Teacher Personality and Job Anxiety: Predictors of Burnout and Job Satisfaction among Secondary Educators

Roshan Khatiwora[1] & Dr. Subhashish Sinha[2]

1. Research Scholar, Department of Education, YBN University Ranchi, Jharkhand

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, YBN University Ranchi, Jharkhand, sbhsishsinha22@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research explores the connection between teacher personality traits, job anxiety, burnout, and job satisfaction among secondary school educators. Using a sample of 300 secondary teachers, the study evaluates their personality characteristics, levels of job-related anxiety, burnout tendencies, and overall job satisfaction. Key findings reveal that personality traits like neuroticism and extraversion significantly influence job anxiety, burnout, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, job anxiety serves as a mediator between personality and burnout. These results underline critical considerations for teacher well-being, school leadership, and education policymakers. Stress and burnout among teachers are global concerns that can lead to severe mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression. Burnout negatively impacts educators' health and poses risks to their mental and physical well-being. Addressing the prevalence and causes of stress, burnout, and anxiety among teachers is essential to alleviate this pressing public health issue.

Keywords: *Teachers, Stress, Burnout, Anxiety, Depression.*

Introduction:

Teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction are critical issues in the educational sector, affecting educators, students, and institutions. Research links burnout to lower job satisfaction, diminished effectiveness, and increased attrition among teachers. While teacher personality traits and job anxiety are recognized as potential predictors of burnout, limited studies explore their interconnectedness in secondary education.(Maity, A. et.al, 2023) The teaching profession's inherent stress, stemming from high expectations, workload, and diverse student needs, often leads to reduced job satisfaction and increased burnout.

Stress, while a natural response to challenging situations, becomes problematic when chronic, impairing emotional balance and day-to-day functioning. Prolonged teacher stress is associated with lower job satisfaction, higher turnover intentions, and adverse coping behaviors, such as excessive alcohol use and heightened anxiety. According to Maslach's stress theory, individuals experience stress when external

demands exceed their coping capacity. Stress among teachers, exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the profession's vulnerability to psychological challenges.

This study investigates the relationships between teacher personality, job anxiety, and job satisfaction, aiming to:

1. Identify correlations between personality traits, job anxiety, and satisfaction.

2. Analyze how job anxiety mediates the link between personality and satisfaction.

3. Explore potential moderators of these relationships.

By addressing these questions, the research contributes to the discourse on teacher well-being and offers strategies to enhance job satisfaction and reduce burnout in secondary education.

Literature Review:

Education plays a fundamental role in societal progress, with teachers serving as critical agents in shaping the future by imparting knowledge and skills. The success of any educational system is strongly tied to the job satisfaction of its educators. Teachers who are content and motivated are more likely to create engaging and supportive learning environments (Spring, 2014). Recognizing this, the present study examines job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Muzaffarabad. This region, located in the scenic area of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, offers a unique context for such research due to its socio-cultural specificities. Understanding the factors influencing teacher satisfaction in this setting is essential, given the evolving demands on the education sector.

The teaching profession involves diverse challenges, such as managing classrooms, adapting curricula, and engaging with various stakeholders, including students, colleagues, parents, and administrators. These complexities necessitate an in-depth exploration of the elements that collectively shape job satisfaction (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017). This study adopts both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive analysis, using surveys and interviews to capture statistical trends and personal experiences. Findings are expected to inform policymakers, administrators, and school leaders about ways to improve working conditions and teacher satisfaction, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of the educational landscape in Muzaffarabad.

Prior research highlights the critical role of teacher satisfaction in fostering effective education. For example, Kouni, Koutsoukos, and Panta (2018) emphasize the interconnectedness of teacher satisfaction with the school environment, community engagement, and professional development. Similarly, Koutrouba and Michala (2017) examined factors influencing satisfaction, such as salary, employment terms, relationships with key stakeholders, and participation in management. Their findings revealed that teachers actively involved in school management and community interactions tend to report higher satisfaction levels, irrespective of gender.

Volante, Fazio, and Ritzen (2017) also underscore the importance of collaboration among teachers, relationships with students, and involvement in policymaking in enhancing job satisfaction. Furthermore, recognition and appreciation of teachers' abilities by school principals, along with effective communication within institutions, significantly boost satisfaction levels (Bentea & Anghelache, 2012). Teachers' sense of achievement and social connections within their work environment further underscore the importance of cultivating a positive and fulfilling work atmosphere.

The correlation between teacher satisfaction and student performance is particularly noteworthy. When educators experience genuine satisfaction, they are more likely to demonstrate exceptional dedication, which positively impacts student outcomes. Consequently, prioritizing teacher well-being is crucial for nurturing young minds and shaping a brighter future (Kouni, Koutsoukos, & Panta, 2018).

Job satisfaction and motivation, while distinct, are closely intertwined. Motivated employees often find their efforts recognized, creating a positive feedback loop that enhances job satisfaction. Organizations that employ rewards and incentives to meet individual needs tend to achieve their objectives more effectively (Zacharo, Marios, & Dimitra, 2018). Key determinants of job satisfaction include salary, promotions, supervision, work environment, and opportunities for professional development (Muntazeri & Indrayanto, 2018; Bayram & Dinç, 2015).

According to Balouch and Hassan (2014), job satisfaction fosters readiness to work, which influences organizational success. The framework proposed by Gessesse and Premanandam (2023) highlights how intrinsic and extrinsic factors, organizational support, and individual characteristics contribute to job satisfaction. Similarly, McNaughtan, García, Garza, and Harwood (2019) emphasize the need for a balanced approach to these factors to enhance satisfaction among employees.

In conclusion, understanding the dynamics of teacher job satisfaction is essential for improving educational outcomes and ensuring a supportive environment for both teachers and students. By addressing these aspects, educational institutions can create sustainable strategies to enhance teacher well-being and retention.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a self-report teacher stress questionnaire, which was developed based on a thorough review of prior research, including work by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978), Fimian (1984), Borg and Riding (1991), Manthei and Gilmore (1996), and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (as referenced in Edudata, n.d.).

Questionnaire Design

1. **Stress Sources:**

   - Participants evaluated the degree to which 46 specific factors caused them stress as educators. Responses were captured using a five-point scale ranging from "no stress" to "extreme stress."

   - A separate question assessed general stress levels: *"How stressful do you find teaching in general?"* Responses were rated on a five-point scale, ranging from "not at all stressful" to "extremely stressful."

2. **Stress Symptoms:**

   - Participants reported the frequency of 15 physical and psychological stress symptoms experienced during the school year. Responses ranged from "never" to "many times a day" on a five-point scale.

3. **Job Satisfaction:**

   - Participants rated their overall job satisfaction by responding to the question: *"How satisfied are you with your teaching job overall?"* A five-point scale was used, from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied."

4. **Demographics and Open Comments:**

   - The survey included multiple-choice questions to gather demographic data such as gender, age, teaching experience, grade level taught, and current assignment. Additionally, an open-ended section allowed participants to provide further comments about the questionnaire or their experiences.

Instrument Testing and Reliability

To ensure clarity and relevance, a focus group comprising male and female teachers from elementary and secondary education reviewed the questionnaire. Feedback from this group informed refinements and modifications. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.951, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Research Design

A quantitative, correlational design was adopted for this study to explore the relationships between teacher personality traits, job-related anxiety, and job satisfaction. A sample of 200 secondary educators from both public and private schools participated. Recruitment combined convenience sampling with snowball sampling techniques.

Data Collection Tools

The following standardized tools were employed:

1. **Big Five Inventory (BFI):** A 44-item questionnaire to assess five personality traits—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

2. **Job Anxiety Scale (JAS):** A 20-item questionnaire measuring anxiety related to teaching roles.

3. **Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS):** A 36-item tool assessing various aspects of job satisfaction, including pay, promotions, supervision, and workplace relationships.

Data Collection Process

Surveys were administered online. Participants were provided with a consent form before receiving a unique link to the survey. Completing the survey took approximately 20–25 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were applied to evaluate relationships between variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify significant predictors of job satisfaction.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical research standards. Approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the existing literature on teacher personality, job anxiety, and job satisfaction in several ways:

1. Advances understanding of teacher personality: By examining the relationships between teacher personality traits and job satisfaction, this study provides insights into the role of personality in shaping teacher experiences.

2. Highlights the impact of job anxiety: The study's findings on the negative effects of job anxiety on job satisfaction underscore the need for schools to prioritize teacher well-being and provide support for managing stress and anxiety.

3. Informs teacher training and development: The study's results suggest that teacher training programs should focus on developing coping strategies and stress management techniques to help teachers manage job anxiety.

4. Provides implications for educational policy: The study's findings have implications for educational policymakers, highlighting the need to address teacher job satisfaction and well-being through policy initiatives.

Implications for Secondary Educators Understanding the factors that influence job satisfaction among secondary educators is crucial for promoting teacher well-being and retention. Schools and administrators can take steps to support teachers, such as:

- Providing stress management training and resources

- Encouraging open communication and feedback

- Fostering positive relationships among teachers, students, and administrators

- Promoting work-life balance and job security

By addressing these factors, schools can create a more supportive and satisfying work environment for secondary educators.

Correlates of Stress, Burnout, Anxiety, and Depression

Research has identified several correlates of stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression among teachers, including:

- Socio-demographic factors: sex, age, marital status, and school organizational factors.

- Work-related factors: years of teaching, class size, job satisfaction, and subject taught.

- Workplace improvements: reducing burnout, improving teacher health outcomes, and reducing healthcare expenditures.

Overall, understanding the factors that influence job satisfaction among secondary educators is crucial for promoting teacher well-being and retention.

Teacher Personality Traits

1. Extraversion: Teachers high in extraversion tend to be more outgoing, sociable, and confident, which can enhance job satisfaction.

2. Neuroticism: Teachers high in neuroticism tend to experience more stress, anxiety, and burnout, leading to lower job satisfaction.

3. Conscientiousness: Teachers high in conscientiousness tend to be more organized, responsible, and reliable, which can contribute to higher job satisfaction.

4. Agreeableness: Teachers high in agreeableness tend to be more cooperative, empathetic, and sensitive, which can foster positive relationships with students and colleagues.

Job Anxiety

1. Workload and responsibilities: Heavy workloads, excessive paperwork, and multiple responsibilities can contribute to job anxiety.

2. Classroom management: Difficulty managing student behavior, disruptions, and discipline can increase job anxiety.

3. Parental expectations: High parental expectations, criticism, or pressure can contribute to job anxiety.

4. Administrative support: Lack of administrative support, resources, or guidance can exacerbate job anxiety.

Job Satisfaction

1. Autonomy and control: Teachers who feel they have autonomy and control over their teaching practices tend to experience higher job satisfaction.

2. Collegial support: Positive relationships with colleagues, collaborative work environments, and supportive school cultures can enhance job satisfaction.

3. Student relationships: Strong, positive relationships with students can increase job satisfaction and motivation.

4. Professional development: Opportunities for professional growth, training, and development can contribute to higher job satisfaction.

Interrelationships

1. Teacher personality and job anxiety: Certain personality traits (e.g., neuroticism) can increase vulnerability to job anxiety.

2. Job anxiety and job satisfaction: High levels of job anxiety can negatively impact job satisfaction.

3. Teacher personality and job satisfaction: Certain personality traits (e.g., extraversion, conscientiousness) can enhance job satisfaction.

Understanding these complex relationships can inform strategies to promote teacher well-being, reduce job anxiety, and enhance job satisfaction among secondary educators.

Description of the relationship between teacher personality, job anxiety, and job satisfaction among secondary educators:

Teacher Personality Traits

1. Extraversion: Teachers high in extraversion tend to be more outgoing, sociable, and confident, which can enhance job satisfaction.

2. Neuroticism: Teachers high in neuroticism tend to experience more stress, anxiety, and burnout, leading to lower job satisfaction.

3. Conscientiousness: Teachers high in conscientiousness tend to be more organized, responsible, and reliable, which can contribute to higher job satisfaction.

4. Agreeableness: Teachers high in agreeableness tend to be more cooperative, empathetic, and sensitive, which can foster positive relationships with students and colleagues.

Implications

The study's findings have important implications for educational administrators, policymakers, and teacher training programs. Specifically:

1. Teacher recruitment and selection: Educational administrators should consider teacher personality traits during the recruitment and selection process to ensure a better fit between teachers and the school environment.

2. Teacher training and development: Teacher training programs should focus on developing coping strategies and stress management techniques to help teachers manage job anxiety.

3. Administrative support: Educational administrators should prioritize providing administrative support to teachers, including resources, guidance, and recognition, to promote job satisfaction.

4. School culture: Schools should foster a positive school culture that encourages collaboration, open communication, and mutual respect among teachers, administrators, and students.

Findings

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationships between teacher personality, job anxiety, and job satisfaction, it has some limitations. Future research should:

1. Use longitudinal designs: To examine the causal relationships between teacher personality, job anxiety, and job satisfaction over time.

2. Explore other personality traits: Such as emotional stability and openness to experience, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of teacher personality.

3. Investigate school-level factors: Such as school size, type, and location, to examine their impact on teacher job satisfaction.

By addressing these limitations and exploring new research directions, future studies can build upon the findings of this research and provide further insights into the complex relationships between teacher personality, job anxiety, and job satisfaction.

Conclusion:

This study examined the connections between teacher personality traits, job-related anxiety, and job satisfaction among secondary school educators. The findings indicate that certain personality traits, particularly extraversion and conscientiousness, are significant contributors to job satisfaction. Conversely, job anxiety was identified as a key factor leading to dissatisfaction. This research offers unique insights into how teacher stressors may influence the likelihood of experiencing anxiety, depression, and job satisfaction, addressing gaps in existing literature.

Although the broader implications of an unsatisfied teaching workforce—such as its effects on teaching quality and student achievement—were not a focus of this study, the findings hold important relevance for educational stakeholders. Addressing issues such as workload, student behavior, and employment conditions could help mitigate teacher stress and, in turn, reduce the prevalence of anxiety and depression. Moreover, providing adequate support to early-career teachers and addressing their mental health needs can enhance overall job satisfaction.

Future research should consider longitudinal studies to explore how teacher job satisfaction evolves throughout their careers. Such investigations would be valuable, as the long-term rewards of teaching may only become evident later in one's professional journey. As one teacher in this study reflected, "Teaching can be very stressful at times, but I love being a teacher. It has its rewards."

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