

**Factors Contributing to the Life Satisfaction of Secondary School Teachers in Jos North
LGA**

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Abstract

The study examined the contribution of three factors to the life satisfaction of secondary school teachers in Jos North. The three factors include monthly income, job satisfaction and meaningful work. Ninety-two secondary school teachers working in public and private schools within Jos North participated in the study. A correlational research design was employed for the study. Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale (1985), Steger, Dik and Duffy's work as meaning inventory (2012) and Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey (1985) were used in collecting data for the study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses. Job satisfaction and meaningful work positively correlated with life satisfaction whereas monthly income had no relationship with life satisfaction. The study therefore recommends an improvement in the working environment of teachers to increase job satisfaction that leads to life satisfaction.

Keywords: Teachers, Life satisfaction, Job satisfaction, Income, Meaningful work

Introduction

Life satisfaction is one of the most essential desires of every human across the world. Every individual regardless of their background has this innate need to be satisfied with life. Generally, people's needs have always been insatiable. Life satisfaction is at the core of these needs. The life satisfaction of teachers is very important. This is because teachers play a very essential role in the overall achievement of a nation's educational goals. Much is expected of them in the aspect of effectively implementing education for all of the children in a society. Most life skills and abilities are formed during adolescence when individuals are in secondary school, so the roles teachers play at this stage cannot be overemphasized. Since teachers are the key players in the educational sector of every nation, the subject of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their lives is of paramount importance. This is obviously because the state of their lives can make a negative or positive impact on the lives of the students they teach. A teacher who is dissatisfied with his or her life is likely to negatively impact the lives of the students he or she teaches. The reverse is true for a teacher who is satisfied with his or her life. The life satisfaction of teachers is very important because it influences how well they perform in their careers.

According to Umme (1999), life satisfaction is very important in career performance because employees are most likely to perform their jobs more efficiently when they are satisfied with their lives. Employees who are happy and satisfied with their lives tend to be more useful and productive to their employers (Umme, 1999). This is in contrast to those employees who are not satisfied with their lives. Employers will therefore do themselves and their employees favors if they try to make life better for their employees by motivating and encouraging them (Wilner, 2011).

Life satisfaction generally entails the degree to which an individual is contented with the state of things at a point in time, depending on that individual's expectations and experiences (Lawler, 1973). In Nigeria, it is widely believed that working conditions as well as financial gains are the major determinants of satisfaction in life (Komolafe, 2010, as cited

in Korb & Akintunde, 2013). Life satisfaction is an assessment of life as a whole based on how well personal goals match with personal achievements (Glass, 1999). According to Budh and Osteraker (2007), it is a subjective and general estimation of physical, social and psychological aspects of an individual's current life satisfaction. Life satisfaction can be assessed specific to particular domains of life which include quality of relationships, income, educational status and work (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002). This study examined three potential factors that may contribute to the life satisfaction of teachers: monthly income, job satisfaction and meaningful work.

According to Case and Fair (2007), income is the sum of all the wages, salaries, profits, interests payments, rents and other forms of earnings received in a given period of time. Studies have been carried out over the years on the relationship between income and life satisfaction. One of such studies was carried out by Deaton and Kahneman (2008) to find out the effect of income on emotional well-being and life satisfaction. The study revealed that the correlation between income and life satisfaction was strong and positive across and within different countries. Stevenson and Wolfers (2008) conducted a similar study to investigate the relationship between income and life satisfaction within countries. The result showed that there was a positive correlation between life satisfaction and income in all but one country and indicated that higher income goes together with higher life satisfaction.

Spector (1997) defines job satisfaction as the extent to which an individual is contented with his or her job, in other words, whether or not they like the job or individual aspects or facets of jobs such as nature of work or supervision. Locke (1976) also viewed job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Job satisfaction of secondary school teachers is one of the job-related topics that received greater attention of educational psychologists in Nigeria in the past years (Akomolafe & Ogunmakin, 2014). A high rate of job dissatisfaction has been discovered among teachers through a series of studies carried out within the last few decades (Adeyemo, 1996, 1986; Adeyoju, 1999; Ajayi, 1998, 1981). Recently however, studies have reported moderate improvement in secondary school teachers' job satisfaction (Adetayo, 2008; Gesinde & Adejumo, 2012).

According to Akomolafe and Ogunmakin (2014), teachers who are satisfied with their jobs usually have a high degree of professional competence; they feel qualified in terms of their knowledge and skills and also feel secured about their classroom management. Steyn (1992) holds the view that the effectiveness of every educational system depends largely on the job satisfaction of teachers employed in the system. Job satisfaction has been associated with productivity, motivation, absenteeism or tardiness, accidents, mental/physical health and general life satisfaction (Landy, 1978). Boardman (1985) discovered a positive correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. According to Redmond (2015), job satisfaction is very subjective for each employee and each situation being assessed.

Work as meaning or meaningful work has been viewed from many different perspectives by many different researches. Steger (2009) views meaningful work as work that makes sense, work that has a point and work that benefits the greater good. According to Steger (2009), there is growing body of evidence showing that meaningful workers are happier, more committed, and better workers. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) define meaningful work as work that employees believe is significant in that it serves an important purpose.

Meaningfulness captures the extent or degree of significance employees attach to their work or believe their work possesses (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzeniewski, 2010). Meaningful work has been associated with numerous work-related benefits, including increased job satisfaction, decreased absenteeism and improved performance (Grant, 2007; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Rosso et al., 2010).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to the life satisfaction of secondary school teachers in Jos north LGA of Plateau State. Specific objectives include the following.

- To examine the relationship between monthly income and life satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Jos North LGA of Plateau State.
- To examine the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Jos North LGA of Plateau State.
- To examine the relationship between meaningful work and life satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Jos North LGA of Plateau State.

Research Hypotheses

This study will test the following null hypotheses.

- There is no significant relationship between monthly income and life satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Jos North LGA of Plateau State.
- There is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Jos North LGA of Plateau State.
- There is no significant relationship between meaningful work and life satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Jos North LGA of Plateau State.

Methods

Participants

The target population for this research is secondary school teachers within Jos North Local Government Area. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the schools and also the teachers who participated in the study. In the first stage which is the selection of the schools, stratified sampling was employed. The researcher first divided the total population of schools in the Local Government Area into four strata: public, religious private, NGO private and other secondary schools. The researcher then drew four schools representing each of the four strata.

A stratified sampling technique was also employed in the second stage which entails the selection of the teachers. In each of the four selected schools, the teachers were divided into three categories of Arts, Science, and Social Science teachers. Ten teachers representing each of the categories from the schools were selected, a total of 30 teachers per school. A total sample of 120 teachers were selected to represent the target population but only 92 participants completed the questionnaires, so the total sample size was 92.

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational research design. A correlational design is used to determine whether or not two variables are correlated. This measures whether an increase or

decrease in one variable corresponds to an increase or decrease in the other variable (Kalla, 2011). The researcher intended to determine the relationship that exists between secondary school teachers' life satisfaction and each of the three factors of monthly income, job satisfaction and meaningful work. The research design also determined how strongly these variables relate to one another.

Instruments

The researcher adopted instruments to measure each of the variables in this research. Life Satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). This scale was developed by Diener and colleagues (1985). It is a five item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the items using a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS has been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of life satisfaction suited for use with a wide range of age groups (Pavot, et.al, 1991).

The predictive variable of monthly income was measured by simply asking the respondents how much they earned every month. They were given a list of options and asked to choose the one that falls within the range of what they earn. This appeared in the bio-data section of the questionnaire where personal information was collected.

The researcher adapted the Job Satisfaction Survey in measuring the variable of Job Satisfaction. The job satisfaction survey was developed by Spector (1985). It is a 36-item questionnaire used to evaluate nine dimensions of job satisfaction related to overall satisfaction. Each of the nine sub-scales has four items but the researcher selected just two sub-scales. These two sub-scales measure promotion and communication respectively, which were combined to one job satisfaction score. Participants were asked to answer each item on a 7-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. This well-established instrument has been repeatedly investigated for reliability and validity evidence. The nine sub-scales altogether have internal consistency reliabilities of .91 (Spector, 1997).

In measuring the variable meaningful work, the researcher adapted the Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI) which was developed by Steger, Dik and Duffy (2012). It is originally a 10-itemed scale designed to measure three facets of meaningful work: positive meaning, meaning making through work and greater good motivations, though this study only reports on the positive meaning variable. Participants were asked to respond to these items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Altogether, the WAMI scale has an internal consistency of .93 (Steger et al., 2012).

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher went to each of the schools selected on different occasions. At each of these schools, the researcher requested the audience of the school principal. The researcher then proceeded to explain the purpose of the visit, giving assurance of total confidentiality and seeking permission to carry out the data collection process. With the aid of a guide assigned by the school principal, the researcher proceeded to each of the departments in the school. Then, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the ten teachers from each of the departments after explaining the purpose of the research and also assuring them of maximum

confidentiality. The questionnaires were answered within two hours in some schools while in other schools, the researcher was told to come back for the questionnaires after two days because some of the teachers were busy. After distributing and collecting the questionnaires when the respondents were through, the researcher expressed gratitude to the participants for their cooperation and then departed from the premises.

Results

The descriptive socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristic of Participants.

	Frequency	Percent
Age Group (years)		
18-24	8	8.8%
25-31	34	37.4%
32-38	20	22.0%
39-45	16	17.6%
≥ 46	13	14.3%
Gender		
Male	53	58.2%
Female	38	41.8%
Religion		
Christianity	84	92.3%
Islam	6	6.6%
Traditional	1	1.1%
Marital status		
Single	41	45.1%
Married	50	54.9%
Educational Qualification		
SSCE	7	7.6%
NCE	25	27.2%
Diploma	6	6.5%
B.ED	25	27.2%
BA/B.Sc.	22	23.9%
M.ED	1	1.1%
M.Sc./MA	2	2.2%
Others	4	4.3%
Monthly Income		
≤ N5,000	9	10.0%
N5,001-N10,000	20	22.2%
N10,001-N15,000	9	10.0%
N15,001-N20,000	17	18.9%
N20,001-N25,000	2	2.2%
N25,001-N30,000	5	5.6%
N30,001-N35,000	3	3.3%
N35,001-N40,000	3	3.3%
>N40,000	22	24.4%

Table 1 shows that many of the study participants were between the age group of 25-31 years. There were slightly more males that took part in the study than females. Majority of the participants were affiliated to the Christian religion. Regarding the educational qualification of the study participants, more than half had a first degree. A total of 51 (56%) had degrees in the field of education. Furthermore, a majority of the study participants earned below N20,000 as monthly income.

The first research hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between monthly income and life satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation between Monthly Income and Life Satisfaction.

Variable	Mean	Correlation (r)	p	Decision
Monthly Income	22,033.33	-.125	0.121	Accept
Life Satisfaction	19.43			

The Spearman's Correlation statistic was used to test the hypothesis. The result indicated that there was no significant relationship between monthly income and life satisfaction. The null hypothesis was accepted. Monthly income and life satisfaction have no significant relationship.

The second hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation (r)	p	Decision
Job Satisfaction	31.08	8.42	.371	0.001	Reject
Life Satisfaction	19.43	6.62			

Result of the Pearson's correlation as indicated in Table 3 show that the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. This means that an increase in job satisfaction correlates with an increase in life satisfaction.

The third research hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between meaningful work and the life satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation between Meaningful Work and Life Satisfaction.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation (r)	p-value	Decision
Meaningful Work	36.89	8.71	.319	<.01	Reject
Life Satisfaction	19.43	6.62			

The results in Table 4 shows the null hypothesis is rejected as there is a positive moderate correlation between work as meaning and life satisfaction. As teachers find their work meaningful, their life satisfaction is higher.

Discussion

This study was aimed at finding out the extent to which certain factors contribute to the life satisfaction of secondary school teachers. These factors are monthly income, job satisfaction and meaningful work. The result of the first hypothesis shows that there is no significant relationship between monthly income and life satisfaction. This implies that

monthly income neither increases nor decreases life satisfaction among secondary school teachers. This result varies from the findings of Deaton and Kahneman (2008) and Stevenson and Wolfers (2008) who both showed a positive and strong correlation between income and life satisfaction. However, this study confirms the results of Abd-El-Fattah (2010) who found that income had no relationship with job satisfaction amongst teachers in Egypt.

The result of second hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. This means that an increase in job satisfaction correlates with an increase in life satisfaction among secondary school teachers. Akomolafe and Ogunmakin (2014) found that teachers' work-life is at the core of their general lives. When they are unhappy with their jobs, it affects their lives generally. They may lose motivation and their outlook on life in general may become negative. The reverse is true when they are fulfilled and happy with their jobs. The result of this study has provided further evidence that job satisfaction and life satisfaction are closely related. What affects one, invariably affects the other. This is also in line with the result of the research carried out by Boardman (1985) who found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

The final hypothesis found that meaningful work had a positive relationship with life satisfaction. This means that the extent to which teachers view their work to be meaningful significantly correlates with an increase in their overall life satisfaction. This is similar to the research carried out by Arnold and colleagues (2007) which found that people who feel their work is meaningful report greater well-being. Weir (2013) also found that meaningful work correlated with life satisfaction.

Recommendations

- The study found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The researcher therefore, recommends that a positive, fulfilling working environment be provided for teachers in order for them to be satisfied with their work. It is the duty and responsibility of school administrators, the education ministry and the government at large to ensure that teachers are satisfied with their jobs, which will in turn boost their life satisfaction.
- The study also found that meaningful work has a positive relationship with life satisfaction. Therefore, teachers should frequently be encouraged to consider the meaningful contributions that their work has to them personally and life in general.

Conclusion

This study has shown that monthly income has no significant relationship with life satisfaction amongst secondary school teachers in Jos North LGA. On the other hand, life satisfaction had a positive moderate relationship with job satisfaction and meaningful work. An increase in the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers leads to an increase in their life satisfaction. The higher the significance teachers attach to their work, the higher their life satisfaction. Therefore employers of teachers should put in place measures that would convey to teachers the message that the work they are doing is of utmost significance and also provide good work environments in order to improve the meaningfulness of work and job satisfaction and thus life satisfaction of teachers.

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