

***SECONDARY SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN SAUDI
ARABIA: THE RESULTS OF A MIXED METHODS APPROACH***

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Abstract

This paper aims to identify the factors which might affect secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This study adopts a sequential exploratory strategy based on a mixed methods approach. The qualitative data generated identified the factors leading to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The factors fall into eight major themes: relationship with the educational administration, head teachers' practices, the school environment, relationships with students and parents, head teachers' authority, relationship with educational supervision and relationships with teachers. The quantitative data reveal that factors causing dissatisfaction are: lack of authority to transfer underperforming teachers, lack of finance and manpower for the cleaning of school buildings, lack of financial resources to improve school buildings, salary, poor revenue from school meals as a financial resource, and lack of financial reward. To explore the relationship between job satisfaction and the selected variables, a Kruskal-Wallis (non parametric statistical test) revealed significant differences between job satisfaction in terms of morale, relationship with the educational administration, the school environment, head teachers' authority and overall job satisfaction according to

educational supervision centers. In addition, a kruskal-Wills test revealed significant differences between job satisfactions in head teachers' practices according to completion of the head teachers' training programme. However, there were no significant differences between job satisfaction related to experience, student numbers, head teachers' qualification, age and school building type. The paper identifies that the highly centralised educational system in Saudi Arabia and the lack of autonomy are factors that affect job satisfaction.

Keywords: *mixed methods, Head teachers, Job satisfaction, Secondary schools, Saudi Arabia*

Introduction

There is growing concern that the head teacher's job has become more demanding and intense. This necessitates the need to investigate and address the issue of school head teachers' job satisfaction. However, there is a paucity of studies that have investigated the head teachers' job satisfaction worldwide in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular as has been noted by Gaziel (1986), Johnson and Holdaway (1994) and Alagabary (2003). This is also the more recent view of Oplatka and Mimon (2008), and has been confirmed by the efforts of this researcher, who traced only four such studies in the Saudi educational context.

Many researchers have addressed the importance of investigating job satisfaction amongst employees of a variety of organisations. However, the most valuable contribution is likely to be the one made by Spector (1997). He identified three reasons to

justify the importance of job satisfaction. First, human values are essential in orienting the organisation by respecting and treating their staff fairly, which in turn will reflect positively on their emotions and wellbeing. Second, the behaviour of the organisation's staff impacts on its operations, either positively or negatively. Third, the assessment of employee satisfaction is crucial in identifying the areas in need of improvement.

Similarly, the importance of job satisfaction has become increasingly urgent in the educational context, because both head teachers and teachers are dealing with the future of the community or society in which they operate. Johnson and Holdaway (1994) mentioned the importance of researching job satisfaction within the educational context with special emphasis on school head teachers. They pointed out three main reasons for this. First, negative phenomena such as absenteeism and head teacher turnover are associated with low levels of satisfaction. Second, there is a strong association between job satisfaction and the overall quality of life in society. Third, new challenges such as modernisation, the revaluation of technology and increases in accountability impose a great deal of pressure upon head teachers and draw attention to the need for more concern over job satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

Many researchers in the field of social sciences have attempted to define the concept of job satisfaction. However, Al-Owaidi (2001) pointed out that there is a diversity of interpretations of the term and that there is no universal comprehensive definition. This fact is confirmed by the work of Oplatka and Mimon (2008), who state

that there is no universal definition of the term job satisfaction that can be agreed upon. In the literature the term reflects a wide range or variety of interpretations of needs, orientations, feelings, perceptions and expectations. Nevertheless, the most cited definition in the field of job satisfaction research within the different disciplines that have examined it, is the one offered by Locke (1976, P. 1300) in which he suggested that job satisfaction is “A pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences.”

Most of the relevant research has tried to determine the factors which lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Buitendach and De Witte (2005) differentiate between the dimensions of the factors which might affect job satisfaction by classifying them into two categories - extrinsic factors including promotion, co-workers, supervision and recognition, and intrinsic factors including personality, education, age and marital status. However, Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996) stated that the predictor variables of job satisfaction are most likely to overlap and that the lack the clarification of organisational and job characteristics are causal factors. Furnham (1992) pointed out that, according to the literature, job satisfaction factors are divided into three groups. These are 1) organisational characteristics focussing on issues such as reward, supervision, and decision-making practices, 2) specific aspects of the job that include workload, autonomy, feedback and the physical working environment, and 3) individual characteristics concerning personal characteristics such as self-esteem and general life satisfaction. Within the educational context, Crossman and Harris (2006) classified the factors that might affect job satisfaction into three general categories. These are: 1) environmental

factors such as the work itself and the environment, 2) psychological factors such as personality, behaviour, and attitudes, and 3) demographic factors such as gender. One of the most significant factors affecting job satisfaction, especially in the educational context, is the work itself, which is highly associated with the characteristics of the structure of the educational organisation. The organisational structure can play a significant role in this regard, depending on whether the structure is highly centralised or decentralised. What determines the degree of centralisation or decentralisation is the extent of decision-making participation and the autonomy which the employee has. The differentiation between the two structures is identified by Lambert et al. (2006). Where the employees work in a highly centralised and formalised organisation, they tend to be dissatisfied and uncommitted (Organ and Greene, 1982) and most likely the opposite is the case in a decentralised organisation.

In general, schools in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia are characterised by a highly centralised system, where the decision making is from top to bottom, where there is a lack of school autonomy and where there is a great deal of bureaucracy. In the relevant literature on job satisfaction these characteristics are most likely to be considered as a source of dissatisfaction. While autonomy within Maslow's theory is considered as an important factor for employees' self-esteem, the responsibilities and the work itself are described as motivating factors in Herzberg's theory. Moreover, decision-making policy is regarded as a hygiene factor, preventing dissatisfaction. The impact of the organisational structure, especially that of centralisation, appears as a dissatisfying factor in a number of studies representing different educational contexts such as Saudi Arabia

(Alroyali 2002), Jordan (Yaseen 1990; Alomari 1992), Cyprus (Zembylas and Papanastasion 2006), Turkey (Sari 2004) and Greece (Saiti 2007), where bureaucracy and lack of autonomy were found to dominate and to cause equal job dissatisfaction for both teachers and head teachers.

The different perspectives used to tackle the determination and classification of such factors was found to overlap. However, these factors can be separated into three main categories: namely, the organisation category, the work itself category and the individual characteristics category, as shown in Figure 1.

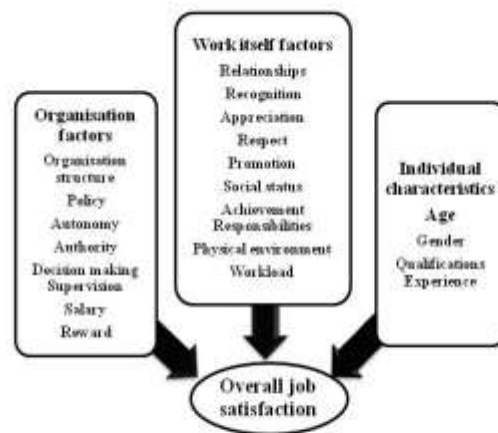


Figure 1 The study Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the main three categories of factors which affect job satisfaction. The drawing of sharp boundaries between these categories is a difficult task as the phenomenon of job satisfaction is multidimensional and the various aspects overlap.

However, Figure 1 sets out the different factors according to the researcher's perspective, based on the literature reviewed. The organisation factors category includes the factors which are likely to be externally determined, such as organisational structure, policy, autonomy, authority, decision making, supervision, salary and reward. The second category - the work itself - includes those factors which are more likely to be of an internal nature, such as interpersonal relationships, status, recognition, appreciation, respect, promotion, achievement, responsibilities, physical environment, workload and job security. Finally, the third category, which deals with individual characteristics, includes factors of a personal nature, such as age, gender, experience and qualifications. This conceptual framework reflects the nature and the features of the Saudi educational context, where a highly centralised system is dominant. However, it is influenced by the ambiguous and multidimensional nature of the phenomenon of job satisfaction, in which many facets overlap.

The majority of the studies which investigated the job satisfaction of head teachers were quantitatively driven, since the use of questionnaires is less time-consuming compared with a qualitative approach. In addition, the majority of the studies of job satisfaction within the different disciplines were quantitative in nature. However, the reviewed studies either used well-known standard measurements such as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (M.S.Q) for instance in the studies of Alomari (1992), Newby (1999), Alonazi (2002) and James (2004) or the Job Descriptive Index (J.D.I) such as in the study of Yaseen (1990) or developed their own questionnaires for the purpose of their study as represented by the studies of Alsaraf *et al.* (1994), Alaraimi (1998), Tieam

(1999), Alroyali (2001), Alagbari (2003) and Almutairi (2005). In the case of using the M.S.Q or the J.D.I, they are most likely irrelevant in the educational context in spite of their high degree of reliability. This casts doubts on their applicability since the duties and responsibilities in the educational context are different from those in a business context. Moreover, these doubts will increase in the case of using these measurements in the Arabic educational context.

Within the Saudi educational context, based on the best efforts and knowledge of the researcher, only four studies have been found that deal with general educational head teachers. These are the studies of Alroyali (2001) who found out that relationships with colleagues were considered by head teachers as a source of satisfaction while promotion was a source of dissatisfaction, Alagbari (2003) who found out that the satisfying factors were salary, achievement, relationships with teachers, compatibility between qualifications, experience and work, social status and job security, while the cooperation of parents, school buildings, the availability of tools, equipment and school utilities were seen as dissatisfiers, Almutairi (2005) who pointed out that the main source of satisfaction is the relationships with teachers and who regarded incentives and salaries as a source of dissatisfaction. Only the study by Alonazi (2002) considered the secondary school head teacher and concluded by identifying responsibilities, recognition, appreciation, relationships with colleagues as sources of satisfaction and promotion as a source of dissatisfaction.

Thus, the review of the previous studies in general and in particular secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction in the Saudi educational context, rationalise the

need for new research as a matter of urgency. Such new research should benefit from an awareness of the drawbacks of the previous studies since only one study dealt with this issue and it had several shortcomings.

Methodological framework

The main shortcomings of the previous studies which have been carried out in the Saudi educational context are that they did not investigate the issue deeply enough and did not give the secondary school head teachers the opportunity to express their attitudes and feelings regarding their satisfaction. Therefore mixed methods have been adopted, particularly the sequential exploratory mixed methods approach which has been used as a methodological framework for undertaking this study. This approach requires two main stages for data collection and analysis. As the phenomenon of job satisfaction is mainly qualitatively driven, the qualitative paradigm is dominant. Therefore, the qualitative data was initially collected by using focus group and semi-structured interviews. In the second stage the quantitative data were collected by developing a questionnaire based on the findings of the qualitative stage.

The aim of this study is to:

1. Explore and examine the factors which affect job satisfaction among secondary school head teachers in Jeddah.
2. Identify aspects of the role of the head teacher that impact on job satisfaction.

3. Make recommendations to the Ministry of Education with regard to ways in which, if necessary, the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers could be improved.

The questions related to this study are as follows

The study focuses on the investigation of the main question:

What factors affect the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers in Jeddah?

This question has been answered through the following sub-questions:

1. What aspect of the role of the head teacher impacts on job satisfaction?
2. Why do these aspects impact on job satisfaction?
3. What are the relevant strengths of these factors?
4. Is job satisfaction significantly affected by variables such as age, qualification, school building type, experience attendance of head teachers' training programme and the role of the educational supervision centre?
5. How satisfied/dissatisfied are head teachers in secondary schools in Jeddah with their position as head teacher?

Three different data collection methods were used sequentially with a random sample of 25 head teachers. This number made up 29% of the population of secondary head teachers in Jeddah. These individuals participated in five focus groups interviews. In addition, a random sample of 20 secondary head teachers (23% of the population) participated in semi-structured interviews. Finally, 86 head teachers who made up the total population of head teachers in the city of Jeddah participated in the questionnaire, 84

of whose responses were used in the final analysis of the data. The questionnaire was developed based on the qualitative findings after ensuring its validity and reliability by applying Cronbach alpha. A score of 0.872 indicated a satisfactory level of reliability. In addition, Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to ensure internal consistency. All the values were significant at $P=0.05$ which indicates a high degree of consistency. All the factors were personalised in the statements used in the questionnaire including a rank of overall job satisfaction. Participants responded to each factor by using a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) as an ordinal scale.

The data analysis procedure was performed in two stages. Firstly, the data were collected by the use of focus groups and semi-structured interviews were analysed by using thematic qualitative data analysis, facilitated by the use of NVivo software to identify the major and sub-themes and the related factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The process of coding considered every single response, whether it was positive or negative, with the aim of minimising the influence of possible researcher bias. Along the same lines, in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings and the accuracy of the coding, the major and sub-themes that emerged were linked to the relevant coded passages. The outcome of this step was referred back to volunteers from the participants to judge the relevance of the coded passages to the major and sub-themes and its labels. This led to the identification of the factors related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction which formed and developed the questionnaire.

Conversely, the quantitative data collected using the questionnaire was analysed statistically by using SPSS software. The type of statistical examination was governed by

the quantitative research questions. These questions were used to find out the following - the relative strengths of the identified job satisfaction factors, the overall level of head teachers' job satisfaction and the relationship between the overall level of job satisfaction and the demographic variables. Therefore, the descriptive statistic was applied by using the median, frequencies and percentages to determine the strengths of these factors and the level of overall job satisfaction. In addition, the non-parametric tests (Kruskal-Wills) used to examine the relationship between the overall job satisfaction and the demographic variables.

Results

The different sets of findings of the present study are presented here according to the dominant paradigm and the time order of the data collection. The findings derived from focus group interviews enabled the researcher to define the major and sub-themes of job satisfaction of the secondary school head teachers. These themes are morale, relationship with the educational administration, relationships with students and parents, the school environment, relationship with educational supervision, head teachers' practices and relationships with teachers. Consequently, these major themes were explored inductively and deductively in depth by conducting semi-structured interviews to identify the underpinning factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The definitions of the major themes as perceived and expressed by the secondary school head teachers are as follows:

The first major theme: The relationship with educational administration.

This theme, as perceived by secondary school head teachers, refers to different aspects that govern the relationship between the head teachers and the educational administration and its authority. It includes other sub-themes reflecting this notion which are procedures, responsiveness, work systems, trust, job security, support, head teachers' training programmes, and the preparation of head teachers before fulfilling the role.

The second major theme: Morale.

The definition of the term morale, as considered by the secondary school head teachers, referred to the incentive factors which influence their job satisfaction, either positively or negatively. The morale theme includes other sub-themes that reflect the incentive factors. These are appreciation, respect, honour, responsiveness, job security, trust, support and salary.

The third major theme: Head teachers' practices.

This theme reflects the practical side of the responsibilities and duties of the secondary school head teacher. The definition of this theme, as perceived by them, is how they practice their role in reality. This theme includes other sub-themes. These are the head teacher's role, human relationships, teacher's professional development, setting up the school environment, the head teacher's practical handbook, head teacher achievement, team building, the delegation of power, and learning development.

The fourth major theme: School environment.

The major theme of school environment refers mainly to the physical environment regarding the school buildings and their preparation and setting up for learning and teaching. This includes the other sub-themes of financial resources, administrative staff, rented buildings, school cleaning, school maintenance, the school buffet and head teacher's expenses.

The fifth major theme: Relationships with students and parents.

This theme can be defined as the framework which regulates the relationship between the head teacher and the students and their parents in terms of the attendance, achievement and behaviour of the former; in addition it refers to the cooperation between head teachers and parents aimed at overcoming various obstacles. This theme includes the other sub-themes of relationship with students, relationship with parents, students' achievements, and the regulation of student assessment, the regulation of students' perseverance and behaviour, and participation in the parents' council.

The sixth major theme: Head teacher's authority.

The theme of authority, as perceived by head teachers themselves,, refers to the decision-making power over teachers, deputy head teachers, controlling staff salaries and students. This theme includes the other sub-themes of head teachers' attitudes regarding their authority with regard to the responsibilities undertaken, authority related to students,

authority related to teachers, authority related to deputy head teachers and authority to control staff salaries.

The seventh major theme: Relationship with educational supervision.

This major theme refers to the responsibilities and the duties of the educational supervision centres and supervisors towards mentoring the school head teacher and teachers with regard to their performance and commitment. This theme includes the other sub-themes of relationship with educational supervision centres, relationship with educational supervisors, supervision practices and supervision authority.

The eighth major theme: Relationship with teachers.

This theme, as perceived by head teachers, refers to the responsibilities and role of the head teacher mainly with regard to teacher's performance and commitment. This theme includes the other sub-themes of teacher's performance, commitment, moving teachers, teacher compatibility and teacher's professional development.

The findings of the semi-structured interviews have the capacity to enrich our understanding of how secondary school head teachers perceive and express their feelings and attitudes regarding their job satisfaction. Moreover, it helps to determine the factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The combination of the identified factors that were derived from the focus group and the semi-structured interviews formed the foundation of the questionnaire. The latter included 68 factors based on the number of responses for each factor. Any responses

fewer than three were rejected. To sum up, the qualitative findings contributed to answering the main research question of the present study by identifying the factors which affect the secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction.

The developed questionnaire was distributed to all 86 government secondary school head teachers in the five educational supervision centres in the city of Jeddah, of which 84 were completed and returned. The data were statistically examined by applying descriptive statistical median to identify the degree of satisfaction for each domain and factor to find out the overall job satisfaction and the relative strengths of the factors which might affect the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers.

Rank	The Domain	Median	Interpretation
1	Head teachers' authority	4	Satisfied
2	Relationships with students and parents	4	Satisfied
3	Head teachers' practices	4	Satisfied
4	Relationships with educational supervisors	3.5	Satisfied
5	Morale	3	Moderate
6	Relationships with teachers	2.5	Moderate
7	Relationships with educational administration	2	Dissatisfied
8	School environment	2	Dissatisfied
	Overall	3.25	Moderate

Table 1 Median of all domains in descending order

As Table 1 shows, the overall job satisfaction is moderate. However, the domains of relationships with educational administration and school environment indicate dissatisfaction. The aggregated analysis indicates that there were 11 factors that were found to contribute strongly to the secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction. In addition, 18 factors were found to be satisfiers, while 13 factors were found to offer a moderate response. However, 19 factors were found to be a cause of dissatisfaction as shown in Table 2. Moreover, 7 factors caused dissatisfaction and were found to strongly affect the secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction as Table 3 shows. The focal point of this study is to highlight the factors which influence the secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction negatively in order for these factors to be addressed and tackled by the Saudi Ministry of Education.

Order	Item No.	Factor Statement	Median	Interpretations
1	14	In my role as a head teacher, the educational administration and its departments respond to my requests for school needs.	2	Dissatisfied
2	15	I have job security whilst practising my job as a head teacher.	2	Dissatisfied
3	18	My salary as a head teacher is compatible with my duties.	2	Dissatisfied
4	21	The relationship between me as a head teacher and the departments of the educational administration is hampered by a lack of clear procedure.	2	Dissatisfied
5	22	As a head teacher, personal relationships dominate the governing of work procedures in the case of contacting educational administration departments.	2	Dissatisfied
6	23	Bureaucracy dominates procedures between me as a head teacher and educational administration departments.	2	Dissatisfied

7	24	The educational administration and its departments interfere in my affairs as a head teacher.	2	Dissatisfied
8	25	I feel as a head teacher that the resolution of the problems of under-performing teachers by the educational administration is not effective.	2	Dissatisfied
9	27	Training programmes aimed at me as a head teacher are available.	2	Dissatisfied
10	28	Training programmes aimed at me as a head teacher meet my training needs.	2	Dissatisfied
11	31	The administrative role dominates my job as a head teacher.	2	Dissatisfied
12	35	As a head teacher, I face obstacles in improving the school environment.	2	Dissatisfied
13	43	I feel that school premises are compatible with student numbers.	2	Dissatisfied
14	44	I use my own money to meet school needs.	2	Dissatisfied
15	45	Financial resources and administrative procedures are available to me as a head teacher to carry out school building maintenance.	2	Dissatisfied
16	46	There are sufficient administrative staff at my school.	2	Dissatisfied
17	62	As a head teacher, I find that the educational supervisors lack authority	2	Dissatisfied
18	65	As a head teacher, I face problems owing to a lack of teacher commitment.	2	Dissatisfied
19	66	As a head teacher, I face problems owing to not effectively resolving the under-performance of teachers.	2	Dissatisfied

Table 2 Factors which act as dissatisfiers in secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction

order	Item no.	Factor statement	Median	Interpretations
1	19	My salary as a head teacher is distinguishable from that of other teachers working with me	1	Strongly dissatisfied
2	20	As a head teacher, I receive financial rewards that encourage me to do my job.	1	Strongly dissatisfied
3	40	Financial resources are available to me as a head teacher for improving the school environment.	1	Strongly dissatisfied

4	41	School buffet revenues supply financial resources to meet school needs.	1	Strongly dissatisfied
5	42	Finances and manpower are available to me as a head teacher for the cleaning of school buildings.	1	Strongly dissatisfied
6	67	As a head teacher, I lack the authority to transfer teachers.	1	Strongly dissatisfied

Table 3 Factors that act as strong dissatisfiers in secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction

The relationship between the secondary school head teachers' overall job satisfaction and age, qualification, attendance on training programmes, experience, school building type, student numbers and the educational supervision centres, were examined. A Kruskal-Wills revealed significant differences between job satisfaction in terms of morale, relationship with educational administration, the school environment, head teachers' authority, and overall job satisfaction according to educational supervision centers. In addition to significant differences between head teachers' job satisfaction in the domain of head teachers' practices according to completion of the head teachers' training programme. However, there were no significant differences between job satisfactions according to experience, student numbers, head teachers' qualifications, age and school building type.

Discussion

This paper aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on the study of head teachers' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction with regard to their work in the Saudi educational context. This has been achieved to a large degree by identifying precisely the

factors which affect their job satisfaction positively or negatively as perceived by the head teachers themselves. In general these factors fall in the eight major themes of: relationship with educational administration, morale, head teachers' practices, the school environment, relationships with students and parents, head teachers' authority, the relationship with educational supervision and relationships with teachers. Obviously, relationships occupy a huge part of their satisfaction. This is due to the fact that the nature of the job is very communal and social. However, their relationship with the educational administration is overwhelmed by the huge administrative issues which influenced how they operate in terms of complicated routines, procedures and bureaucracy. In addition, the aspects of their role which were found to affect their job satisfaction were their relationship with educational administration and the school environment. This is mainly due to the influence of the centralised system which is strongly dominant in the Saudi educational context. The dissatisfaction in these two domains were reported by secondary school head teachers with regard to different factors which are associated with the characteristics of the Saudi educational context as reflected by the bureaucracy and the lack of school autonomy, in addition to the lack of the financial resources for the school.

However, some other factors which are not related to the aforementioned domains were also reported to negatively affect job satisfaction but are still associated with the centralised system. This includes the level of head teachers' salaries when compared with their responsibilities and the lack of financial reward. Moreover, the aspect of head teachers' authority is another indication of the influence of the centralised system, for

instance, the lack of authority to transfer underperforming teachers. These findings, which reflect the influence of the highly centralised system on job satisfaction, are not surprising because a number of studies of job satisfaction by other researchers in different educational contexts have commented on this aspect: for example, in Jordan (Yaseen 1990; Alomari 1992), Cyprus (Zembylas and Papanastasion 2006), Turkey (cited Sari 2004) and Greece (2007). Each of these researchers reported similar findings. On the other hand, the relationship between age, qualifications, experience, school and student numbers, building type and secondary school head teachers' overall job satisfaction were not found to be correlated. However, the attendance at head teachers' training programmes has an effect on the head teachers' practices domain in terms of the satisfaction on the part of those who attend.

The secondary school head teachers' overall job satisfaction was found to be moderate. This is similar with the findings of similar studies in similar contexts such as those of Yaseen (1990), Alarimi (1998), Alonazi (2001), Alroyali (2002) and Alagabri (2003). However the overall job satisfaction does not reflect the reality of the attitude and feelings of secondary school head teachers towards their work as they perceived it. This is especially true with regard to those aspects which impact on their morale. This was shown when they expressed these aspects as incentive factors by identifying the lack of the financial reward and the similarity of their salaries with that of the teachers of similar experience and qualification, regardless of the huge duties and responsibilities of the head teacher. Working in such challenging and demanding conditions with a lack of autonomy, weak authority, having to cope with a bureaucratic system and a lack of financial reward

raises the question -why do they keep doing their job? The answer to this question stems from the Saudi cultural attitude as to the value of work. In addition, there is the wrong interpretation that a head teacher, who may leave his position to go back to the classroom with less responsibility, might be seen as a failure by Saudi society. Moreover, Saudi secondary school head teachers believe that the only promotion they can get during their career as educators is the position of school head teacher which, in a way, is important for their self-esteem

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Conclusion

This paper highlights the factors involved in understanding Saudi secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction. This has emphasised the factors which impact negatively on such job satisfaction. What is now needed is a serious consideration on the part of the Saudi Ministry of Education as to how this new understanding might be meaningfully applied to initiatives to improve the working conditions of head teachers. The findings demonstrate that there is an urgent need for decision makers to recognise the fact that educational quality is largely related to the importance of the head teachers' role in leading the educational process. In addition, the Ministry of Education should give special consideration to the issue of the impact of the highly centralised system by delegating more of its authority to schools head teachers, aiming at minimising the impact of the centralised system and maximising school autonomy. What also has to be emphasised is the importance of correcting the salary scheme to distinguish between the salary of head teachers and that of classroom teachers. Such an action could result in the creation of

competition for the selection of more competent and more highly skilled head teachers. Thus an objective of any Ministry of Education should be to maximise head teachers' satisfaction and minimise their dissatisfaction, not only for the benefit of the head teachers themselves, but for the sake of school staff and students as well.

The contribution of this study is limited to the city of Jeddah. Nevertheless, it has clearly identified the factors leading to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In order to make the most of this contribution, future research is needed by using the developed questionnaire with a larger population in different parts of Saudi Arabia, using the factor analysis technique to identify precisely the most significant factors which affect secondary school head teachers' job satisfaction.

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