

Human Capital Management in the Wandering Context of Events – Challenges for the Managerial Staff

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Chapter 7

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dorota Grego-Planer^a

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7.1. Introduction

COVID-19 is a global health problem that continues to affect millions of people (Donley, 2021). The pandemic hit Europe in the first months of 2020, severely affecting the mental health of many people (Kumar and Nayar, 2021). European governments, in response to the epidemiological crisis, recommended first social isolation and then lockdown at home. Suddenly, a large proportion of European workers switched to remote work. As was mentioned in the previous chapters of this monograph, many workers have been forced to work from home, and many have faced challenges due to some fundamental problems, such as lack of living space or housing, and also working in the presence of their family (Kniffin et al., 2021).

The pandemic has also significantly disrupted educational systems, not only in Europe. Such problems affected over 1.5 billion students worldwide (Shahzad, Hassan, Aremu, Hussain, and Lodhi, 2021). In education, many countries decided to completely close schools and move to distance learning to reduce COVID-19 transmission (Donley, 2021; Obrad and Circa, 2021). There is no doubt that teachers are one of the professional groups most affected by the new reality. The closure of the schools enforced a radical change in the teaching model, moving to online classes. Teachers had to drastically alter the way they work. On an individual level, not all of them had the same resources or were equally trained to face the challenge. Some teachers had previous experience of working remotely, others did not. Some of them were good at new technologies (perhaps younger teachers), while others had more difficulties with it (Mahmood, Ariza-Montes, Saleem, and Han, 2021).

The level of the competency and readiness of teachers for e-learning further exacerbated this problem. The challenge of teachers qualifications was a key issue in the context of a satisfactory learning strategy during the pandemic. The literature

^a Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, ORCID: 0000-0002-7569-1526.

points to other problems related to online learning. Ferri et al. (Ferri, Grifoni, and Guzzo, 2020) discussed technological (e.g. lack of access to the Internet), pedagogical (e.g. no computer skills) and social (e.g. lack of interaction with students) challenges. Moreover, Yusuf (2020) noted that teachers must also take into account changes in students' attitudes and behavior. During distance learning, students can be less focused, may not have access to all the necessary learning tools and materials, or simply not attend online classes. Obligatory e-learning can also aggravate pre-existing disproportions in learning progress caused by socio-economic inequalities. During online education, financial resources can determine whether students will be able to use computers, other mobile devices, and the Internet (Thomas and Rogers, 2020). In addition, Omodan (2020) suggested that while technology and the Internet appear to be globally available, there are still areas where access to technology is limited, such as in rural locations. Although many teachers were forced to learn online after the outbreak of the pandemic, the acceptability of this form of education is still marginal. Face-to-face learning is still the most preferred method (Fute, Oubibi, Sun, Zhou, and Xiao, 2022). Introducing new teaching strategies has always caused physical and mental implications among teachers due to their relatively high reluctance to make changes (Yılmaz and Kılıçoğlu, 2013). In addition, the physical change of the workplace, social environment and the lack of skills necessary to use technological tools are other challenges faced by teachers during the pandemic (Poncet et al., 2007). The entire COVID-19 situation has affected not only the professional, but also private lives of teachers. Their stress levels increased and their quality of life decreased, which further affected their working lives and productivity in the long run (Fute et al., 2022).

The literature emphasizes that physical, social and psychological changes in the workplace can have a strong influence on job satisfaction (Papavasileiou, Lyons, Shaw, and Georgiou, 2017). Therefore, it is worth reassessing the level of teacher satisfaction with all the changes that have occurred in education during the pandemic.

Hence, **the goal of this chapter** is to juxtapose the results of the study on the job satisfaction level of teachers in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic with the results of research conducted in this area in other countries. Before this comparison was made, the author first explained the theoretical assumptions of the concept of job satisfaction, and discussed the methodics of her own empirical research to present the findings in the next step. Finally, the most important conclusions were formulated.

7.2. Theoretical foundations for the concept of job satisfaction

Work is an integral part of everyone's life. It has a huge influence on people's behaviour, attitude and lifestyle. The type of work performed, its conditions, as well as numerous internal conditions determine the level of perceived job satisfaction. Satisfaction, as a rule, is associated with a feeling of happiness and contentment, and

identified as a positive attitude of the employee towards the organization, colleagues and the work itself. According to Spector, job satisfaction means how much people like or dislike their jobs. According to this author, job satisfaction can be treated as a single general feeling or as a set of attitudes regarding various aspects of this work (Spector, 1997).

Locke defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experience (Locke, 1976, p. 1304). Job satisfaction is a mental state determined by how well an individual believes his or her job-related needs are being met (Evans, 1997). Adenuga added that job satisfaction reflects the level of compatibility between employees' expectations of the job and the rewards that the job provides (Adenuga, 2015).

In turn, Hirschfeld (2000) explained that job satisfaction relates to the extent to which people like their job. Job satisfaction can be defined as an emotional state, which is the result of the evaluation of one's own work and the experience related to it (Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction is related to employee's satisfaction not only with the work itself, but also with the broader organizational context related to the job.

Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon driven by a variety of factors that has been extensively researched in the literature. Locke (1976) summarized them in several dimensions: the work itself, pay, promotions, recognition, working conditions, benefits, supervision and co-workers.

The concept of the "work itself" is referred to by Robbins et al. (Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt, 2003, p. 77) as the extent to which the job provides the individual with stimulating tasks, opportunities for learning, personal growth, and the chance to be responsible and accountable for the results. Pay, according to the same author, applies to the amount of remuneration the employee received for a specific job (Robbins et al., 2003).

Satisfaction with promotion (Friday and Friday, 2003), regards employees' opinions toward the organization's promotion policies and processes. Employees who are promoted have more opportunities for personal development, greater responsibility, and a higher social position (Bajpai and Srivastava, 2004). Working conditions include ambient temperature, lighting, ventilation, hygiene, noise, working hours, and resources. The employee would prefer to work in conditions that allow him or her to be more physically comfortable and convenient. The absence of such working conditions can have a negative impact on a worker's mental and physical well-being (Parvin and Kabir, 2011).

As mentioned above, supervision is another factor affecting satisfaction. Research shows that people will be more satisfied with their job if they enjoy working with their supervisors (Aamondt, 2004). Yet another factor that determines job satisfaction is the degree to which co-workers are friendly, competent, and supportive. According to various research, employees will be more satisfied at work if their co-workers are more supportive (Aamondt, 2004; Robbins, 2005).

It should be added that a sense of justice also has a significant impact on the level of job satisfaction. Workers feel some sense of justice for all of the aspects that contribute to job satisfaction (Sypniewska, 2014). Employees who feel fairly treated show a higher level of satisfaction (Aamondt, 2004).

Job satisfaction, according to (Armstrong, 2006), can be improved by focusing on internal motivators such as responsibility, achievement, and recognition. Management's objective should be to decide how to delegate responsibilities in diverse ways so that their employees have the space and freedom to use their skills and abilities.

Other variables directly related to the employee, are the demographic characteristics. The first of these individual factors is age; job satisfaction increases with age and is higher for older workers who have worked longer. Older and more experienced employees often have better competencies, additionally, they are often trusted by their superiors and colleagues. They are also generally assessed better, which contributes as well as to a higher level of their job satisfaction (Al-Ajmi, 2001).

Gender is the next factor analyzed by many authors. The results regarding the influence of gender on job satisfaction are ambiguous. Peccei and Lee (2005) found no significant impact of gender diversity on job satisfaction of employees. Some researchers indicated that women are more satisfied than men (Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2007). For women, however, working conditions are of great importance, as they allow, for example, to combine their work with family needs (Loscocco, 1990).

There is also a strong link between tenure and job satisfaction. Employees with more years of work experience are happier than those with fewer years of work experience (Okpara, 2004). Loscocco (1990) also indicated in his research that married employees are more satisfied with their jobs than single employees. More and more researchers also focus on the relations between other internal factors and job satisfaction, which include emotional intelligence (Jorfi, Bin Yacco, and Shah, 2012) and personality traits (Steel, Schmidt, Bosco, and Uggerslev, 2019).

Despite the numerous factors that may determine job satisfaction, researchers agree that it positively influences many important phenomena in the work environment. It has a positive effect on organizational commitment (Amos, Acquah, Antwi, and Adzifome, 2015; Ngadiman and Ratmawati, 2013), commitment to the company's goals (Latif et al., 2013) and organizational citizenship behavior (Rahman, Shahrazad, Sulaiman, Nasir, and Omar, 2014). Importantly, job satisfaction is negatively correlated with the intention to leave the company (Wang and Zhang, 2010) and absenteeism (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction had also a positive effect on life satisfaction (Bachtiar, Sudibjo, and Bernarto, 2018).

The above-mentioned consequences of having satisfied employees show the importance of this phenomenon. It is therefore worthwhile to constantly conduct

research on this subject, especially when the work environment is undergoing such large and sudden changes as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.3. Empirical research methodics

The goal of the empirical research was to assess the general level of satisfaction of primary school teachers in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter was designed to examine this level among male and female teachers of secondary schools.

The empirical research was conducted from January 2021 to March 2021. A structured questionnaire was used to conduct a quantitative investigation. The participants were informed that taking part in the study was completely voluntary, and there was no monetary compensation for taking part in this study. The respondents were kept anonymous. The majority of the surveys were conducted online, with respondents receiving an email with a link to the survey website. The respondents provided their answers directly online.

To measure job satisfaction, in line with Judge, Bono and Locke (Judge et al., 2000), a shortened five-item version of the Brayfield and Rothe (1951) scale was used, an example being “I find real enjoyment at work”. The responses were on a 7-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7), with a coefficient alpha of .82. The sample was composed of 303 employees of six secondary schools in Poland. The structure of the research sample is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. The structure of a research sample

Characteristics		Number	%
Gender	women	227	74.9
	men	76	25.1
Age	under 30	23	7.6
	31-40	85	28.1
	41-50	111	36.6
	51-60	84	27.7
Teaching experience (years)	under 5	19	6.3
	5-15	78	25.7
	15-25	102	33.7
	25-35	61	20.1
	over 35	43	14.2

Source: own research.

This study used SPSS for data analysis purposes. For descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation (SD) was used, and the Mann–Whitney *U* tests were applied to compare the groups (Field, 2013).

7.4. Empirical research findings

The data in Table 7.2 reveals that in general, the teachers' level of job satisfaction was high ($M = 5.02$; $SD = 1.07$). The teachers rated each of the aspects that were asked about relatively highly. The lowest mean was obtained by the answer concerning the statement: "Each day at work seems like it will never end" – 4.66(R), while the highest," I consider my job to be rather unpleasant" – 5.42(R). However, the median of all the analyzed responses was above 5, which can be considered a high result.

Table 7.2. Descriptive statistics for the overall job satisfaction and its items

Components	Mean	Median	SD
OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION	5.02	5.2	1.07
I find real enjoyment at work	5.03	5.0	1.37
I feel fairly satisfied with my present job	5.13	5.0	1.29
Most days I am enthusiastic about my work	4.88	5.0	1.42
Each day at work seem like it will never end (R)	4.66	5.0	1.48
I consider my job to be rather unpleasant (R)	5.42	6.0	1.41

Source: own research.

When analyzing the respondents' answers in terms of gender, it can be observed that both male and female teachers assessed their level of satisfaction at a similarly high level. The data is presented in Figure 7.1.

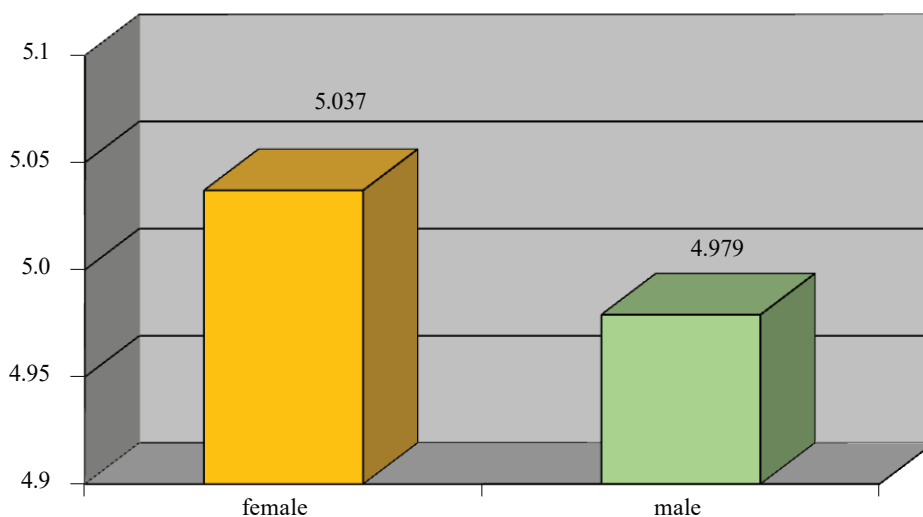


Figure 7.1. Mean score of job satisfaction for male and female teachers

Source: own research.

The data are very close, there were no significant differences between the two groups of respondents as was also confirmed by Mann-Whitney U tests. Table 7.3 presents the results.

Table 7.3. Mann-Whitney test of overall job satisfaction

Overall job satisfaction			
Comparing group	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp sig. (2-tailed)
Group 1 – female	8511.000	-0.174	0.862
Group 2 – male			

Source: own research.

As shown in Table 7.3, Mann-Whitney $U = 8511.000$, $z = -0.174$, and $p = 0.862 > 0.05$. Thus, there was no significant difference in the overall job satisfaction among male and female teachers during COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the chapter presents the average level of satisfaction of the respondents broken down by age (Figure 7.2) and teaching experience (Figure 7.3).

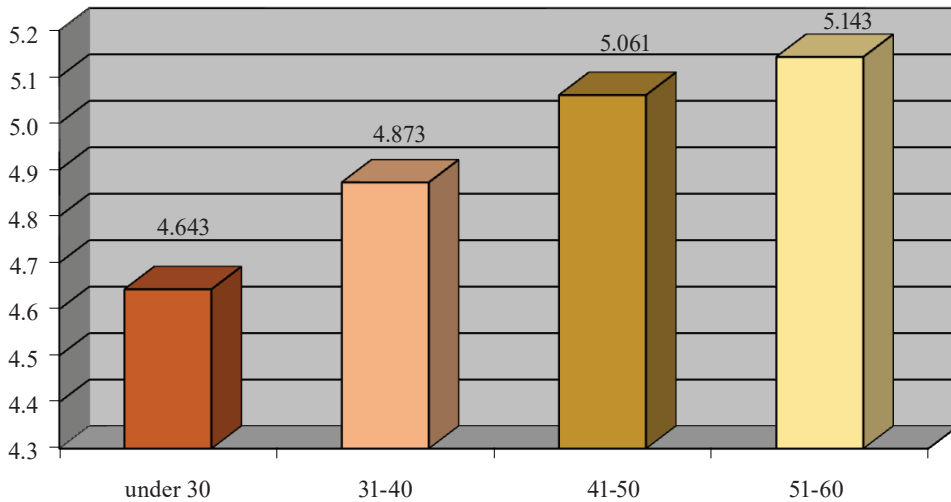


Figure 7.2. Mean score of job satisfaction in terms of the age of the respondents

Source: own research.

The results show that the level of job satisfaction was higher for older workers and lowest for the youngest. These results would not be surprising if not for the fact that the respondents were surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Older workers might appear to be less satisfied, if only because of the sudden need to use advanced technology to conduct online classes, which is always easier for the younger generation. However, the results did not confirm this relation.

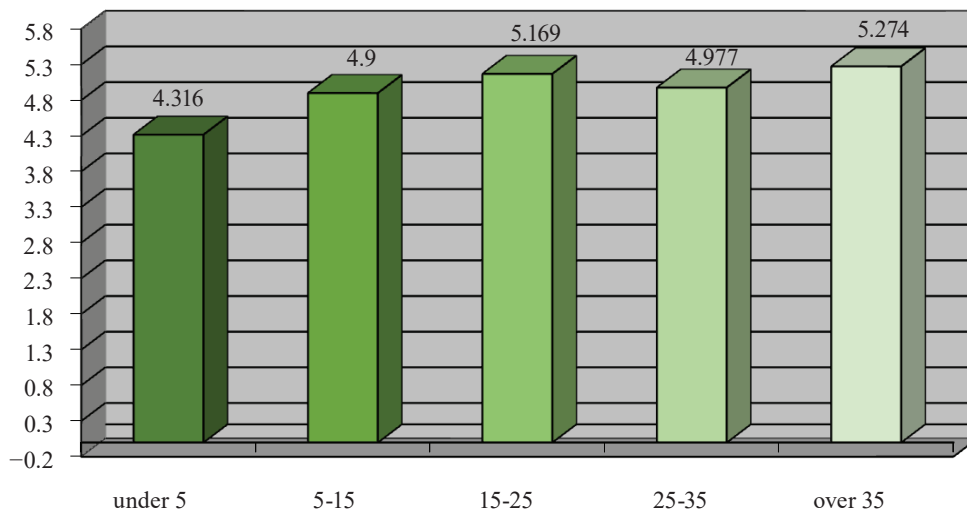


Figure 7.3. Mean score of job satisfaction in terms of teaching experience of the respondents

Source: own research.

The results presented in Figure 7.3 also confirmed that people with longer teaching experience also achieved higher levels of satisfaction during the pandemic. Although the differences here were not as significant as in the case of the age of the respondents, the lowest average was obtained by teachers working in school for less than five years.

7.5. Final conclusions and research summary

When addressing the final conclusions, it should first be noted that the goal of the empirical research has been achieved, namely the goal was to assess the general level of satisfaction of primary and secondary school teachers in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, contrary to expectations, the level of satisfaction of the surveyed primary school teachers was quite high considering such a large change in working conditions. Total job satisfaction was rated 5.02 on average. All of the five items received a rating above 4.6 on a scale from 1 to 7. This result can be considered relatively high, especially since the median of responses in each case was at least 5. When analyzing the results in terms of the respondents' demographic data, it should be emphasized that the level of satisfaction increased along with the age of teachers. Those over 50 were the most satisfied, and those under 30 the least satisfied. The situation was similar in the case of teaching experience. Teachers with the longer experience were the most satisfied. It is also worth mentioning the results in terms of gender; no significant difference in the overall job satisfaction

among male and female teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic was found. This was confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U test.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the results on this topic are not clear-cut. Most of the research conducted indicated a relatively low level of teacher satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research among Indian private school teachers showed that teachers were dissatisfied with their job during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chanana, 2021). In addition, Sheikh (2020) study revealed that younger teachers had a high chance of becoming depressed due to the need to combine family and work responsibilities due to online work. Additionally, the satisfaction level of the teachers was also reported to be lower in online teaching in (Suganya and Sankarshwari, 2020).

However, there are studies that show a fairly high level of teacher satisfaction during online education. Research conducted with over 2800 kindergarten, primary, and secondary school teachers in China showed that their job satisfaction during the pandemic was satisfactory (Fute, Oubibi, Sun, Zhou, and Xiao, 2022). Similar levels of satisfaction were shown, for example, in the study by Succar et al. (Succar, Beaver, and Lee, 2022).

Such a large discrepancy in research can only emphasize how important, and still pending this topic is. A necessary direction of the author's research must be predictors of job satisfaction. It is worth considering the reasons for this level of satisfaction of the surveyed primary school teachers.

Finally, in the context of the presented research findings, one can say that the goal of this chapter has been attained. The author juxtaposed the results of the study on the job satisfaction level of teachers in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic with the results of research conducted in this area in other countries.

Summarizing, it should be said that the COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis and then quickly expanded to the economic, social life, and education sector of the global world (Thu, Ngoc, Hai, and Tuan, 2020). All enterprises and public organizations should be aware that only satisfied and committed employees are the key to success in these difficult times.

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