

**RESEARCH PAPER****Job Satisfaction among Special Education Teachers Working at Special Education Institutes, Punjab (Pakistan)****<sup>1</sup>Dr. Muhammad Javed Aftab\*, <sup>2</sup>Nadia Rashid and <sup>3</sup>Eman Salman**

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**Corresponding Author** [drmjavedaftab@ue.edu.pk](mailto:drmjavedaftab@ue.edu.pk)**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the level of job satisfaction among special education teachers working at special education institutes in Punjab. Highlighting key factors influencing their satisfaction levels. Special education teachers play a crucial role in the education system, yet their job satisfaction remains underexplored. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing self made questionnaire of job satisfaction consisted 35 questions which were covering following factors; Working environment, Professional development, Facilities and resources, Implementation of policies, Income, Joy, and Student teacher ratio. Results indicate that senior teachers were more satisfied than junior teachers. Not significant differences were found in job satisfaction level on the basis of gender. Significant group variations were noted on the basis of experience and income. These findings underscore the importance of addressing various facets of job satisfaction. Inform policy interventions aimed at enhancing job satisfaction and ultimately improving the quality of education provided to special students.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Special Education Department, Special Education Teachers**Introduction**

It is the most important factor in determining a person's social class and a primary source of fulfillment for their biological, psychological, and social needs. "Job satisfaction is the degree to which people like their jobs. In other words, it refers to a subjective evaluation that the worker makes of her own job, either in its entirety or with respect to its different attributes. It is related to the sociological concept of alienation and the economic concept of the utility derived from work: with respect to them, job satisfaction has a more positive connotation, is defined in a more subjective way, and has a stronger empirical orientation". Therefore, a person's overall mental health and job happiness depend greatly on the suitability of their occupation. Job satisfaction is an important factor in determining the long-term viability of educational organizations, notably in the teaching profession. High job satisfaction among educators leads to positive results that support organizational stability and growth. High job satisfaction leads to increased intrinsic motivation, which improves teachers' commitment, engagement, and performance. No one works in a profession where they are entirely content with their position. A teacher is a man who creates society in addition to instructing students. The teacher is the cornerstone upon which the entire educational system is built. The role of teachers cannot be overlooked in any educational restoration initiative. Education is the primary means of altering a person's (students') lifestyle (Habib, 2015), assimilating positive changes, creating a thinking capacity (Allen Jr., & Hunsaker, 2016), and strengthening one's ability to solve problems (McNeil, 2013).

Over time, special education has changed to encourage the integration of kids receiving special education services into regular education classes. The school for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), which mandated that all children with disabilities have access to a public school, was passed as a result of significant educational change that took place in the 1970s (Essex, 2016). When the school system implemented this statute, more pupils were enrolled in public schools, which raised the demand for special educators. Following that, a number of legislative acts brought about significant reforms, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), which guaranteed students with disabilities a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and encouraged their inclusion in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to meet their unique educational needs (Lindstrom & Drolet, 2017). Special instructors in the field of special education are similarly impacted by issues with job satisfaction. Although these teachers are employed by the educational system, they have far less resources than normal teachers in terms of pay, perks, and position. We might anticipate better things in this particular field if these gaps are bridged. But as of right now, most special educators—despite the fact that this is quite upsetting to discover are dissatisfied with their jobs and the working conditions that require (Maurya & Singh, 2019).

Notable research gaps in the field of special education include the lack of investigation into how student-teacher ratios affect the caliber of support given, how the work environment affects the mental health of special education professionals, how job structure and job satisfaction are related, and how well professional development and resource allocation can improve results for students with special needs. Furthermore, the impact of income levels on the motivation and retention of special education teachers has received less consideration, especially in the particular context of Pakistan. In order to maximize special education procedures and provide a more inclusive learning environment, these gaps must be filled.

### **Literature Review**

Qualitative research shows that "salary" has a significant impact on teacher job satisfaction. The study concludes that addressing both financial and non-financial components is critical for generating contentment and guaranteeing the longevity of the teaching profession. The understanding of the crucial role of income shows that simply boosting cash compensation may not be adequate; comprehensive support for teachers' professional development and career advancement is also required. As a result, the study advises for a comprehensive approach, emphasizing the importance of not only monetary incentives but also non-monetary indicators in increasing job satisfaction and maintaining a rewarding teaching career. Researcher suggests that educational institutions and policymakers should use comprehensive ways to support teacher well-being and professional development. (Demir-Yıldız, 2023).

A research delves into the correlation between teacher autonomy perceptions, job satisfaction, and student outcomes, examining distinctions between general and special education teachers. Utilizing a nationally representative dataset with approximately 22,850 teachers from 4,620 public schools, representing 2.38 million teachers, the study employs multilevel modeling. Findings indicate that variations in classroom autonomy might impact general education teachers more significantly than their special education counterparts. The study suggests that special education teachers may exhibit lower sensitivity to changes in autonomy levels. The implications extend to both research and practice, prompting a nuanced understanding of autonomy's influence on job satisfaction, particularly for special education teachers. These insights can inform strategies to enhance job satisfaction and ultimately contribute to improved student outcomes in both general and special education settings (Olsen & Mason, 2023).

Tsakiridou & Kolovou (2018) investigated job satisfaction among 22,850 teachers in 4,620 public schools, utilizing nine variables corresponding to job satisfaction dimensions. Statistical analyses, including t-tests and variance analysis, were conducted based on demographic factors. Overall job satisfaction was 80.6%, with a mean satisfaction score of 3.84. Gender differences were significant, with women more satisfied. Special education staff reported higher satisfaction than teaching and administrative staff. The number of colleagues affected satisfaction, with smaller teams more satisfied. Pay satisfaction was 74.5%, with gender, age, specialization, years of service, and service status influencing responses. Opportunities for promotion and fringe benefits showed dissatisfaction. Contingent rewards, supervisor, co-workers, nature of work, and communication were generally satisfactory. Operating conditions elicited neutral responses. Specializations, age, and service status influenced varying degrees of satisfaction across dimensions.

Diagne, (2023) conducted a study by utilizing data from the OECD's 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), encompassing over 250,000 teachers across 48 countries, our study aimed to discern factors influencing teacher job satisfaction. The analysis revealed that distributed leadership emerged as the foremost predictor of teacher job satisfaction, emphasizing the significance of shared leadership responsibilities. Positive teacher-student relations were another crucial factor contributing to job satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of a supportive classroom environment. Additionally, teacher salary and collaborative opportunities demonstrated positive and significant associations with job satisfaction. Conversely, factors contributing to teacher dissatisfaction included high workload stress, followed by barriers to professional development and a challenging disciplinary climate. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of teacher job satisfaction, highlighting the need for supportive leadership structures, positive interpersonal dynamics, fair compensation, and manageable workloads to foster a positive and fulfilling teaching experience globally.

Generally speaking, satisfaction is the state of having one's wants met or the pleasure derived from doing so. According to Merriam-Webster's Cambridge Dictionary, joy is the satisfaction, pleasure, or delight that results from having one's desires fulfilled. It might be wise to leave this little but noticeable distinction to knowledgeable semantics. Nevertheless, there is no getting around the fact that happiness and contentment are difficult, if not impossible, to see and quantify. For the purpose of argument, if it is assumed that happiness and contentment are separate constructions that exist outside of theory, how does the existence or absence of one of these traits impact the other? However, finding sources of happiness appears to be different from finding sources of satisfaction for the purposes of this study. The sample that was most satisfied was with their coworkers and colleagues. Student satisfaction was ranked lower than satisfaction from coworkers and parents combined. But it was students who seemed to be most happy. More precisely, when pupils succeeded—no matter how tiny—thanks to the support of their teachers, Special Educators took great pride in it (Iftikhar, Maqbool & Iqbal, 2022).

Pepe, Addimando, and Veronese (2017) further reported that there is a consensus among researchers that student behaviors are the acknowledged source of much of the stress and burnout that has contributed to the current teacher shortage crisis. They also reported that higher achievement among students and improved teacher job satisfaction are correlated. Building on this idea, the study looked at sources of happiness as well as satisfaction because it may enhance motivating variables and results. The study's special educators overwhelmingly stated that their kids are the only reason they enjoy teaching.

The themes that this sample cited most frequently include "watching my students become successful" and "observing positive change and growth in my students." Similar phrases like "building rapport with my students" and "making connections to my students" were also frequently used. Nonetheless, student learning was linked to the majority of

student-related responses. Examples of this include "when students finally grasp a concept and break through" and "when students comprehend a concept they were struggling with." There were also reports of "the moment a skill 'clicks' for a student" and "I love the laughter moments students have." These quotes highlight some of the most potent benefits of education (Singer, 2023).

Job satisfaction and discontent are mostly determined by what an individual expects and receives from their employment. Job satisfaction or discontent is correlated with a few external elements in addition to psychological aspects and internal states. Less happiness among teachers may be caused by a variety of factors, including the working environment, supervisory support, facilities available to employers, permission, and possibilities for personal growth and development (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2016). Research demonstrates that teachers who are happier in their jobs are more committed to their jobs and are less likely to leave school to pursue other careers (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015).

The elements that affect teachers' satisfaction must be identified because they have no bearing on the education that students receive now or in the future, which should inspire teachers to pursue further study. Considering that there is a global teacher shortage, greater focus should be placed on improving teacher happiness at work. Not only is employee performance directly tied to job happiness, but it also positively impacts teacher and student wellbeing, school cohesion, and the teaching profession as a whole. The things that cause teachers to become dissatisfied with their work may not always cause them to give up and look for other employment opportunities. Researchers recommend that schools monitor teachers' job satisfaction more closely. Teachers who are unhappy with their jobs are unable to exert all of their effort to stop their students' never-ending learning loop (Shabir et al., 2014).

## **Material and Methods**

### **Research Design**

A Quantitative approach was used. Descriptive research design was used to evaluate the Job satisfaction level among special education teachers in the province Punjab, Pakistan.

### **Population**

Special education teachers working in Govt. Special Education Centre at Punjab level, were selected as the population of this study. They serves students with disability," visually impaired students, hearing impaired students, physically handicapped and Intellectual disability".

### **Sample Size**

150 teachers working in Govt. Special Education Centres Punjab.

### **Sampling:**

Because of geographical restrictions in Punjab convenient sampling was used by the researcher.

### **Research Instrument**

Self- made questionnaire was used to collect the data from special education Teachers. The questionnaire contained 35 questions, covering 7 factors related to job satisfaction of special education teachers, Factors covering Working environment,

Professional development, Facilities and resources, Implementation of policies, Income, Joy, and Student teacher ratio. Each factor consist 5 questions. Scoring was done by Likert scale.

### Validity and Reliability of Research Tool

Questionnaires got validated by three experts' i.e. PhD field experts and special educationist. Pilot testing was done before final data collection. Value of Cronbach's alpha for questionnaire (finding job satisfaction) was calculated as .815.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Demographic Analysis**

Title	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	70	46.7%
	Female	80	53.3%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age of Respondents	20 to 30 Years	42	28%
	31 to 40 Years	54	36%
	41 to 50 Years	54	36%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
Designation	SSET	72	52%
	JSET	78	48%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
Qualification	Master	105	70%
	M.Phil.	45	30%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
Area	HIC	44	29.3%
	IDD	68	45.3%
	PHC	21	14%
	VIC	17	11.3%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
Place of Posting	Rural	65	43.3%
	Urban	85	56.7%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
Belongs to	Rural	61	40.7%
	Urban	89	59.3%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>
Experience	1 to 5 Years	33	22%
	6 to 10 Years	27	18%
	11 to 15 Years	35	23.3%
	16 to 20 years	55	36.7%
		<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2**  
**Correlation Matrix for Scale and its Sub Scales Used in the Study (N = 198)**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	--	.731**	.532**	.359**	.641**	.764**	.117	.784**
2	--	--	.637*	.539**	.444**	.740**	.290**	.837**
3	--	--	--	.630**	.570**	.411**	.403**	.812**
4	--	--	--	--	.544**	.166*	.475**	.724**
5	--	--	--	--	--	.496**	.282**	.768**
6	--	--	--	--	--	--	.094	.697**

7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.545**
8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Note. 1=working environment, 2=Professional development, 3=Facilities and resources, 4=Implementation of policies, 5=Income, 6=Joy, 7=Student teacher ratio, 8=Job satisfaction \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2 describes inter-correlations among subscales of the scale. Results suggest that all scales are significantly correlated with each other except working environment with student teacher ratio, and joy with student teacher ratio. The substantial association between most subscales of job satisfaction shows that these elements are interrelated and impact one another. A positive working environment, opportunities for professional development, adequate facilities and resources, effective policy implementation, fair pay, joy of work, and student-teacher ratio are all important factors contributing to overall job satisfaction among special education teachers. These are important factors that positively contribute the job satisfaction level of special education teachers. However, it is worth noting that the working environment and joy did not correlate significantly with the student-teacher ratio, implying that these features may be impacted by various causes or have a more complex relationship.

**Table 3**  
**T-test Analysis at the Basis of Designation of teachers**

Area of Posting	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
JSET	78	100.10	17.820	-5.209	148	.000
SSET	72	118.56	25.201			

Table 3 is comparing respondent's job satisfaction level on the basis of designation. The data include the numbers of respondents (N), mean scores, standard deviation (std. deviation), t-statistics, degrees of freedom (df), and the significance level (Sig. 2-tailed). The mean job satisfaction score for respondents JSET (N=78) is 100.10 with a standard deviation of 17.820. Whereas the mean job satisfaction score for respondents SSET (N=72) is 118.56 with a standard deviation of 25.201. The t-statistics is -5.209, and the degree of freedom is 148. The p-value is 0.000, indicating a significance level below 0.01. At the stated level of significance ( $p < 0.01$ ), respondents JSETs and SSETs have significantly different perspectives. This shows that people in different designations of job have considerably diverse job satisfaction levels.

**Table 4**  
**T-test Analysis at the Basis of Gender of teachers**

Area of Posting	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Male	70	111.76	26.267	1.368	148	.181
Female	80	106.51	20.641			

Table 4 is comparing respondent's job satisfaction level on the basis of gender. The data include the numbers of respondents (N), mean scores, standard deviation (std. deviation), t-statistics, degrees of freedom (df), and the significance level (Sig. 2-tailed). The mean job satisfaction score for respondents Males (N=70) is 111.76 with a standard deviation of 26.267. Whereas the mean job satisfaction score for respondents females (N=80) is 106.51 with a standard deviation of 20.641. The t-statistics is 1.368, and the degree of freedom is 148. The p-value is .181, indicating that significance level exceeds 0.05. At the stated level of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ), respondents males and females have non-significant levels of job satisfaction. This shows that males and females have considerably same level of job satisfaction levels.

**Table 5**  
**Comparison of Means at the Base of Income (One-Way ANOVA).**

Description	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	20347.200	2	10173.600	24.143	.000
Within Groups	61944.560	147	421.392		
Total	82291.760	149			

Table 5 presents the results of one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) comparing job satisfaction on the basis of income of respondents. The table includes data on the sum of squares for between and within groups, degrees of freedom (df), mean squares, F-statistics and significance level (sig). The between groups sum of square is 20347.200, within groups sum of squares is 61944.560, and the total sum of squares is 82291.760. With 2 degree of freedom between groups and 147 degrees of freedom within groups, the mean square between groups is 10173.600 and the mean square within groups is 421.392. The f statistics is 24.143, with a p-value of .000, indicating that the significance level is below .01. Consequently, according to the significance level ( $p < 0.01$ ), there is significant difference in the job satisfaction level among the respondents with varying levels of income. This suggests that, in this context, amount of income significantly impact the job satisfaction level.

**Table 6**  
**Comparison of Means at the Base of Experience (One-Way ANOVA).**

Description	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8803.443	3	2934.481	5.830	.001
Within Groups	73488.317	146	503.345		
Total	82291.760	149			

Table 6 presents the results of one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) comparing job satisfaction on the basis of experience of respondents. The table includes data on the sum of squares for between and within groups, degrees of freedom (df), mean squares, F-statistics and significance level (sig). The between groups sum of square is 8803.443, within groups sum of squares is 73488.17, and the total sum of squares is 82291.760. With 3 degree of freedom between groups and 146 degrees of freedom within groups, the mean square between groups is 2934.481 and the mean square within groups is 503.345. The F statistics is 5.830, with a p-value of .001, indicating that the significance level is below .01. Consequently, according to the significance level ( $p < 0.01$ ), there is significant difference in the job satisfaction level among the respondents with varying levels of experience. This suggest that, in this context, years of experience significantly impact the job satisfaction level.

## Findings

- There is significant positive correlation among subscales (working environment, Professional development, Facilities and resources, Implementation of policies, Income, Joy and Student teacher ratio) of the scale job satisfaction. All sub-scales are significantly correlated with each other accept working environment with student teacher ratio, and joy with student teacher ratio.
- Significant group differences were found on study variable job satisfaction in terms of designation (JSET and SSET) of special education teachers.
- Significant group differences were not found on study variable job satisfaction in terms of gender of special education teachers.
- Significant group differences were found on study variable job satisfaction in terms of income of special education teachers.

- Significant group differences were found on study variable job satisfaction in terms of experience of special education teachers.

## Discussion

The study discovered significant disparities in job satisfaction between special education teachers (JSET and SSET). This shows that different designations' duties and responsibilities may have varying effects on job satisfaction. And senior special education teachers are more satisfied than junior special education teachers. This finding is in line with Sharma and Jyoti (2009) who claim that higher designation leads to higher level of job satisfaction. Interestingly, the study found no significant gender disparities in job satisfaction among special education teachers. This suggests that male and female instructors in special education have near about similar levels of job satisfaction. According to Mason (2010) women and men did not differ from one another in their sources of satisfaction in management work. Andrade et al. (2021) there were no differences between men and women's satisfaction level related to their jobs. Job satisfaction among special education teachers differed significantly by income level. This emphasizes the necessity of fair and equal compensation in increasing job satisfaction. Teachers who feel sufficiently paid for their work may have higher levels of job satisfaction than those who feel underpaid. These results are in line with Bakan and Buyukbese (2013) who found that employees having high salaries indicate increased level of job satisfaction than did employees with low salaries. And according to Sharma (2015) there is high association between level of income and level of job satisfaction. Similarly, there were substantial disparities in job satisfaction among special education teachers based on their experience level. This shows that tenure or field experience may have an impact on job satisfaction perceptions. Bedeian et al. (1992) reported that tenure was more consistent and stable predictor of job satisfaction.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, these findings highlight the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction among special education teachers and emphasize the importance of addressing various factors, such as workplace conditions, professional development opportunities, compensation, and career stage, in order to promote overall job satisfaction and well-being in this critical sector. Additional research and focused treatments aimed at addressing these characteristics may result in increased job satisfaction, retention, and, eventually, better outcomes for students with special needs.

## Recommendations

Prioritizing a number of key recommendations is critical for increasing job satisfaction among special educators. For starters,

- Improving the working environment by providing enough tools and cultivating a supportive culture can boost teacher morale.
- Investing in continual professional development geared to the specific requirements of special education teachers ensures that they grow and improve their skills.
- Fair remuneration plans should be implemented, with frequent assessments to alleviate income inequities and acknowledge teachers' efforts.
- Special emphasis should be placed on addressing the unique requirements and challenges associated with various designations, as well as creating inclusivity and support across jobs.
- Furthermore, mentorship programs and fostering work-life balance are critical for long-term retention and happiness among teachers at all phases of their careers.



- Student teacher ratio should maintain for effective teaching learning process and learning outcomes.
- Monitoring and correcting gender discrepancies in job satisfaction, as well as pushing for supportive policies and practices, all help to foster a positive work environment.

By applying these ideas, educational institutions can foster a culture of respect, support, and fulfillment among special education teachers, which will benefit both educators and children.

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