment with well-behaved students can reduce job-related stress, thereby improving hygiene factors and preventing dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Marzano et al., 2003).

Finally, general work conditions also showed SK teachers with the highest satisfaction. This broad category encompasses various aspects of the daily work life of a teacher, and its higher rating in SK schools could be a cumulative effect of better resources, more supportive leadership, and a more positive school culture. The lower satisfaction in SJK(C) schools in this area, similar to the work environment, points to a need for a comprehensive review of the overall working conditions to enhance teacher well-being. This aligns with the importance of hygiene factors in Herzberg's theory, where adequate working conditions are essential to prevent dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966).

The R-squared values indicate that while school type significantly influences job satisfaction, it only accounts for a relatively small percentage (11.9%) of the total variance. This suggests that other factors, not explored in this specific analysis, also play a substantial role in determining teacher job satisfaction. These unexamined factors could include individual teacher characteristics (e.g., personality, experience, self-actualization levels), school-specific policies, community support, and broader socio-economic influences. The comparative study on self-actualization levels among primary school teachers by Velayudhan et al. (2025) and Velayudhan's (2013) dissertation on job satisfaction and self-actualization are crucial in understanding these individual-level factors (Velayudhan et al., 2025c; Velayudhan, 2013). Future research could explore these additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher job satisfaction in Malaysia, potentially incorporating more qualitative methodologies to capture the nuances of teacher experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interplay between these factors and the theoretical frameworks discussed (Herzberg, Maslow, Equity, Expectancy) offers a rich area for future inquiry into the complexities of teacher job satisfaction and its impact on educational outcomes (Spector, 1997).

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