

## Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction of Teachers in Private Kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China.

Lifang Hou, Sureemas Sukkasi and Phanthida Laophuangsak\*

Master of Education Program in Educational Administration  
Faculty of Business Administration, Southeast Asia University  
E-mail: PhunthidaL@sau.ac.th

วันที่รับบทความ : 10 มีนาคม 2568, วันที่แก้ไขบทความ ครั้งที่ 1 : 13 เมษายน 2568

วันที่ตอบรับการตีพิมพ์ : 21 พฤษภาคม 2568

### Abstract

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire administered to 200 teachers in private kindergartens, selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and multiple regression analysis. For the qualitative component, in-depth interviews were conducted with six teachers and kindergarten administrators. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The results showed that the majority of respondents were women, aged between 31 and 40 years, held a bachelor's degree, and had an average monthly income of 3,000–4,000 USD. Regarding the factors affecting Teachers' job satisfaction, teacher commitment had the highest mean score, followed by Transformational leadership, School climate, and Self-efficacy, respectively. Multiple regression analysis revealed that school climate and Teacher commitment significantly predicted Teachers' job satisfaction at the .05 level, while Transformational leadership and Self-efficacy did not have a significant effect. The model accounted for 75.2% of the variance in job satisfaction. The qualitative findings provided guidelines for enhancing Teachers' job satisfaction, which include: (1) developing transformational leadership among administrators by improving effective

communication; (2) improving the school environment by fostering a positive work atmosphere, strengthening teacher-administrator relationships, and cultivating a supportive organizational culture; (3) encouraging teacher participation in decision-making; and (4) enhancing teacher commitment through professional development programs, clear incentive systems, and opportunities for peer learning.

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Transformational leadership, Self-efficacy, School climate, Teacher commitment

## Introduction

Teachers are key to achieving quality and balanced education. Teacher performance affects teachers' job satisfaction, which refers to the positive state and satisfaction that teachers express in their work (Judge et al., 2012). Kindergarten teachers play an important role in making significant contributions to teaching and learning and influencing the development of quality early childhood education. However, kindergarten teachers are faced with the dual task of caring for and nurturing children aged 3 to 6, which means that teachers have to spend more time and energy. In China, most kindergarten teachers often face the fact that they have low incomes and high work stress (Gong et al., 2020). Kindergarten teachers' job satisfaction not only affects the quality of teaching and learning (Yang et al., 2022), but may also affect the overall cohesion of the kindergarten (Toropova et al., 2021). Kindergarten teachers who are satisfied with their jobs can have a greater impact on young children (Shoshani & Eldor, 2016).

From the literature review, transformational leadership is a dynamic approach that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve higher performance, fostering constructive behaviors, and providing emotional and intellectual support to followers. This results in increased intrinsic motivation and commitment to achieving common goals (Suryadi et al., 2024; Mudd-Fegett & Mudd, 2024). Self-control, or an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete a task and achieve specific goals, can significantly influence behavior and motivation in different contexts (Gavora et al., 2024.; Vaculikova, 2024). School climate is defined as the quality and characteristics of school life, which encompasses social, emotional, and

academic interactions (Santhosh & Flower, 2023) and includes dimensions such as supportive teacher-student relationships, student engagement, and overall school safety. In addition, teacher commitment encompasses teachers' dedication to their career, students, and educational goals. This commitment is characterized by intrinsic motivation, ethical behavior, and a proactive approach to professional development and their responsibility (Rehman et al., 2023) are essential for promoting an effective learning environment and achieving educational objectives (Zuhri et al., 2023).

Therefore, it is very important to study the job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers, while most previous studies have focused on the job satisfaction of primary and secondary school teachers (Holsblat, 2014; Uzun & Özdem, 2017; Edinger & Edinger, 2018). Although the job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers has received little attention, understanding the factors affecting the job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou is an important issue, which involves many aspects such as leadership style, organizational climate, social support, work engagement, experience, and cultural context. Addressing these factors holistically can lead to increased job satisfaction, which is important for teacher retention and the over quality of early childhood education in the region. Therefore, this research is interested in studying the factors affecting the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China, to suggest ways to enhance the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens.

### **Research objectives**

1. To study factors affecting job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China
2. To study the guidelines for promoting job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China.

### **Hypothesis of Research**

Hypothesis 1 Transformational leadership affects the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China.

Hypothesis 2 Self-efficacy affects the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China.

Hypothesis 3 School climate affects the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China.

Hypothesis 4 Teacher commitment affects the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China.

## **Literature Review**

Job satisfaction is a person's satisfaction and positive emotional response to his job (Judge et al., 2012). This includes satisfaction with work duties, colleagues, management, organizational policies and work-life balance. The satisfaction of the job shows the approach of the employees-by affecting the positive and negative-to their work, affecting inspiration, performance and welfare.

Transformational leadership motivates employees to prioritize organizational goals on personal interests through visionary thinking, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, personal thoughts and moral leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This style enhances inspiration, morale and performance by promoting organizational identity, encouraging ownership and recognizing individual powers. It operates innovation, change and long-term success (Dutta & Sahni, 2015), emphasizes empowerment, cooperation and shared vision (Vinis & Thomas, 2024).

Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in their capability to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. It reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. The concept was introduced by psychologist Albert Bandura in his seminal work on social cognitive theory. (Bandura, 1997).

School climate is the quality of school life, encompassing norms, values, relationships, teaching practices, and organizational structures. It influences student behavior, academic performance, and well-being. A positive climate fosters engagement, learning, and a supportive environment, enhancing academic achievement and student progress. (Cohen et al., 2009).

Teacher commitment is the psychological and emotional dedication teachers have

towards their profession, colleagues, students, and educational goals. It drives them to invest time and energy in improving teaching practices, fostering student learning, and engaging in professional development. This commitment is crucial for enhancing teaching quality, student performance, and overall school success.) Ghulam et al., (2023

### Research Framework

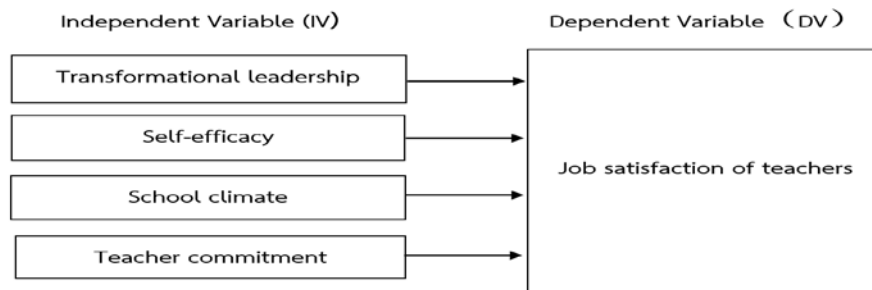


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

### Research Methodology

#### Population and Sample and Key informants

In this research, the population consisted of 610 teachers from three private kindergartens in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province: 200 teachers from Best Bilingual Kindergarten, 180 teachers from Headstart Kindergarten, and 230 teachers from Brightstar Kindergarten. The sample for this research included teachers from private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China. Based on an effect size of .10, a statistical power of .95, four predictors, and a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of .05 (Soper, 2024), the minimum required sample size was 191 teachers. Therefore, this study used a sample of 200 teachers. Stratified sampling and simple random sampling were employed for data collection.

The key informants were six teachers from Best Bilingual Kindergarten, Headstart Kindergarten, and Brightstar Kindergarten. They were teachers and administrators with at least five years of kindergarten experience and a willingness to share their insights on the job satisfaction of private kindergarten teachers.

#### Research Tools

The survey instrument used in this study was a questionnaire, which was developed based on a review and analysis of relevant literature. The questionnaire was divided into four

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parts. The first part collected basic demographic information about teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, including gender, age, education level, type of employment, and average monthly income. The second part measured factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China. This section included 18 items covering transformational leadership, self-efficacy, school climate, and teacher commitment. The third part consisted of 10 items measuring the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou. The fourth part included an open-ended question asking for suggestions and also incorporated a semi-structured interview with key informants.

The reliability of the questionnaire, assessed using Cronbach's alpha for the four variables, exceeded 0.70. For content validity, three experts were consulted to evaluate the quality of the questionnaire. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) for all items ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, which is above the acceptable threshold of 0.50, indicating that the questionnaire was suitable for data collection.

### **Data Analysis**

The quantitative research method was used in this study. Once the data collection was completed, the data was analyzed using Jamovi Program to help draw conclusions from the study, including descriptive analysis the arithmetic mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD), correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. Analysis of data from in-depth interviews to study the guidelines for promoting job satisfaction of private kindergarten teachers in Zhengzhou, China using content analysis

### **Results Analysis**

#### **1. Analysis of Personal Factors of Respondents**

Most of the teachers from private kindergartens in Zhengzhou City who responded to the survey were female (93.50%). The majority were between 31 and 40 years old (42.5%), held a Bachelor's degree (53.00%), and had an average monthly income of 3,000–4,000 dollars (27.50%).

#### **2. Analysis of the Level of Factors Affecting Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Private**

**Kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China****Table 1** Mean, standard deviation, skewness and dominance of affecting teachers' job satisfaction in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China. Overall.

(n=200)

<b>Factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Transformational leadership	200	4.49	0.73	-1.45	2.08
Self-efficacy	200	4.40	0.69	-0.81	-0.43
School climate	200	4.48	0.73	-1.30	1.17
Teacher commitment	200	4.56	0.61	-1.20	0.28

From Table 1, it was found that transformational leadership had a significant influence on teachers' job satisfaction in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China. The analysis of mean values provided insight into the components of transformational leadership. The item "Leaders with strong communication skills" had the highest mean score of 4.50 (SD = 0.74), followed by "Leaders with clear intentions and goals" and "Leaders who provide timely coaching", with mean scores of 4.49 (SD = 0.76) and 4.49 (SD = 0.77), respectively. The item "Leaders who emphasize teamwork" had the lowest mean score of 4.46 (SD = 0.76). The distribution of the responses showed skewness values ranging from -1.45 to -1.36 and kurtosis values ranging from 1.61 to 1.87, indicating a negatively skewed distribution with moderate peakedness.

### **3. Analysis level of job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China.**

**Table 2** Mean, standard deviation, skewness and dominance of affecting teachers' job satisfaction in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China. Job satisfaction

(n=200)

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. You are satisfied with the working environment of the school.	4.47	0.80	-1.61	2.78
2. You feel that working here contributes to the development of your abilities.	4.41	0.82	-1.44	2.09
3. You are offered professional development opportunities at the school.	4.38	0.85	-1.39	1.79
4. You are satisfied with the management of the school.	4.36	0.87	-1.40	1.94
5. You like the atmosphere of the school.	4.43	0.80	-1.48	2.40
6. You feel that the school values the opinions of teachers.	4.34	0.89	-1.39	1.59
7. You are satisfied with the communication between the teachers and the management.	4.37	0.88	-1.51	2.25
8. The school provides adequate teaching equipment and resources.	4.44	0.81	-1.59	2.74
9. You feel confident about working at this school	4.42	0.80	-1.48	2.46
10. You are guided and supported by your colleagues in your work.	4.50	0.72	-1.55	2.89

Table 2 presents the analysis of job satisfaction among teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China. The top three items with the highest average scores were as follows:

“You are guided and supported by your colleagues in your work” had the highest mean score of 4.50 (SD = 0.72), followed by “You are satisfied with the working environment of the school” with a mean score of 4.47 (SD = 0.80), and “The school provides adequate teaching



equipment and resources” with a mean score of 4.44 (SD = 0.81). The item with the lowest average score was: “You are satisfied with the management of the school”, which had a mean score of 4.36 (SD = 0.87).

#### 4. Analysis of factors affecting knowledge sharing among university professors in Nanning City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China

**Table 3** Analysis of factors affecting the job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China

		(n = 200)				
		Transformational leadership	Self-efficacy	School climate	Teacher commitment	Job satisfaction
Self-efficacy	Pearson's r	.632***	—			
	df	198	—			
	p-value	<.001	—			
School climate	Pearson's r	.793***	.656***	—		
	df	198	198	—		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	—		
Teacher commitment	Pearson's r	.773***	.819***	.766***	—	
	df	198	198	198	—	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	—	
Job satisfaction	Pearson's r	.728***	.665***	.846***	.769***	—
	df	198	198	198	198	—
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	—

Note. Ha is positive correlation

Note. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001, one-tailed

From Table 3, it is found that there is a significant positive relationship between Transformational leadership, Self-efficacy, School climate, Teacher commitment, and Teachers' job satisfaction. The Pearson correlation coefficients for these relationships are .728, .665, .846, and .769, respectively.

**Table 4** Analysis of Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction of Private Kindergarten Teachers in Zhengzhou, China

(n=200)

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate	VIF	Tolerance
Intercept	-0.21	0.21	-1.02	.31			
Transformational leadership (TL)	0.04	0.07	0.52	.61	0.03	3.29	0.30
self-efficacy (SE)	0.06	0.07	0.90	.37	0.06	3.06	0.33
school climate (SC)	0.63	0.07	9.41	<.001	0.60	3.22	0.31
teacher commitment (TC)	0.30	0.10	3.00	.00	0.24	4.84	0.21
R = .867      R <sup>2</sup> = .752      Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .747      F=148							
p = .000      *p < $\alpha$ = .05      ** p < $\alpha$ = .01      ***p < $\alpha$ = .001							

From Table 4, the data presented in the table show the following conclusions:

The fit of this linear regression model has an R-squared value of .752, indicating that the four predictor variables, Transformational leadership (TL), Self-efficacy (SE), School climate (SC), and Teacher commitment (TC) account for 75.2% of the variance in teaching quality. Therefore, the results of this data analysis effectively reflect the influence of these predictor variables on the criterion variable, which is teaching quality.

The VIF values for the four predictor variables in this multiple regression analysis range from 3.06 to 4.84, which are all less than 5. The tolerance values range from 0.21 to 0.33, all of which are greater than 0.20. These results indicate that there is no multi-collinearity among the independent variables, confirming that the analysis results are both accurate and reliable.

The data reveal the significance of the regression equation, with an F value of 148 and p-values for each predictor less than .001. This indicates that the model is statistically significant, demonstrating that all four predictor variables have a significant impact on the criterion variable, which is teaching quality.

Among the four predictor variables, Transformational leadership (TL), Self-efficacy (SE), School climate (SC), and Teacher commitment (TC), the analysis found a statistically significant multiple relationship with teachers' job satisfaction at the .001 level. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) was .867, indicating that the model could explain 75.2% of the variance in teachers' job satisfaction.

An examination of the regression coefficients showed that School climate (SC) and Teacher commitment (TC) significantly predicted teachers' Job satisfaction at the  $p < .001$  level. The regression coefficients for School climate (SC) were .63 in raw score ( $b_3$ ) form and .60 in standardized score ( $\beta_3$ ) form. Likewise, the coefficients for Teacher commitment (TC) were 0.30 ( $b_4$ ) and 0.24 ( $\beta_4$ ). In contrast, Transformational leadership (TL) and Self-efficacy (SE) did not significantly predict teachers' job satisfaction.

Regression equation in unstandardized coefficient

$$TS = -04.0 + 21.0TL + 06.0SE + 63.0SC^{***} + 30.0TC^{***} \quad 1$$

Regression equation in standardized coefficient

$$TS = .03.0TL + .06.0SE + .60.0SE^{***} + .24.0TC^{***} \quad 2$$

It can be explained that Transformational leadership (H1) and self-efficacy (H2) have statistically insignificant effects on teachers' job satisfaction in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou City at the .05 level of significance, thus not supporting the hypothesis (not supported). Meanwhile, school environment (H3) and teachers' commitment (H4) have statistically significant effects on teachers' job satisfaction in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou City at the .001 level of significance, thus supporting the hypothesis (supported). This indicates that school environment and teachers' commitment are important factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou City.

## Discussion

### Hypothesis 1 Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The study found no significant association between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among private kindergarten teachers in Zhengzhou, China, which is inconsistent with

previous research suggesting a positive relationship. Paganin et al. (2025) suggest that there is a positive relationship. The inconsistency in the results may be due to the cultural context. In the Chinese education system, leadership tends to be more hierarchical and more focused on practical management. This cultural difference may limit the expected effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction. Thus, the research suggests that transformational leadership may not be as effective in individualistic cultures, which place more emphasis on individual growth and motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

### **Hypothesis 2 Self-management Ability and Job Satisfaction**

The study found that self-management competence did not significantly predict job satisfaction. This is inconsistent with previous research that Zakariya (2020) and Ortan et al. (2021) found that teachers' self-efficacy had a significant direct effect on job satisfaction. In addition, Cayupe et al. (2023) stated that teachers with high self-efficacy were more likely to be satisfied with their roles. The inconsistency in the results may be due to the specific work context of private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, where teachers face high workloads, rigid management structures, and limited decision-making power, which can hinder the development of self-efficacy. In addition, Chinese cultural differences may also contribute to this difference, as group cohesion and humility are often prioritized over confidence.

### **Hypothesis 3 School Climate and Job Satisfaction**

The study found that the relationship between school climate and job satisfaction, which was confirmed by past studies, had a positive effect on teachers' job satisfaction. For example, Abdul et al. (2024) study found a positive relationship between school climate and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Afghanistan; Wojciech's (2022) study showed that school climate significantly predicted job satisfaction of teachers in regular and special schools in Poland; and Hanaysha et al. (2023) revealed that school climate influenced job satisfaction both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy and stress. The results of this study indicate that a positive environment in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou City is likely to increase teachers' job satisfaction by promoting supportive relationships, reducing job-related stress, and promoting self-efficacy.

#### **Hypothesis 4 Teacher Commitment and Job Satisfaction**

The study found that the relationship between teacher commitment and job satisfaction is supported by past studies, such as Sothinathan et al. (2024) suggested that middle leaders play a key role in promoting teacher commitment, which positively affects job satisfaction. Shakya et al. (2023) found that job satisfaction was significantly related to affective commitment. Furthermore, Antonio et al. (2022) proposed that both external and internal factors, such as organizational support and personal life fulfillment, influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It can be seen that teacher commitment is an important factor affecting job satisfaction, as it helps increase teachers' emotional commitment and overall role fulfillment

#### **5. The guidelines for promoting job satisfaction of teachers in private kindergartens in Zhengzhou, China**

For the content analysis from key informants, the following approaches to promoting teacher satisfaction were proposed:

1) The transformational leadership to increase job satisfaction can be achieved by determining clear goals and vision, motivating teachers, promoting open communication, replying to the trust immediately, providing continuous learning opportunities, and promoting teamwork to reduce stress and increase the engagement.

2) To improve job satisfaction, the creation of self-efficiency can be achieved by increasing class management and problem-solving skills, promotes a positive and welcoming work environment, provides teachers opportunities to see the impact of their work, and accept their contribution to enhance confidence and self-esteem.

3) Creating a positive school environment to promote job satisfaction by improving school environment, providing high quality educational resources, providing safe classes and environment, equally allocation of work and providing proper breaks for teachers, promoting positive relations between teachers, colleagues and students, and involving a variety of teachers and involving teachers.

4) To increase job satisfaction, teacher commitment can be obtained to identify and appreciate the efforts and development of teachers, to determine clear goals and to promote effective communication between administrators, teachers and parents, provide ongoing

professional development and guidance and include teachers, to strengthen their role in the success of the student.

### Recommendations for further research

1. Expand the study sample to include other regions or rural areas to compare and explore the factors affecting job satisfaction in different types of schools.
2. Investigate the impact of social and cultural factors by conducting studies in different countries or regions, taking into account cultural differences, family values, social norms, and educational policies.
3. Use action research to test and refine strategies for improving teacher job satisfaction in real-world contexts.

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