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## Factors Relating Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Private Universities: A Case Study of Guangzhou X Vocational College, China

Chongchang Zhao<sup>1\*</sup> and Somjai Nupung<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graduate student, Department of International Management, Faculty of School of Accountancy and Finance, Walailak University.

<sup>2</sup> Academic, Department of Management, Faculty of School of Accountancy and Finance, Walailak University.

\*Corresponding author, E-mail: 13822389780@139.com

### Abstract

This article examines the determinants of Guangzhou X Vocational College teachers' job satisfaction. Understanding the determinants of teacher satisfaction is essential for improving their work experience and institutional support. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through a questionnaire incorporating Hagedorn's Job Satisfaction Theory and Social Exchange Theory (SET) with 304 teachers. The analysis conducted using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and ANOVA, revealed that salary, career growth, and management support positively impact job satisfaction, whereas work stress negatively impacts job satisfaction. Additionally, demographic factors such as experience, education, and academic rank strongly influence satisfaction levels. The research suggests the need to enhance management support, refine salary structures, and alleviate work stress to improve teacher retention and institutional quality. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and administrators in supporting teacher satisfaction and institutional development.

**Keywords:** Teachers' Job Satisfaction, Hagedorn's Theory, Social Exchange Theory

### Introduction

Teacher job satisfaction is a vital aspect of career development, students' academic success, and overall educational quality (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2020). Teachers who are more satisfied in their job have been shown to have heightened motivation, enhanced teaching quality, and result in improved student performance (Wartenberg et al., 2023). Because it is so essential, its determinants must be understood to achieve greater teacher retention and institutional performance.

Conceptual frameworks such as Hagedorn's Theory of Job Satisfaction and Social Exchange Theory (SET) explain these. Hagedorn's theory focuses on remuneration, career development, and organizational support as the key drivers of job satisfaction (Kuo et al.,



2022). SET, in contrast, explains the influence of perceived justice and reciprocity in work relationships on levels of satisfaction (Huo et al., 2022). Current studies emphasize the impact of post-pandemic concerns on teacher job satisfaction, retention, and institutional stability (Zhang, 2020).

Guangzhou X Vocational College serves as the research site for this analysis because it operates as a private institution with 1,267 instructors and 30,000 students (Guangzhou X Vocational College, 2024). The study area of teacher satisfaction specifically focused on vocational colleges within Guangzhou remains poorly documented in academic literature. While job satisfaction has been widely studied, research focused on vocational colleges remains limited, particularly in Guangzhou, and existing studies often overlook the unique work environment and challenges of vocational institutions. The research combines Hagedorn's theory together with SET to produce results that will guide educational administrators and policy development in enhancing teacher contentment and institutional durability.

## Objectives

As the rapid growth of education, the job satisfaction of teachers has been increasingly emphasized. This research attempts to explore and study the situation of jobs satisfaction and influencing factors of the teachers in Guangzhou X Vocational College. Specific objectives are:

1. To explore the job satisfaction among teachers in Guangzhou X Vocational College.
2. To examine the relationship between factors and job satisfaction among teachers in Guangzhou X Vocational College.
- 3.

## Concept Theory Framework

### Hagedorns' theory of teachers' job satisfaction

Hagedorn's theory focuses on the impact of job satisfaction on the work behavior of teachers, noting such variables as salary, career development, working environment, stress, management support, social recognition, and psychological rewards (Kuo et al., 2022). As satisfaction rises, so does involvement and effectiveness, and as satisfaction declines, disengagement and lower performance occur (Li, 2019). This theory has been applied in research to make sense of various environments, and the results have pointed out significant factors that affect teacher satisfaction such as interpersonal relationships, recognition, and self-actualization (Hou & Gumban, 2023). These factors enable institutions to develop interventions that increase job satisfaction to the advantage of both teachers and learning quality.



### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains teachers' job satisfaction as a balance between rewards and inputs (Homans, 1958). These are salary, career development, working environment, and pressure (Emerson, 1976). Satisfaction is greater when rewards match expectations but less when they fall short of expectations (Zhu et al., 2020). New SET developments highlight cultural and contextual considerations, which are significant to understanding private university teachers in Guangzhou (Chen et al., 2020). By analyzing reward-effort balance and social rewards, SET provides a comprehensive framework for improving teachers' job satisfaction and developing targeted improvement strategies (Li & Bagger, 2023).

### **Period Research**

Teachers' satisfaction as a research topic within educational psychology reflects teachers' emotional response to the work environment and to the role of teachers. Teachers' job satisfaction includes several different variables including satisfaction with colleagues, students, and the entire school climate. Effective teacher retention and school effectiveness will not be possible without understanding and measuring TJS. Diverse ways have been proposed for early studies to define teachers' satisfaction. Salary, career development, work environment, stress, management support and rewards are determinants of teacher job satisfaction (Toropova et al. 2020). The combination of fair compensation, career development and a supportive work environment makes employees satisfied (Wang et al., 2019). Management support and work stress negatively correlate with well-being (Liu & Zhang, 2022; Lee et al, 2021) and positively correlate with motivation. Social and psychological rewards do play a key role (Zhang, & Chen, 2021). This research studies these factors in private universities.

### **Concept and Measurement of Teachers' Satisfaction**

Teachers' Job Satisfaction is a teacher's response to work, and it relates to the teachers' retention and performance. Teachers' job satisfaction is a positive emotional state as defined by Locke (1969) and Vroom (1982), it is influenced by salary, career growth and management support (Klassen et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). In a complete sense, it is multidimensional i.e., work conditions, relationships, and fulfillment. The study found that interpersonal relationships and school management have a remarkably high impact on satisfaction (Lopes and Oliveira, 2020; Zhu, 2023). A questionnaire is used to assess Teachers' Job Satisfaction in private universities.

### **Relationship between Factors and Teachers' Job Satisfaction**

Research consistently finds a high correlation between salary packages and teacher job satisfaction. Higher salaries not only increase job satisfaction but also reduce teacher turnover (Smith, 2023). Zhang (2023) found a high positive correlation between salary and



teachers' overall satisfaction, adding that fair and transparent remuneration systems are key drivers of satisfaction. Performance bonuses and welfare benefits also enhance job satisfaction (Lee, 2021; Li, 2022).

H1: Salary and benefits positively influence teachers' job satisfaction.

Professional growth activities have high correlations with rising job satisfaction (Smith, 2023). Teachers who engage in continuous training have better job commitment and are more a part of their institutions (Lee & Kim, 2021). Moreover, having tools for professional development and promotion opportunities lifts teachers' overall satisfaction (Johnson, 2022).

H2: Career development opportunities positively influence teachers' job satisfaction.

An environment of support in the workplace is important for job satisfaction among teachers. Support from colleagues, administration, and having sufficient teaching resources to work with play a key role in increasing satisfaction levels (Johnson, 2022; Smith, 2023). Teachers who feel supported by the school administration are also more job-satisfied (Williams, 2021).

H3: Work environment positively influences teachers' job satisfaction.

Severe work stress negatively affects job satisfaction. Studies discovered that workload overexertion, clerical pressures, and burnout lead to decreased satisfaction and turnover intentions (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979; Wang et al., 2020). Work stress management has the potential to alleviate its ill effects on teachers' jobs and boost rates of teacher retention (Johnson & Lee, 2022; Wang & Chen, 2021).

H4: Work stress negatively influences teachers' job satisfaction.

Evaluative administrative support, including administrative assistance and organizational justice, also plays a key role in improving job satisfaction for teachers (Wang & Zhou, 2022; Çelik & Kalkan, 2022). Teachers perceiving strong organizational support indicate more satisfaction, besides reduced work-stress (Toropova et al., 2020).

H5: Management support positively influences teachers' job satisfaction.

Social rewards, including peer recognition and community support, are positively correlated with teachers' job satisfaction (Yang et al., 2022). Individualized reward programs enhance work satisfaction and overall work performance (Rokeman, Kob, & Sobry, 2023). Additionally, a proper reward system and positive school culture are also accountable for increased satisfaction (Syahmalini, Alawi, & Ariyadi, 2022).

H6: Social rewards positively influence teachers' job satisfaction.

Psychological rewards, such as intrinsic motivation, emotional fulfillment, and positive student-teacher relationships, play a significant role in teachers' job satisfaction (Wartenberg et al., 2023). Satisfied and valued teachers are more content and more



dedicated to their work. Moreover, good student relationships lead to heightened job satisfaction and professional identity.

H7: Psychological rewards positively influence teachers' job satisfaction.

## Research Framework

Hagedorn's job satisfaction theory for teachers and Social Exchange Theory (SET) are used in this study to determine significant determinants. Hagedorn (2000) has developed her model including extrinsic and intrinsic factors such as salary and benefits, career development, and organizational support. Blau (1964); Emerson (1976) explains how mutual exchanges, such as management support recognition, can increase satisfaction. Numerous studies (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960) have confirmed the fact that supportive climates and recognition increase satisfaction and commitment. Based on this the study proposes relationships and work-related variables and the job satisfaction of teachers (Wang, 2021; Zhou and Li, 2020).

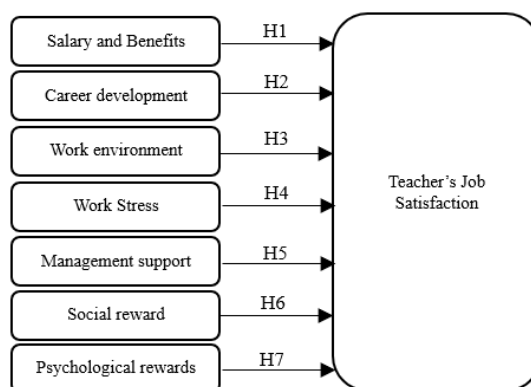


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

## Materials and Methods

The study designed a questionnaire based on Hagedorn's teacher job satisfaction theory and social exchange theory to explore the influencing factors of teacher satisfaction in Guangzhou X Vocational College. The evaluation system comprises three major indicators: personal information, job satisfaction factors, and overall job satisfaction. Salary, career development, work environment, work pressure, management support, and social and psychological rewards are the independent variables. The study focuses on teachers from Guangzhou X Vocational College, including 1,267 full-time teachers from 10 secondary colleges and two teaching departments. A sample size of 304 was determined using Yamane's formula with a 5% sampling error. Data is collected through an online survey from 304 teachers using stratified sampling and SPSS 26.00 for analysis.



A 5-point Likert scale is used to measure responses, whereas statistical means include correlation analysis. Validity testing with Cronbach's Alpha guarantees high internal consistency (overall  $\alpha = 0.959$ ). Expert assessment and content validity testing establish reliability. The findings confirm the strength of the questionnaire for further analysis and hypothesis testing.

## Results

This study analyzed 304 respondents, with a balanced gender distribution: 48.7% male and 51.3% female. The majority are married, suggesting family roles may influence job satisfaction. Most respondents are aged 40-50 with substantial teaching experience, particularly those with 11-15 years. Educationally, 46.7% hold a bachelor's degree, and 45.4% hold a master's degree. The largest group is lecturers, followed by associate professors. Overall, the sample is diverse, experienced, and highly educated, providing valuable insights into the research themes.

The study assessed normality using the Shapiro-Wilk or Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, revealing that all variables (X1 to X7 and Y) failed ( $p < 0.000$ ), indicating non-normal distribution. Consequently, Spearman's rank correlation, a non-parametric method, was used to assess the strength and direction of relationships without assuming normality.

**Table 1:** Correlation analysis test

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	Y
X1: Salary and benefit	1.000							
X2: Career development	0.568**	1.000						
X3: Work environment	0.572**	0.568**	1.000					
X4: Work stress	0.578**	0.526**	0.556**	1.000				
X5: Management support	0.546**	0.499**	0.513**	-0.557**	1.000			
X6: Social reward	0.504**	0.576**	0.567**	-0.519**	0.495**	1.000		
X7: Psychological rewards	0.491**	0.581**	0.502**	-0.551**	0.451**	0.574**	1.000	
Y: Teachers' job satisfaction	0.544**	0.541**	0.453**	-0.551**	0.579**	0.538**	0.535**	1.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This study explores the relationship between independent variables (X1 to X7) and job satisfaction of teachers (Y). The results confirm that all hypotheses are true. Support from management (0.579,  $p < 0.01$ ) is the highest positive indicator, followed by salary and benefits (0.544  $p < 0.01$ ), career development (0.541  $p < 0.01$ ), social rewards (0.538  $p < 0.01$ ), and psychological rewards (0.535  $p < 0.01$ ). The work environment (0.453  $p < 0.01$ ) also exerts a moderate positive influence, while work stress (0.551  $p < 0.01$ ) is negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

Based on these findings, all the hypotheses are supported, which assert that management support, salary and benefits, career development, social and psychological rewards, and work environment positively affect job satisfaction among teachers. On the





other hand, work stress has a negative effect on satisfaction, citing the need for more institutional support and stress management strategies.

## Conclusions and Discussion

This study identified key factors influencing teacher job satisfaction, including salary and benefits, career development opportunities, work environment, work pressure, management support, and social and psychological rewards. Management support, salary and benefits, career development, and work pressure were the most critical variables. Consistent with Hagedorn's Theory and Social Exchange Theory (SET), external conditions and perceived fairness strongly impact satisfaction. Teachers who received fair salaries, clear career paths, and strong management support reported higher satisfaction levels, aligning with findings by Zhang (2023). Conversely, work stress negatively correlated with satisfaction, supporting Johnson and Lee's (2022) observation that excessive stress leads to burnout and reduced commitment. Additionally, social, and psychological rewards, such as recognition and respect, enhance intrinsic motivation and professional fulfillment. The results highlight the need for vocational colleges to prioritize improving organizational support, offering competitive salaries and benefits, providing robust career development opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment to boost teacher satisfaction and institutional quality. These findings deepen the understanding of teachers' professional experiences and offer practical strategies for enhancing educational stability and excellence.

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