

Job Satisfaction Study of Contract Teachers at GMIT Kuanino 01 Elementary School

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This qualitative study aimed to identify Job Satisfaction Study of Contract Teachers at GMIT Kuanino 01 Elementary School 01 based on Gilmer's key aspects. Four participants were strategically selected via purposive and snowball sampling, and the essential data were collected through in-depth interviews. Analysis, utilizing thematic techniques adapted from Bungin (2012), reveals a significant divergence in satisfaction levels. The highest satisfaction is found in the interpersonal and self-development dimensions, supported by a robust synergy between teacher initiative and openly supportive leadership. However, overall satisfaction is significantly constrained by acute dissatisfaction regarding the Compensation/Salary Aspect (perceived as disproportionate) and the Physical Working Conditions Aspect (deemed critical due to infrastructure safety risks). Consequently, the supportive psychological work climate and the Financial Adaptive Satisfaction mechanism serve as essential compensatory factors that sustain job satisfaction despite inadequate institutional material guarantees.

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1. Introduction

According to Law Number 20 of 2003, articles 1 and 3, concerning the National Education System in Indonesia, education is defined as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process that actively develops the potential of students. This development aims to instill spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills necessary for the individual, community, nation, and state. The national education system encompasses all interconnected educational components integrated to achieve national educational goals.

The success of education is influenced by various factors, including teachers, students, facilities, infrastructure, environment, and curriculum. As the main subject of education, the teacher is the primary determinant of achieving educational success. Based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, competency is defined as the set of knowledge, skills, and behavior that teachers or lecturers must possess, internalize, and master in carrying out their professional duties. (Hamalik, 2015) further suggested that the role of the teacher is threefold: as a liaison, a modernizer, and a builder.

The synthesis of these two perspectives concludes that the teacher's role is dual: not only as an instructor who transfers knowledge, but also as an educator who guides students. Through this dual role, teachers help students achieve established educational goals. Therefore, the strategic role of teachers is highly determinative of the quality and caliber of graduates produced by an educational institution.

In the Indonesian education system, teachers can be categorized based on employment status, which is broadly divided into two main types: Civil Servant Teachers and Contract Teachers. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022) reported that more than half of all teachers in Indonesia are Civil Servants (PNS), specifically 1,520,354 individuals, or 52% of the total. This leaves a significant 48% who are non-PNS, necessitating government attention to their welfare. Contract teachers specifically account for 704,503 individuals, which is equivalent to 24% of the total teacher population in Indonesia.

This disparity in employment status directly correlates with significant differences in the rights, welfare, and job satisfaction between PNS and Contract Teachers. According to Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Article 35 (Imanuddien, 2018), factors affecting a teacher's performance involve the execution of duties, teamwork, work capability, and evaluation. High human resource performance is known to be influenced by both internal and external factors (Kim et al., 2020). For instance, an external factor influencing performance is the working environment. Research by Cepi (in Lesmana & Widjajani, 2015) stated there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and work productivity, which is driven by various job satisfaction factors, whether financial or non-financial (appreciation). Essentially, job satisfaction confers both positive and negative value to employee performance.

Every individual has a different level of satisfaction based on their internal assessment. Job satisfaction is a phenomenon heavily influenced by individual characteristics; each person has a unique satisfaction level guided by their life values and distinctive preferences. As affirmed by Sutrisno, 2009 in his book *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia*, this concept highlights that an individual's level of job satisfaction largely depends on the extent to which the job meets their personal expectations and desires.

Preliminary interviews with contract teachers at SD GMIT Kuanino 1 revealed several issues affecting their job satisfaction. Externally, the main complaints include low salaries, which are disproportionate to their workload, and inadequate school facilities hindering the learning process. Internally, teachers experience psychological pressure due to two factors: first, low student literacy skills lead to professional frustration, and second, high student absenteeism rates cause disappointment. This situation is further aggravated by perceived injustice in the PNS appointment process, where private school teachers feel less prioritized. This combination of challenges ranging from low pay, poor facilities, teaching difficulties, to status discrimination collectively creates a less satisfying work environment and potentially lowers the morale of these contract teachers. This phenomenon not only reflects dissatisfaction from a physical standpoint but also indicates the psychological challenges faced by contract teachers at GMIT Kuanino 1 Elementary School.

Based on the issues described above, it is apparent that the level of job satisfaction among contract teachers at GMIT Kuanino 01 Elementary School, remains relatively low. Therefore, the researchers were motivated to conduct this study to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the Job Satisfaction of Contract Teachers at GMIT Kuanino 01 Elementary School.

2. Method

This qualitative study employed a descriptive research design. The participants consisted of four contract teachers. The research utilized the Purposive Sampling technique and the Snowball Sampling system. Participants were selected based on determined criteria, which included: 1) Being a teacher at GMIT Kuanino 01 Elementary School. 2) Having the employment status of a contract teacher. 3) Being able to speak Indonesian fluently. 4) Being willing to sign the informed consent form as a research participant. Data were collected through in-depth interviews. This study applied data analysis techniques according to (Bungin, 2012): Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing and Verification.

3. Results and Discussion

The research was conducted with the aim of ascertaining the profile of job satisfaction among contract teachers at GMIT Kuanino 01 Elementary School using a qualitative method (Triatna, 2015) citing Gibson (Rondeau, 2025) defined job satisfaction as an individual's attitude toward their work. This attitude is based on their perception of various work aspects, such as job content, working conditions, and opportunities for development. Gilmer (1991, as cited in As'ad, 2004)) proposed several aspects of job satisfaction, namely job security, opportunity for advancement and development, pay, working conditions, and communication.

Job Security

The aspect of job security, according to Gilmer (1991, as cited in As'ad, 2004), is one of the ten fundamental factors significantly influencing the level of employee job satisfaction. This aspect extends beyond physical safety in the workplace, focusing primarily on psychological and economic security, reflecting the employee's feeling that their position and work are stable, guaranteed of continuity, and free from the risk of unilateral termination.

Analysis results indicate that physical safety and internal institutional support are at a high level of satisfaction. The institution has actively, comprehensively, and responsively carried out its responsibilities through the supervision of rotating teachers, physical protection against external moral threats (involving authorities), and preparedness through education and disaster simulation. This successful implementation creates a stable environment and makes the participants feel protected and secure.

This finding is consistent with Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where safe and stable working conditions function as hygiene factors necessary to prevent dissatisfaction. Prior research, as demonstrated by (Hendarti et al., 2021), proves that both job security and job insecurity have a significant influence on employee job satisfaction, where employees who receive job security guarantees tend to have high job satisfaction.

Although physical security is guaranteed, psychological security is in a divided condition. The decline in psychological satisfaction is triggered by a combination of economic instability (low and drastically reduced salary) that causes "down" feelings and frustration, and significant disturbance from the external environment (interpersonal conflict/anger from parents/guardians). These challenges create emotional and professional vulnerability for the participants. However, this psychological detriment is mitigated by strong psychological support and care from colleagues, which acts as a stress buffer. Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn (1978) emphasized that social support from the work group is crucial for reducing role tension and organizational stress.

The aspect of position stability shows high satisfaction. Participants expressed gratitude and security for successfully obtaining rare job opportunities and felt a guarantee of professional position, even without significant differences in treatment between contract teachers and permanent foundation employees. Some participants view their work as a primary source of sustenance, indicating a high instrumental value for the position.

These findings support the Job Embeddedness Theory developed by Mitchell et al. (2001), where the feeling of stability and gratitude for rare job opportunities increases the participants' desire to remain (link) and feel compatible (fit) with their jobs. This is consistent with the findings of Qin et al., 2021 which explain that job guarantees make employees feel valued and needed by the organization; in return, they will value the company by demonstrating high work motivation and avoiding deviant behavior.

Opportunity for Advancement and Development

Next is the aspect of opportunity for advancement and development. According to Gilmer (1991, as cited in As'ad, 2004), this aspect is one of the important factors affecting employee job satisfaction. This aspect is defined as the presence or absence of opportunities to gain experience and improve abilities during work. In summary, this aspect refers to the extent to which the company provides pathways and opportunities for employees to enhance skills, gain new experience, and advance (promotion) in their careers.

Job satisfaction in the aspect of opportunity for advancement and development is at a high level, driven by a strong synergy between institutional support and participants' independent initiative. The institution effectively provides Information Support (PPPK, PPG) and non-physical Facility Support (flexible work permission) that function as extrinsic rewards. Consistent with the opinion of Shujaat et al., (2013) to increase employee job satisfaction, companies need to focus on their career progression. Therefore, companies must have structured career development programs, and management is obligated to actively discuss employee career plans directly with them.

On the other hand, participants demonstrate high intrinsic motivation by proactively utilizing technology (YouTube, Google) to improve teaching competence. According to A. Locke (1968) career goal clarity supported by information and high personal initiative are strong predictors of performance and job satisfaction. This is consistent with Judge and Watanabe (as cited in Sopiah, 2008), who proposed several factors that significantly influence job satisfaction, including opportunities for promotion and advancement, intrinsic factors of the job itself, job nature, salary system, and working conditions, including working hours. Furthermore, factors originating from the individual, such as education and personal effort, are also determinants of job satisfaction.

Although these self-development efforts are intensive, the process is not free from obstacles, especially from negative external interpersonal and emotional interventions, such as pressure from family members. This obstacle creates a psychological burden that needs to be managed. Bandura (1977) explained that teachers' self-efficacy in developing is influenced by personal experience and social support; therefore, negative external interventions can become serious barriers to their self-belief.

Pay

The next aspect is the pay aspect. According to Gilmer (1991, as cited in As'ad, 2004), the Pay/Wage Aspect is a primary determinant of job satisfaction, where satisfaction in this aspect refers to the extent to which the financial compensation received by employees is considered fair, appropriate, and adequate to meet their basic needs, which in turn reflects the employee's valuation of their job and performance within the organization.

Job satisfaction in the pay aspect shows polarization, with the majority of participants experiencing significant dissatisfaction because it is considered unfair and disproportionate (salary not commensurate with UMR or workload). Small and unstable salaries cause fundamental personal inadequacy (lack of funds for transportation and daily needs) and trigger psychological decline (disappointment, frustration). This finding strongly supports Adams (1965) concept of Distributive Justice, where participants compare input (effort, responsibility) with output (salary) and perceive inequity, leading to dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the failure of the salary to meet basic needs confirms that pay functions as a Hygiene Factor (Herzberg et al., 1959) that fails to be met, thereby fundamentally creating dissatisfaction.

Some participants show relative satisfaction that is adaptive in nature, considering the salary "sufficient" because it is adjusted to basic operational needs (daily transportation) rather than objective standard proportionality. This condition of personal sufficiency is achieved through the adjustment of expectations

("must be sufficient") and practical realism. This phenomenon can be explained as a Workplace Adaptive Coping mechanism. In organizational psychology, this is related to (Bandura, 1991) Self-Regulation Theory, where individuals modify their goals and expectations to fit environmental constraints (school) to maintain psychological balance, even if the existing compensation system is not entirely fair.

Working Conditions

The next aspect is the working conditions aspect. According to Gilmer (1991, as cited in As'ad, 2004), this is one of the determinants of job satisfaction that focuses on the physical work environment directly perceived by employees. Job satisfaction in the conditions aspect is at a low level and is a source of significant dissatisfaction.

This is caused by two main problems. The condition of the old and fragile building (made of natural stone) poses serious safety risks (fear of collapse) for the participants. Next is the lack of critical facilities (absence of computers/laptops for assessment, LCDs, and secure cabinets), which directly hampers the effectiveness of technology-based teaching. The absence of a boundary fence further worsens the situation, triggering security vulnerability and facility damage by external parties. These findings contrast sharply with Frederick Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory view that Working Conditions must function as a Hygiene Factor to prevent dissatisfaction; the failure of the infrastructure here instead becomes the main trigger for dissatisfaction.

Although the physical infrastructure is poor, participants show relative satisfaction with the Internal Environment (air quality and lighting) which is considered adequate and does not become an obstacle, except in cases of specific room placement. Kukiqi (2017) defined the physical working environment as the work environment related to physical conditions or vulnerability in the workplace, consisting of machines, office layout, temperature, ventilation, and lighting. The results of this study also reveal a positive influence of the working environment on job satisfaction, especially the physical working environment.

In the External Environment, despite serious threats (conflict with parents/guardians and vandalism due to the lack of a fence), partial security emerges through social adaptation mechanisms, where the surrounding community helps provide safe snacks to mitigate the risk of lacking a canteen. This adaptation demonstrates the role of Informal Social Support in balancing environmental risks.

Overall, Working Conditions (Environment and Facilities) fail to meet minimum standards and create distractions and anxiety that hinder participants' work focus. This finding is supported by the principle of Cognitive Ergonomics (Wickens et al., 2021), where an unsafe physical environment and inadequate facilities (such as lack of assessment tools) increase cognitive workload and stress, thus negatively affecting teachers' concentration and work motivation.

Communication

The next aspect is the communication aspect. According to Gilmer (1991, as cited in As'ad, 2004), the aspect of communication is an important element in job satisfaction, which is defined as the opportunity for employees to convey or submit complaints, suggestions, and matters that need to be presented to the leadership.

Job satisfaction in the aspect of Vertical Communication is at a highly effective level and is one of the highest sources of satisfaction. This is due to the leader's openness and professionalism, characterized as a "welcome" and supportive figure. The leader actively creates space for free expression of opinions and complaints without fear. This effectiveness is reinforced by the leader's positive response, who acts as a mediator who weighs and analyzes input before making a decision.

This finding is highly consistent with Transformational Leadership Theory (Edmondson, 1999), where the leader creates an environment of psychological safety for subordinates to speak (voice) without fear of punishment. According to Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory, constructive feedback increases Expectancy (the belief) that effort will lead to performance, which in turn increases satisfaction.

Horizontal Communication is generally effective, marked by a high sense of camaraderie, mutual help, and non-formal support that increases participants' sense of belonging. However, this effectiveness is hampered by interpersonal challenges that create a threshold of discomfort. This obstacle arises from uncooperative colleagues and high levels of sensitivity, triggering friction, incidents of offense, and subtle competition, especially for newer participants.

The inability to fully manage conflict at the peer level indicates a weakness in Group Emotional Intelligence. Although leadership support is strong, this horizontal friction suggests the presence of role conflict at the peer level. Role conflict at the peer level is a chronic source of stress, and this stress is negatively correlated with individual job satisfaction and well-being, which, according to Katz & Kahn (1978) can disrupt group dynamics and reduce team work effectiveness.

4. Conclusion

The level of job satisfaction among contract teachers at SD GMT Kuanino 01 demonstrates significant variation across Gilmer's five key aspects, with the highest satisfaction being found in the interpersonal and self-development dimensions. The Opportunity for Advancement and Development and Vertical Communication (Superior-Subordinate) aspects achieve a superior level of satisfaction, supported by a strong synergy between teachers' independent initiative and leadership that is highly open, supportive, and accommodating.

Regarding the Job Security Aspect, physical safety and position stability are guaranteed; however, the main vulnerability lies in psychological security due to financial instability and external threats triggered by infrastructure deficiencies. Horizontal Communication (Peer-to-Peer) is at a moderate level of satisfaction, which is vulnerable due to interpersonal challenges. Overall, the supportive psychological work climate and the Financial Adaptive Satisfaction mechanism serve as essential compensators that sustain job satisfaction amidst the institutional failure to provide adequate material guarantees.

Overall job satisfaction is significantly constrained by low scores on the Salary/Compensation Aspect and the Physical Working Conditions Aspect. The majority of teachers experience financial dissatisfaction because compensation is deemed disproportionate to the Regional Minimum Wage and responsibilities (triggering inequity), while Physical Working Conditions are deemed critical due to safety risks posed by the fragile, old building structure.

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