Delving the Relationship between Teacher Empowerment and Job Satisfaction among Iranian EFL Teachers in Tehran Aviation University

Fatemeh Azimi Amoli
Department of English, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran

Maryam Youran
Department of English, Payam-e Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract—The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers’ empowerment and job satisfaction. The surveys used in this study contain School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) measured teacher perceived empowerment, the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) measured teacher job satisfaction, and the demographic survey included age, educational background and gender. SPES measured six different dimensions of empowerment: Decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact, along with an overall total and TJSQ includes nine factors of satisfaction: Supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, and responsibility. The result indicated that significant correlations were found between total teacher empowerment and total teacher job satisfaction. However, there was no correlation between factor of security in job satisfaction scale and the three teacher empowerment scales of professional growth, status, and autonomy. There was also no correlation found between the teacher job satisfaction factor of recognition and the three teacher empowerment dimensions of decision-making, self-efficacy and impact. In the other hand, there are significant differences in the demographic variables of educational background and gender with regards to teacher empowerment and job satisfaction.

Index Terms—teacher empowerment, job satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Teacher Empowerment

Due to previous researches, teacher empowerment is a field that teachers should have enough jurisdictions in the professional development process to have self-efficacy. Short (1992) stated that teacher empowerment is as a professional development process including professional knowledge base, higher teaching efficacy, and promote decision-making to meet the requirement of education. The three key issues accentuated in the study included: (a) empowerment is a learning process which grows the ability of teachers to achieve authority and allow them to make a more efficient learning environment, (b) teachers should obtain a higher self awareness to enhance the learning environment, and (c) empowering motivation is a factor which improve teacher’s sense of power and consequently increase self-efficacy.

Whitaker and Moses (1990) expressed that five factors which enhance empowerment can be included to: (a) make a sense of self-confidence in teachers, (b) liberate teachers, foster their collaboration, and decreases alienation, (c) change bureaucracy, (d) arouse growth and renewal, and (e) improve cooperation.

Blase and Blase (1994) investigated some points about the concept of teacher empowerment concentrating on professional structure, improving the teaching profession, and increase independence. On the other hand, Mahrenholtz (1996) focused on changing old concepts, motivating teachers to become involved, making new ideas and innovations in order to grow their professional knowledge base.

Blanchard and Carlos (1996) accentuated some key pinpoints. First, employees must be responsible and managers need to trust employees. Second, rewards create more motivation and enhance self-efficacy of the organization and encourage an innovation. Third, training and development is vital in the process. Fourth, the more trust, the more motivation can be predicted.

According to Short’s (1992) study teacher empowerment as a professional development process containing professional knowledge base, higher teaching efficacy, self-efficacy, and increasing participation in decision-making to meet the goals of education. The three key points in the study include: (a) empowerment is a learning process increasing the ability of teachers to achieve authority and allowing them to make a more efficient learning environment, (b)
teachers should have a higher self awareness and improve the learning environment, and (c) empowering teachers can enhance their motivation and improve their sense of responsibility in order to increase overall efficacy.

Riley (1995) indicated that teachers are the most important resource in the school restructuring processes. When teachers have empowerment, their authority structure changes and if this can change, then empowerment can be more easily performed as well as school restructuring can be accomplished. Empowered teachers can make greater contributions, and seeing the changes that these contributions make, can further add to and sustain the momentum.

B. Job Satisfaction

According to Zembylas & Papanastasiou (2004), Job satisfaction is an effective feedback to the situation which a person involved at work. Thus it is a distinguished relationship between what one wants from teaching and what one discerns it is suggesting to a teacher.

Thompson (1997) stated that some aspects, associated with teacher satisfaction, include salary, support from supervisor, and accessibility of resources. These and other factors of teachers’ working environment have been recognized as factors that increased teacher dissatisfaction and to teacher’s attrition. Therefore, Travers & Cooper (1996) indicated that when teachers are not satisfied with their working conditions, they are intended to leave the profession (Travers & Cooper, 1996).

In a study of the job satisfaction of high school journalism teachers, Dvorak and Phillips (2001) used Herzberg’s two-factor theory to identify predictors of job satisfaction. The results of the study indicated that the teachers felt generally satisfied. If given the opportunity to return to college to start over again, 70% of the teachers indicated they would again choose teaching. Dvorak and Phillips found a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors predicted the job satisfaction of these teachers. Intrinsic predictors included advancement, work itself, and responsibility. In contrast to Herzberg’s theory, working conditions, salary, and job security were extrinsic factors which were significant predictors of job satisfaction for this sample.

C. Relationships between Teacher Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

The beginning studies about teacher empowerment and job satisfaction started in the 1990’s in elementary and high schools and the finding displayed that there was a positive relationship between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction.

Short & Rinehart (1992) examined teachers in a Reading Recovery program and found a positive correlation between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction. The reason was standardized management policies, therefore, teacher empowerment, job satisfaction and responsibility enhanced.

Wu (1995) examined the relationship among teacher empowerment, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Pennsylvania and the findings displayed that when teachers distinguish empowerment, both job satisfaction and consequently organizational commitment enhances.

Hatchett (1995) investigated teacher empowerment, transformational leadership and job satisfaction in Florida and result that empowerment, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction had a positive correlation.

Fritsch (1995) proclaimed assertively that faculty senates and policy practices in Virginia schools had a positive perception of empowerment in teachers caused to increase job satisfaction. Likewise, Lanney (1998) studied high school teachers’ empowerment and job satisfaction, finding a positive correlation between teacher perception of empowerment and job satisfaction.

Klecker (1996a) studied 180 venture schools in Ohio also finding a positive correlation between empowerment and job satisfaction.

Empowerment and job satisfaction represent that these two factors could have a positive relationship. While there has been limited unification of the teacher empowerment into other areas like job satisfaction in Iran so this research used studies of job satisfaction and teacher empowerment which indicates a need for further study.

D. Statement of Problem

In Iran, the traditional educational system has many restrictions on the teachers. Teachers cannot change any of textbook. As a result, teachers do not have any control of the syllabus, and are cannot participate in decision-making at school. So teachers don’t feel they are empowerment and are not satisfied in their jobs. Therefore, how to empower teachers and improve their job satisfaction is an important issue in Iran. In Iran, the educational system is the assessment of students and their performance which orders what academic opportunities are available to them in school. Consequently, evaluation of teachers is assessed by variables like how their students perform, and not by other variables in the classroom. Because of this reason, teachers have not been empowered to participate in policy-making activities outside of their classrooms. Short (1992) expressed that teacher empowerment contains teachers participating in policy and decision-making, acquiring new professional skills, having approach to professional development, and performing changes. As an instructor and decision maker in the classroom, a teacher needs to enhance skills to learn and solve problems sequentially, develop educational programs and perform changes.

E. Significance of the Study
If empowering teachers increases their job satisfaction, therefore this increased job satisfaction enhances the quality of teaching and the general efficiency of schools. The traditional educational system in Iran has many restrictions for the teachers. Teachers cannot choose what kind of textbook to use even though this action is neither more helpful for students, nor can they participate in school decision-making and planning. Traditional educational concepts contain focusing on teaching and not being involved in any decision-making activities have been an obstacle to change. In order to enhance the system, it is vital to determine how job empowerment can promote change and increase job satisfaction for teachers. The results of this study can encourage comprehending to recognize relationships, strengths and weaknesses, and appropriate interference, improve the quality of teaching and increase school efficiency.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The correlational research method used in this study is related to evaluating the relationships between two or more variables. The study was used to assess randomly selected teachers of Aviation University, employing quantitative data collection techniques.

B. Research Hypotheses

H1: There is no relationship between total teacher and total teacher job satisfaction.

H2: There is no significant difference in total teacher empowerment based on different demographic characteristics of teachers (age, educational background and gender).

H3: There is no significant difference in total teacher job satisfaction based on different demographic characteristics of the teacher (age, educational background and gender).

C. Instrumentation

1. Demographic survey

This survey included gender, age, school size, and educational background.

2. School participant empowerment scale

Short and Rinehart (1992) designed the SPES instrument in 1992. It consists of 38 items addressing six dimensions: Decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. Developed to measure school participant (teacher) empowerment, the design measures several items such as trust, communication, and structures for involvement, risk taking, and critical incidents. In addition, topics such as opportunities for decision-making, control over daily schedule, opportunities for growth and development can also be empowering aspects of a teacher’s job.

3. Teacher job satisfaction questionnaire

Lester (1987) designed the TJSQ to investigate teachers’ job satisfaction. This instrument has 66 items divided into nine factors including supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, responsibility, work itself, advancement, security, and recognition.

D. Data Analysis

For the investigating the hypotheses, a t-test was used to test the mean difference between two variables, teacher empowerment and job satisfaction and total teacher empowerment and total teacher job satisfaction on teachers’ educational background, gender, and age.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Testing Null Hypothesis One

The primary null hypothesis was tested by using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. According to Gau (2001), if the correlation coefficient between two variables was below 0.500, there is a correlation between two variables. The results are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TE Dimension/ TJ Factors</th>
<th>Decision-making</th>
<th>Professional growth</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Self-efficacy</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>TE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>.307</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td>.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition Pay</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>.381</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.386</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>.422</td>
<td>.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work itself</td>
<td>.396</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>.317</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>.386</td>
<td>.274</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>-.117</td>
<td>-.212</td>
<td>-.040</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TJ Total</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>.465</td>
<td>.508</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: TE= Teacher empowerment and TJ= Teacher job satisfaction

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The results between the total teacher empowerment and total teacher job satisfaction displayed the correlation coefficient at $r = .508$, that is, there is a positive correlation between teacher empowerment and teacher job satisfaction. But the table 1 also represents that the teacher job satisfaction factor of security and the teacher empowerment dimensions of professional growth ($r = .080$), status ($r = .16$), and autonomy ($r = .054$) have no correlation with each other. Even, there are no correlation between teacher job satisfaction of recognition, the teacher empowerment dimensions of decision-making ($r = .092$), self-efficacy ($r = -.40$) and impact ($r = .021$). Therefore, the primary hypothesis was rejected.

B. Testing of Null Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two displays that there is no significant difference in total teacher empowerment based on different teachers’ demographic characteristics (age, educational background and gender). Table 2 indicates that the $p$ value for total teacher empowerment is being $0.00 (-0.769)$. It is below the significance level of $0.05$, so total teacher empowerment is significantly different based on the demographic variable of educational background. Based on the higher mean, teachers who have Master degrees perceive higher empowerment than teachers who only have Bachelor degrees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Empowerment</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.4156</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.4624</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 3, the $p$ value for total teacher empowerment being $0.01 (t = .408)$. Since it is below the significance level of $0.05$, the total teacher empowerment is significantly different based on gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Empowerment</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 indicates, the total teacher empowerment is $0.287$ and greater than the significance level of $0.05 (F = 1.261)$ resulting in no significant difference between total teacher empowerment based on teacher’s age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Empowerment</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Between group</td>
<td>1.005</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.335</td>
<td>1.261</td>
<td>.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>107.791</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>108.795</td>
<td>409</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 5, there is no significant difference in total teacher job satisfaction based on different demographic characteristics of teachers.

C. Testing the Null Hypothesis Three

Table 5 indicates all nine factors of teacher job satisfaction having $p$ values greater than the significance level of $0.05$, therefore, there is no significant difference of teacher job satisfaction based on the demographic variable of teacher’s educational background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>1.247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 displays all of the nine teacher job satisfaction factors having $p$ values greater than the significance level of $0.05$ which represent there is no significant difference based on the demographic variable of gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.385</td>
<td>3.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the significance level ($p < .05$), only two factors (Advancement and Recognition) are significant for job satisfaction based on age as shown in Table 7.
The findings from this research with English teachers were consistent with the findings from other studies with regular academic teachers which have also found positive correlations between these constructs (Klecker & Loadman, 1996b; Kim, 2002; Wu & Short, 1996). Therefore, we can conclude that the relationship between empowerment on job satisfaction is likely the same for all content area teachers. Conversely, the more empowerment increases, the more job satisfaction also increases. For this study, empowerment served as an internal index which the work environment is likely the same for all content area teachers. Conversely, the more empowerment decreases, the less job satisfaction also decreases. For this study, empowerment served as an internal index which the work environment...
satisfied the teacher’s requirements and thus were indicators of satisfaction which is presented by the Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis et al., 1968) and Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). These theories assumed that individuals are motivated more by intrinsic factors of their work. The findings of this study display that empowerment may be an important factor that aids to overall job satisfaction. In addition, this study indicates better understanding of how these two issues are related.

According to Johnson (2004) & Warr (1991), the educational literature has represented a consistent relationship between teacher retention and job satisfaction. Davis et al. (1968) expressed that the greater the balance between the individual and his/her work environment, the greater the chance of tenure. Therefore, teacher retention ultimately may be increased. The finding of a significant relationship between the constructs of job satisfaction and empowerment in this study provided support for the suggestion that administrators and school personnel create a work environment which emphasizes teacher empowerment.

Furthermore, Shen (1997) indicated work environment can be influential for teachers to control the school and teaching policies leads to greater levels of job satisfaction and empowerment and ultimately, increased teacher retention.

Quaglia, et al. (1991) also displayed that school administrators are sensitive to the importance of empowerment to teacher satisfaction levels and provide opportunities for teacher participation within the school. Training should be given to administrators on the types of leadership so that this professional process will continue to express high levels of empowerment and job satisfaction and ultimately have increased teacher retention. School administrators should concentrate on creating an empowering work environment for teachers by increasing participation in decision making, providing opportunities for professional growth, fostering professional respect between colleagues, promoting self-efficacy, allowing for teacher autonomy, and welcoming teacher input on school-related issues.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

According to these results in Aviation University in Iran, the following recommendations are made for instructors and future researchers.

For instructors. The recommendation for instructors is to differentiate between your responsibilities and what empowerment you have. One responsibility for instructors is to participate in the school’s decision-making process. In so doing, they will empower themselves and their profession, teach more effective, and reform their education more successful. The combination of developing and enhancing both professional teacher knowledge and their competency, will either promote teacher skills or the school’s performance, and can improve student learning, which leads to a better performance.

For future researchers. The recommendation for future researchers is to perform research in different levels of instruction (other than university) and in different areas.

REFERENCES


Fatemeh Azimi Amoli is a Ph.D Candidate in Ilam University in TEFL. She is teaching English courses in some Universities and published many articles and two books. Her area of interests includes in Leadership Style, Teacher Professional Development, and Psycholinguistics.

Maryam Youran graduated in TEFL in Takestan University. She is teaching English courses in Payam-e-noor University, Ilam Branch. She likes to study in syntax and discourse field.